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# The World

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026

**Strikes on three more alleged drug boats kill 11, says US military**

Associated Press  
Washington, February 17

THE US military said Tuesday that it carried out strikes on three boats accused of smuggling drugs in Latin American waters, killing 11 people in one of the deadliest days of Trump administration's months-long campaign.

The series of strikes conducted Monday brought the death toll to at least 145 people since the administration began targeting those it calls "narco-terrorists" in small vessels since early September.

Like most of the military's statements on the 42 known strikes, US Southern Command said it targeted alleged drug traffickers along known smuggling routes. It said two vessels carrying four people each were struck in the eastern Pacific Ocean, while a third boat with three people was hit in the Caribbean Sea.

The military did not provide evidence that the vessels were ferrying drugs but posted videos that showed boats being destroyed. Trump has said the US is in "armed conflict" with cartels in Latin America and has justified the attacks as a necessary escalation to stem the flow of drugs. But his administration has offered little evidence to support its claims of killing "narcoterrorists."

**ARAGCHI SAYS PROGRESS MADE ON THE MAIN GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

## Iran briefly closes Strait of Hormuz as US, Tehran nuclear talks unfold

**First announced closure of the strait carrying 20% of world's oil amid US threats**

Reuters  
Geneva, February 17

IRAN AND the United States reached an understanding on the main "guiding principles" in a second round of indirect talks over nuclear dispute on Tuesday, but it does not mean a deal is imminent, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said.

Different ideas have been presented, these ideas have been seriously discussed, ultimately we've been able to reach a general agreement on some guiding principles, from now on we will move based on those principles and enter the text of a potential agreement," Araghchi told Iranian media after the talks concluded in Geneva.

The military did not provide evidence that the vessels were ferrying drugs but posted videos that showed boats being destroyed. Trump has said the US is in "armed conflict" with cartels in Latin America and has justified the attacks as a necessary escalation to stem the flow of drugs. But his administration has offered little evidence to support its claims of killing "narcoterrorists."

The US has sent a battle



People carry pre-Iranian Revolution national flags as they protest near the United Nations office in Geneva on Tuesday. REUTERS

force to the Middle East to press Tehran to make concessions in the decades-long nuclear dispute and President Donald Trump has said "regime change" in Tehran may be the best thing that can happen.

Iranian state media reported earlier that Iran would temporarily shut part of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global oil supply route, as it held talks over its nuclear programme while Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned on Tuesday that any US attempts to depose his govern-



ment would fail.

It was the first time Iran has announced the closure of the key



**"The US President says their army is the world's strongest, but the strongest army in the world can sometimes be slapped so hard it cannot get up"**

AYATOLLAH ALI KHAMENEI,  
IRAN SUPREME LEADER

international waterway, through which 20% of the world's oil passes, since the US began threatening Iran and rushing military assets to the region

Speaking at a disarmament conference in Geneva after the talks, Araghchi said that a "new window of opportunity" had opened and that he hoped talks would lead to a "sustainable" solution that ensured the full

recognition of Iran's legitimate rights. US envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner took part in the Geneva talks, which were being mediated by Oman, a source briefed on the matter told Reuters. The White House did not respond to emailed questions about the meeting.

Earlier, Trump said he himself would be involved "indirectly" in the Geneva talks and that he believed Tehran wanted to make a deal. "I don't think they want the consequences of not making a deal," Trump said.

Just after the talks started, Iranian media cited 86-year-old Khamenei as saying Washington could not force out his government. The republic has been ruled by clerics since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"The US President says their army is the world's strongest, but the strongest army in the world can sometimes be slapped so hard it cannot get up," he said, in comments published by Iranian media.

The US has sought to expand scope of talks to non-nuclear issues such as Iran's missile stockpile. Tehran says it is willing only to discuss curbs on its nuclear programme - in exchange for sanctions relief - and will not give up uranium enrichment.

### BRIEFLY

ITALY

**Historic Sannazaro theatre in Naples destroyed in blaze**



A FIRE gutted the interior of the historic wood-framed Teatro Sannazaro in a wealthy neighbourhood of the Italian city of Naples on Tuesday, officials said. The fire is believed to have started in an apartment block in the Chiaia district, but spread rapidly to the nearby 19th-century theatre, bringing its domed roof crashing to the ground and devastating the plush stalls and tiers of gilded boxes. "Very little of the theatre remains," Naples fire commander Giuseppe Paduano told reporters. "Inside there are still some small hotspots that we will extinguish shortly. As for the causes, it's still too early to say."

Naples Mayor Gaetano Manfredi said initial indications suggested the blaze had started accidentally. REUTERS

IRELAND

**Govt opens EU privacy probe into Musk's Grok**

ELON MUSK'S social media platform X faces a EU privacy investigation after its Grok AI chatbot started spitting out nonconsensual deepfake images, Ireland's data privacy regulator said Tuesday. Ireland's Data Protection Commission said it notified X on Monday that it was opening the inquiry under the 27-nation EU's strict data privacy regulations, adding to the scrutiny X is facing in Europe and other parts of the world over Grok's behaviour. AP

SPAIN

**Spain approves \$8bn in aid for storm-hit regions**

THE SPANISH government approved financial aid worth around 7 billion euros (\$8 billion) on Tuesday for people affected by the storms that battered the Extremadura and Andalusia regions in the past weeks. Spain and Portugal have been hit by several storms since the start of the year that have caused widespread damage to infrastructure and crops, while forcing authorities to evacuate thousands of people. REUTERS

### NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

PAKISTAN

**Child, 11 soldiers killed by TTP in KPK province**

MILITANTS FROM the banned TTP rammed an explosive-laden vehicle into a checkpoint in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, killing 11 security personnel and a child, the military said on Tuesday. TTP claimed responsibility for the deadly suicide attack on the FC check post in the Bajaur district bordering Afghanistan. PTI

NEPAL

**EC tells media: No opinion poll before vote**

NEPAL'S ELECTORAL body on Tuesday urged media not to disclose results of opinion polls before the general elections as it may damage a "healthy competitive environment." Nepal is set to hold the House of Representatives elections on March 5, the first since last year's Gen-Z protests that toppled the PSharma Oli-led coalition government. PTI

**Taliban free three Pakistani soldiers in Saudi-mediated deal**

Reuters  
Kabul, February 17

He said the release was in line with the Taliban government's policy of maintaining "positive relations with all countries" and came ahead of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

It was also in response to a request from "the brotherly country of Saudi Arabia", which has hosted recent talks between the two sides, the spokesman added.

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Key border crossings between Afghanistan and Pakistan have been periodically shut amid the tensions, disrupting trade and movement across the 2,600-km (1,600-mile) frontier.

Pakistan accuses Afghanistan's Taliban rulers of harbouring militants who stage attacks inside Pakistan, a charge Kabul denies.

### EPSTEIN FILES FALLOUT

## Hyatt board's chairman Pritzker resigns, expresses regret over links

Rebecca Davis O'Brien  
February 17



President of Hyatt foundation  
Thomas Pritzker. FILE

THOMAS PRITZKER, a billionaire heir to the Hyatt Hotels fortune, stepped down from his role Monday as executive chairman of the Hyatt Hotels Corporation, becoming the latest person felled by an association with the disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein.

Pritzker, 75, said in a letter to the Hyatt board that he was retiring, effective immediately, adding: "Good stewardship also means protecting Hyatt, particularly in the context of my association with Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell which I deeply regret."

He added that he "exercised terrible judgment in maintain-

charges, with the two frequently corresponding to confirm meals and appointments, including at Epstein's Manhattan townhouse.

In one email exchange from 2018, Epstein asked Pritzker to help his girlfriend, Karyna Shuliak, arrange a trip to Southeast Asia. Pritzker agreed, and asked what she planned to do there. Shuliak responded: "Going to try to find a new boyfriend for Jeffrey." Pritzker replied with a smiley-face emoticon and said "May the Force be with you."

A representative for the Pritzker did not respond to a request for comment Monday.

Beyond their business interests,

members of the Pritzker family

are prominent in politics and

philanthropy.

**Australia refuses repatriation of 34 IS-linked women, children from Syria**

*Melbourne:* The Australian government will not repatriate from Syria a group of 34 women and children with alleged ties to the militant Islamic State group, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Tuesday.

The women and children from 11 families were supposed to fly from Syria to Australia, but Syrian authorities on Monday turned them back to Rojdetention camp because of procedural problems, officials said.

Only two groups of Australians have been repatriated with government help from Syrian camps since the fall of the Islamic State group in 2019.

Albanese would not comment on a report that the latest women and children had Australian passports.

Zelensky called for allies to increase pressure on Russia to reach a "real and just" peace deal via tougher sanctions and weapons supplies to Ukraine.

Trump pointed to Ukraine when asked by reporters what he was expecting from the talks in Geneva. "Well, we have big talks," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One. "It's going to be very easy. I mean, look, so far, Ukraine better come to the table fast. That's all I'm telling you."

Pelicot recounted her story of survival in the book and in her first series of interviews since the landmark 2014 trial

that turned her into a global icon against sexual violence and imprisoned her husband who knocked her out with drugs so other men could assault her inert body.

"Today I'm doing better, and this book allowed me to engage in self-reflection, to take

stock of my life," she said. "I had to try to rebuild myself on this field of ruins. Today I am a woman standing strong."

Pelicot said her book is meant to deliver "a message of hope to all the women who are

going through a very complicated period in their lives."

The shocking case — and Pelicot's decision to waive her anonymity and speak publicly — prompted a reckoning over rape culture in France and beyond, as her dignity and strength impressed many across the world.

Gymnastic superstar and Olympic gold medalist Simone Biles, herself a survivor of sexual abuse, paid tribute to Pelicot in a message broadcast by the BBC. "Gisele has demonstrated to the world that it's not for victims of sexual abuse to feel shame — it's the perpetrators," Biles said.

of his language and his preternatural energy and ambition, he became a moral and political force in a racially ambiguous era, when Jim Crow was still a vivid memory and Black political power more an aspiration than a reality.

With his gospel of seeking common ground, his pleas to "keep hope alive" and his demands for respect for those seldom accorded it, Jackson, particularly in his galvanizing speeches at the Democratic conventions in 1984 and 1988, enunciated a progressive vision that defined the soul of the Democratic Party, if not necessarily its policies, in the last decades of the 20th century.

Jackson picked up the mantle of King after his assassination in 1968 and ran for president twice, long before Obama's election in 2008. But he never achieved either the commanding moral stature of King or the ultimate political triumph attained by Obama.

Jackson was hospitalized in November for treatment of a rare and particularly severe neurodegenerative condition, progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP), according to the advocacy organization he founded, the Rainbow PUSH Coalition. In 2017, he announced that he had Parkinson's disease, which in its early stages can produce similar effects on bodily movements and speech.

Jackson died peacefully, but it did not give a cause or say where he died.

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Gisèle Pelicot

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Jackson's death came as the nation mourned the loss of a civil rights leader and a symbol of hope.

"My constituency is the desperate, the dispossessed, the disrespected and the despised," Jackson said in the rolling cadences of the pulpit at the 1984 Democratic National Convention in San Francisco. "They are restless and seek relief."

His transcendent rhetoric was inseparable from an imperfect human being whose ego, instinct for self-promotion and personal failings were a source of unending irritation to many friends and admirers and targets for derision by many critics. Jackson, the writer and social commentator Stanley Crouch once said, "will be forgotten and transform it."

ever doomed by his determination to mythologize his life."

Still, he offered an expansive vision of American opportunity that admirers say helped change the nation's landscape of possibility. And his idea of a multi-racial coalition empowered by an activist government to confront rampant inequality in American life remains central to progressive wing of the Democratic Party and has inspired groups like Black Lives Matter.

Nothing about Jackson was simple, starting with his upbringing. He was born Jesse Louis Burns on Oct. 8, 1941, in Greenville, South Carolina. His mother, Helen Burns, was 16 at the time, a high school major.

rette renowned in town for her coloratura soprano singing voice. His father, Noah Louis Robinson, was a handsome, imposing 33-year-old former boxer who lived next door, married to another woman. That he was not involved in his son's rearing was a source of humiliation for Jesse as he grew up in his small, segregated Black community.

In 1943, his mother married Charles Jackson, whom she had met while he was a shoeshine attendant at a barbershop, before he joined the Army. Jackson did not adopt Jesse until 14 years later. When the couple had a son of their own, Jesse was sent to live with his maternal grandmother.

• JACKSON PICKED UP THE MANTLE OF MARTIN LUTHER KING AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION IN 1968 AND RAN FOR PRESIDENT TWICE, LONG BEFORE OBAMA'S ELECTION IN 2008

## Jesse Jackson, who led civil rights movement after King, dies at 84

Peter Applebome  
Chicago, February 17

THE REV Jesse Jackson, whose impassioned oratory and populist vision of a "rainbow coalition" of the poor and forgotten made him the nation's most influential Black figure in the years between the civil rights crusades of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and the election of Barack Obama, died on Tuesday. He was 84.

His death was confirmed by his family in a statement, which said that Jackson "died peacefully," but it did not give a cause or say where he died.

Jackson was hospitalized in November for treatment of a



{ JESSE JACKSON }

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App

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AstroSage AI  
[astrosage.com](http://astrosage.com)



## • LEGAL

## Data law: SC to examine privacy, public interest & press freedom

Vineet Bhalla  
New Delhi, February 17

THREE SEPARATE PIL petitions have been filed in the Supreme Court challenging the constitutionality of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023. They argue that while the Act (and the Rules notified under it) was enacted to safeguard digital privacy of individuals, it paradoxically undermines the fundamental Right to Information (RTI), handicaps investigative journalism, and expands state surveillance powers.

The petitions have been filed by the civil society network National Campaign for Peoples' Right to Information (NCPRI), transparency advocate Venkatesh Nayak, and The Reporters' Collective (TRC) Trust, a group of investigative journalists.

The SC on Monday admitted the pleas, issuing notice to the Centre and listed them for hearing by a Constitution Bench of five judges in March. However, it declined to place an interim stay on the Act.

### Privacy vs transparency

The three petitioners point out how Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act amends Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act, 2005, which governs the disclosure of personal information held by public authorities.

Earlier, public officials could deny personal information requested under the RTI Act only if it had no relationship to any public activity or interest, or if it caused an "unwarranted invasion" of an individual's privacy. There was also a public interest exception: the public information officer (PIO) could disclose even personal information if they were satisfied that the "larger public interest justifies the disclosure".

The new section exempts that. NCPRI's petition states that this amendment "extinguishes" a PIO's statutory power to weigh public interest against privacy. TRC says investigations into corruption often rely on asset disclosures, tender documents and file notations, which inevitably contain personal data.

By removing the public interest override, the petitioners argue that public authorities can withhold information that is deemed "personal" even if it has a significant connection to public activity. NCPRI contends that this converts a "carefully calibrated privacy exemption into an absolute bar", shielding corrupt officials. Nayak's petition calls this a "death knell for participatory democracy" and "ruinous to ideas of open governance". NCPRI says the RTI Act amendment is "manifestly arbitrary" as it creates a class of information that is opaque, regardless of public interest involved.

### Impact on journalism

On press freedom, TRC's petition highlights how under the DPDP Act, journalists collecting data on individuals may be classified as "data fiduciaries". This imposes severe obligations such as giving notice to and obtaining consent from the very individuals being investigated.

TRC argues that this is "infeasible" and "counter-productive" for investigative journalism. If the individual does not give consent, Section 12 mandates that their data be erased by the data fiduciary, which would "make post-facto validation of a news report or article impossible". The petition also warns of a "chilling effect" due to the "unaffordable penalties" (rising up to Rs 250 crore) prescribed under the Act.

### State power and independence

Both Nayak and TRC challenge Section 36 of the Act, which empowers the Union government to call for information from any data fiduciary. TRC says this facilitates "unreasonable digital searches" without procedural safeguards and that it is "vague, overbroad and arbitrary". It adds that without an exemption for journalistic purposes, media organisations could be forced to hand over data revealing anonymous sources, deterring potential informants. Nayak contends "there is no appeal or review available" against the central government's order. This "lends the provision amenable to arbitrary and excessive abuse, with a Central Government monopoly over private data".

Nayak and TRC also allege that the Data Protection Board of India — tasked with enforcing the Act and imposing penalties — lacks independence. Under the newly notified Rules, the search-cum-selection committee for appointing the board's chairperson and members consists entirely of government secretaries and government-nominated experts.

Nayak's petition argues that "complete executive dominance" in appointments violates the doctrine of separation of powers in light of the board performing quasi-judicial functions.

### • GEOPOLITICS

## India's challenges as Myanmar gets new govt under shadow of old conflicts

### EXPERT EXPLAINS

NIMMI KURIAN  
PROFESSOR AT CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH, NEW DELHI

THE RESULTS of the recent elections in Myanmar closed a political loop set into motion with the military coup of February 2021. The military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) has secured a landslide, leaving India with much to watch out for.

**How is Myanmar's political, conflict landscape likely to evolve now?**



Myanmar has long been in the grip of a protracted governance crisis, weighed down by its nearly eight-decade history of ethnic minority mobilisations against social, economic and political marginalisation, shaped in part by British colonial rule.

Myanmar's most recent political crisis began with the February 1, 2021 coup by armed forces under Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. The military takeover abruptly reversed a decade of nascent democratic reforms in the country.

It also plunged the country into a grave humanitarian crisis. The International Court of Justice is at present deliberating on a charge of genocide brought against Myanmar by The Gambia.

The UN estimates that nearly half the population currently lives at or below the poverty line. The massive displacement crisis triggered by the coup has forced 3.2 million people to flee their homes.

**Why were the polls under a shadow?**

Min Aung Hlaing's rhetorical pledge of a transition towards a 'disciplined democracy' notwithstanding, serious concerns regarding process, participation and credibility have dogged Myanmar's entire electoral cycle. The lopsided election results underscore deep-seated systemic exclusions that made the USDP's landslide win possible (739 out of 1,025 national and provincial seats).

Under post-coup laws enacted in 2022 and 2023, the junta-appointed Union Election Commission (UEC) dissolved more than 40 opposition parties, including Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD), which had swept the 2020 polls.

The electoral process was also discredited due to widespread territorial disenfranchisement, with the UEC openly acknowledging that polling could not be held in 56-67 townships, especially in conflict-affected regions in the west and north, including Rakhine, Shan and Kachin.

And apart from the election, Min Aung

Hlaing has been making institutional arrangements that further bind military power to the civilian administration. On February 3, he signed a new law establishing the Union Consultative Council to be headed by him. It will function as an extra-constitutional 'super-body' to exercise ultimate oversight.

**What's likely to be high up on the new government's agenda?**

The military now seeks to 'restore stability' to a nation destabilised by its own actions. Ensuring this transition is tightly calibrated will be key to maintaining its dominance. Towards this end, extensive personnel changes are being made across the civilian bureaucracy. There has been a rapid expansion of surveillance infrastructure and a tightening of oversight across all digital networks. Internationally, continued diplomatic isolation will be a major concern, with Western sanctions largely still in place and regionally, ASEAN barring Myanmar from bloc summits. There have,

however, been some pockets of issue-based linkages with India, China, and Malaysia, focusing on humanitarian assistance, aid and development projects.

**What should India watch out for?**

There is a lot at stake for India as Myanmar's continued instability creates spillover pressures for its internal security. These present India with complex intertwined challenges: from managing refugee flows to controlling cross-border arms trafficking and smuggling. The spillover has brought nearly 31,000 refugees to Mizoram as of February 2026 with UN figures recording a nearly 500% increase in the past five years.

This instability will be felt most acutely along the shared 1,643-km porous border. There's also the risk of key infra projects such as the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway being left in limbo. India's strategic calculations will have to

factor in new ground realities that point to the junta's sharply eroded territorial control. Reports claim that rebel forces and ethnic militias now exercise effective control of about 42% of Myanmar's territory. The crisis has also increased the operational space for cross-border insurgent activity along the India-Myanmar border, with the NSCN-IM reportedly consolidating positions in Sagar region and offering cross-border logistical support to Valley-based groups.

The Myanmar military is evidently not a viable net security provider and lacks the wherewithal to safeguard India's strategic, economic and security interests.

India's earthquake humanitarian relief under Operation Brahma in 2025, offers a natural entry point to support the people who have borne the brunt of Myanmar's multidimensional conflict. A recalibration of its Myanmar policy has been a long time coming and can help India shift the needle from a strategy that seeks stability to one that offers stability.

### • ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

## The architects of AI, and the ties that bind them



SOUMYARENDR A BARIK & ANIL SASI

AS GLOBAL AI leaders convene in New Delhi for the AI Impact Summit, it is difficult to ignore their web of interconnected companies and common mentors.

Sam Altman, the founder of OpenAI, is in India for the summit, as is Anthropic's Dario Amodei. Also in town is Yan LeCun, a mentor to many AI leaders.

If Alan Turing's 1950 paper laid the foundation for AI and language processing, it was Google's transformer paper — 'Attention Is All You Need', written by eight Google researchers in early 2017 — that set the stage for all the foundational large language models that we have today. The transformer architecture is the common link in the development of LLMs and generative AI tools.

The world's most consequential artificial intelligence research is being conducted by a strikingly small circle of scientists who studied mostly under the same mentors, taught in the same rooms and kept recruiting from each other's labs.

To understand where AI is going, one needs to understand a simple fact: Virtually every major breakthrough of the past 15 years traces back to five or six key figures and three institutions: Stanford University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Toronto.

No surprise then that the AI world is deeply interconnected, with Google DeepMind, OpenAI and Stanford/MIT featuring as the primary hubs for the current generation of AI leaders, with close, often fluid, talent flows. The connections among top AI founders and leaders are built on shared academic backgrounds, research collaborations and moves between major labs.

### The PayPal parallels

After eBay acquired PayPal in 2002, a close-knit group of former PayPal founders and employees — that included Peter Thiel, Elon Musk and Reid Hoffman — went on to found or fund many of Silicon Valley's most influential companies. Their ventures include YouTube, LinkedIn, Tesla, Yelp, SpaceX and Palantir.

OpenAI was founded by Elon Musk, Altman, Ilya Sutskever, Greg Brockman, Wojciech Zaremba and John Schulman. Thiel was the main backer and mentor of Sam Altman, providing the large part of the \$5 million that made up Altman's initial venture fund. When OpenAI launched in

### • THE CIRCULAR DEALS TURNING THE A.I. WHEELS

#### JAN 2025

- OpenAI, SoftBank, Oracle and MGX become initial equity funders in Stargate Project
- Stargate to build AI infra for OpenAI at \$500 bn in next four years

#### SEPT 2025

- OpenAI says will spend \$300 bn

#### on data centre capacity from Oracle

- Oracle to buy Nvidia chips for new data centres
- Shares of all companies surge

#### OCT 2025

- OpenAI says will buy 10% stake in AMD
- Deploys 6 GW of AMD's graphics processing units

#### NOV 2025

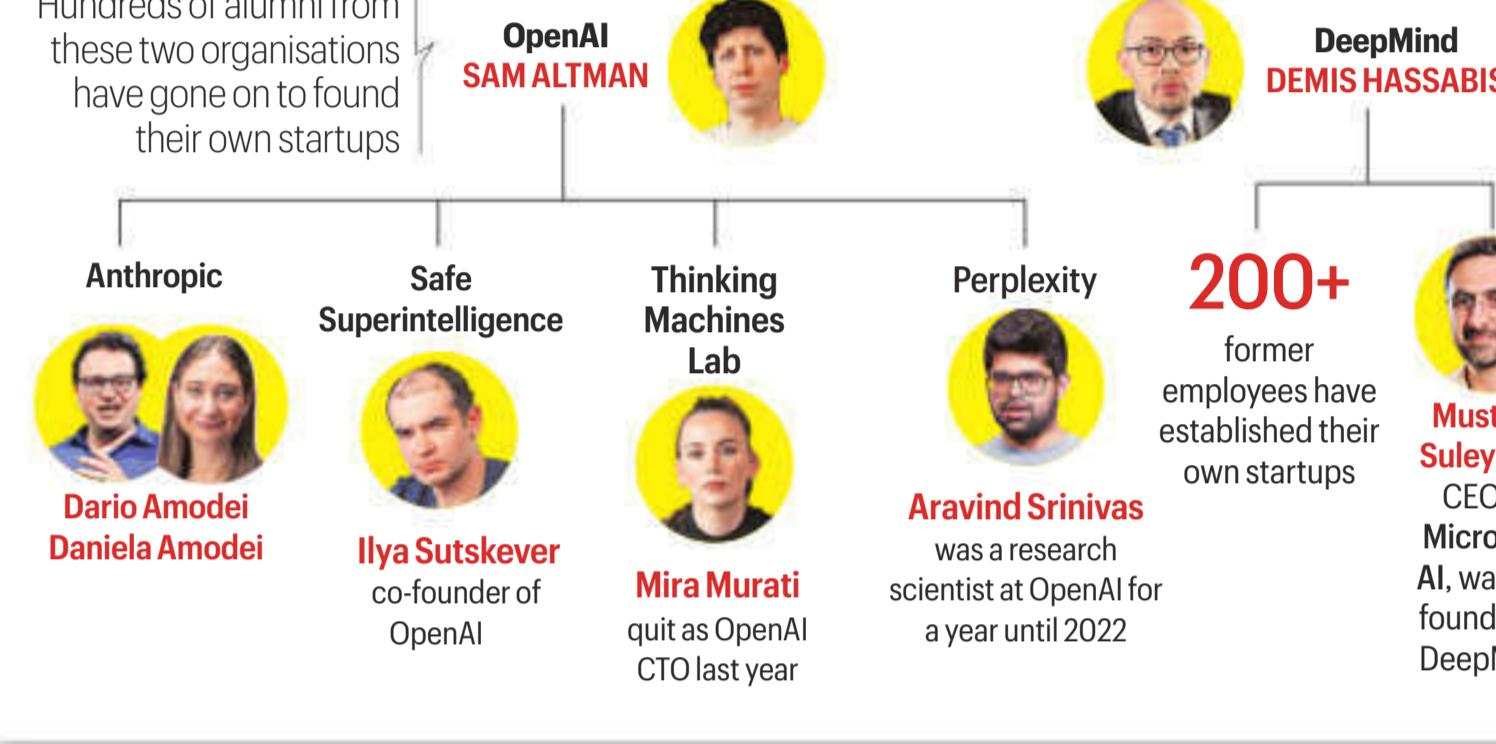
- Nvidia commits \$10 bn for Anthropic, Microsoft commits \$5 bn
- Anthropic to use Nvidia chips and Microsoft cloud infra.

#### JAN 2026

- Nvidia to invest \$100 bn in OpenAI
- OpenAI to use investment to buy Nvidia's chips

### THE WEB OF A.I. LEADERS

A deeply connected network of researchers, mentors and founders is shaping modern AI.



### Intellectual mentorship

The intellectual godfathers of deep learning include Geoffrey Hinton (University of Toronto/Google), LeCun (New York University/ex-Meta) and Yoshua Bengio (Université de Montréal). They all won the Turing Award in 2018 for conceptual and engineering breakthroughs that made deep neural networks a critical component of computing.

Hinton's students include Sutskever (OpenAI/Safe Superintelligence) and Alex Krizhevsky (AlexNet). LeCun, Meta's chief AI scientist until January this year, was in fact a postdoctoral researcher under Hinton.

After the success of AlexNet, Hinton, Sutskever and Krizhevsky formed a company to commercialise their work. In 2013, Google acquired that company for \$44 million and hired all three.

Hinton stayed at Google Brain for the next decade while maintaining his faculty position at the University of Toronto. Sutskever worked at Google Brain for a few years before co-founding OpenAI in 2015. Krizhevsky eventually left Google to work at startups before becoming a research advisor at various AI companies.

### • AVIATION

## Despite damage, black boxes hold key to Pawar air crash probe

Anagha Jayakumar

New Delhi, February 17

been sought from the Accredited Representative of the State of Manufacture for specialised support in data retrieval," the AAIB said.

Initial information from the crash site indicated that low visibility conditions in the area might have played a role in the accident. The data from the recorders, along with the wreckage, are expected to help reconstruct the events leading up to the crash, whose cause remains unknown.

### What are black boxes?

The black box, or aircraft flight recorder, has been around in some form since the 1930s, when French engineer François Hussonot originated a data recorder equipped with sensors that would optically project around 10 parameters onto a photographic film. The film ran continuously in a box constructed to prevent any light from entering it, lending it the name "black box". The name has endured ever since,

### The two recorders

- Aircraft today typically have two black boxes: the Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) and the Flight Data Recorder (FDR).

- The CVR records radio transmissions and other sounds in the cockpit, including flight crew noises and engine noises.

- The FDR records technical details such as altitude, air-speed, vertical acceleration, etc.

even though the external metal casing has always been orange, to help its speedy identification and retrieval.

The invention of the box, however, is credited to Australian jet fuel expert David Ronald de Mey Warren, who was reportedly inspired by a miniature recorder he had seen at a trade fair. In 1956, he created a prototype he called the ARL Flight Memory Unit, which could store up to four hours of voice and flight instrument data.

### How do black boxes help understand plane crashes?

Most aircraft today are mandatorily equipped with two black boxes, the cockpit voice recorder (CVR) and the flight data recorder (FDR). The CVR records radio transmissions and other sounds in the cockpit. The FDR, on the other hand, records more than 80 different types of technical details pertaining to the flight itself.

The FDR data helps investigators to re-

construct the flight by generating a video simulation. This helps them visualise the aircraft's altitude, power settings, instrument readings and other flight characteristics. It typically takes 10-15 days to analyse the data recovered from the black boxes after a crash.

### How do black boxes withstand crashes?

The recorders are stored inside a unit made of a strong material such as steel or titanium, and are insulated from extreme heat, cold, and wetness. These boxes are equipped towards the tail end of the aircraft, which usually sustains the least impact from a crash.

These recorders are equipped with a beacon that can send out ultrasound signals for 30 days, which becomes handy when planes crash into water bodies. However, in some cases, like the Malaysian Airlines MH370 flight, the recorders weren't found.

### • GEOPOLITICS

## India's challenges as Myanmar gets new govt under shadow of old conflicts

### EXPERT EXPLAINS

NIMMI KURIAN

PROFESSOR AT CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH, NEW DELHI

Myanmar has long been in the grip of a protracted governance crisis, weighed down by its nearly eight-decade history of ethnic minority mobilisations against social,

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026



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## Making AI Affordable, Safe and Inclusive

Inauguration by  
Narendra Modi  
Prime Minister

February 19, 2026 | 10:00 AM | Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi

Watch the event LIVE on



During the AI summit at Bharat Mandapam, Tuesday. PRAVEEN KHANNA

## Meta raises concerns over 3-hour timeline for takedown of social media content

Soumyarendra Barik  
New Delhi, February 17

## Business as Usual

By EP UNNY



Am sure you have the Natural Intelligence to keep Nicobar more liveable than New Delhi.

RAISING CONCERNs over India's recently notified social media rules which prescribe strict content takedown timelines, social media giant Meta, which operates platforms like Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, said Tuesday that the norms might be "challenging" to comply with from an operational standpoint.

Rob Sherman, Meta vice president policy and deputy chief privacy officer, told reporters on the sidelines of the ongoing India-AI Impact Summit: "Operationally, three hours (the takedown window) »CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**INSIDE** PAGES 6, 17  
GOVT UNVEILS  
FRAMEWORK FOR  
AI IN HEALTH CARE

## I have known Imran from time he was 17, treat him humanely: Gavaskar urges Pak

Kapil Dev and he join appeal to let doctors of Imran's choosing treat him

Sriram Veera  
Mumbai, February 17

Imran Khan has been in custody since August 2023

## THE BIG PICTURE

A GAME CALLED FOOTY PAGE 13

Pune land deal:  
Probe panel says no Parth Pawar role, points to official lapses

Vallabh Ozarkar  
Mumbai, February 17

AN OFFICIAL probe into the controversial 41-acre land deal in Pune's Mundhwa area has found no criminal liability on the part of Parth Pawar, son of former Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister, the late Ajit Pawar—but recommended action against two revenue officials for procedural lapses related to the transaction, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

The report prepared by a committee headed by IAS officer Vikas Shankar Kharage, now Additional Chief Secretary (Revenue), has been submitted to the Revenue Department under Cabinet Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule and is »CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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## SPORT

T20 WORLD CUP:  
AUSTRALIA OUT,  
ZIMBABWE IN  
SUPER EIGHTS

PAGE 16

• HIS VIDEO FLAYING 'OPEN SALE OF DRUGS' WENT VIRAL, AMRITSAR POLICE GOT HIM TO RETRACT

## 'Getting drugs like Zomato order': His son dead, a Punjab cop's helplessness

{ PAGE 1  
anchor }Kamaldeep Singh Brar  
Amritsar, February 17

IT WAS A CURIOUS "FACT CHECK" by the Amritsar police. Twenty-four hours after a viral video of a Head Constable sitting with the body of his 26-year-old son on the road, saying he had died of drugs, and flaying their "open sale" in their neighbourhood Guru Nanakpura in Amritsar, police put out a video of the father "retracting" his claims.

But, in Guru Nanakpura, located barely 7 km from the Golden Temple, the facts speak for themselves.

Getting drugs, says Head Constable Ashok Kumar Saini—who lost his son Akash last

Friday, just a day after he had been released from his latest rehab stint—is "like ordering from Zomato".

Shamsher Singh Sandhu, a leader of the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), whose wife Surjit

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

# The Second Page

## Meghwal: Decision on J&K statehood soon; been waiting for a year and a half, says Omar

**Basharat Masood**  
Srinagar, February 17

UNION MINISTER OF State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal on Tuesday hinted at an early decision on the return of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking to reporters in Srinagar, Meghwal said "you will soon hear about a decision" on the issue.

Reacting to Meghwal's comment, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said that "no one will be satisfied" unless statehood is granted, and hoped the wait would not be long.

"See, you have raised an important issue. It is a sensitive issue," Meghwal said. "See, in the Home Minister has said in the Lok Sabha that you will get this right. It has a process and I feel that you will soon get to hear a decision (about it)."

Meghwal, however, didn't elaborate, nor did say what the decision would be.

While Meghwal's comment has renewed a hope of the return of statehood to Jammu and

FROM PAGE 1 | FULL REPORTS ON [WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM](http://WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM)

## Modi, Macron meet

materials to health and skilling, Modi underlined that "this partnership will provide stability and progress" in "this era of unpredictable global dynamics".

Macron, who will travel to New Delhi for the AI Impact summit Wednesday, said India is one of the most trusted partners of France. "From Rafale jets to submarines, we are expanding defence cooperation," he said.

The two leaders virtually inaugurated the H125 light utility helicopter final assembly line of Tata-Airbus in Karnataka.

"We take pride in the fact that, together, India and France will manufacture in India the world's only helicopter capable of flying to the heights of Mount Everest and export it to the entire world," Modi said.

The facility, according to the Ministry of External Affairs, will strengthen India's aeronautical manufacturing capabilities, lead to skilling of the workforce, create jobs and give impetus to At-

manirbhar Bharat.

Describing the India-France relationship as "very crucial", Modi said, "The strategic partnership between the two countries is one of the oldest and, with the help of President Macron, we have deepened the ties and given it more energy in recent times. Based on this trust and vision, we are elevating our relation to a Special Global Strategic Partnership. This partnership is not just strategic. In this era of unpredictable global dynamics, this partnership will provide global stability and progress."

He said the friendship between the two countries has "no boundaries" and the partnership can "reach from deep oceans to the tallest mountains".

Macron said, "Both our countries firmly believe in the rule of law, and it has been demonstrated in the past few years." He said India and France will continue to cooperate to combat terrorism.

Underlining the cooperation

in the defence and aerospace sectors, Modi said the inauguration of the helicopter assembly line is a testament to the growing collaboration between the two nations. The delivery of the first "Made in India" H125 is expected in early 2027. It will also be available for export in the South Asian region.

Modi and Macron launched the Indo-French Centre for AI in Health, Indo-French Centre for Digital Science and Technology, and National Centre of Excellence for Skilling in Aeronautics.

"These are not just institutions, they are future-building platforms," Modi said.

Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs, said, "Both leaders announced a total of 21 important outcomes in areas including defence, tech and innovation, startups, critical minerals, advanced materials, health and skilling."

The outcomes included:

• Establishment of an annual Foreign Ministers Dialogue to regularly review implementation of the elevated partnership and Horizon 2047 Roadmap.

• Launched the India-France

Year of Innovation, Technology and Innovation, and the India-France Innovation Network.

• Renewed the agreement on defence cooperation, and agreed on a JV between BEL and Safran to produce Hammer missiles in India.

• Reciprocal deployment of officers at Indian Army and French Land Forces establishments.

• Constitution of a Joint Advanced Technology Development Group on Critical and Emerging Technologies.

• Joint Declaration of Intent for Cooperation in Critical Minerals and Metals.

• Amending the Protocol on the Double Tax Avoidance Agreement.

• Signed a Letter of Intent between T-Hub and Nord France on strategic cooperation in start-up ecosystems, innovation.

• Signed an MoU for scientific collaboration.

• Joint Declaration of Intent on establishing an Indo-French Centre for Digital Sciences and Technology, launch of the Indo-French Centre for AI in Health at AIIMS, New Delhi.

helicopters which it is designing and developing – the 13-ton medium-lift class Indian Multi-Role Helicopter (IMRH) and the Deck-Based Multi Role Helicopter (DBMRH).

SAFHAL is a joint venture between Safran Helicopter Engines SAS and HAL and is tasked with the design, development, production, sales and support of new generation helicopters in India.

On Monday, Singh, during a visit to GTRE, said every effort is being made to prioritise the development of aero engines in India. The GTRE is also conducting a joint study with the UK for aero engine development.

At the annual dialogue Tuesday, both countries announced reciprocal deployment of officers at Indian Army and French Land Forces establishments.

Senior officials said Singh made a strong pitch to enhance indigenous content in the Rafale aircraft to be manufactured in India to around 50 per cent.

Last week, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), headed by Singh, cleared the acquisition of another 114 Rafale from France, of which 90 are to be manufactured in India.

Additionally, Singh is also learnt to have sought the setting up of MRO facilities for various French aero engines in India. He had earlier said that the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) had finalised French major Safran to manufacture an advanced jet engine in India along with the Bengaluru-based Gas Turbine Research Establishment (GTRE), which will power India's indigenous fifth-generation Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA).

In 2024, state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) had signed an airmen contract with SAFHAL Helicopter Engines Pvt Ltd to begin the joint design, development, manufacture, supply and support of a new generation high-power engine 'Aravalli' for two

Both ministers reaffirmed the commitment to enhance military-to-military cooperation as a key pillar of the Strategic Partnership.

According to the Ministry statement, Singh "brought out that the recent India-EU Security and Defence Partnership marks a significant step in deepening the collective engagement".

Both Ministers agreed to leverage this framework, both bilaterally and in the wider European context, for tangible outcomes that will strengthen regional stability, enhance joint capabilities, and reinforce the enduring Indo-French strategic alignment," the statement said.

## Push for MRO facilities

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his French counterpart Catherine Vautrin, who co-chaired the annual defence dialogue, discussed a range of bilateral security and defence issues, including priority areas for co-development and co-production of military equipment, a Ministry of Defence statement said. The dialogue is a structured ministerial-level bilateral meeting to review and guide defence and security cooperation.

Prior to the meeting, the French Defence Minister was presented with a Guard of Honour at HAL airport upon her arrival.

According to the Ministry, the ministers emphasised the need for a closer defence partnership and connecting the industries of both nations, especially in the field of niche technology.

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## Pune land deal probe

expected to be placed before Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Taru is currently in judicial custody.

The deal had drawn scrutiny on Parth Pawar with Ajit Pawar publicly distancing himself from the transaction. "I am not even remotely connected to this land deal. If anyone is doing wrong, I will never support them... If anyone has done anything wrong by taking my name, action should be taken," Ajit Pawar had said at the time,

adding that he had not spoken to any official regarding the transaction.

He had also announced that the transaction would be cancelled. Fadnavis subsequently ordered a detailed probe. Parth Pawar had said that he was a partner in the firm but was not involved in the procedural aspects of the transaction.

Officials said the Kharage committee examined land ownership records, legal status of Mahatma Watan land, valuation documents, stamp duty calculations, Revenue department file notings and the procedure followed during registration.

The panel also reviewed the ownership structure of Amadea Enterprises and the sequence of administrative approvals.

Investigations by the Pune City police's Economic Offences Wing and the Pimpri Chinchwad police have led to multiple arrests in the case.

Apart from Taru, the police also arrested Sheetal Kishanchand Tejwani, who represented the "Watandars", or original land allottees, and executed the deal through a power of attorney. Digvijay Patil has also been named in the FIRs.

When contacted, Deepali Kushendu Kedar, lawyer for Tejwani, said, "The constitution of the Kharage Committee raises serious concerns regarding jurisdiction, fairness, and institutional impartiality. The lawful Watandars have long been contesting the actions of the Revenue authorities before competent forums, and the formation of an inquiry committee within the same department creates an inherent conflict of interest. These objections have been formally placed before the committee, and in view of this fundamental conflict, any report submitted under such circumstances would lack credibility and serve no meaningful purpose."

WITH SUSHANT KULKARNI, PUNE

## SC asks academy to form panel for norms on judges' approach

Express News Service  
New Delhi, February 17

THE SUPREME Court has asked the Director of National Judicial Academy, Bhopal, Justice Aniruddha Bose, to constitute a "committee of experts" to prepare a comprehensive report on developing "guidelines to inculcate sensitivity and compassion into judges and judicial processes in the context of sexual offences and other vulnerable cases".

The need for setting up the committee arose as the SC was hearing a matter in which it had taken suo motu cognisance of a May 17, 2025 Allahabad HC order modifying the order of summons dated March 26, 2023 issued by the Special Judge (POCSO), Kasganj, to two accused in a 2022 case lodged by a mother accusing them of attempting to rape her minor daughter.

While the trial court had issued summons under Section 376 IPC (rape) read with Section 18 of POCSO Act (attempt to commit offence), the HC revised the same to be under a lesser charge under Sections 354(b) IPC (assault or use of criminal force to a woman with intent to disrobe), read with Section 9/10 (aggravated sexual assault) of POCSO Act.

It added that "these recommendations shall be in the form of 'draft guidelines for the approach of judges and the judicial system when dealing with cases of sexual offences and other similarly sensitive occurrences involving vulnerable

victims, complainants, and/or witnesses'."

As per the February 10 order which was made available Monday, the committee of experts "shall be presided over by Justice Bose as chairperson and shall comprise four other domain experts".

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## Ramdev moves court to protect personality rights; Delhi HC says 'can't be so sensitive'

Sohini Ghosh  
New Delhi, February 17

AMIDST a flurry of cases by celebrities seeking to protect their personality rights, X (formerly Twitter) told the Delhi High Court Tuesday that content involving "political commentary, satire, fair comment and public speech" must be protected and not removed on their request.

The submission by the social media platform came in a case by Yoga guru Baba Ramdev to protect his "personality rights". Ramdev, also the co-founder of FMCG company Patanjali Ayurved, in his suit, has objected to posts on Facebook and X using his personality as a source of amusement and parody for comic relief, so as to "generate audience engagement".

He also objected to his digital identities being created without consent or authorisation, being used to monetise and endorse products. He sought that 16 accounts be blocked on X Corp, 18 URLs on Meta Platforms, along with other content on social intermediaries.

X Corp, at the outset, objected to "indiscriminate" blocking orders from the court. Submitting that of the 16 account URLs on its platform that Ramdev has objected to, it has disabled access to three.

Justice Singh, noting that there is nothing denigrating in a fact-check of a fake news, orally addressing Nayar, said, "See the transcript... it's a fact check... they are only saying something in your favour... We have to be practical about it... it is far from anything disparaging... we can't be so sensitive... I just cannot take off everything that is against your client..."

He also objected to his digital identities being created without consent or authorisation, being used to monetise and endorse products. He sought that 16 accounts be blocked on X Corp, 18 URLs on Meta Platforms, along with other content on social intermediaries.

devl is a parody account and has not made any media posts. The other account, the counsel said, has changed its profile name entirely and now goes by 'Karl Marx'.

"So unless Karl Marx comes in a personality suit, I think the plaintiff will be satisfied by it..." the counsel said.

Further pointing to some posts Ramdev has objected to, including a meme format post where a user has stated 'Epic' while attaching two photographs purportedly featuring Ramdev — one when petrol price was at Rs 55 per litre vis-a-vis when price was at Rs 100 per litre — X Corp's counsel said, "This is political commentary, purely satire, how does it violate personality rights?"

Concerns over Imran's physical condition have mounted in recent weeks. Atherton reported in *The Times* that Imran is close to losing sight in his right eye. Imran is being held at Adiala prison in Rawalpindi where, according to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, he has been subjected to extended periods of solitary confinement.

The captains outlined three specific demands: "medical attention from doctors of Mr. Khan's own choosing"; "humane and dignified conditions of detention in line with international standards", including regular visits by close family members; and "fair and transparent access to legal processes without undue delay..."

The signatories were careful to note that their appeal was made "without prejudice to any legal proceedings".

Within Pakistan, the cricket fraternity has been rallying in support of Imran. Atherton noted that Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis, two of Imran's most celebrated fast-bowling proteges, have urged authorities to allow him access to proper medical care.

Justice Singh, noting that there is nothing denigrating in a fact-check of a fake news, orally addressing Nayar, said, "See the transcript... it's a fact check... they are only saying something in your favour... We have to be practical about it... it is far from anything disparaging... we can't be so sensitive... I just cannot take off everything that is against your client..."

## Cop's son

played football for alma maters Khalsa School and Khalsa College. He went on to do B.Sc. in Hotel Management from Chief Khalsa Diwan, an Amritsar-based educational institution set up in 1902, with first-class honors. "He was a bright boy," says Saini, focused on his career, for which he had also given up sports.

Deployed with the Punjab Armed Police, the 51-year-old recalls when all that started coming apart. It was 2020-21, and Saini was away on election duty in UP, when he got a phone call from a concerned acquaintance. "I was told my son had fallen into bad company."

Saini's heart sank, and when he returned home, his apprehension was confirmed: he had joined the ranks of parents fighting Punjab's drug epidemic.

Saini says his wife and he spared no effort navigating the costly and grueling world of rehabilitation for the next few years. Akash spent time at rehab centres across Amritsar and nearby Sri Hargobindpur, with the family spending between Rs 15,000-Rs 20,000 per month.

But, every time Akash came out, their fight started all over again, Saini says. "Inside centres, addicts are healthy, they eat well, and are disciplined. But the moment they step out, the temptation is everywhere."

It's like "a home delivery" service, says a bitter Saini. "Addicts make a phone call, and

drugs are delivered right on the street. You cannot shadow your child 24 hours a day."

Saini says he tried to sell his house to move the family away, but that he could not get a fair price as Guru Nanakpura is known for its "drug activity".



**International Fleet  
Review 2026**

**18<sup>th</sup> Feb**



**Exercise MILAN 2026**  
Harbour Phase - **19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Feb**  
Sea Phase - **21<sup>st</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> Feb**



**IONS - Conclave of Chiefs**  
**20<sup>th</sup> Feb**

# A HISTORIC MARITIME MOMENT FOR INDIA

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**THREE MAJOR GLOBAL NAVAL ENGAGEMENTS**



**UNITED THROUGH OCEANS**



**15<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY**



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UNDERAGE BOY DRIVING SUV MOWED DOWN YOUTH IN DWARKA

# Sahil dreamt big... after death, acceptance letter arrives from University of Manchester

Upasika Singh  
New Delhi, February 17

FOR THE last few days, 23-year-old Sahil Dhaneshra and his mother Inna Makan from Dwarka were counting down days, as they waited for response from all the foreign universities he had applied for admission to MBA courses. Raised by a single mother, Sahil knew that he had to make it big in life and support his family. He believed an MBA from a foreign university was his sure-shot ticket to success.

On February 14, Inna found a letter waiting—an acceptance letter from the University of Manchester.

But by then, her whole world had fallen apart.

Sahil had died after being mowed down by a speeding Scorpio vehicle while on his way to Inna's office on a motorcycle on February 3. Police later confirmed that the car was being driven by a 17-year-old boy who didn't have a driving licence.

"I received a call around 1.20 pm that my son met with an accident... I went to the spot and saw my son lying on the road, bleeding... he was in so much agony," Inna told The Indian Express on Tuesday.

Sahil was rushed to Indira Gandhi Hospital, where he was declared dead at 1.57 pm.

"My life ended there," she said plaintively. "My son was just days away from realising his dreams."

After the postmortem examination was conducted, Sahil's remains were taken to Haridwar and the family returned to Delhi on February 14 to hold a wake.

Police said it appears the Scorpio collided with the motorcycle coming from the oppo-



(Top) Mother Inna Makan with Sahil's photograph; (above) the mangled Scorpio car being driven by the 17-year-old boy and Sahil's motorcycle. UPASIIKA SINGHAL

site direction and thereafter hit a Swift Dzire taxi parked on the road.

The Scorpio driver, the 17-year-old boy, was apprehended. Being a minor, he was produced before the Juvenile Justice Board and sent to an observation home. He was later granted interim bail on February 10 to sit for his Class X board exams, police said.

"The police kept telling me that he is a juvenile, it's the law that he'll get bail. Then they

told me that even if his father is arrested, it will be easy to get bail because it was just an accident," said Inna.

She couldn't accept this, she added. That is when she decided to turn to social media for help.

"I first started a page on Instagram but soon it was banned because someone reported it for money laundering. So, I turned to Twitter (X) because I knew people would respond more over there," she said.

Inna made a tearful appeal on social media seeking action against the driver involved. "I lost my son, Sahil Dhaneshra, a 22-year-old talented boy whom I raised for 23 years alone as a single mom. He was killed brutally by a Scorpio... the driver was an unlicensed driver and his sister was making reels in the car while he sped around," she alleged in a video on X on Sunday.

Sahil's friends, meanwhile, are numb by the sudden loss.

"He was the most mature among all of us," said Manas Sachdeva (20), one of Sahil's close friends. Describing him as incredibly hard working and intelligent, Manas said that Sahil was holding down two part-time jobs while working with his mother's real estate company and pursuing his final semester of BBA.

"He just wanted to uplift his mother's life... he had to leave college for some time because there were financial troubles at home but he went back the moment he could pay the fees again," said Manas.

Sahil's room is peppered with evidence of his determination. On the ceiling, right above where he slept, he had written '2025 will be my \$10,00,000 year' with a black marker. On the wall opposite his bed, 'DREAM' written vertically, with the 'D' spelling out 'Discipline'.

Sahil's grandmother Rajkumar, bedridden, is worried about her daughter. "Inna lost her husband when Sahil was just a toddler. And now her only child is gone. I'm worried for her but I feel so helpless."

However, as Inna grieved, her anger simmered. "This is just the beginning. I won't rest till my son gets justice," she said.

## Father was not in Delhi when 17-yr-old boy took car for a ride, say police

Upasika Singh  
New Delhi, February 17

TWO WEEKS after Sahil Dhaneshra was killed after being hit by an SUV allegedly driven by a 17-year-old boy without a licence—police are examining the role of the boy's father, the car owner, and the circumstances in which the minor got access to the vehicle.

Police said the boy's father was not in Delhi when the incident took place and was allegedly unaware of his son taking the car for a ride. The father, said police, has been legally bound down—he has to make appearances before the police and the court when ordered to as part of the probe.

Being a minor, the accused was produced before the Juvenile Justice Board and sent to an Observation Home. However, he was released on February 10 on the grounds that he had to give his Class 10 Board exams.

Speaking to mediapersons on Tuesday, the father said, "I was not in Delhi when this happened. On February 3, I received a call from my wife that my son was in an accident. Naturally, I was worried. I asked my wife how he managed to get the car and she told me he was just going to drop his sister off at the Metro (station)..."

"I told them to take the victim to the hospital. I thought maybe there were only minor injuries... Only later was I informed that the boy had died... I feel bad for his family... I can't imagine what they are going

through but I can understand their pain," he added.

In her statements to the media, Sahil's mother Inna Makan has alleged that it took the authorities several hours to take Sahil to the hospital. A senior police officer, however, said that when the first responders reached the accident site, Sahil was already dead. "In case of a death, we have to secure the crime scene and collect evidence. The body cannot be removed from the scene until this is done. Had the first responders seen even the slightest sign of life, he would have been shifted to a hospital immediately," the officer added.

Police, meanwhile, confirmed Inna's claims that many challans have been registered against the accused's car for reckless driving. Inna had put the number at 13. "We have taken cognizance of this. We will verify and add this to our chargesheet," said the officer.

According to Sahil's post-mortem report, he died because of severe bleeding and major damage to vital organs caused by the crash. A postmortem conducted at Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital found he had sustained a serious head injury that caused heavy bleeding in the brain, a broken arm and several broken ribs.

Meanwhile, police said they have verified that the boy was in fact 17-year-old and not 19-year-old, as he had earlier claimed. The birth certificate of the driver has revealed that he was born on August 2, 2009.

## Skywatch



**Forecast:**  
February 18, 2025

Generally cloudy sky, very light rain expected at isolated places during morning hours

**MAX: 26-28**  
3.6°C above normal

**MIN: 13-15**  
2°C below normal

- Sunrise: 6:56 AM (February 19)
- Sunset: 6:13 PM (February 18)
- Moonrise: 7:54 AM (February 19)
- Moonset: 7:10 PM (February 18)

## AQI Tracker



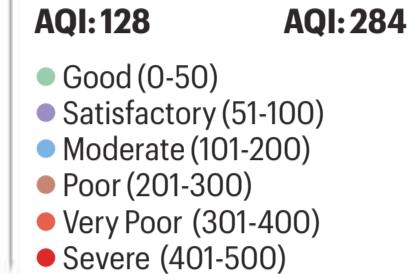
**Anand Vihar**  
Poor  
AQI: 289



**Narela**  
Poor  
AQI: 282

**IGI Airport**  
Moderate  
AQI: 128

**Chandni Chowk**  
Poor  
AQI: 284



## BRIEFLY



Students leave an examination centre in Noida after writing their Mathematics paper for CBSE Class 10 exams Tuesday. GAJENDRA YADAV

**TRIGGER BEHIND FIRE YET TO BE ASCERTAINED**

## 32-year-old man killed after fire breaks out at Central Delhi house

A 32-YEAR-OLD man died after a fire broke out at a residential building in Sadar Bazar area in Central Delhi on Tuesday evening, officers said. The Delhi Fire Service (DFS) received a distress call at around 7.05 pm reporting flames erupting from the second and third floors of the house. Fire tenders were immediately dispatched to the spot. According to a DFS official, the blaze had engulfed domestic articles stored inside the building, causing heavy smoke to spread through the upper floors. During the rescue effort, a man identified as Sohan (32), was found unconscious on the second floor. Sohan was rushed to Hindu Rao Hospital where he was declared dead. Police said the exact cause of the blaze is yet to be ascertained.

## Court denies bail to former Jaypee Infratech chief

STATING THAT thousands of homebuyers are now running from pillar to post while the accused is enjoying the proceeds of crime, a Delhi court Monday denied bail to former CMD of Jaypee Infratech Ltd, Manoj Gaur. He was arrested by the ED on November 13 last year in a 2018 money-laundering case involving the alleged diversion of close to Rs 13,800 crore. The case began after homebuyers of Jaypee Wish Town and Jaypee Greens projects filed complaints with the EOW in Delhi and UP. Around 25,000 homebuyers were impacted due to non-delivery of their homes. ENS

## Rapido driver injured, robbed by group of men

A DRIVER with the ride-hailing app Rapido was injured and allegedly robbed by a group of unidentified men in Greater Noida's Bisrakh area late Friday night, police said. The rider was on his way home when two to three men allegedly followed him on a motorcycle and forced him to stop, said Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central Noida) RK Gautam. Police said the accused were allegedly carrying a knife. During the assault, the victim sustained injuries and his motorcycle and mobile phone were snatched, they added. ENS

## Biker held for opening doors of moving vehicles

AFTER A video showing several bikers opening the doors of buses and tempo while driving dangerously on the roads of the Capital was widely shared on social media, police arrested one of the accused on Tuesday. The accused identified as Tushar Puniya (22) was arrested for allegedly performing dangerous stunts on a motorcycle in Northeast Delhi to create a reel for social media, said police. ENS

EASTERN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, February 17

**FIR lodged after wearable devices stolen at AI summit, machines found**

NEOSAPIEN

Police said they have reached out to the victim. "The CCTV camera footage has been scanned and the accused identified. They would be arrested soon," said an officer.

On Monday, Yadav had posted on X: "Think about this: We paid for flights, accommodation, logistics and even the booth [at Bharat Mandapam]. Only to see our wearables disappear into a high-security zone. If only security and official entourage had access, how did this happen? This is extremely disappointing."

He had also posted some pictures, apparently of the booth, on X.

## Faridabad fire: FIR lodged against owners, managers of 2 factories



The fire spread rapidly, engulfing several vehicles. EXPRESS

Abhimanyu Hazarika  
Faridabad, February 17

A DAY after a series of explosions sparked a major fire at a Faridabad factory, leaving at least 37 injured, an FIR was lodged on Tuesday against the owners and managers of two factories.

The fire spread rapidly engulfing the entire unit of Shree Kalkaji. Several vehicles, including two-wheeler and cars parked within a 100-m radius of the unit, were charred.

Shree Kalkaji, a proprietorship firm located in Mujesar Industrial Area in Sector 24, is a small-scale manufacturer and supplier of automotive and industrial lubricants.

As per its listing on online B2B marketplace IndiaMart, Shree Kalkaji specialises in producing and trading a range of oils and lubricants.

Explosions. Police added that the owners and managers of both factories sustained injuries and are not fit for questioning yet.

The fire spread rapidly engulfing the entire unit of Shree Kalkaji. Several vehicles, including two-wheeler and cars parked within a 100-m radius of the unit, were charred.

Chief Secretary Rajeev Verma, officials said, had asked all heads of the department at a recent meeting to complete the entries of their assets within 20 days.

The Indian Express had first reported about the government developing the portal, which is being operated by the IT department, last November.

Officials said that while the

## DAMIS PORTAL: ALL GOVT LAND DATA A CLICK AWAY

### Months after Delhi govt started mapping its assets, data of 14,000 properties registered

#### • Key points about DAMIS

##### WHAT IS DAMIS?

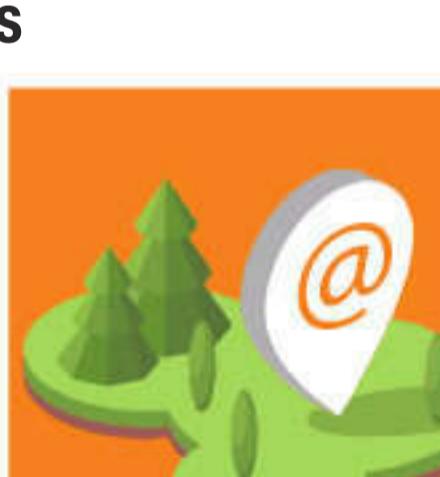
Centralised, GIS-enabled digital repository of all government-owned properties

##### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Helps bring fragmented, missing data on one platform

##### HOW CAN DATA BE USED?

All information is a click away if government is looking for land to build schools, colleges or hospitals



government owns a large number of land and properties, the records are currently maintained separately by different departments and agencies. The asset information, at present, is fragmented, and, in some cases, outdated, making it difficult to obtain a comprehensive overview of government assets. There are over 100 departments, offices, institutions and other entities under the Delhi government.

The platform ensures standardised records of assets,

while dashboards and analytical tools support structured monitoring, said officials. The DAMIS allows departments and agencies to easily enter details of land parcels and properties, generate customised reports and use high-resolution satellite imagery to create Geographic Information System (GIS) based maps for spatial visualisation and analysis.

To address the challenges of information gap and fragmentation of data, DAMIS has been developed as a central-

structures. Even two cars cannot pass simultaneously," she submitted, contending that the functional width was often less than four metres. To this, the bench said that the report would be taken on record.

Sharma further submitted that additional photographs from other blocks, not visited by the commission, showed even narrower lanes with four to six-storey structures. She argued that in the event of a fire or natural disaster, emergency services would find it "impossible" to access such buildings.

Referring to the fire safety regime, Sharma cited provisions of the Haryana Building Code, 2017, as amended, per-

mitting residential plotted buildings up to 16.5 metres in height (stilt plus four floors).

She argued that the amendment aligned the requirement of a no objection certificate with the Haryana Fire Services Act, 2009, raising the threshold from 15 metres to 16.5 metres.

She submitted that in the absence of adequate road width, spacing between buildings and requisite equipment, fire-fighting services could not effectively cater to structures of 16.5 m.

Sharma told the bench that she was pressing only for interim relief in the present petition. The bench then directed the parties to file written submissions within two weeks.

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National & International  
[Genaral & Exam related]

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## DALELGARH VILLAGE IN GREATER NOIDA

# Two toddlers drown in same village — one in open drain, another in flooded field

Neetika Jha  
Noida, February 17

AFTER A three-year-old boy drowned in a 6-ft deep flooded field in Greater Noida's Dalelgarh village, located off the Eastern Peripheral Expressway, on Saturday, it has come to light that around two weeks earlier, a one-and-a-half-year-old girl had died in the same village after falling in an open drain nearly 10 m away from her home.

An open drain, full of garbage, runs through large parts of the village, passing in front of several single-storey homes.

According to villagers, they had written to the Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) following the death of the girl on February 1 but to no avail.

Krishna Kant, the secretary of Gram Vikas Seva Samiti, a local residents welfare group, said that in a letter written to GNIDA on February 4, they had expressed concern that the flooded areas in the village can cause serious accidents and sought action.

The letter was acknowledged by GNIDA officials, he added.

However, GNIDA General Manager A K Singh denied responsibility. "It does not concern us and we are not responsible," Singh said, adding that the land where the girl drowned did not fall under GNIDA's jurisdiction and was located on the village outskirts.

"We cannot be covering all the drains in the area," he added.

The girl had fallen into the open drain around 6 pm while



The flooded field and the drain (right) where the two children drowned in the Dalelgarh village of Greater Noida. EXPRESS

playing outside with her 3-year-old brother. Her mother, Poonam said she was in the kitchen when the children had stepped out unnoticed. "When I couldn't find her, I started searching and the neighbours joined in. After two hours, we found her in the drain. We rushed her to the hospital but she could not survive. There was mud all over her face and body. My child was scared of the water and died in it," Poonam said. Her husband is an autorickshaw driver.

The second victim, Devansh, had come from Sikandrabad with his parents, Rakesh and Anjali, to attend a

bhanda at the Baleshwar Baba Samadhi complex, organised by his maternal grandfather, Anil. On Tuesday, the family members sat in mourning outside their two-room house as Devansh's parents left for their home.

"They had just arrived and went straight to the temple for the bhanda," said Devansh's grandmother Kavita.

"Around 11 am, we realised he was missing. When we could not find him, we feared he had been kidnapped. Then Harsh, my son, spotted his pink woollen cap floating in the flooded field," Kavita said. Devansh was rushed to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead.

The temple is located about 500 m on the outskirts of the village, surrounded by wheat

fields. Adjacent to it lies the flooded field, which villagers claimed belonged to the GNIDA and was designated as grazing land.

After the death, however, the GNIDA had said in a statement that the land is registered in the name of a farmer in the village. "It is not a government pond. The pit had filled with water on this private land, in which the child drowned."

Anil said district officials

have promised the family a compensation of Rs 4 lakh. "The sub-divisional magistrate and the lekhpal have assured us that the compensation would be handed over soon," he added.

Both the families said they have not filed a police complaint.

tively participating in stone pelting or committing any specific overt act," said Additional Sessions Judge (ASJ) Bhupinder Singh of Tis Hazari Court in his order on Tuesday.

"...the absence of demonstrative identification at this stage assumes relevance for the limited purpose of assessing the necessity of further incarceration, particularly where identity and individual role are in dispute," he added. A total of 20 people were arrested in the case and eight did not move the court for bail.

On January 6, a fleet of 30 bulldozers rolled in at 11 pm at the spot, and the demolition began at 12.10 am. As per the police, stones pelting allegedly began at 12.40 am, and after about 10 minutes, officers responded with teargas. The demolition came hours after the Delhi HC declined a plea for an interim stay on the action.

## TURKMAN GATE VIOLENCE CASE

## 'Footage doesn't show accused pelting stones': Court grants bail to 12

Nirbhay Thakur  
New Delhi, February 17

MORE THAN a month after they were arrested for allegedly triggering violence during a demolition drive at New Delhi's Turkman Gate area, a sessions court on Tuesday granted bail to 12 accused in the case as it pulled up the Delhi Police over lack of evidence. No specific footage was brought on record by the police, underlined the court, to "clearly and unmistakably" identify the accused persons.

"It has been submitted by the prosecution that the incident was captured through drone surveillance and other video recordings. However, despite detailed arguments in that regard, no specific footage was played before this court during the course of hearing to prima facie demonstrate clear and unmistakable identification of any of the present applicants as acc-

## Census 2027: 40K staffers set to be trained as houselisting exercise begins in April

Express News Service  
New Delhi, February 17

WITH THE country gearing up for the 16th Census next year, the Delhi government has kicked off preparations for the houselisting exercise, which is scheduled to start from April 15. Over 40,000 employees will be trained in the coming days to conduct the survey on ground, said officials.

The exercise will conclude by June, said a senior official from the Revenue department. "The mapping of houselisting blocks, comprising around 180-200 households, has already started. After the mapping work is completed, each houselisting block will be assigned an enumerator for gathering information from people during this exercise," the official explained.

The houselisting exercise is designed to create a comprehen-

## DU imposes month-long ban on protests, draws criticism

Express News Services  
New Delhi, February 17

THE DELHI University (DU) on Tuesday imposed a month-long ban on all public meetings, protests, and demonstrations across its campus, drawing sharp criticism from student and teacher groups who alleged the administration is using law-and-order concerns to suppress a growing movement demanding stronger safeguards against caste discrimination.

In an order dated February 17, the Office of the Proctor said that "public meetings, processions, demonstrations, and protests of any kind are strictly prohibited within the University Campus for a period of one month," citing inputs that such gatherings could lead to "obstruction of traffic, threats to human life, and disturbance of public peace."

The order further stated that



The DU campus.

in the past, "organisers have often failed to control such protests, which have escalated resulting in deterioration of law and order within the campuses."

Invoking a police order issued by the ACP, Civil Lines subdivision, the notification also prohibited the "assembly of five or more persons," the "holding of any public meeting, rally, dharna, protest, or agitation," and even the "shouting of slogans and making speeches." The restrictions came into effect

on Monday and will remain in force for one month, unless withdrawn earlier.

The decision follows protests on February 13 at the Arts Faculty, where students were demanding the full implementation of the UGC regulations aimed at addressing caste-based discrimination in higher education. That protest spiraled into confrontation, with student group AISA alleging targeted threats against its activists,

while YouTube Ruchi Tiwari accused some protesters of assault and molestation. Delhi Police later said cross-FIRs were registered.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, DU Proctor Manoj Singh, defended the order, calling it a temporary measure. "We do not want any issue or protest to create a divide amongst the students. Before something serious happens, we decided to issue this notification," he said.

By year-end, 241 key arterial roads set to get major makeover

New Delhi: At least 241 key arterial roads across the Capital are set to get a major makeover at a cost of Rs 802 crore, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said on Tuesday.

"All roads will be developed under the 'wall-to-wall carpeting' model to ensure that construction is carried out uniformly across the full width of the stretch. The initiative is a significant step towards making the Capital safer, more organised and future-ready," she told mediapersons, adding that the project is being implemented with the support of the Union government.

The project is targeted for completion by the end of the year. Work will be undertaken in a phased manner to minimise traffic disruption and public inconvenience, said officials.

ENS

**TRIPURA UNIVERSITY**  
A Central University, Tripura (W), Tripura (W), Pin - 799022  
No. ETU/REG/14<sup>th</sup> Convocation/2026 NOTICE Date: 17/02/2026

Tripura University is proposing to hold its 14<sup>th</sup> Convocation in the month of March, 2026. The Provisional Merit List for the years 2024 & 25 is published in the University website for general information to the students and stakeholders. (NB: Hindi version is available on T.U. website).

Sd/-, (Prof. Samir Kumar Sil), Registrar(i/c)

Office of Official Liquidator attached to the Hon'ble High Court at Allahabad, 9th Floor, Sangam Place, Civil Lines, Allahabad, Ph.: 0532-2560312

Notice in Form No.63 Under Rule 148(1) of the Companies (Court) Rules, 1959 M/s ARAYA MUTUAL BENEFIT CO. LTD. (IN LIQUIDATION) Company Petition No. 9 of 2018

Advertisement of Notice to Creditors and Workmen to Prove Their Claim

In the compliance of Hon'ble Hon'ble High Court order dated 21.01.2026 and 12.02.2026, Notice is hereby given to the creditors of the above named company that they are required to submit their claim with the Official Liquidator having proofs of their respective debts or claims against the above named company by delivering at the Office of the Official Liquidator on or before 05.03.2026 or sending by post to the Official Liquidator so as to reach him not later than the said date, an affidavit proving the debt or claim in the prescribed form with their respective names, addresses and particulars of debt or claim and any title to priority under section 530 of the Act. Any creditor and workmen who fails to submit his affidavit or within the time limit aforesaid will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution of dividend before his debt is proved, or, as the case may be, from objecting to such distribution.

All creditors and workmen who has sent in his proof, if so required by notice in writing from the Official Liquidator, shall either in person or by his advocate, attend the investigation of such debt or claim at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice and shall produce such further evidence of his debt or claim as may be required.

Note: Claims may be filed in form 66/67 of the companies (Court) Rules, 1959 as applicable and Available on websites. (i) [www.mca.gov.in](http://www.mca.gov.in) (ii) [www.companyliquidator.gov.in](http://www.companyliquidator.gov.in).

(MUKESH KUMAR SONI)  
OFFICIAL LIQUIDATOR  
UTTAR PRADESH  
ALLAHABAD

Date ..... 2026

## DEDICATION DUTY ABOVE ALL

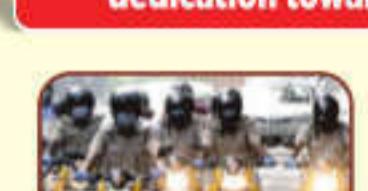


Delhi Police Week: 16 – 22 February, 2026

7 DIN  
7 SANKALP  
A SAFE DELHI

1 SERVICE 2 SECURITY 3 DEDICATION 4 COURAGE  
5 SENSITIVITY 6 VIGILANCE 7 PARTICIPATION

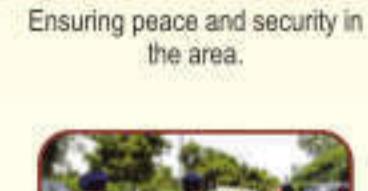
Going beyond time, circumstances, and personal limits to perform one's duties with complete loyalty and dedication toward the nation and its citizens.



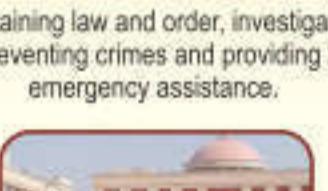
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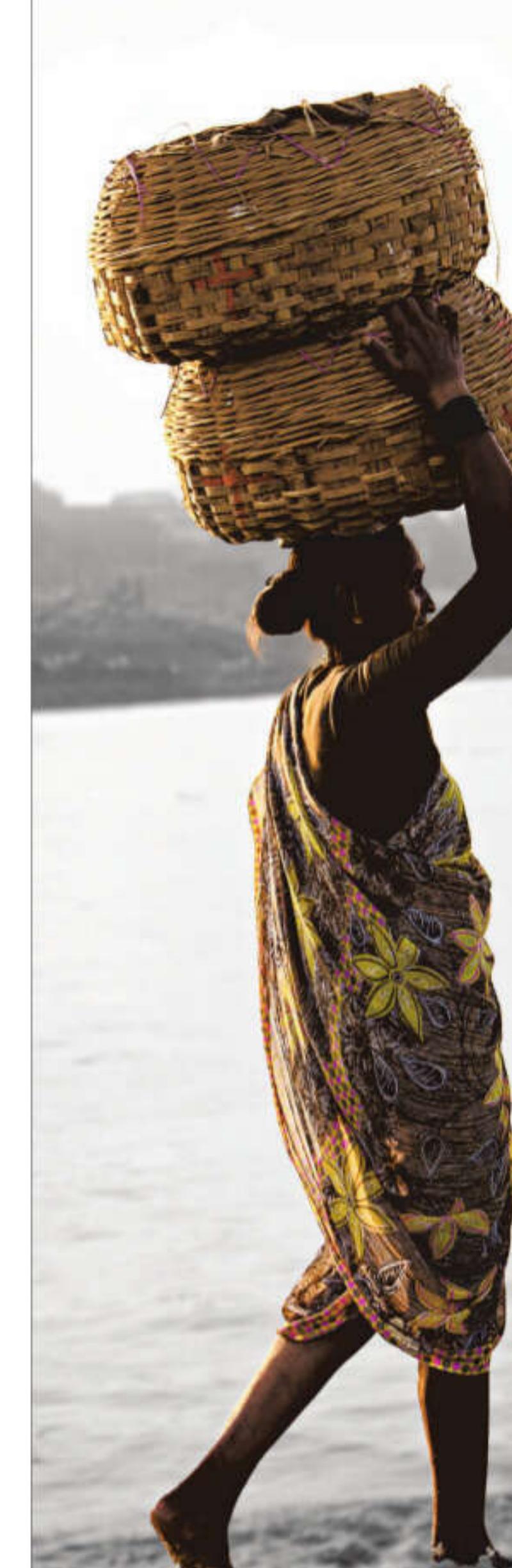
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New Delhi

# India AI Impact Summit

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026

6

## Data to deployment: Framework unveiled to regulate AI in healthcare

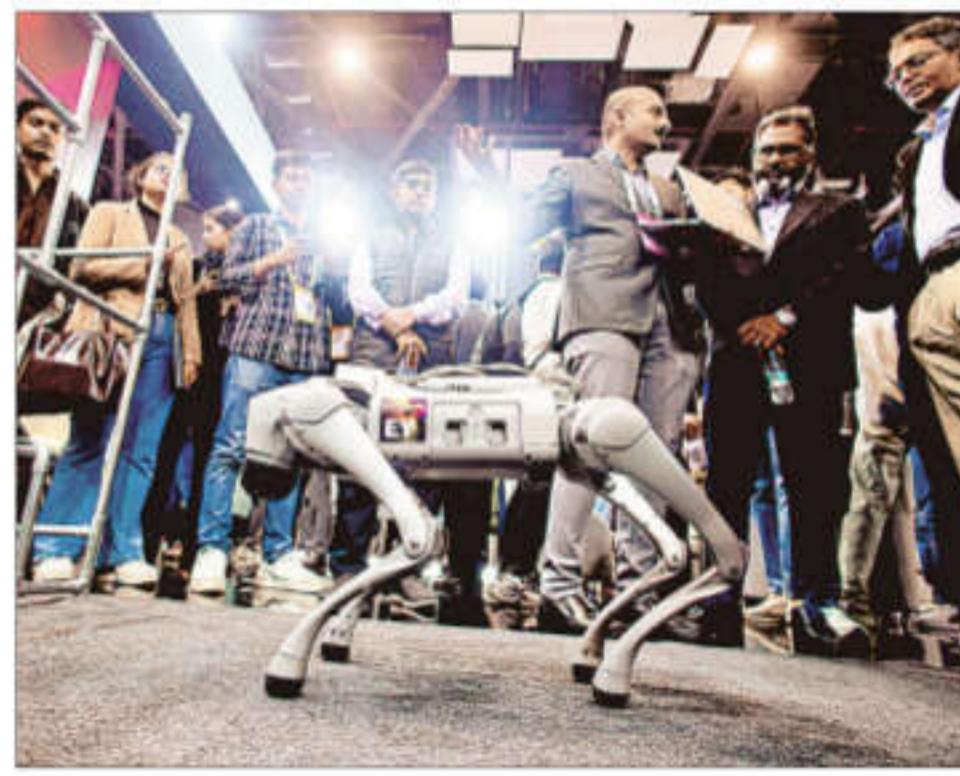
Anonna Dutt  
New Delhi, February 17

THE DEPLOYMENT OF AI solutions in healthcare will require a "life cycle" approach, starting from defining the problem to collection, storage and management of data, verification and validation, and real-world performance, according to a policy framework for the sector released by the Union Health Ministry on Tuesday at the AI Impact summit.

"Once you develop an AI solution, how do you buy it, how do you monetise it? There is no way to determine that in the current mechanisms and procurement methods," National Health Authority CEO Sunil Kumar Barnwal said.

Elaborating on the need for such a framework, he said, "One of the biggest challenges with AI is that it learns while it is being used but it can also drift sometimes. These challenges can be addressed only when we look at the whole life cycle of AI from data collection to training to deployment, continuous monitoring, and decommissioning if necessary."

Barnwal headed the committee that developed the framework called Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for India (SAHI). This is the larger framework for using AI in healthcare, with an



During the AI summit at Bharat Mandapam on Tuesday. PRAVEEN KHANNA

implementation roadmap that lists out which department does what currently in the works, he said.

The framework states: "AI systems in healthcare differ fundamentally from conventional digital tools: they influence clinical judgment, shape care pathways, and inform population-level decisions, often evolving through updates or learning mechanisms. As a result, AI adoption in healthcare cannot be treated as a one-time approval or deployment event."

According to Barnwal, any AI solution in healthcare will have to follow principles that are already a part of the Ayush-

man Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM). Data privacy will have to be built in by design into any solution, he said, adding that patient consent would be required for sharing of data.

"The data under ABDM resides at the source, be it a hospital, laboratory or pharmacy. It doesn't migrate to a central database. And, the patient has to give consent every time when the data moves from one place to another," he said.

Training of health workers is also key to effective deployment of any AI solution, Barnwal said.

Union Health Minister J P Nadda said India laid the foun-

### E. EXPLAINED

#### First big step

The framework is India's first big step to regulate the use of AI in healthcare. A more focused strategy to determine implementation on the ground is the next step.

dation for AI years ago. "We all know that AI does not operate in isolation. AI lives, breathes, thrives on the digital infrastructure. Recognising this early, India began laying the foundation almost a decade before. In 2015, we launched digital India with a clear objective to make India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy," he said.

He said that the ABDM created the digital public architecture, without which AI could not be developed responsibly or at scale. Nadda also launched a system that will allow innovators to train their healthcare AI models on real-life data made available on a single platform.

Dr Catharina Boehme, from WHO-SEARO, said: "This is not simply a technology roadmap, it's a public health strategy built to strengthen care, improve decisions, extend reach. It sup-

ports progress towards universal healthcare and sustainable development goals... India has become the first country in Southeast Asia region to adopt such a comprehensive strategy and one of the first countries globally to have it. India has set a benchmark."

The framework was developed through four large sets of deliberations held in Vijayawada, Delhi, Shillong and Mumbai with clinicians, health tech companies, state governments, participants for healthcare delivery, and policy makers.

Manindra Agarwal, Director of IIT Kanpur, said: "The key challenge for the team was real data on which the AI has to be trained is very fragmented, available with various health centres, and in small amounts. The data also needs to be protected well because of privacy concerns. So, sharing it is not easy."

Agarwal also spoke about the challenges faced while developing a platform called Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI (BODH) by the Government and IIT Kanpur. "Once the data is on the platform and every developer wishes to train their model, the data doesn't add value after some time because it is the same data. So, one needs a mechanism to ensure that the data is constantly updated," he said.

## 'We are working on safe and trusted AI for the people'

ON THE SIDELINES OF THE INDIA AI IMPACT SUMMIT, VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA SPOKE TO VEEZHINATHAN KAMAKOTI, DIRECTOR, IIT MADRAS, ABOUT WHAT THE SUMMIT SEEKS TO ACHIEVE, INDIA'S ROLE IN SHAPING GLOBAL AI NORMS, AND HOW EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ARE APPROACHING THE CHALLENGES OF SAFE, TRUSTED AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. EDITED EXCERPTS:

### EXPRESS INTERVIEW



VEEZHINATHAN KAMAKOTI  
DIRECTOR, IIT MADRAS

#### What is IIT Madras's core focus at this summit?

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT VERTICALS WE ARE WORKING ON IS SAFE AND TRUSTED AI, LED BY PROF. RAVINDRAN. FOR ANY AI SYSTEM TO BE WIDELY ADOPTED, PEOPLE MUST TRUST IT AND BELIEVE IT IS SAFE.

THE IDEA IS SIMPLE BUT POWERFUL: EVERY CHILD SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO A PERSONALISED AI TUTOR; PARENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THEIR CHILD'S LEARNING TRAJECTORY; TEACHERS SHOULD RECEIVE SUPPORT IN PERSONALISING INSTRUCTION; AND POLICYMAKERS SHOULD HAVE DASHBOARDS TO TRACK EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES. THIS DIRECTLY ALIGNS WITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4 — EQUITABLE, ACCESSIBLE AND QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL AND ECHOES SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S IDEA THAT IF THE POOR CANNOT REACH EDUCATION, EDUCATION MUST REACH THE POOR.

SO WE ARE ASKING FOUNDATIONAL QUESTIONS: HOW DO YOU DEFINE SAFETY IN AI? HOW DO YOU DEFINE TRUST? HOW DO YOU ENSURE THAT AN AI SYSTEM BEHAVES RELIABLY, ETHICALLY AND PREDICTABLY?

THIS BECOMES ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT WHEN YOU CONSIDER MISUSE, WHETHER IN CYBER WARFARE, SURVEILLANCE OR MALICIOUS ATTACKS, VERSUS POSITIVE APPLICATIONS LIKE HEALTHCARE PREDICTION OR EARLY DISEASE DETECTION. WE NEED COMMON GLOBAL PRINCIPLES TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THESE USES.

AGARWAL ALSO SPOKE ABOUT THE CHALLENGES FACED WHILE DEVELOPING A PLATFORM CALLED BENCHMARKING OPEN DATA PLATFORM FOR HEALTH AI (BODH) BY THE GOVERNMENT AND IIT KANPUR. "ONCE THE DATA IS ON THE PLATFORM AND EVERY DEVELOPER WISHES TO TRAIN THEIR MODEL, THE DATA DOESN'T ADD VALUE AFTER SOME TIME BECAUSE IT IS THE SAME DATA. SO, ONE NEEDS A MECHANISM TO ENSURE THAT THE DATA IS CONSTANTLY UPDATED," HE SAID.

HOW DOES THIS ALIGN WITH INDIA'S LONG-TERM VISION, ESPECIALLY TOWARDS VIKSIT BHARAT 2047?

AT IIT MADRAS, OUR AI WORK IS CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH NATIONAL PRIORITIES. ONE MAJOR EFFORT IS THE

CAN GUIDE PARENTS AND TEACHERS.

AI CAN ALSO HELP UNDERSTAND WHAT A CHILD IS INCLINED TOWARDS, WHAT ENGAGES THEM, AND HOW LEARNING CAN BE PERSONALISED RATHER THAN STANDARDISED.

Beyond education, what flagship AI projects is IIT Madras working on?

WE ARE WORKING WITH SEVERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO INTEGRATE AI INTO PUBLIC SYSTEMS. SOME NOTABLE EFFORTS INCLUDE OPENING UP LARGE-SCALE DATASETS SUCH AS THE BRAIN RESEARCH DATABASE AND THE CANCER ATLAS, WHICH ALLOW FOR MASSIVE AI-DRIVEN RESEARCH AND INTERVENTION. WE ALSO HAVE EXTENSIVE WORK IN RESPONSIBLE AI, HEALTHCARE AI, AND COLLABORATIONS WITH ORGANISATIONS LIKE WADHWANI AI. MANY PROJECTS ARE UNDERWAY, MANY OF THEM FOCUSED ON APPLYING AI TO REAL-WORLD PUBLIC PROBLEMS.

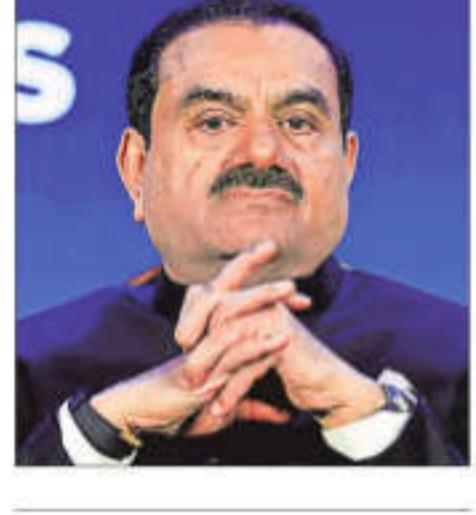
Does IIT Madras have dedicated AI degree programmes?

YES. WE OFFER A BTech IN AI AND DATA SCIENCE, AN MTECH IN THE SAME FIELD, AND A LARGE-SCALE ONLINE BS PROGRAMME IN DATA SCIENCE AND PROGRAMMING.

THE DISTINCTION IS IMPORTANT. THE BTech PROGRAMME FOCUSES ON ENGINEERING CREATION — BUILDING SYSTEMS, HARDWARE-SOFTWARE CO-DESIGN, AND DEEP TECHNICAL WORK. THE BS PROGRAMME FOCUSES MORE ON APPLICATION — USING DATA SCIENCE TOOLS EFFECTIVELY WITH STRONG THEORETICAL GROUNDING.

## Adani Group to invest \$100 bn in AI-ready data centres by 2035

Soumyarendra Barik  
New Delhi, February 17



ING THROUGH INDIA-BASED DATA CENTRE INFRASTRUCTURE.

THE ADANI GROUP SAID THE FRESH INVESTMENT WILL EXPAND ITS EXISTING 2 GW DATA CENTRES CAPACITY TO 5 GW.

INDIA'S DATA CENTRE MARKET IS CURRENTLY ESTIMATED TO BE WORTH \$10 BILLION, WITH AROUND \$1.2 BILLION REVENUE GENERATED IN FY24, ACCORDING TO A RECENT REPORT BY ANAROCK.

LAST MONTH, UNION IT MINISTER ASHWINI VAISHNAW SAID THAT PRIVATE INVESTMENTS IN INDIA'S AI INFRASTRUCTURE COULD DOUBLE FROM LAST YEAR'S \$70 BILLION BY THE END OF THE ONGOING FINANCIAL YEAR (FY26).

LAST OCTOBER, TCS SAID IT WILL INVEST \$6.5 BILLION OVER FIVE YEARS TO BUILD 1 GIGAWATT (GW) IN AI-READY DATA CENTRES. THE SAME MONTH, GOOGLE ANNOUNCED AN INVESTMENT OF \$15 BILLION TO BUILD A 1 GW DATA CENTRE, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ADANI GROUP.

IN DECEMBER, MICROSOFT SAID IT WOULD INVEST \$17.5 BILLION IN THE COUNTRY, WITH PRIMARY FOCUS ON AI DATA CENTRES. AMAZON HAS ANNOUNCED IT WILL INVEST \$35 BILLION IN INDIA OVER FIVE YEARS, WITHOUT SPECIFYING HOW MUCH OF IT WOULD GO TOWARD DATA CENTRE EXPANSION.

THE INVESTMENT IS EXPECTED TO CATALYSE BY 2035 AN ADDITIONAL \$150 BILLION ACROSS SERVER MANUFACTURING, ADVANCED ELECTRICAL INFRASTRUCTURE, SOVEREIGN CLOUD PLATFORMS AND SUPPORTING INDUSTRIES. TOGETHER, THIS IS PROJECTED TO CREATE A \$250-BILLION AI INFRASTRUCTURE ECOSYSTEM IN INDIA OVER THE DECADE, THE COMPANY SAID IN A STATEMENT.

"NATIONS THAT MASTER THE SYMMETRY BETWEEN ENERGY AND COMPUTE WILL SHAPE THE NEXT DECADE. INDIA IS UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO LEAD... INDIA WILL NOT BE A MERE CONSUMER IN THE AI AGE. WE WILL BE THE CREATORS, THE BUILDERS AND THE EXPORTERS OF INTELLIGENCE."

GAUTAM ADANI,  
CHAIRMAN, ADANI GROUP

Summit, and is among the first high-profile infrastructure-related announcements that are expected to be made during the five-day summit, which concludes on February 20. It also comes weeks after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in her Union Budget speech a tax holiday until 2047 for foreign companies operating

in India.

At the expo, the company showcased its work in multilingual Voice AI. "When two humans talk, we don't text each other," Gopalan said. "Voice is the most natural form of communication."

Gopalan said finding funding was a struggle initially for the firm founded in 2017. "We went through almost two years with no funding and no salaries. We met about a hundred investors, and most of them told us the same thing: 'If you're calling APIs of global companies, we're interested. But if you're trying to build deep tech on your own, Indians can't do products.' People said Indians are good for services, not products," he said.

But despite persistent investor scepticism, Gopalan, a

"It was a great experience,"



## Key Steps

Visitors at a booth during the India AI Impact Summit at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Tuesday. PRAVEEN KHANNA

### EYE ON AI

#### Attendance directive

THE CENTRE HAS ASKED ALL ITS OFFICIALS ABOVE AND INCLUDING THE RANK OF DEPUTY SECRETARY TO VISIT THE AI SUMMIT AND SUBMIT A REPORT ON INNOVATIVE EXAMPLES OF USE OF AI OBSERVED BY THEM OR USE CASES WHICH CAN BE IMPLEMENTED IN THEIR MINISTRY OR DEPARTMENT. IT IS LEARNT THE CABINET SECRETARIAT ISSUED THE DIRECTIONS ON MONDAY (FEBRUARY 16). OFFICIALS ARE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT A NOTE, NOT EXCEEDING TWO PAGES, TO THE SECRETARY OF THEIR MINISTRY OR DEPARTMENT CONCERNED, MENTIONING IDEAS OR INNOVATIVE EXAMPLES OF USE OF AI, AS PER SOURCES. THE SECRETARY CONCERNED HAS TO THEN SEND A REPORT COMPILED FROM THE NOTES TO THE CABINET SECRETARIAT BY FEBRUARY 27, IT IS LEARNT.

#### Cognitive gyms'

FROM DRAFTING, REWRITING TO PROMPTING, AS AI TOOLS ARE BEING USED FOR MULTIPLE TASKS, PROF. SUNITA SARAWAGI, DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING, IIT BOMBAY, SAID, "IT'S A WELL-STUDIED PHENOMENA THAT RELIANCE ON AI LEADS TO COGNITIVE DECLINE." THE ADVENT OF MECHANISATION, SARAWAGI SAID, LED TO OBESITY AND LIFESTYLE DISEASES. "THEN CAME GYMS. I EXPECT SOMETHING SIMILAR IN FUTURE WITH RESPECT TO COGNITIVE ABILITIES. THERE'LL BE COGNITIVE GYMS, WHICH WILL ALLOW THOSE INTERESTED TO TRAIN MENTAL ABILITIES TO A POSITION WHERE THEY CAN FUNCTION PROPERLY."

ENS

• PM WAS KEEN ON AN INDIAN COMPANY DEVELOPING AN END-TO-END SOLUTION WITHOUT DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN HARDWARE, SAYS KUNAL JAGTAP, CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER, STELLARVIEW

## Voice, road safety, health: At AI meet, innovations that impact & improve lives

Day after PM Modi interacted with founders & developers, The Indian Express spoke to some of those who he said were working to develop use of AI 'responsibly, inclusively'

Vidheesha Kuntamalla & Drishti Jain  
New Delhi, February 17

AS HE WALKED THROUGH THE HALLS OF BHARAT MANDAPAM AT THE INDIA AI IMPACT EXPO 2026 ON MONDAY, PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI STOPPED AT THE STALLS, LEANED INTO SCREENS, LISTENED CLOSELY TO FOUNDERS, AND ASKED QUESTIONS.

Later, in a post on X on Tuesday, Modi described the summit as "a powerful convergence of ideas, innovation and intent," which reaffirmed India's push to build artificial intelligence "responsibly, inclusively and at scale".

On Tuesday, The Indian Express visited some of the stalls that had held the PM's attention — some focused on how machines speak and listen, others on how they see.

Gnani.ai: The



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at India AI Impact Expo 2026. PTI FILE

FORMER CORPORATE EMPLOYEE, AND HIS CO-FOUNDER WENT AHEAD WITH BUILDING THEIR PRODUCT COMPANY. "WE STUCK TO OUR GUNS," HE SAID.

FINALLY, IN 2019, SAMSUNG INVESTED IN THE COMPANY — ONE OF THE KOREAN GIANT'S EARLY INVESTMENTS IN AN INDIAN STARTUP. SUBSEQUENTLY, INVESTMENT FROM THE INTERNET COMPANY INFO EDGE FOLLOWED.

TODAY, GNANI.AI WORKS WITH MORE THAN 200 CUSTOMERS IN INDIA AND ABROAD, INCLUDING BANKS, CONSUMER BRANDS, AND

SENDING DATA TO EXTERNAL SERVERS. THE SYSTEM CAN TRACK VEHICLES AT SPEEDS OF UP TO 230 KM/H, THE COMPANY SAYS.

KUNAL JAGTAP, CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER OF STELLARVIEW, SAID PM MODI WAS STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT THE HARDWARE-PLUS-SOFTWARE SYSTEM HAD BEEN BUILT ENTIRELY IN INDIA. "HE WAS KEEN ON AN INDIAN COMPANY DEVELOPING AN END-TO-END SOLUTION WITHOUT DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN HARDWARE," JAGTAP SAID.

THE PM ASKED THE TEAM WHY THE SYSTEM WAS CERTIFIED ONLY UP TO THE SPEED OF 230 KM/H. "WE TOLD HIM THERE WERE NO VEHICLES TO TEST BEYOND THAT SPEED," JAGTAP SAID.

STELLARVIEW WAS FOUNDED FOUR YEARS AGO. THE BULK OF THE COMPANY'S CLIENTS ARE HIGHWAY DEVELOPERS AND OPERATORS — A GROUP THAT INCLUDES ADANI, IRB, AND ASHOKA BUILDCON — AND THOSE WORKING ON PROJECTS WITH THE NHAI.

"INITIALLY, WE WERE NOT A PRODUCT COMPANY AT ALL. WE WERE IN THE SERVICES BUSINESS, PROVIDING COMPUTER-VISION SOFTWARE SERVICES, MAINLY TO CUSTOMERS IN THE US," ADITYA JOSHI, DEVOPS AND SECDEVOPS

ENGINEER AT STELLARVIEW, SAID.

"THAT SERVICES WORK HELPED US UNDERSTAND RECURRING PROBLEMS AND GAPS ACROSS CLIENTS. OVER TIME, WE REALISED THOSE LEARNINGS COULD BE CONVERTED INTO A PRODUCT," HE SAID.

"THE SERVICES BUSINESS AND THE PRODUCT COMPANY WERE REGISTERED SEPARATELY," JOSHI SAID. "WE USED THE REVENUE GENERATED FROM SERVICES TO INVEST IN BUILDING THE PRODUCT. THAT'S HOW THE PRODUCT COMPANY WAS BOOTSTRAPPED IN THE EARLY STAGES, WITHOUT EXTERNAL FUNDING."

EKA.CARE: DOCTORS, PATIENTS, RECORDS

ANOTHER STALL THAT CAUGHT THE PM'S ATTENTION WAS EKA.CARE, A DIGITAL HEALTH PLATFORM FOUNDED BY VIKALP SAHNI (40) AND DEEPAK TULI (45) IN 2021. THE PLATFORM ENABLES PATIENTS TO MANAGE AND STORE THEIR HEALTH RECORDS, AND ASSISTS DOCTORS IN MANAGING THE HISTORY OF PATIENTS WITH AI TOOLS SUCH AS EKA SCRIBE.

SAHNI, A GRADUATE FROM NIT SILCHAR, IS A PASSIONATE DEVELOPER, AND WAS ONE OF THE VOLUNTEER DEVELOPERS OF THE AAROGYA SETU THAT WAS LAUNCHED DURING

New Delhi

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026

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## AI would add more tech jobs to nation's economy: Modi

Express News Service  
New Delhi, February 17

At the India AI Impact Summit in New Delhi on Tuesday. PRAVEEN KHANNA

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) is a force-multiplier that could redesign some jobs, but would eventually add more tech jobs to India's economy, representing a transformative opportunity in the country's journey towards Viskit Bharat 2047, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday.

In an interview to news agency ANI, PM Modi said at a time when the world is worried about AI, which stands at a civilisational inflection point, India is "using it to dissolve divides" while remaining ready to face any disruption in the employment sector due to it.

"I view AI as a force-multiplier which will further help us push the boundaries of what we thought possible... History has shown that work does not disappear due to technology. Its nature changes and new types of jobs are created," he said.

"While some jobs may be redefined, digital transformation will also add new tech jobs to India's economy. India is already well-equipped to adapt to this change... Combining innovation with inclusion, we are confident that AI will strengthen India's workforce. With the right skills and preparation, our youth will lead the future of work," he said.

The Prime Minister said there was a need to approach AI

with a sense of more responsibility as it got further advanced, which India was doing by moving towards a more structured governance approach in AI regulation at a time when the technology itself seemed to be at the inflection point of civilisation.

"With the launch of IndiaAI Safety Institute in January 2025, the country created a dedicated mechanism to promote the ethical, safe and responsible deployment of AI systems... What makes India's approach distinctive is its focus on local risks and societal realities," he said.

"AI can expand human capability in unprecedented ways, but it can also test existing social foundations if left unguided," he said.

PM Modi said this belief was behind the vision of the AI Im-

pact Summit currently underway in the capital, the first of its kind and scale to be hosted in the Global South. The Summit, he said, was framed around the "people, planet, progress" framework and impact that ensures "meaningful and equitable outcomes, not just innovation".

"The guiding spirit, 'Sarvjan Hitay, Sarvajan Sukhay', reflects India's civilisational philosophy. The end goal of technology should be 'welfare of all, happiness of all'. Technology exists to serve humanity, not to replace it," he said.

He said AI was being utilised in India to help address deep developmental challenges while creating entirely new economic opportunities.

From AI governance and inclusive datasets to climate appli-

cations, agricultural productivity, public health and multilingual access, these issues were central when it came to India's vision: AI must accelerate global development while remaining deeply human-centric, the PM said.

It was also enabling inclusive growth, bridging the urban-rural divide and expanding access to opportunity. "With its experience of building a human-centric digital public infrastructure, India is best placed to ensure that AI's benefits reach the last mile, to farmers in villages, students in small towns, MSMEs, women entrepreneurs, informal workers and youth across rural and urban India, and not remain confined to a narrow urban elite," he said.

"Technology must serve every citizen, regardless of geography, gender or income. The goal is not AI adoption for its own sake. It is AI that genuinely empowers citizens and accelerates India's journey toward becoming a developed nation by 2047, and offers a scalable model for the Global South," he said.

Underlining India's potential to become "an AI powerhouse", while balancing issues related to its impact on jobs, which he said the country was equipped to handle, the PM said the recently tabled Union Budget 2026-27 reinforced its vision of combining innovation with inclusion when it came to AI.

**'WE HAVE REINFORCED OUR TECH SOVEREIGNTY'**

## Our partnership strong, says Macron as India-France Year of Innovation is launched

Express News Service  
Mumbai, February 17

A videogram of French President Emmanuel Macron out on a jog in Mumbai on Tuesday.

LAUNCHING THE 'India-France Year of Innovation' along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, French President Emmanuel Macron said on Tuesday that it was the starting point for an unprecedented level of integration between the two knowledge-based economies.

"France and India have been working hand in hand for years and we have reinforced our technological sovereignty while supporting our national industries. Our partnership is strong and it relies on countless joint projects," President Macron said, speaking of France being a steadfast partner of Make in India in the field of defence and the crucial cooperation in the space sector.

"The development of the Trishna satellite shows what can be achieved when scientific excellence and industrial expertise are brought together. It will enable the countries to monitor and understand climate change better," he said, speaking of the collaborative endeavour in 2024 between the ISRO and French space agency CNES.

He lauded other initiatives between the two countries, including the farm-to-plate project led by the French institute in Pu-

tucherry, tracking agricultural products, to the coming together of professionals of both countries for new experiences like the National Museum in Delhi and the Maritime museum complex in Gujarat.

Macron also spoke about

tween the two countries.

He said that he along with PM Modi had co-chaired the AI Action Summit in Paris in 2025, and he was looking forward to continuing moving forward together toward better use of AI – he is set to attend the India AI Impact Summit being held in Delhi.

At the beginning of his 13-minute talk, Macron said that many companies across the globe are being led by people born in India. "Many of them were born here in India. The question is no longer whether India innovates, the question is who will innovate with India and France is the only clear answer. We are here, we want to be here with you and we are not leaving. Jai Ho," he said.

## Shivaji-Tipu remark row: State Cong chief apologises

Express News Service  
Mumbai, February 17

MAHARASHTRA CONGRESS president Harshwardhan Sapkal on Monday issued a public clarification and apology after an FIR was registered against him over a remark allegedly comparing Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj with someone else," Sapkal said.

He alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party and its supporters had spread misinformation in a planned manner. "Based on this propaganda, attempts were made to incite religious tensions and trigger riots in the state, which we witnessed in Pune," he said.

Sapkal reiterated that there was "no question of comparing" Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj with anyone.

aigns on social media, words I never said were attributed to me, creating the false impression that I had compared Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj with someone else," Sapkal said.

He alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party and its supporters had spread misinformation in a planned manner. "Based on this propaganda, attempts were made to incite religious tensions and trigger riots in the state, which we witnessed in Pune," he said.

In a statement posted on X, Sapkal said his original 70-second comment about displaying portraits of historical figures together in government offices had been "deliberately taken out of context and distorted".

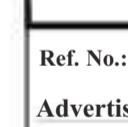
"Through misleading cam-

aigns on social media, words I never said were attributed to me, creating the false impression that I had compared Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj with someone else," Sapkal said.

He alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party and its supporters had spread misinformation in a planned manner. "Based on this propaganda, attempts were made to incite religious tensions and trigger riots in the state, which we witnessed in Pune," he said.

Sapkal reiterated that there was "no question of comparing" Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj with anyone.

**OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR  
VEER CHANDRA SINGH GARHWALI  
UTTARAKHAND UNIVERSITY OF  
HORTICULTURE & FORESTRY BHARSAR  
(PAURI GARHWAL)**



Ref. No.: 341/UUHF/REG/2025-26  
Date: 17.02.2026

Advertisement for Direct Recruitment - AICRP Scientist Posts

Applications are invited in the prescribed format from eligible candidates for different posts of AICRP Scientist under direct recruitment at VCSSG, UUHF, Bharsar. Interested candidates may visit the University website www.uuhf.ac.in for detailed information and prescribed format.

Sd/-  
Registrar

**PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya, Greater Noida**  
Sector P-3, Greater Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar

**Walk in Interview**

A walk-in interview will be held on March 10, 2026, to select contract teachers for various positions at the school for the 2026-2027 academic year. For complete information, please visit the school's website: <https://gaternoida.kvs.ac.in>.

Principal

**IN THE COURT OF VANI GOPAL SHARMA, SPECIAL JUDGE  
(Under the Prevention Money Laundering Act 2002) -cum-  
SESSIONS JUDGE, GURUGRAM**

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED**

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.(Section 84 of the BNSS 2023  
and it will be section 65 of the PML Act 2002)

**Directorate of Enforcement Versus  
Orachor Onyeka Obina & others**

Case No.: 04/20.05.2025  
Date of hearing:- 25.03.2026  
Time :- 10:00 a.m.

The PML Act, 2002  
ECIR/CDZO-II/01/2021 Dated: 04.01.2021

C.I.S. No.: COMA/07/2025  
CNR No.: HRGR/01-007459-2025

To,  
The Assistant Director,  
Directorate of Enforcement  
Gurugram Zonal Office, Saraswati Vihar,  
M.G.Road, Gurugram, Haryana-122002

Whereas accused Orachor Onyeka Obina @ Kelvin Mansary @ Ben, son of Orachor Nna Alxe, resident of Flat No 302, House No U 64/8, DLF Phase-III, Gurugram, Haryana and in Nigeria, resident of Village Mgbawka, Aluka, State Nigeria is required before this court in Case No. COMA-07-2025, pertaining to ECIR/CDZO-II/01/2021 Dated: 04.01.2021 and it has been reported on a warrant of arrest thereupon issued against Orachor Onyeka Obina @ Kelvin Mansary @ Ben, son of Orachor Nna Alxe, that the above named accused cannot be found, and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the above named accused Orachor Onyeka Obina @ Kelvin Mansary @ Ben, son of Orachor Nna Alxe, has absconded or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant.

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Orachor Onyeka Obina @ Kelvin Mansary @ Ben, son of Orachor Nna Alxe, resident of Flat No 302, House No U 64/8, DLF Phase-III, Gurugram, Haryana and in Nigeria, resident of Village Mgbawka, Aluka, State Nigeria is required to appear before this court to answer the said ECIR on the 25.03.2026.

Issued under my hand and seal of this Court on this 12<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2026.

(Vani Gopal Sharma)  
Sessions Judge-cum-Special Judge  
(PMLA, 2002), Gurugram

**Note:- The Proclamation be issued in national and local newspaper and also on the website of the Complainant- Directorate of Enforcement. The Complainant is further directed to affix the Proclamation at some conspicuous place on the available addresses of accused as well as a conspicuous place in the town or village where said accused resides and outside the court-room. Executing constable is directed to appear in the court for making statement regarding above mentioned compliance on 20.02.2026.**

(Vani Gopal Sharma)  
Sessions Judge-cum-Special Judge  
(PMLA, 2002), Gurugram

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• WEB EXCLUSIVE

'In China, engineers are given PhDs for products. Is that the way forward for India?'  
— By Kishore Paknikar

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS

# The Editorial Page

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026

• WORDLY WISE

The Earth is a fine place and worth fighting for.  
— Ernest Hemingway

**The Indian EXPRESS**

~ FOUNDED BY ~

RAMNATH GOENKA

IN 1932

BECAUSE THE TRUTH  
INVOLVES US ALL

## With Bangladesh, a moment to recalibrate

TARIQUE RAHMAN'S swearing-in as Prime Minister also marks the beginning of a new phase in India-Bangladesh relations. When the BNP was last in power from 2001 to 2006, led by the new PM's mother, the late Khaleda Zia, then heading a coalition with the Jamaat-e-Islami, the relationship with India was tested. Some of the issues of contention then mirror the points of unease today. There were incidents of violence against the Hindu minority following the October 2001 elections; India's requests that Bangladesh act against insurgent groups operating against it largely went unheeded. India invested in ties with the Sheikh Hasina government, therefore, after her return to power in 2009. Now, Delhi needs to engage with a new Dhaka. There are signs it is doing so, and the Rahman-led BNP has also signalled it will meet it halfway.

A future-facing shift has been evident in Delhi's outreach to Rahman recently. Minister S Jaishankar travelled to Dhaka to attend Khaleda Zia's funeral in December, and Speaker Om Birla was present at Rahman's swearing-in. Rahman steered clear of anti-India rhetoric during his election campaign, while his party manifesto pledged to uphold religious freedom and communal harmony. Yet, going ahead, there will be challenges. Foremost among them is Hasina. Dhaka has submitted a formal extradition request, but New Delhi is unlikely to send her back — rightly so — particularly when international assessments agree that the ICT verdict was driven by vendetta, not justice. Then, the hardline Jamaat-e-Islami is in a stronger position after this election, and a large chunk of the constituencies it has won lie close to the India-Bangladesh border. Security cooperation with the Rahman government will be essential for India, given the historical baggage of insurgent groups operating actively during the rule of the BNP-Jamaat coalition in 2001-2006. The Muhammad Yunus-led interim government failed to prevent incidents of violence against Hindus — it will be the new dispensation's responsibility to reassure the minorities. China's expanding footprint and Islamabad's bid to rebuild ties with Dhaka during Yunus's tenure suggest that New Delhi will need to be engaged and vigilant.

The logic of a shared history and culture, and strong economic cooperation provide a strong foundation for mutually beneficial ties. A meaningful reset calls for prudence on both sides and, from the larger player, magnanimity. The Rahman government must address New Delhi's concerns. India's political establishment must temper policy and rhetoric with long-termism and sobriety.

## A climate warning, to India from Europe

THE EU's top global warming advisory body, the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change (ESABCC), has called on the bloc's members to find ways to deal with rising temperatures. The agency's advice to prepare for a temperature rise of about 2.8 degrees Celsius by 2100 is particularly sobering. For decades, Europe's climate policy has focused on emissions reduction commitments. The advisory, issued on Tuesday, acknowledges that mitigation must be accompanied by measures to build resilience against the worst effects of a warming world. It is also a tacit recognition that the Paris Pact's ambition of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels is increasingly out of reach.

Most studies identify Europe as the fastest-warming continent. Floods, lethal heatwaves and devastating forest fires almost every year of this decade are warnings that EU policymakers have to find ways to save lives and protect livelihoods. Their counterparts in India face similar challenges. Extreme weather events tend to mirror across continents in terms of intensity and unpredictability. That's why ESABCC's recommendations to embed climate resilience in initiatives across policy domains ring true for planners across the world.

That said, the social and economic contexts within which meteorological phenomena unfold are vastly different. EU nations have effective early warning systems, and their social safety nets are stronger compared to those in countries of the Global South. Agriculture in EU countries contributes a far smaller share to GDP and employs a significantly lower proportion of the population compared to India. Planners in almost every part of the world must balance the needs of coping with the climate with the imperatives of creating jobs, infrastructure and public services. However, in developing countries, policymakers have to protect vulnerable populations while continuing to lay the foundations for economic prosperity. They may be better placed in one respect, though. Much of Europe's highways, buildings, rail tracks, water and energy supply systems were built for a stable climate. India's infrastructure development, in contrast, is still a work in progress. ESABCC's warning should, therefore, push planners to incorporate climate resilience into development projects at the outset.

## Robert Duvall & the art of understated greatness

ROBERT DUVALL, by temperament, was not the scene-stealing type, once remarking that playing a strong supporting part — "probably...a better part anyway" — was preferable to playing the lead. "You don't have the weight of the entire movie on your shoulders," he told *The New York Times* in a 1979 interview. A surprising sentiment to express in a profession where attention is the main currency. But then, Duvall, who died this week at the age of 95, had talent enough that the beam of the spotlight always, inevitably, found him.

Two iconic roles illustrate how Duvall, despite never being a typical Hollywood leading man, earned his place among the screen greats. In Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979), his brief screen time as the ruthless Lt Col Bill Kilgore captured the nihilism at the heart of the film, encapsulated in one of its most quoted lines: "I love the smell of napalm in the morning." It was a finely balanced yet formidable portrayal of evil, and his believability was key — just as it was in *The Godfather* (1972) and *The Godfather Part II* (1974), also by Coppola. In both, Duvall's portrayal of the calm, reasonable Tom Hagen, consigliere and unofficial member of the Corleone crime family, was the necessary counterpoint to the violent outbursts of other characters.

In these and other roles, including his Oscar-winning turn as a country music has-been in *Tender Mercies* (1983) and screen debut as Boo Radley in *To Kill A Mockingbird* (1962), Duvall excelled thanks to his chameleon-like ability. He may not have wanted to carry the whole weight of a film, but his performances, always sure-footed and true to the story, helped lay the foundation for many a cinematic classic.



**RAJA MANDALA**

BY C RAJA MOHAN

PRESIDENT EMMANUEL Macron may not be riding high at home in France, but in Delhi, he draws immense political affection. Macron has carved out a distinctive place for Paris in Delhi's strategic calculus. His visit to Mumbai and Delhi this week — his fourth to India since assuming office in 2017 — consolidates the significant transformation in bilateral ties in technology and defence, as well as the Indo-Pacific, over the last decade.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's sustained engagement with Macron has been part of India's broader pivot to Europe in recent years. The visit of German Chancellor Friedrich Merz in January, the presence of the European Union leadership at this year's Republic Day celebrations, and the signing of the long-negotiated free trade agreement underline the growing salience of Europe in India's strategic thinking.

This column has long been sceptical of "multipolarity" as an accurate description of the global balance of power. The US remains pre-eminent, and China has been steadily catching up. A number of other nations — including India and France — are some distance away in terms of economic scale, military weight, and technological depth.

If there is any doubt, one need only look at the AI Impact Summit in Delhi this week. The business of artificial intelligence con-

tinues to be dominated by American technology giants, and Washington is likely to exert considerable influence over the outcomes of the summit. China is the other AI superpower. Yet, the political and market conditions for substantive India-China cooperation in this domain are limited for now. There is, however, considerable scope for India to work with Europe and the middle powers in the non-Western world.

The popular phrase in Delhi — the "quest for a multipolar world" — has served as a shorthand for India's effort to maintain productive relations with all major powers. Since the end of the Cold War, that quest involved managing America primacy while sustaining cooperation with post-Soviet Russia and engaging a rising China. Today, that approach is being recalibrated. India's multipolar strategy now runs through Europe.

Macron's visit is not simply about deepening a robust bilateral partnership. It reflects India's exploration of what might be called a "multipolar West". Europe is no longer seen merely as an adjunct to Washington or a passive player in the arena of US-China rivalry. It is an important global actor in its own right, capable of contributing to India's economic and technological transformation while widening Delhi's *spielraum* — or the space for manoeuvre abroad.

It is worth recalling that France was among the earliest proponents of political activism in favour of a "multipolar world" —

well before Russia and China made it a central theme of their diplomacy. Paris has also consistently advocated European "strategic autonomy". This shared vocabulary has created a measure of comfort between Delhi and Paris.

Beyond rhetorical convergence, though, is the deepening practical

cooperation under the Horizon 2047 framework that lends substance to the partnership. Horizon 2047, unveiled in 2023, is a long-term India-France roadmap committing both countries to collaboration in defence, technology, space, energy and the Indo-Pacific through 2047, when India marks a century of independence.

Recent agreements illustrate this trajectory. India's decision to expand its Rafale fleet with the Air Force and the Navy, the French readiness to produce some of them in India, along with the planned assembly of helicopters and joint jet-engine cooperation, point to a consequential defence industrial partnership between the two countries. The Indian private sector is expected to play an expanding role in the transformation of the domestic aerospace ecosystem in collaboration with France.

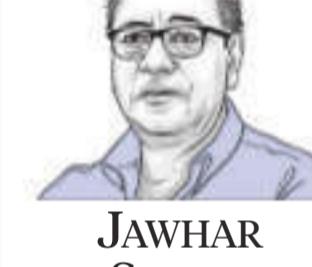
As global debates over AI governance intensify, India and France have presented themselves as advocates of a "third way". Between American corporate concentration and Chinese state-centric control, both seek regulatory frameworks that protect sovereignty while encouraging innovation. Whether this approach can shape global norms remains uncertain, given the US and China's lead in AI development.

It is important to note that Delhi and Paris are not constructing their partnership in opposition to the US. Washington, in any case, is increasingly focused on regaining its dominance of the Western Hemisphere.

Successive administrations in Washington have pressed their allies for more burden-sharing. Trump wants Europe and India to assume greater responsibility in Eurasia and the Indo-Pacific. This American emphasis on regional self-reliance creates space — and incentive — for Delhi and Paris,

Macron's visit is not simply about deepening a robust bilateral partnership. It reflects India's exploration of what might be called a "multipolar West"

## A chance to rebuild an old neighbourliness



**JAWHAR SIRCAR**

FTER THE recent elections in Bangladesh, it is good to see India reconsidering the stand it had taken during Muhammad Yunus's rule. We may now be on the way to regaining our only steadfast friend in the neighbourhood, as the Indian establishment has swung out of its fixation with Hasina and accepted the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) as India's best bet. It took more than a year for our government to view the BNP with more kindness despite the party's anti-India track record.

As the polls were announced, backdoor channels opened up with the BNP and the Jamaat. The two parties' old alliance broke down, and circumstances forced the BNP to move to the centre-left and take Yunus and the extremists head-on. The Jamaat underwent an incredible metamorphosis from those who aided the Pakistan Army in its genocide in 1971 to arguably the cleanest alternative in Bangladesh's corrupt political quagmire. The Yunus regime helped in this transformation, and the student-led National Citizen Party (NCP) joined Jamaat's 11-party alliance.

To be fair to Yunus, one must appreciate that he undertook a Herculean task. He reformed the civil service, police, judiciary, the Election Commission and regulatory bodies, and started rebuilding national institutions. The peaceful conduct of the first fair elections in years is proof of his success, even as he floundered on law and order and went after India. His "July Charter", a package of 84 reform proposals, was endorsed by all parties except the banned Awami League. Seventy per cent of voters endorsed this charter in the constitutional referendum, even as most rejected Yunus, the NCP and the Jamaat.

After returning from London, Tarique Rahman had less than 6 weeks to take over the BNP, understand the turbulent times, select candidates and campaign for the 12th February election. But the very fact that the BNP and a few minor allies swept the polls, securing 50 per cent of the vote and winning 212 of 299 seats, reveals the

voters' maturity. This is what we had been arguing, but even sharp watchers were surprised at the electorate's almost complete rejection of the Gen Z leaders who had toppled Hasina. Jamaat-e-Islami's hopes of seizing power were dashed as it could secure only 68 seats, with the NCP managing just six.

Our postulate that the Hanafi Muslim Bangladeshi and secular voters would not be swayed by the lure of the more Wahabi Pakistan- and Arab-supported Islamic Right was proved correct. But the Jamaat's ascent to respectability is seen in how one out of three Bangladeshis voted for it. This could be a reaction to Hasina's authoritarian rule. The geography of voting behaviour, however, points to the Jamaat winning mainly in the western districts that face the Indian border, where many refugees settled and nursed grievances against India. More tangibly, the cross-border trade that sustains much of the economy of these areas has been shattered. The hardening of border checks and the closure of trading posts and markets hurt them badly. Under different circumstances, the Islamists may have won even fewer seats. The votes of women and Awami League supporters who gulped down their hatred of the BNP, may have helped keep the extremists out.

Whatever the case may be, Tarique Rahman has never held public office, and we have to be cautious. He needs India to normalise trade and find ways to draw more Indian investment. India needs to have patience and not be seen too prominently until the anger subsides. It would also help if the impasse over Hasina is resolved at the earliest. Visas have to be opened up immediately for Bangladeshis to come to India for medical treatment, education, and tourism. Border trade must return to normal levels, and the balance of trade must be made fairer. There are no permanent friends or enemies, and we cannot just lose Bangladesh to Pakistan.

The writer is a former Rajya Sabha MP

## Confusion can become costly in the trade pact



**SOUMYA BHOWNICK**

HE COSTLIEST tariff right now is confusion. In the US-India Joint Statement, the two sides say they have reached a framework for an interim agreement, while reaffirming a pathway toward a broader bilateral trade agreement. The statement specifies a reciprocal tariff rate of 18 per cent on goods originating from India at this stage and notes that broader tariff reductions are tied to the successful conclusion of the interim agreement. This is an important distinction, suggesting a politically announced staging mechanism rather than a fully concluded, legally consolidated FTA with final schedules, binding annexes, and settled dispute disciplines.

Trade under Donald Trump is used as a bargaining tool and a form of leverage. That approach rewards strong claims at the announcement stage, but it also raises the domestic cost of later recalibration, especially when early interpretations run ahead of what negotiators can lock in. India's best response, therefore, is disciplined sequencing: Defining stages with credible boundaries, specifying what is out of scope for stage 1, and signalling the domestic process and institutional steps that would govern stage 2.

Why does confusion become costly so quickly? Because it behaves like a shadow tariff. It shows up as deferred shipments, paused capex, cautious inventory behaviour, delayed hedging decisions, and a risk premium on compliance and regulatory exposure. In farm-linked chains, transmission is even faster.

The Russia angle adds another layer where clarity matters. Washington's public messaging has attempted to link trade concessions to India's energy choices. India's official position remains anchored in core macroeconomic stability: Energy security for 1.4 billion Indians, with diversification guided by market conditions and evolving international dynamics. Any credible exit from overreliance on a particular supplier ultimately hinges on supply assurances, pricing stability, shipping and insurance constraints, and long-term contracting options. The decisive terrain, however, lies beyond headline tariffs. Whether the deal becomes usable in practice will be determined by the "rules layer": Standards, conformity assessment, technical barriers to trade, digital trade provisions, and the compliance pathways that turn nominal market access into operational market access. The difference between a stabilising agreement and a politically brittle one often lies in whether compliance design is predictable, consultative, and phased in a way that matches administrative capacity.

In this context, "clarity" is best understood as reducing interpretive space without pre-empting negotiation. That requires a disciplined public articulation of scope that separates what the interim framework covers from what is explicitly excluded and deferred, paired with a sequencing roadmap. It also requires treating implementation capacity as a core part of the bargain, especially for smaller firms. Finally, both sides should resist using ambiguity as a bargaining device.

The writer is a fellow, Centre for New Economic Diplomacy, ORF

One of the fishermen, whose boat was burnt when the naval boats fired at its diesel tank but who managed to escape after being manhandled by the Sri Lankan navy men, told UNI that the three boats were fishing in Sangu Kadal when they were confronted by a Sri Lankan naval ship.

### Chavan plays peacemaker

THE UNION Home Minister, S B Chavan, has called a meeting in Delhi of Surjith Barnala and Bhajan Lal to sort out the territorial dispute between Punjab and Haryana. Chavan, according to informed sources, is expected to ask the two chief ministers to resolve the dispute through mutual discussion rather than through

another commission as suggested by the Mathew Commission for the identification and transfer of Punjab's Hindi speaking areas to Haryana in lieu of Chandigarh.

### Sehore violence continues

VIOLENCE CLAIMED four more lives in curfew-bound Sehore town, taking the toll in the incidents to eight. Reports said that after a peaceful night, rival groups tore through curfew regulations and created terror in several localities, burning shops and houses and clashing with each other, even as additional police reinforcements reached the town, about 35 km from here. The curfew, imposed for 24 hours, has been extended for another 24 hours in view of the continuing violence.

## 40 YEARS AGO

February 18, 1986



• **WHAT THE OTHERS SAY**  
Trump's destructive policies enrich fossil fuel billionaires, while Beijing has bet big on the green transition.  
— *The Guardian*



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# The Ideas Page

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026

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## Like Nandan Nilekani for Aadhaar, India's AI moment needs a leader



UJWAL THAKAR  
AND ADITYA VISHWANATH

**I**N A recent article, 'On building public AI, governments must be tactical but remain flexible' (IE, February 16), Akash Kapur and Arvind Narayanan offer an important warning: Governments building public AI should resist technological vanity. Focus on enabling infrastructure, governance, and the conditions that allow innovation to serve citizens. Don't chase frontier models. Don't build data centres for prestige. Be tactical, be flexible.

Their argument stops one step short of the harder question. If public AI demands constant judgement about what to build, what to enable, and where markets will fail, the real challenge is not merely design. It is leadership. India has faced this moment before. When Aadhaar was conceived, the breakthrough did not come from software alone. It came from stewardship. Most visibly, Nandan Nilekani — he could align ministries, reassure industry, answer critics in Parliament and in the press, and keep execution moving at a scale that touched over a billion people. Aadhaar was not inevitable. It happened because someone with credibility across worlds chose to step into the most uncomfortable space in Indian governance — the space between a bold idea and a working system.

Transformations like that require people who turn ambition into architecture. Who convert political will into platforms. India found such leadership once. In the AI era, we need to find it again.

Kapur and Narayanan rightly point out



ILLUSTRATION: C.R. SASIKUMAR

that governments should invest in "lighter, lower-cost forms of infrastructure" for AI, things like open-source translation modules, speech-to-text systems for low-resource languages, and high-quality datasets curated for Indian conditions. They caution, correctly, that simply throwing money at large language models or domestic compute capacity is unlikely to yield public value. These are sensible recommendations. But who makes the call on which of these investments to prioritise? Who arbitrates when the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology wants one thing, the Ministry of Health wants another, and NITI Aayog has its own roadmap? Who ensures that a promising pilot in agricultural AI in Madhya Pradesh doesn't die because no one is coordinating with the team building a similar tool in Telangana?

**Who arbitrates when the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology wants one thing, the Ministry of Health wants another, and NITI Aayog has its own roadmap?**

The answer is not a committee. It is a person. That person must bring a specific and rare combination of qualities. Technical depth, obviously, but that is table stakes. Beyond it, they need the ability to work across governments and states in a federal system that does not naturally co-operate. They need credibility with global technology firms and with India's own start-up ecosystem. They need seriousness about privacy and digital rights, not as an afterthought but as a design principle. They need ease with entrepreneurs and patience with bureaucrats. And they need the resilience to operate under permanent scrutiny, because any public AI programme in India will attract criticism from several directions. Above all, they need a conviction that technology succeeds only when it includes

everyone — not just English speakers, not just smartphone owners, not just the urban middle class.

AI is already shaping education, health, agriculture, skilling, and welfare. These are the domains where the state touches citizens most directly, and where the gap between good design and bad design is not abstract. If the design is weak, exclusion will scale. If the design is strong, the opportunity will scale. We have seen both outcomes in India's recent digital history. UPI scaled opportunity. The initial implementation of Aadhaar-linked welfare, before corrections were made, showed how exclusion can scale, too. AI will be no different. The difference is that AI moves faster, and the window for getting the architecture right is shorter.

Leaving that outcome to drift, hoping that the right frameworks will emerge from inter-ministerial coordination and consultants' reports, would be a historic mistake.

For the right person, this is rare nation-building territory. The chance to lay the rails on which thousands of innovators, in government and outside it, can run. To create public infrastructure with decades of useful life. To demonstrate to the world that AI can power development, not just consumption. India's bench of talent is deep. In technology, in public policy, in the intersection of the two, we have people who have done extraordinary things. What we need now is the courage to identify mission leadership early, empower it with genuine authority, and then stay the course even when the inevitable controversies arrive.

Because platforms do not build themselves. And India's AI moment will not wait for us to figure out the org chart.

**Thakar is a development sector mentor & director, ex-banker. Vishwanath is co-founder of MakerGhat and Inspirit and visiting research scholar at Stanford University**

*Naxalism nears its end. In Bastar, time for a future without fear*



YASHOVARDHAN AZAD

**I**T BEGAN in the rice fields of Naxalbari in 1967, flamed through the forests of Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Chhattisgarh, survived splits, purges, ideological rigidity, state neglect and tribal anger — and for over five decades seemed impregnable. But the Naxalite movement is now staring at the possibility of its definitive end. Two developments have struck at its heart: First, the killing of Basavraj, the LTTE-trained military strategist, last May, and more recently the elimination of his handpicked disciple, Madvi Hidma, the dreaded PLGA commander of Bastar, in November. The second is the surrender of Venugopal Rao, alias Sonu, Central Committee member — and his public call urging cadres to put down arms. When ideology itself concedes defeat, the end is near.

Hidma was the only high-ranking Bastariya leader in a largely Telugu-dominated Maoist hierarchy. That made him invaluable — the bridge between ideology and the soil. His ambushes were designed not only to kill but to terrify. But in the last two years, Hidma was running, not leading. Forced out of his strongholds, stripped of sanctuaries, and pursued by multi-state operations, he was killed far from Dandakaranya, deep inside Andhra Pradesh. For an organisation built on the myth of fear, this was the greatest psychological blow. A spate of surrenders followed.

If Hidma's death shattered the movement's body, Sonu's surrender shook its soul. Hesitated what no top Maoist had ever said publicly: Maoist ideology had been betrayed by its own cadres. That the state had transformed dramatically, while local Maoist units had stagnated into rent-seeking groups extorting contractors and villagers. For the first time, a senior Maoist leader acknowledged that the revolution had become irrelevant to the people it claimed to represent. A series of setbacks — leadership losses, dwindling finances, shrinking territory, growing tribal resentment — added to this ideological collapse.

The statistics of 2024–25 narrate the story of this lost war. Over 260 Maoists were killed in 2025 in Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Andhra. Multiple top commanders were neutralised. More than

1,500 cadres surrendered in two years across Bastar, Gadhchiroli, Malangiri and Khammam.

The success is due to the work of the CRPF's COBRA battalions, state police forces, District Reserve Guards, and the Intelligence Bureau. In the last two years, dozens of officers and jawans laid down their lives. Credit also goes to the Union Home Minister, whose backing changed the ground reality.

The turning point came when forces stopped merely "clearing" areas and began to hold them, from fortified police stations in high-threat zones to delivery of public goods. Tribals saw that the state was not a visitor but a resident and enabler. And in Bastar, it was ultimately the people who defeated the Maoists — by withdrawing shelter, food, intelligence and legitimacy.

The Home Minister's deadline for a "Naxal-free India" is fast approaching. The final mile is not military — success now depends on a rehabilitation policy that changes minds. Encouraging models are emerging, such as the Pundum Café in Bastar, run entirely by surrendered Naxals. The Gadchiroli SP's "One Village, One Library" initiative is expanding the horizons of tribal youth. Job linkage programs, skill centres, sports academies, and forest cooperative also play important roles.

More is needed: Protection of tribal land, no acquisition without full compensation, and guaranteed livelihood options; a strict environmental impact assessment before any forest land is acquired for mining; safe avenues for tribal youth who want to step into the "new world"; and an system that is firm but empathetic.

History offers stern lessons. Earlier counterinsurgency efforts — like the Jan Jagran Abhiyan in the 1980s and Salwa Judum in 2005 — ended up feeding the rebel ranks by alienating the very people they sought to protect. In 1999, after the killing of Nalla Reddy, there was hope that top leader Ganapathy would surrender. Instead, the movement grew stronger. Hence, premature celebration is dangerous.

The forests that once echoed with the march of guerrillas now hear the sounds of schoolchildren and market days. The ideologies are disillusioned, the commanders are dead or running, and the foot soldiers are returning home. The end of Naxalism will not be announced by a parade or a peace treaty. It will be known the day a young tribal in Bastar imagines a future without fear — and sees the state as a partner, not a stranger.

**The writer has served as special director, Intelligence Bureau; secretary (security), Government of India; and Central Information Commissioner**

## Reform begins at police station, not in court



MEERAN CHADHA BORWANKAR

THE SUPREME Court has recently criticised state governments for making ad-hoc appointments to the post of Director General of Police (DGP) despite its earlier directions for a minimum assured tenure of two years. The persistent disregard for the Court's directives is because very few state governments are willing to accept an independent-minded police chief. In today's highly politicised environment, an officer with professional integrity is often seen as an inconvenience.

A self-assured police leader, whether a Station House Officer (SHO) or Superintendent of Police (SP), strives to maintain professional standards instead of pandering to the whims of politicians. They focus on improving investigation, strengthening evidence, and increasing conviction rates that are sliding down. As per the data released by the National Crime Records Bureau for 2023, the conviction rate for murders was mere 37.7 per cent and for rape it was lower at 22.7 per cent.

Across departments, politically neutral officers are often unwanted. "Rubber stamps", who comply unquestioningly and obey the orders of even their kith and kin, are preferred.

While many elected representatives sincerely raise public concerns, most have failed to protect institutions that can deliver transparent and efficient services. In my view, this reluctance stems from fear and insecurity: Strong institutions reduce dependence on politicians. When citizens can approach offices directly and receive timely service, they no longer need to wait outside politicians' chambers with

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folded hands. For many political leaders, power is not only to be exercised but also displayed. The authority to transfer and appoint officers is one such pompous display. It also allows them to reward loyalty and punish independence.

It must also be acknowledged that the police have not always earned public trust. Delays in FIR registration, corruption, and insensitive behaviour are genuine grievances. Police leadership is aware of these shortcomings, and some officers have made efforts to reform the system. However, when such officers are sidelined or kept waiting indefinitely for confirmation, a damaging message is conveyed to the entire force: Conform to the prevailing culture of mediocrity and patronage, or become irrelevant.

Gradually, institutional values give way to personal loyalty. Sycophancy replaces professionalism. As a result, officers across departments increasingly function as subordinates to political "masters" rather than work as public servants within the framework of the Constitution.

The Supreme Court's intervention in the Prakash Singh case in 2006 was a sincere attempt to arrest this decline. Its seven directives — fixed tenure for officers on operational duties like the SHO, district SP etc., national and state security commissions, complaints authorities at different levels, separation of investigation from law and order, and creation of establishment boards — were designed to promote stability and accountability. Unfortunately, most states have implemented these reforms only in form, not in substance.

Ad-hoc appointments continue. Complaints authorities remain weak or non-existent. Investigation and law-and-order functions are rarely separated due to chronic vacancies. Establishment boards, meant to consider merit in appointments, exist largely on paper, while informal political instructions dominate transfers and postings. Security commissions, where they exist, are largely ineffective in providing any meaningful policy guidelines.

The result is that citizens remain helpless. Courts alone cannot correct this imbalance. Police reforms cannot be driven only by judicial orders; they must be supported by civil society, the media, and committed professionals within the system. And it is too much to expect politicians to understand their role as institution-builders and prevent the decay?

The police leadership must also introspect. Improving service delivery at the police station level is essential. Measures such as online FIR registration, technology-based licensing, better investigative training, regular sensitisation programmes, and firm accountability for misconduct are no longer optional. The police station is where citizens form their first and often lasting impression of the state.

Court-mandated reforms must be accompanied by meaningful ground-level changes. Strengthening the DGP's office alone is insufficient. The police station must become the true centre of reforms. Without active citizen participation, sustained public scrutiny, and internal commitment, the system cannot change.

**The writer, IPS (R), was the commissioner of police, Pune**

and enabler. And in Bastar, it was ultimately the people who defeated the Maoists — by withdrawing shelter, food, intelligence and legitimacy.

The Home Minister's deadline for a "Naxal-free India" is fast approaching. The final mile is not military — success now depends on a rehabilitation policy that changes minds. Encouraging models are emerging, such as the Pundum Café in Bastar, run entirely by surrendered Naxals. The Gadchiroli SP's "One Village, One Library" initiative is expanding the horizons of tribal youth. Job linkage programs, skill centres, sports academies, and forest cooperative also play important roles.

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**The writer has served as special director, Intelligence Bureau; secretary (security), Government of India; and Central Information Commissioner**

## As US retreats on climate, India must step up



VAIBHAV CHATURVEDI

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Thursday repealed what is known as the Endangerment Finding (EF), issued in 2009 by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EF held that global warming due to greenhouse gases endangers public health and the welfare of current and future generations. By revoking it, the EPA is being directed away from its foundational principle that required it to treat climate emissions as a matter of human well-being.

The EF provided strong legal backing for mitigation efforts by federal and state authorities and private stakeholders. It also contributed significantly to the adoption of the Paris Agreement, and its precursor, the Kyoto Protocol. Even after the US government

failed to ratify the latter, key stakeholders were able to undertake domestic mitigation actions. The EF became the basis of all subsequent regulations by the EPA. It ensured the EPA could not legally ignore climate change or roll back greenhouse gas regulations without justification. This repeal is arguably the most consequential shift in US climate regulation in recent years.

Three questions emerge: Does this signal a re-emergence of fossil fuels in the US? What does it mean for the global emissions pathway? What are its implications for India?

Trump has consistently argued for expanding domestic fossil fuel production. With regulatory rollbacks, approvals, and financial incentives, fossil fuel companies have seen a resurgence in production, profits, and export deals. Oil and gas exploration has seen a fillip, though the

economics of coal production are still not being viewed favourably by American investors. However, many investors view new investments in the fossil fuel industry as high-risk. The repeal of the EF may embolden fossil fuel interests, but it does not automatically alter the broader structural forces driving global energy markets towards lower-carbon options. However, in the US, this action could dampen investor confidence in renewable energy and electric mobility.

Second, the implications extend to this situation strengthens the strategic case for India to intensify investment in research, development and deployment of green technologies

beyond the US's borders. The US is a cradle for green innovation. If investment in low-carbon technology innovation slows, the pace at which new technologies become affordable and scalable globally could be affected. Unless other countries step in, the global emissions pathway could see slower progress.

For India, this presents a double-edged sword. Mitigation sceptics will clamour to roll back India's 2070 net-zero pledge or near-term ambitions. But this situation strengthens the strategic case for India to intensify investment in research, development and deployment of green technologies, from energy-efficient appliances and alternative battery chemistries to advanced solar technologies, carbon capture and storage, and small modular nuclear reactors. These are critical elements for India's pathway to net zero, as research by

the Council on Energy, Environment and Water shows. Doing so would not only accelerate India's own energy transition but also position it to capture emerging global value chains and create jobs.

It would be short-sighted for India to view this moment as a reason to dilute ambition. Rather, it underscores the importance of steady, growth-aligned climate action. As India hosts the AI Impact Summit, Mumbai Climate Week and the Tamil Nadu Climate Summit this week, it has an opportunity to strengthen resolve and signal its commitment to jobs, growth and a sustainable development pathway. For India, the prudent response lies not in retreat, but in strategic advancement.

**The writer is senior fellow at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water. Views are personal**

**Rajasthan: Nine officials held after raids in Jal Jeevan Mission graft case**

**Parul Kulshrestha**  
Jaipur, February 17

IN A crackdown on alleged large-scale corruption in the Jal Jeevan Mission, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted by the Rajasthan Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) arrested nine senior officials on Monday following early morning raids across multiple locations.

Acting on findings in a case registered by the ACB, more than 15 teams conducted simultaneous operations in Jaipur, Barmer, Udaipur, Karauli, Delhi, and other locations. The action led to the arrest of nine accused, including serving and retired senior engineers of the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED).

According to the ACB, the investigation revealed that two firms allegedly secured tenders worth approximately Rs 960 crore by submitting forged completion certificates in the name of a third company. The SIT found that fake certificates were allegedly used to qualify for major projects under the Jal Jeevan Mission. Investigators alleged that high-level PHED officials allegedly colluded with the firms and manipulated tender conditions to favour them.

## Action over namaz at pvt property: HC contempt notice to Bareilly DM, SSP

**Manish Sahu**  
Lucknow, February 17

THE ALLAHABAD High has directed that contempt notices be issued to the Bareilly District Magistrate and the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) for allegedly not complying with its January order, in which it held that no permission is required for holding religious prayer meetings in private premises.

The court passed the order while hearing a petition by a man, Tarik Khan, seeking permission to offer namaz at his private premises since Ramzan is approaching.

Asked why the petition was filed, the petitioner apprised the court of an incident that took place last month.

In January, the police had picked up a group of men, including Khan, for questioning for allegedly offering namaz at the same premises.

The court was told that the petitioner has instituted the present petition on the ground that the month of Ramzan is imminent and he has sought permission to offer namaz and religious activities at his private premises.

Khan's counsel, Rajesh Kumar Gautam, submitted that on hearing the matter, the court directed issuance of notices to the District Magistrate and SSP under the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971.

In its February 12 order, the

## Evacuation of 51 Kuki students lays bare faultlines, no clarity on return

**Sukrita Baruah**  
Guwahati, February 17



Meanwhile, over 31,000 students are appearing for the Class 12 exams of the Manipur board that started on Tuesday, officials said.

WITH THE CBSE Board examinations beginning on Tuesday and no let-up in tensions between the Tangkhul Naga and Kuki communities in Manipur's Ukhrul, 51 Kuki students from a Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) in the district have been relocated to Kuki-majority Kangpokpi district. The relocation itself briefly ran into trouble when villagers mistook the students for "miscreants".

Asit Pattaika, the school's principal in Ramva village, said 18 of the children who have been moved are from Classes X and XII, while 33 are from other grades. He said the Board examination centres for the 18 children have been shifted to Kangpokpi.

Ukhrul, a Tangkhul Naga-majority district in Manipur, has been gripped by tensions between members of that community and Kuki residents since February 7, stemming from incidents that spiralled into arson and firing in the mixed-community Litan and adjoining villages.

While the violence itself has quietened and become sporadic, tensions remain high. As a result, 51 Kuki students of the Ministry of Education-run JNV, Ramva, were moved last week to the 40 Assam Rifles Battalion

headquarters in Shangshak and the 40 Assam Rifles base in Shokvao. JNV Ramva, a residential school, has 526 students and is located around 10 kilometres away from Litan.

However, with the Board examinations approaching, school authorities reportedly sought to shift Class X and XII students from the Kuki community to a place where they can write their examinations without impediments. "Womenfolk from Tangkhul groups have been staging sit-ins on the road and highways, and that was scaring the children. The school authorities requested that the children taking Board examinations be transferred to JNV Kangpokpi," said a government official.

"In all Tangkhul areas, people are frisking and control-

ling the movement of Kukis. Yesterday, we got to know that some students were being hidden in the Assam Rifles camps, and there were people from our community who did not want their movement and were trying to stop it. Because our fight is not with the children, I accompanied them till the Litan police station, which involves crossing four Tangkhul villages, and tried to convince people to calm down and not obstruct them. But we asked them to move all the children...because we cannot take the risk and responsibility of their safety," he said.

The Manipur police, in a statement, said that members of the public "mistook" the students for "miscreants".

"The support of the TKS (Tangkhul Katamnao Saklong, apex Tangkhul student union in Manipur) and its zonal units, particularly the president of the Katho Katamnao Long, was crucial in de-escalating tensions. Their efforts in persuading villagers across the Shangshak, Ramva, Shokvao, TM Kasom, and S Laho areas ensured the safe evacuation of the students to Litan police station, despite heightened tensions in the area," the police said.

The Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti has directed the authorities at JNV Kangpokpi to arrange accommodation for all the trans-

ferred students. Apart from Class X and XII students who will take the Board exams, the rest should be able to write their annual examinations at JNV Kangpokpi, the Samiti said. Authorities have been instructed to hand over all children to their parents or guardians once their examinations are complete.

"All the students are well and good. They have written their exams today. We are making sure that every requirement is being taken care of," said JNV Kangpokpi principal PS Yadav on Tuesday.

According to Mercy Khong-

### BRIEFLY



The two Iranian nationals in custody on Tuesday. EXPRESS

**GUJARAT**

## Iranian speedboat with suspect chemical intercepted, 2 detained

THE GUJARAT ATS and Indian Coast Guard on Tuesday said they apprehended two Iranian nationals with 203 kg of suspect chemicals they were transporting over the high seas in a speedboat. A forensic science laboratory has initiated the chemical analysis of the seized substance, and appropriate legal proceedings have been initiated. According to DIG Sunil Joshi, confidential information was received by SP K K Patel of the ATS that Iranian drug smuggler Haji Fida had dispatched a consignment of approximately 200 kg of a suspected chemical substance from the Konarak port in Iran's Sistan province. ENS

## SC to hear appeal against Lalu bail on April 22

MORE THAN five years after it first issued notices on appeals challenging bail to former Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Prasad following his conviction in a fodder scam case, the Supreme Court on Tuesday said it will hear the matter in April. A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and N K Singh adjourned the hearing, saying, "The files are just languishing. We will give a date in April. Those cases in which the respondent has died, we will close them." ENS

## Kin of missing cadet demand criminal probe

Family of an Odisha deck cadet who went missing at sea demanded a criminal probe on Tuesday, alleging lapses in an ongoing probe. Sarthak Mohapatra, 23, a deck cadet on EA Jersey reportedly went missing between Mauritius and Singapore. Sarthak's mother and uncle have urged the Union and Odisha governments to initiate a criminal probe with the Singapore government. The company has claimed it is "fully cooperating" with the probe. ENS

## A year after house demolished, life takes a turn for Nagpur riot accused

**Ankita Deskar**  
Nagpur, February 17

IT'S BEEN a roller-coaster year for Fahim Shamim Khan. Named prime accused in the Nagpur communal violence of March 2025, he was jailed and his family house demolished by the authorities, claiming illegal construction. Four months later, Khan got bail; last month, his wife Alisha became a corporator in the very same municipal body that demolished their house; and last week, the Nagpur Bench of the High Court directed the corporation to either reconstruct Khan's house or compensate the family.

As he waits for the Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC) to get back to the court by March 4, Khan says he is expecting the riot charges against him to also collapse.

On March 17, 2025, violence had broken out in Nagpur's Mahal following protests by VHP and Bajrang Dal members against the tomb of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb located in Aurangabad, leaving one dead and 38 injured, including 33 policemen.

Khan was arrested on the allegation of inciting the crowd. Soon after, bulldozers rolled in to pull down his house in Sanjay Bagh Colony, and registered in the name of his 65-year-old mother Mehrunnisa Khan.

Nearly a year later, the rubble remains on the spot, while Khan, his wife and three triplets live in a rented tin-roof shelter next to it.

The NMC claimed that por-

HC has ruled civic body must either rebuild his house or compensate him



Fahim Shamim Khan, his wife and three triplets live in a rented tin-roof shelter. EXPRESS

tions of the house were unauthorised and that the land lease held by the Khan family had expired.

However, Khan says, the demolition team that arrived in the early hours of the morning removed not just "the unauthorised sections" but the entire house.

"We had submitted a complaint about safety hazards over a year ago, and it is still pending. But when it came to my house, the notice was forced into my mother's hands on a holiday, when government offices were closed, and the demolition began even before official working hours."

Hours after the bulldozers arrived, the HC stayed the demolition, saying that, *prima facie*, due process — including the mandatory 15-day notice period laid down by the Supreme Court

had not been followed.

Municipal Commissioner Abhijit Chaudhari even tendered an unconditional apology before the court, claiming that civic officials were unaware of the SC directive.

Apart from Khan, NMC sent notices to structures owned by two other families whose relatives were named in the riots, partially pulling down a balcony in one case. The NMC action against them was also stayed by the HC.

Denying the riot charges against him, Khan says he had visited the police station earlier that day to submit a complaint regarding the alleged burning of a cloth bearing Quranic verses. He was not present in Mahal when clashes broke out, he says, adding that his mobile location data supports this.

Over 68 accused have been identified; like Khan, all are out on bail.

Khan's advocate Ashwin Ingole says: "We have substantial proof and have requested the court to quash the FIR. We have also sought the constitution of an SIT for a fair inquiry."

Prosecutor Nitin Telgote admitted to The Indian Express there was a delay in the case. "The charge sheet is yet to be filed. We are making efforts to expedite the process, but it will take a while," he said.

Khan believes his innocence has already been endorsed by his wife Alisha's victory in the NMC polls held in January. She entered electoral politics only after Khan was charged in the riots, and won from Prabhat 3 ward, on an AIMIM ticket.

More than losing the house, Khan regrets that their joint family was left "separated". "My parents have moved in with my sister. One brother and sister share a small room. Another brother lives in a rented room with his wife and child... The hardest part was not jail. It has been seeing my family scattered and suffering."

They don't have the means to build another house big enough for all of them, Khan, who earns a modest income running a burqa shop now, says. Dreading another harsh summer with his small children in a tin-roofed house, he adds they can't remove even the debris at their old home because if he moves anything, it may be construed as tampering with evidence.

The incident took place months before the state's assembly elections.

Just days earlier, on April 8, 2023, communal violence was witnessed in the area, spiralling out of a petty fight between two minors. Within hours, the villagers called a meeting.

During the meeting, there were rumours of Hindus getting beaten up in a minority-domi-

## 2023 Chhattisgarh communal flare-up: 17 accused of killing man, son acquitted

**Jayprakash S Naidu**  
Raipur, February 17

ALL 17 men who were arrested for rioting and murdering a father-son duo from a minority community during communal violence in 2023 in Biranpur village in Chhattisgarh's Bemetara district were on Tuesday acquitted by a Sessions court in Bemetara.

Rahim Umad Mohamed, 55, and his son Idul Mohamed, 35, were beaten to death with stones and sticks by a mob in Chechanmeta, near Biranpur village, on April 10, 2023. The murder took place in the afternoon, and the bodies were discovered the next morning.

The incident took place months before the state's assembly elections.

Just days earlier, on April 8, 2023, communal violence was witnessed in the area, spiralling out of a petty fight between two minors. Within hours, the villagers called a meeting.

During the meeting, there were rumours of Hindus getting beaten up in a minority-domi-

nated area of the village, following which a mob ran into the area and a clash ensued. During the violence, 23-year-old Bhuneswar Sahu was killed.

The next day, over 700 personnel were deployed in Biranpur to avoid any further escalation. On April 10, a bandh was announced by the VHP. Despite the deployment, a crowd led by then BJP state president and current Deputy CM Arun Saat attempted to enter the village.

That same day, a house near Biranpur was burnt. It belonged to Rahim's daughter and son-in-law. The following day, the bodies of Rahim and his son were discovered.

Back then, six FIRs were registered and 17 men were held.

## BJP budget like birth of a boy, Cong budget a girl child: Rajasthan MLA

**Hamza Khan**  
Jaipur, February 17



Badur Singh Koli is the BJP MLA from Weir Assembly

Speaking in the Assembly on Monday evening during the debate on the state budget, Singh, the MLA said, "Ours is youth budget, theirs is an old-age budget... our honourable CM Bhajan Lal Sharma, our government gave birth to a boy in the very first budget, and then again in the second and third budgets. The one who gives birth to a boy in their youth is always useful."

Demanding a public apology from Koli, Leader of Opposition Tika Ram Jolly said,

"And when Ashok Gehlot

## Even Bangladesh able to conduct fair elections: Mamata's jibe at EC

**Atri Mitra**  
Kolkata, February 17

WEST BENGAL Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday targeted the Election Commission (EC), saying even a trouble-torn Bangladesh was able to conduct free and fair elections while there was a conspiracy to destroy democracy in India.

Addressing a press conference, the CM said, "We were worried about the election in Bangladesh but see how they conducted it in a free and fair manner. But here is a conspiracy to destroy democracy in India."

Referring to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral

roll in the state, Banerjee questioned while documents like residential certificates, "family tree" were accepted during the similar exercise in Bihar but the same papers were not allowed in West Bengal. Why are these documents not being accepted in Bengal?"

"I will not name them. They are basically a torture commission. They are acting like Hitler and Muhammad bin Tughlaq. They are atrocious," she claimed.

"The EC has become a Tughlaq Commission run by a political party. It is treating ordinary people like terrorists. On BJP's instructions, the EC is deleting names of Bengal's voters during SIR," Banerjee said.

## 'Not party stand': Venugopal on chatter in Cong on TN tie-up

**Asad Rehman**  
New Delhi, February 17

AMID TENSION between the Congress and DMK over the alliance for the Tamil Nadu Assembly polls, senior Congress leader KC Venugopal on Tuesday said that the grand old party was waiting for a "clear cut coalition discussion" and that opinions expressed by his party leaders from the state were "individual" in nature.

The Congress-DMK pot was first stirred on December 28, with Congress data analytics head Praveen Chakravarty describing Tamil Nadu's debt position as "alarming". Then Congress MP from the state Manickam Tagore said that the Congress and DMK alliance should have power sharing.

Clearing the air, Congress general secretary (organisation) Venugopal said the two parties were "in the process of discussions". "We have a political party. Our party's people also have political ambitions. There needs to be a clear-cut



We are waiting for alliance discussions, said the leader

coalition discussion. We are waiting for that discussion. Other parties – DMK – will inform us when is the discussion going to start," he said.

In a reference to Tagore and others who have made similar remarks, he said: "As far as different voices in the Congress party, I would like to categorically say that is not the party stand at all. That may be the individual stand... Final decision will be taken by the high command – Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge. We are waiting for alliance discussions."

Without coming on record, DMK leaders on Tuesday said that power sharing with the Congress was out of the question. "If



# SC: Parties, leaders must strive to foster fraternity

Express News Service  
New Delhi, February 17

**Before the speech comes the thought. How can we control the thought."**

JUSTICE B V NAGARATHNA,  
SUPREME COURT

HEARING A plea filed in the wake of alleged hate speeches by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the Supreme Court said on Tuesday that all political parties and their leaders must strive to follow constitutional morality and foster fraternity in the country.

The petition sought a declaration that public speeches, when made in their official or quasi-official authority, must be subject to constitutional morality and conform to values of equality, fraternity and secularism and not violate the fundamental rights of individuals.

A bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justices B V Nagarathna and Joymalya Bagchi noted that the petition was "targeted against a particular individual" and advised the petitioners to

situation is becoming toxic and something needs to be done.

"We need to do something. Only your lords and masters can do something. This is becoming very toxic," he said, adding that the petition "is not qua any individual".

When the court pointed out that it had speeches of only one individual, Sibal said he would delete the reference. He urged the court to consider the larger issue, to which the CJI pointed out that the Supreme Court's January 2023 Constitution bench judgment in Kaushal Kishor vs State of Uttar Pradesh had already taken care of it.

Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the petitioners—academic Roop Rekha Verma, former MP Mohammad Adeeb, activist Harsh Mander, Christian leader John Dayal, former Delhi lieutenant governor Naresh Jang and others—said the

They should be fair."

Justice Nagarathna, who was part of the bench that decided the Kaushal Kishor case, said, "There has to be restraint on all sides. Political leaders must foster fraternity in the country. Suppose we lay down guidelines... who will follow it?"

Justice Bagchi also said it was for the parties to follow guidelines already laid down. "From Kaushal Kishore to Amish Devgan, how many guidelines have we laid down? Responsibility lies with the political parties to implement as well," he said.

Justice Nagarathna added, "Before the speech comes the thought. How can we control the thought?" She added that it was necessary to "erase thoughts which goes against the constitutional ethos." Sibal said a fresh petition will be filed, following which the court adjourned the matter for two weeks.

Ajit plane crash:  
Foreign technical support sought to retrieve CVR data

Sukpal Sharma  
New Delhi, February 17

FOREIGN TECHNICAL assistance has been sought for data retrieval from one of the flight recorders of the Learjet 45 aircraft that crashed in Baramati on January 28, claiming the lives of then Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar and four others, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) said on Tuesday.

Both flight recorders or so-called black boxes suffered fire damage but data from one of them has been downloaded, the AAIB said. "Cockpit Voice Recorder... is undergoing detailed technical examination. Assistance has been sought from the Accredited Representative of the State of Manufacture for specialised support in data retrieval."

## Actress death case: SC upholds partner's abetment conviction

Acquits him of murder charge in 2002 death of Prathyusha



Rahul V Pisharody  
Hyderabad, February 17

THE SUPREME Court on Tuesday dismissed the appeals in the 2002 case of the death of actress Prathyusha—bringing finality to legal battles following a suicide pact between the actress and her partner, who was accused of murder.

A division bench of Justices Rajesh Bindal and Manmohan upheld the conviction of Gudipalli Siddhartha Reddy for abetment of suicide while acquitting him of murder.

Controversy erupted following a postmortem report by Dr B Muni Swamy, who claimed the actress had been strangled and gang-raped. The

claims were made public via a TV interview. It sparked a public outcry and led to a CBI probe.

However, the SC noted that a "wealth of ocular and medical evidence" proved death by poisoning rather than homicidal violence. Expert committees from AIIMS and state authorities confirmed the external injuries cited by Dr Swamy were actually therapeutic artefacts—marks left by medical procedures employed by doctors to save her life. The court criticised Dr Swamy's conduct as "unprofessional" and "irresponsible".

The bench ruled that the partner remains legally culpable. The court held a reciprocal commitment to die provides the "necessary impetus" for the act, thereby constituting abetment under Section 107 of the IPC.

The court directed him to surrender in four weeks to serve a two-year sentence.

On February 23, 2002, the 20-year-old actress and Reddy consumed pesticide in an apparent suicide pact following opposition from their parents to the prospects of their marriage. Prathyusha died during treatment.

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# The Big Picture

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026

13

FROM AUSTRALIA TO INDIA

## A game called Foooty

Sometime in 2004-5, talent scouts from Australia arrived in Jharkhand's tribal districts and flung a strange-looking, oblong ball at anyone who seemed interested. And then, just like that, a new sport was born. SHIVANI NAIK on how Australia's most watched sport, 'Aussie rules Footy', is slowly becoming a way out of desperation for many

With inputs from SHUBHAM TIGGA



Players from the Jharkhand team practise at a ground in Ranchi. SHUBHAM TIGGA

**S**HIBA MARNDI says "thoda gadbad" (a little mishap) happened right after he was born in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district. It's more grave. His parents, he later explains, "abandoned" him. But his mother's elder sister, his "badi maa", brought him to the outskirts of Bhubaneswar and took him in. Raising four of her own, the family didn't have any comforts to offer him.

But he'll never forget how, years later, she encouraged him to get back on his feet after a nasty tackle on his chest left him struggling to breathe for six months. "She has never seen my sport. But she knew how happy I was playing it. After I had recovered from the chest-hit, she told me, 'Don't take tension, ja khel. Bas dekh ke khel (go play, just play safe). I'm with you,'" he says.

The sport — one that has given many aimless youth a frenzied direction in life — is Aussie rules Footy or simply 'Footy'. In the roughly two decades since the sport was introduced in India, while Footy has taken firm root in some of tribal areas of Odisha and Jharkhand, it has also drawn into its orbit players from some of the most dire areas — from the urban slums of Mumbai to migrant labour colonies in Rajasthan, from nondescript villages in Andhra Pradesh to the border belts of West Bengal and the struggling shanty villages of Bihar.

**Two things established Jharkhand as the prime force to AFL boss Andrew Dillon — when they kicked, they did so straight with the top of the foot, and they knew how to hold the ball vertically**

Over 250 men and around 50 women from 11 states participated in the recently concluded Ranchi Nationals, where the Jharkhand Crows teams took all the three titles — Senior Men's, Senior Women's and Junior's.

If rugby liberated footballers who felt constricted by the dribbling, Footy is for those who love to run unhampered and play a mix of basketball, volleyball and football. It helps that at least for those 80 minutes of kicking,

handballing and running with the ball, the game distracts from the desperate realities of their lives.

"I used to play cricket and football, like the father who left me. But in cricket you had to wait for the ball and stand till then. Footy, every minute you have to move," says Marndi, who captained the Odisha Swans side that finished as semifinalists. "Had it not been for my *badi maa*, I would never have made the India team. She was worried for six months after my injury, but then the courage, too, came from her."

Marndi's biggest achievement was to make it to the Indian team six years ago. Every three years, the team, called the 'Indian Tigers', travels to Australia for the AFL International Cup — the World Cup of the sport. Led by Jharkhand's Mahesh Tirkey, who currently works in Jamshedpur as a District Sports Officer, the team has players mainly from Jharkhand and Bihar, the two finalists in the recent Nationals, but there are others from Maharashtra, Odisha, West Bengal and Rajasthan too.

### A foothold in India

Footy is as dear to Aussies as the beach and surfing, but the only one with cultural heft that can be exported.

The Australian Football League (AFL), with 19 club teams from across four Australian states, plays Footy as a winter sport, with grounds shared with cricket, the country's summer sport. Many of the top cricket venues in the country such as the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Sydney Cricket Ground and Adelaide Oval host both sports with drop-in pitches for cricket.

A high-energy contact sport, Footy sees 18 players a side crisscrossing a giant oval field, with their goal being to score in the trapezoid-shaped goal zone that's marked by vertical posts or uprights. While the sport has assumed the following of the country's unofficial religion — with Footy team loyalties worn as identities — the sport hasn't quite managed to find takers outside Australia. The AFL tried to get the sport into China, and sought out the US (including Las Vegas) and parts of northern England, but didn't make any headway.

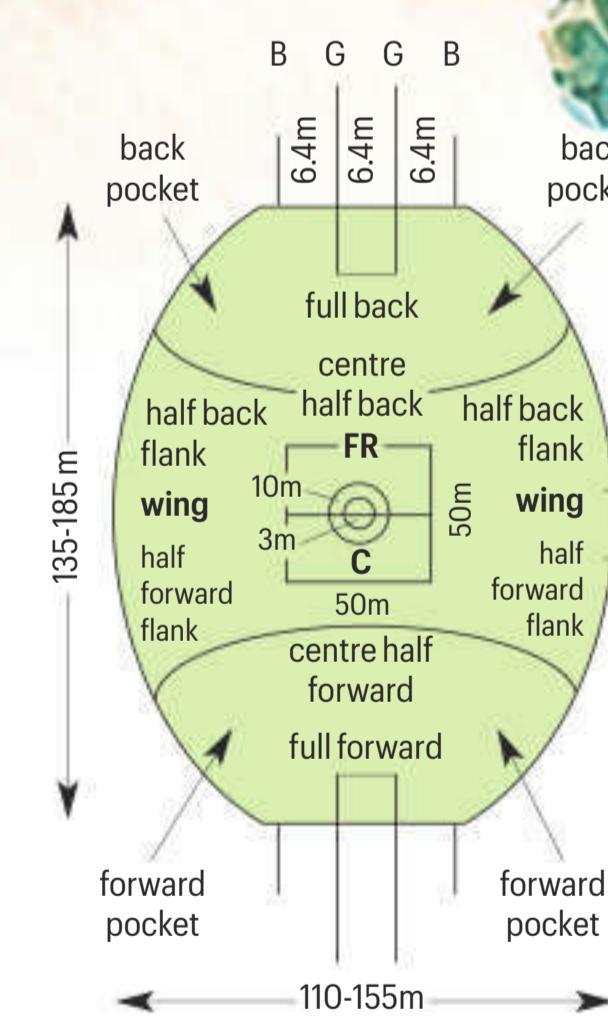
And then, sometime in 2004-5, at the height of M S Dhoni's emergence from Jharkhand, Footy coaches from Australia landed in the state's tribal districts and flung the funny oblong ball at anyone who peered at the strange-looking mish-mash sport.

But like every sport looking to take off in India, Footy needed a toehold in Kolkata, a city with a deep sporting culture, organisational heft and an amateur athlete base willing to try out new games. It's here that cricketer Ricky Ponting launched an initiation programme for Footy when he was at Kolkata Knight Riders.

Soon after, around 150 volleyball, basketball, high jump and rugby athletes from West Bengal were trained in the basics of Footy. Some from among the 150 then fanned out across the tribal belts of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha, while a few took the sport to Magic Bus, a sports NGO in Mumbai. The NGO took it further into Maharashtra (mostly Mumbai's slums and Navi Mumbai's developing areas) and to Rajasthan, mainly to Jaipur's unstructured playing grounds. And then, just like that, the ball got rolling.

But what got AFL big boss Andrew Dillon intrigued enough to travel to Jharkhand for the recent Nationals was the official AFL registration number of 10,000. These were players who had over the last decade played Footy in some form or trained in the sport. Everything scales up in India, but Dillon merely wanted to see those large numbers and assure himself that this highly-difficult-to-transplant sport could proliferate in a foreign land.

Effort and money from Australia had, of course, trickled in over 11 years to spread the game, and teams such as Jharkhand Crows, Kerala Bombers and Bengal Tigers and Maharashtra Giants had ripped off jersey designs



### • RULES OF THE GAME

- Footy combines elements of basketball, volleyball, rugby, handball, soccer
- It's a high contact and physically demanding sport, with full-body tackles and collisions between players, who run for almost 12-15 km per game. But in India, it's played with restricted tackles
- There are two ways of moving the ball forward — handballing and kicking with a straight (top of the) foot. To handball or punch the ball, players hold the ball in one hand, clenched fist of the other, punch the ball with the clenched fist and release the ball. Rucks (jumping to gather aerial balls like in basketball) are manned by specialists, usually the tallest members
- Scoring happens when the ball clears the zone of the forward posts (the two upright bars). You score six points if they go past the two smaller back posts and 1 point if the ball lands in from sideways. So if a team scores 3 outright goals (3x6=18) and 5 (5x1) through the side bars, they end with 23 points



### • ALL ABOUT FOOTY

**THE SPORT:** Australian rules Football or 'Footy' is a high-intensity contact sport in which players can tackle using their hands or use their whole body to obstruct opponents.

**TEAM:** 18 a side internationally; in India, each team fields 9 players

**GROUND:** Played on oval, cricket grounds in Australia; in India, the playing area is strictly oval, but it is half the size of the Australian grounds

and names from Australian teams such as Adelaide Crows, Essendon Bombers, Richmond Tigers and GSW Giants.

While the sport is yet to be recognised by the government or the Sports Authority of India, it offers players a chance to get into state teams and play for India, all under AFL funding. AFL also funds volunteering coaches to bear expenses towards the annual Nationals.

As he watched the players in Ranchi, two things established Jharkhand as the prime force to Dillon straightaway — when they kicked, they did so straight with the top of the foot, and they knew how to hold the ball vertically, like it ought to be.

In the early setting winter sun, a group of players in blue Jharkhand jerseys noisily chase an oblong ball, as coach Ravi Minj watches through the haze of dust they have kicked up.

At the first whistle for break, Neetu Kumar walks up to the edge of the field and slumps to the ground to pull up her socks. A 20-year-old from the Munda tribe, she has grown up playing football, but it's in Footy that she sees her future. She doesn't have to look too far for inspiration — Jharkhand's Aloman Tigga is considered a pioneer in women's Footy.

Neetu, an Economics (Honours) student at Doranda College in Ranchi, works as a domestic help after college, earning around Rs 2,000 a month. "This game has given me a different identity. It's not very well known outside Jharkhand, so it will be a struggle. But we are ready to struggle," she says.

For coach Minj, a former footballer who has been coaching the state team since 2014, the struggle begins even before they reach the ground. He says a couple of years ago, the ground they trained on was acquired by a PSU, forcing them to practise on an uneven, open ground in Ranchi. "The earlier ground gave us a very positive vibe. People from the nearby slum areas would sit and cheer for us. That encouraged us a lot," he says.

But when he watches his boys and girls playing — the perfect top-of-the-foot kick, just the right grip of the ball — he knows they have it in them.

Australia-based cricket writer Bharat Sundaresan, who the AFL consults on its Indian outreach programmes and who accompanied Dillon to Ranchi, says Footy's growth in India has been organic. "It's a unique way of growing this sport as an indigenous one, where most players have never watched an Aussie Footy game or

can't name a player," he says.

### 'Khel matlab nikamma'

India captain Tirkey, who played dodgeball while in Madhubani, Bihar, settled in Ranchi after the death of his father, a railway employee, in 2005. He was among the earliest of athletes from Jharkhand's tribal families whose natural strength and running made them take on the role of 'small forwards' and run freely in a sport that has no offside rule.

Their athleticism supported the sport's free spirit. No Jharkhand junior team has ever lost a final in India, even as seniors are serial champions, says Footy's India chief and former captain, Sudip Chakravarthy.

Arun Rai is from Kaimur in Bihar, a Footy state that goes under the radar only because it is overshadowed by Jharkhand.

However, he grew up in Jaipur, living with his uncle and aunt ("kaka aur kaki"). They had moved in search of employment, taking the young Arun with them so he could access better education.

The pressure of academics on children of Bihar migrants is stifling, he recalls. His uncle never forgot to remind him that he had walked 1,500 km from Kaimur, and only Arun's academic success was worth that sacrifice. But he hated to study and Footy was his

release. It was while playing football in Jaipur that he spotted Footy players trained by one of the 150 initial apostles from Magic Bus. A friend persuaded him to join, and he was smitten for life, given how much he loved to run.

"Khel matlab nikamma (You are worthless if you play) is the Bihar mindset," he says. "It's worse in my case because I lived in a joint family and had moved to Jaipur with my uncle, and was expected to prove that moving out was worth it. Nobody in my family had ever played sports, and after Class 12, you either started preparing for competitive exams or joined the Army or CRPF. When I said I wanted to play a sport, let alone Footy, it was a scandal," he recalls.

Cricket — and an empathising aunt, his kaki — helped. "It's not like she knew what Footy was, but she was mad for cricket. When I told her Harbhajan Singh became DSP by playing sport, and the Great Khali also landed a police job, she went about convincing my uncle because it's about financial independence," recalls the captain

of Bihar Bulldogs who works as head coach at Rajasthan's biggest residential university, Banasthali University in Tonk.

"Once I broke my foot. The shouting and the scene that followed at home! They declared my sport over," he says.

Once again, the *kaki* prevailed. It helped that Footy offered upto Rs 1.5 lakh as medical insurance back then.

He might have taken to Footy fleeing his disinterest in academics, but Rai ensured he completed his coaching certification courses and earned a degree. "I completed a Master's in physical education. I'm a Bihar, I know how important education is," Rai laughs.

### 'Imagine playing for India'

Back in Australia, Footy has struggled to lure the Indian diaspora despite many outreach attempts. The sheer physicality drives most of them to the safer, softer cricket.

Chakravarthy, the AFL India head, points out that most Footy balls get stitched in Jalandhar, Punjab. That, to him, is a sign, along with the sport's success in Jharkhand, that Footy might take off faster in India than it has among Indian-origin Australians.

That dream looms large in Maharashtra Giants' captain Amos' eyes. Keeping with how Footy winds up

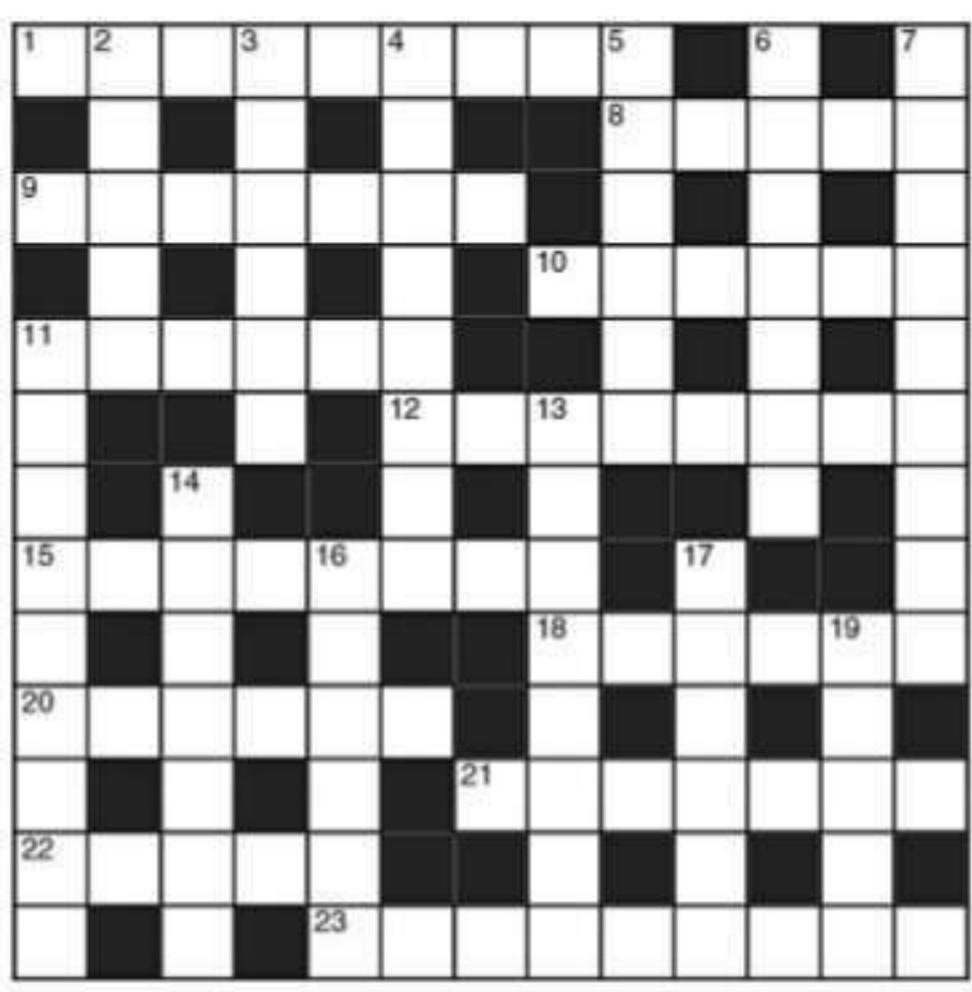
finding just the ones who need that turbo-charging to their dreary lives, the sport reached Amos at Mumbai's Govandi slums and then followed him into Navi Mumbai, where he built his first concrete home. A sports lover, cricket had snapped his shoulder, football broke his elbow, but Footy kept him away from crime and drugs. "When inside the ground, all pain vanishes with the whistle. Life is tough, but imagine getting to play for India. We apply spray and run freely," he says.

It was his mother's support, he says, that made a "fighter" out of him. "Our team has bankers, airline ground staff, tailors, factory labourers. We represent not just the state, but our families, the mothers who teach us to be brave and go out there without fear of getting hurt," he says.

His reward? "When passersby at Shri Vaj Park stop to see us play. And stay there and keep watching. That look on their faces... it's priceless." He knows his mother, who's barely seen Australian Footy, will be proud.

## CROSSWORD

5915



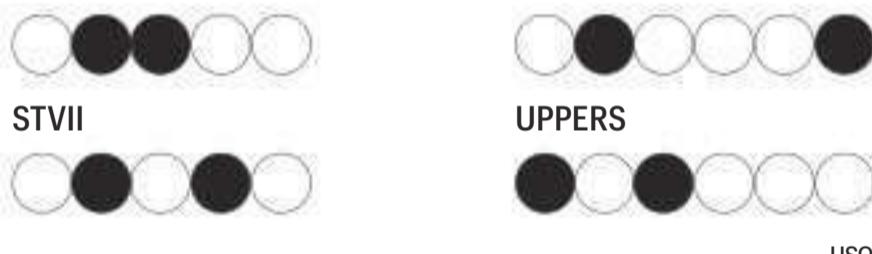
- ACROSS**
- Revolutionary means of getting a drink (9)
  - One transaction that cannot be faulted (5)
  - Wily monarch now imprisoned (7)
  - Official report — about a revolution? (6)
  - Like stars visible to the naked eye (6)
  - Misses unpopular with photographers (3,5)
  - Lurches uncertainly into the mess (8)
  - Stay right in the fold (6)
  - Angle brackets in the end (6)
  - Male animals breed (7)
  - Succeed in giving directions to the girl (5)
  - Make a song about a charming woman changing places (9)

**SOLUTIONS CROSSWORD 5914 ACROSS:** 1 Toaster, 4 Cards, 7 Best, 8 Evensong, 10 Opening bid, 12 Emerge, 13 Begged, 15 Vindicates, 18 Earing, 19 Eton, 20 Whale, 21 Nomadic **DOWN:** 1 Taboo, 2 Answered, 3 Ravage, 4 Confidence, 5 Roof, 6 Sighted, 9 Pilgrimage, 11 Agitated, 12 Eyebrow, 14 Odds on, 16 Sonic, 17 Whoa

## JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective circles below. Select the letters in the shaded circles and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

Men are never so good or so bad as their \_\_\_\_\_. - James Mackintosh (8)



**ANSWER:** Goods, Visit, English, Upper  
Mackintosh

**SOLUTIONS:** Goods, Visit, English, Upper

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED**  
See Section (82 Cr. PC)  
**84 Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita-2023**  
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely Altab Alam @ Vicky S/o Mumtaj Alam R/o H.No. 226, Maa Wali Gali Bada Chowk, Mandawali, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 98/2021, U/s 33 Delhi Excise Act at PS: Mandawali, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Altab Alam @ Vicky can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Altab Alam @ Vicky has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Altab Alam @ Vicky of FIR No. 98/2021, U/s 33 Delhi Excise Act of PS: Mandawali, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 14.05.2026. By order Sachin Judicial Magistrate First Class-03 East District, Court No.16 Karkardooma Courts Delhi DP/1563/ED/2026

## PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.  
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Kasim S/o: Kallu, R/o: B-120 & 134, Sabzi Mandi, Ghazipur, Delhi; Also at- H. No.03, Near Seelampur Fatak, Sarbj Colony, Gandhi Nagar, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in Case FIR No. 190/2019 U/s 323/341/34 IPC, P.S.: Patparganj Industrial Area, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Kasim cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Kasim has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said Kasim accused of offence in Case FIR No. 190/2019 U/s 323/341/34 IPC, P.S.: Patparganj Industrial Area, Delhi and is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 23.04.2026.

By Order  
Sh. P. Bhargav Rao  
DP/95/ED/2026  
Judicial Magistrate, First Class-05  
(Court Matter)  
Room No. 3, Karkardooma Court, Delhi

## STORES E-PROCUREMENT

E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work:

1. E-Tender No.: NB265079, Dated: 13-02-2026; Item Description: 500KVA, 750VOLT, 3PHASE brushless alternator conform to RDSO SPEC: RDSO/PE/SPEC/AC/0084-2008 Rev. 1 or latest along with fitted flexible coupling and key compatible with Koel CPCB-II engine for high capacity LHB power car. Accepted Make: RDSO's approved firms only. PL No.: 375008/10018. Consignee: SSE/AC/POH/NBQ, NFR (Assam). Qty.: 04 Nos; Earnest Money: ₹1,02,130/-; Closing of E-tender: at 14:30 hrs. on 06-03-2026.

2. E-Tender No.: NB265087, Dated: 13-02-2026; Item Description: 4.5 KW Under Slung Constant Voltage Regulated cum Emergency Battery Charger ( RBC cum EBC) for LHB Coaches as per the RDSO Spec. No : RDSO/PE/SPEC/AC/0183 (Rev-2)-2024. Make: Any RDSO's approved make. NOTE: Material should be procured through RDSO approved vendors only. PL No.: 451400270010. Consignee: SSE/AC/POH/NBQ, NFR (Assam). Qty.: 25 Nos; Earnest Money: ₹1,82,310/-; Closing of E-tender: at 14:30 hrs. on 06-03-2026.

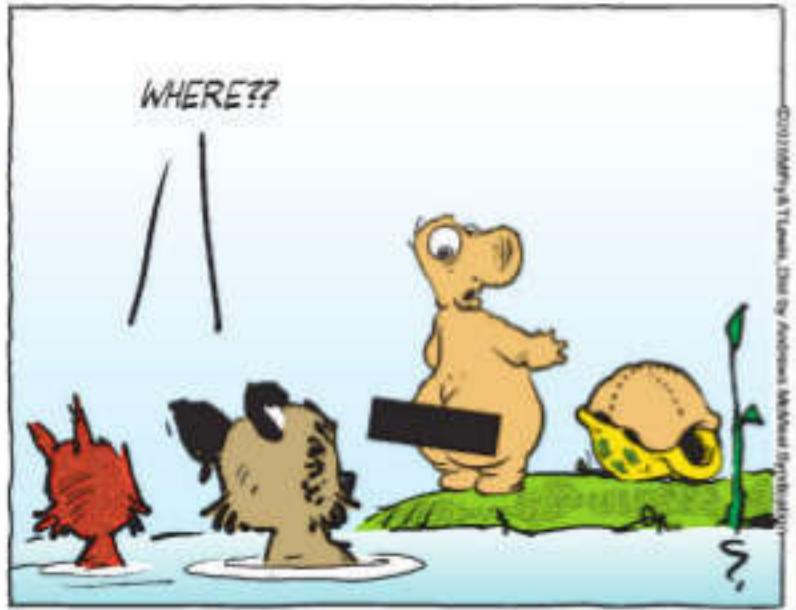
The complete information with the tender documents of above mentioned e-tenders are available in website <https://ireps.gov.in>.

Dy.CMM/D/New Bongaigaon  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
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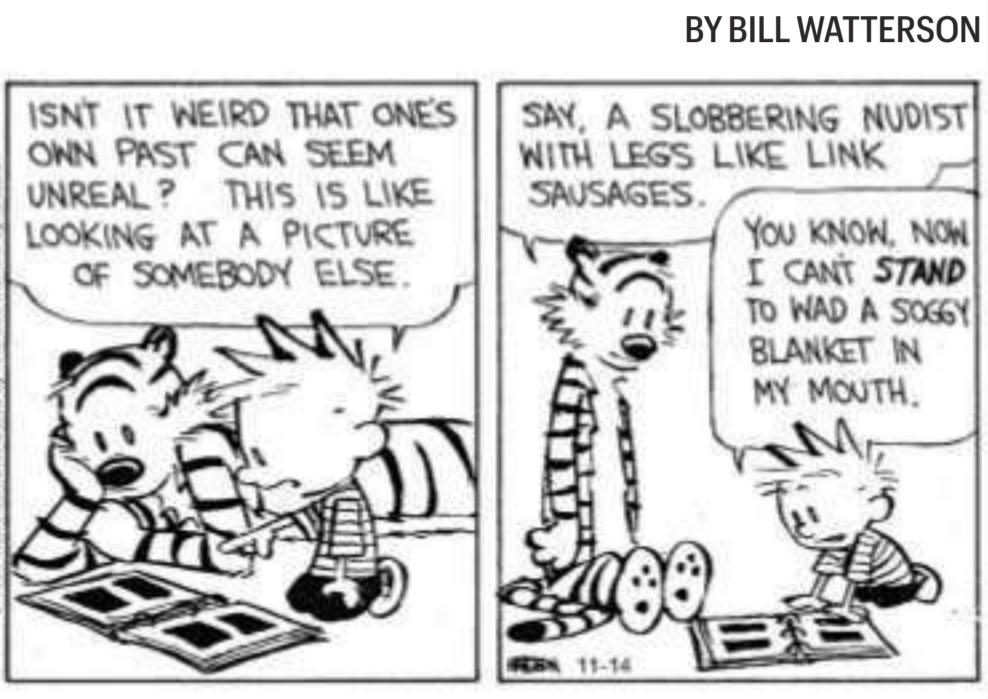
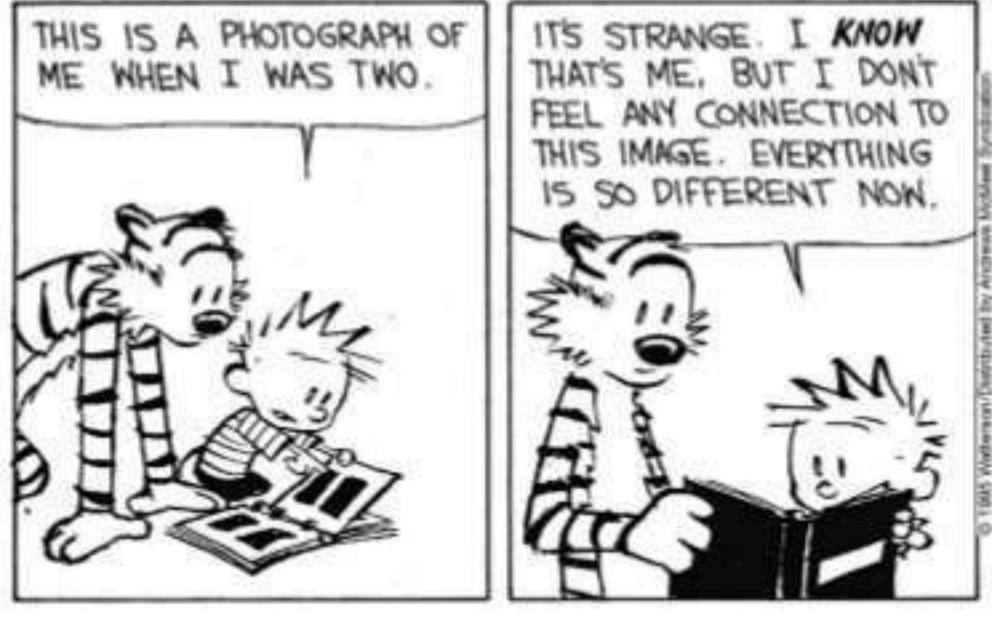
## OVER THE HEDGE



BY MICHAEL FRY &amp; T LEWIS



## CALVIN &amp; HOBBES



BY BILL WATTERSON

## MARVIN

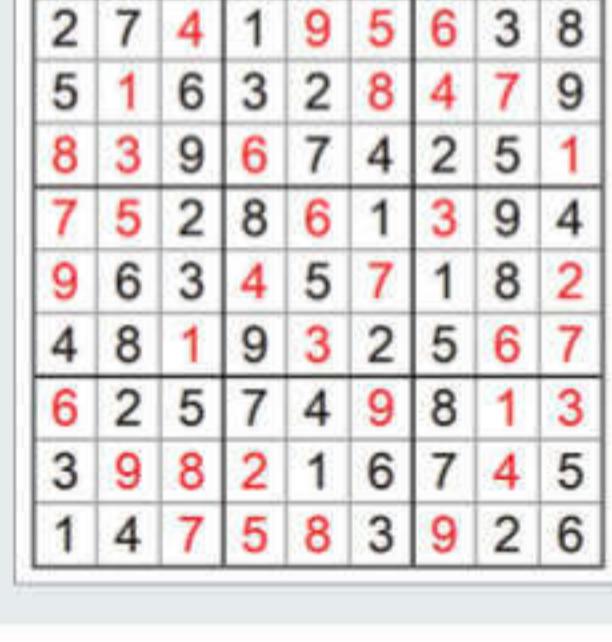


BY TOM ARMSTRONG

## SUDOKU 6233



## SOLUTIONS SUDOKU 6232



## PUBLIC NOTICE ON AUCTION OF PLEDGED GOLD ORNAMENTS

The borrower/s in specific and interested bidders in general, are hereby informed that on account of non-repayment of the Banks due by the borrowers under despite the payment notice and reminder notice issued by the bank, the said ornaments will be sold by the bank serving by the respective borrower/borrowers available by themself will be sold in public auction on 27/3/2026 at 10.30 AM. The auction may be adjourned to any other later date at the discretion of the bank upon publication of the same in the Banks notice board. The borrowers are hereby further informed that the gold amount will be recovered by private sale if the same is auction is not successful and there is a further balance to be recovered after the auction is to be informed to the bank and the borrowers for recovery of the balance amounts due to the bank. In case of diseased borrower, all conditions will be applicable to legal heirs.

**DIFFICULTY LEVEL**  
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;  
3s = Medium; 4s = Hard;  
5s = Very Hard;  
6s = Genius

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CONTAINER CORPORATION OF INDIA LTD.

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NSIC New MDCB Building, 2nd Floor, Okha Indl. Estate (Opp. NSIC Okha Metro Station), New Delhi-110020

## TENDER NOTICE (E-Tendering Mode Only)

E-Bids are invited for Open e-Tender (in Single Packet) for Establishing of a Container Repair Facility for ISO Containers at MMLP Varnama (Gujarat).

Tender No. CON/AREA/III/ISO Container Repair/VERNAMA/2026  
Estimated Cost Rs. 22,00,436/- (Inclusive of GST) for Four (4) years  
Date of Sale (On Line) From 18.02.2026 at 15:00 hrs. to 10.03.2026 (upto 16:00 hrs.)

Last Date & Time of Submission On 11.03.2026 up to 17:00 hrs.

Date & Time of Opening On 12.03.2026 at 15:30 hrs.

For eligibility criteria and other details please log on to [www.concorindia.com](http://www.concorindia.com) or [eprocure.gov.in](http://eprocure.gov.in) or [www.tenderwizard.com/CCIL](http://www.tenderwizard.com/CCIL). Bidders are requested to visit the websites regularly.

Executive Director/Area-II

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED**  
See Section (82 Cr. PC)  
**84 Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita-2023**  
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely Satender S/o Suresh Chand R/o H.No. B-1/510, F/F, Gali No.18, Harsh Vihar Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 237/2023 Dated 05.04.2023 U/s 135 Indian Electricity Act at PS: Harsh Vihar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Satender can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Satender has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Satender of FIR No. 237/2023 Dated 05.04.2023 U/s 135 Indian Electricity Act of PS: Harsh Vihar, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 12.05.2026.

Interested bidders may visit Pune Metro Rail website [www.punemetrorail.org/tenders](http://www.punemetrorail.org/tenders) to view this tender notice (NT), download the Tender documents and obtain further details regarding the Tender from e-tender portal of MAHA-METRO (Pune) under e-tenders section. Bidders can visit the Maha-Metro website [www.mahametro.org](http://www.mahametro.org) or CPP website <https://eprocure.gov.in> from 16:00 hrs. on 18/02/2026 to 16:00 hrs. of 01/04/2026.

Executive Director (Procurement & Contract), PMPR, Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation Limited

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By order  
Ashish Rastogi  
Additional Sessions Judge-05

Room No. 21, 1st Floor  
Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

DP/2056/NE/2026

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DP/2056/NE/2026

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED**  
See Section (82 Cr. PC)

**84 Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita-2023**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely Satender S/o Suresh Chand R/o H.No. B-1/510, F/F, Gali No.18, Harsh Vihar Delhi has committed

(or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 237/2023 Dated 05.04.2023 U/s 135 Indian Electricity Act at PS: Harsh Vihar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Satender can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Satender has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Satender of FIR No. 237/2023 Dated 05.04.2023 U/s 135 Indian Electricity Act of PS: Harsh Vihar, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 12.05.2026.

By order  
Ashish Rastogi  
Additional Sessions Judge-05

Room No. 21, 1st Floor  
Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

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**Airee, Bhurtel help Nepal end with a victory**

**Shankar Narayan**  
Mumbai, February 17

TEN DAYS ago, Nepal's T20 World Cup campaign had begun with a heartbreak when they fell short by four runs against England.

That narrow defeat cast a long shadow, and heavy losses to Italy and the West Indies ensured their tournament never truly gathered momentum. Tuesday, however, offered a final shot at redemption.

This time, the Rohit Paudel-led side held their nerve. Backed by thousands of Nepalese fans who once again packed the Wankhede Stadium, Nepal crossed the line against Scotland for a stirring seven-wicket win.

Dipendra Singh Airee was the chief orchestrator of the run chase. Chasing 171, Nepal was provided with a steady platform by Kushal Bhurtel. But when Michael Leask struck in the 10th and 12th overs to leave Nepal at 87/2, the contest hung in the balance. Airee walked in with work to do.

#### Calm Airee

Calm yet assertive, the right-hander pierced the gaps square of the wicket and punished anything short with authority. In Gulshan Jha, he found the perfect ally.

The pair steadily drained Scotland's hopes, putting on a match-winning stand of 73 runs in 36 balls.

Airee remained unbeaten on a sparkling 50 off 23 balls – an innings that combined clarity of thought with controlled aggression. It was Nepal's first T20 World Cup win in 12 years.

Earlier, Scotland had posted 170/7, built around Michael Jones' 71 off 45 balls.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Scotland 170/7 in 20 overs (Michael Jones 71; Sompal Kami 3/25) lost to Nepal 173/1 in 19.2 overs (Dipendra Singh Airee 50\*, Kushal Bhurtel 43; Michael Leask 3/30) by 7 wickets

#### OPENING ACT

# Living by the six, dying by the duck: No crisis for Abhishek

In a fickle format, optics are a better indicator of form than numbers; batsman will not be prompted to embrace moderation vs Netherlands

**Sandip G**  
Ahmedabad, February 17

THE GAZE and mind of the motley audience in the Narendra Modi Stadium shrinking on him, Abhishek Sharma stoutly defended the first ball from an intrepid net bowler. A collective gasp blew in the stands, where a few overzealous fans were waving the tricolour and hoping for Abhishek to ferry the first ball deep into the stands. It's the habit he has pampered the audience into, the burden of expectations he has imposed on himself. With every defensive stroke of his, the onlookers grew impatient. Even during an optional nets session, they expect his willow to shower sixes.

It soon did, when he pillored a good length ball from Varun Chakaravarthy straight over him. The ball crashed onto a just-swept orange seat beside the sight-screen. Peals of applause crackled, creating an echo in the vast and immense space. Abhishek clanked into Abhishek mode, and this was what the crowd wanted. Sixes soared, shrieks of "watch out" sliced the unusually nippy air.

The onslaught of sixes is why they flock to watch him; the carnage of sixes is the reason Abhishek has swiftly become the pin-up boy of India's radical batting ethos in the format. It's the reason his recent string of low scores has alarmed some of them.

But it's merely a reflection of his exploding stature that just a brief fallow spell has been magnified into a crisis. Two ducks in as many World Cup outings, and four in the last seven fixtures, has shocked the world around him. Words of counsel from the wise old hands have poured in. Sunil Gavaskar suggests he should take a single of the first ball; Ravi Shastri asks him to "give himself a little more time".

From grim and serious observers to lay watchers, everyone has an opinion or theory on what he should do to end the string of zeros. Sometimes, it takes a lean patch to appreciate an athlete's value and impact at its fullest. It's not really a frugal phase either: the last nine knocks featured a brace of half-centuries and three 30-plus scores. AP



Despite the early dismissals, it's not really a frugal phase either for India opener Abhishek Sharma: the last nine knocks featured a brace of half-centuries and three 30-plus scores. AP

hek would ever match Virat Kohli's stupendous average of 48.69. But India would trade that average for his eye-bursting strike rate of 193 (Kohli's was 137.04).

Even during the ducks, Abhishek betrayed little visible signs of struggles. Against Pakistan he timed the first two balls, the third and fourth were a little forced on a surface where the new-ball from the off-spinner Salman Agha bounced (spongy, tennis-ball like) onto him.

"You can't plan for that dismissal, to be caught at short mid-on. There is no way Pakistan would have expected that," India's batting coach Sitanshu Kotak said. Against the US, he slashed a ball straight to deep cover. Both were instances of indiscretion. He ignored the pitch and bowler versus Pakistan and the fielder against the USA.

There is no definite pattern in his dismissals, no specific tragic flaw a bowler could expose and exploit. He has not scratched around, or played and missed. His movements were sharp, his alignment was intact. He is not trying to be someone else, or bat differently. It just seems like a random coincidence.

#### Not losing sweat

Not much sweat or time is lost on finding a solution. "We don't over-analyse. Sometimes, it does more harm than the opposition's bowlers. He has his plans sorted. He plans the way he wants. Of course, we discuss bowlers and their plans. But nothing else. He is in good form and mind-set," Kotak explained. There is not much advice a coach could give him, other than ensuring that he doesn't brood on the ducks and become an emotional wreck.

He cannot tell him to be patient and embrace moderation. It's antithetical to the essence of being Abhishek. Or to paraphrase Kotak, "you should let him be himself."

But India would hope that he strikes form soon, lest he begins to self-doubt and drifts into a point of profound desperation. He is still India's most important batsman, the ignition that sets the fireworks. Ishan Kishan's form is sublime, but tournaments are seldom won single-handedly. On his part,

Abhishek is doing his bit, which is practising as rigorously as possible. After a brief respite, he returned to the portable nets – a green rectangular cage -- and began carving sixes again. Against Netherlands, the audience would wish the same, that he pampers them again with a treat of sixes, that Abhishek would clank into Abhishek mode.

# Samra's ton goes in vain as New Zealand march into Super 8

**Venkata Krishna B**  
Chennai, February 17

BOUNCING BACK from their defeat to South Africa, New Zealand sealed their Super 8 spot, but to do so, they had to overcome an impressive century from Canada opener Yuvraj Singh Samra. Although Canada eventually lost their fizz, the 19-year-old Samra owned the day at Chepauk, where, during the course of his 110, he became the youngest ever batter to score a century in World Cups. His hundred was also the first by a batsman from an Associate nation, which keeps throwing up new stories.

For a brief while, when New Zealand found themselves 30/2 in the chase of 174, Afghanistan would have watched it with plenty of interest. However, Glenn Phillips (76 off 36) and Rachin Ravindra (59 off 39) took them out of the hole and put them into the Super 8's phase with unbeaten fifties. Their innings, though, was overshadowed by that of Samra, the lone player born and raised in Canada who is part of this squad.

Born to parents with Indian roots, his father, Baljit Samra, had named him after Yuvraj Singh. "I'm not sure exactly what age. I think it was around 11-12 years when I got to know about it. My dad was a really big Yuvraj Singh fan. He followed his cricketing journey throughout, and he told my mom if it's a boy he wants to name Yuvraj no matter what. And he named me that," Samra told Cricket Canada. Batting left-handed like his idol, he prefers to go straight and through the covers and mid-wicket. As the New Zealand attack, sans Lockie Ferguson and Mitchell Santner, struggled to hit the right lines, Samra feasted on it.

#### Standing ovation

In the first over, he jumped out of his crease to hit pacer Matt Henry over covers that set the tone. Thereafter, it was as if Samra transcended himself to the place where he wanted to be, and as he walked back got a standing ovation from nearly 16,000 fans at the venue.

"I was just really grateful, like, every day I manifested this moment that I want to score a 100 in the World Cup as the youngest player in the T20 World Cup. I feel like I enjoyed the whole innings. I feel like I just went my way today and I felt great," Samra said.

Since Canada booked their spot in the T20 World Cup, Samra has been dreaming of scoring a century. Having already established himself in the team, he doesn't want to restrict himself to the limited opportunities he gets with the Canadian outfit. Instead, he has his eyes firmly on T20 franchises and coming into the T20 World Cup, he wanted to use the tournament as an audition of sorts. "In Canada, it's not that easy because we only get three months to play. It's like minus-



Yuvraj Singh Samra celebrates after scoring his century. PTI

**In each of his (Samra's) 11 boundaries and three sixes, what stood out was the bat-swing**

25, minus-30 weather, so it's really hard. We try to come to Sri Lanka, the countries that have good weather, and it's really hard playing cricket there. I feel like this innings could change my life, and I can actually make a good living out of this sport, especially being from Canada, and I feel like it can be a real dream come true," Samra said.

Going by the innings, there are good reasons for Samra to be hopeful. With the Global T20 league becoming a regular fixture in Canada, and the likes of MLC, SA20 and European T20 around, where opportunities have opened up for Associate cricketers, Samra has shown the game that can position him in leagues.

Apart from taking down the Kiwi pacers, he was severe against the spinners, in particular Cole McConchie and the two medium-pacers Kyle Jamieson and Jimmy Neesham. In each of his 11 boundaries and three sixes, what stood out was the bat-swing.

"I feel like it came naturally to me, a natural swing. I feel like my dad helped me a lot in my batting as well. I feel like in my cricket journey, my dad plays the biggest role. I really wish he was here watching this game, but all the credit goes to my dad," he said.

Samra aside, there was very little contribution from the rest of Canada's batsmen. Captain Dilpreet Singh, who put on 116 runs for the opening wicket with Samra, struggled to up the ante, labouring on to 36 off 39. The rest merely tried to hand the strike to Samra, who held the innings together before falling in the last over.

Having booked their Super 8 spot, New Zealand will head to Colombo, where they will be based for the duration of the next round.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Canada 173/4 in 20 overs (Yuvraj Singh Samra 110) lost to New Zealand 176/2 in 15.1 overs (Glenn Phillips 76 not out, Rachin Ravindra 59 not out) by 8 wickets

# From flower-stall poverty to Sri Lanka's hero: Nissanka's story

**Sriram Veera**  
Mumbai, February 17

Right there, at the temple steps, Pathum Nissanka signed his future.

"Not too sure whether any other child has signed his admission papers at Kalutara Bodhiya," Nishantha would later tell The Island newspaper. "This is the greatest blessing you can get. You will have a bright future."

The father was a ground boy at Kalutara Esplanade cricket ground, watering pitches, maintaining the surface. His desire was simple – make his son a cricketer. But Colombo, where cricketing futures are made, was a dream too far to bridge for a family this poor. Until Nissanka came calling.

Eventually, Nishantha made a phone call. Come to Kalutara Bodhiya, the famous temple in the region. That's where they would meet. The temple wasn't chosen randomly. That's where Nissanka's mother sold flowers to devotees. That's where the family's day began and ended – survival measured in small transactions, in coins pressed into palms for jasmine and lotus blooms. When the boy arrived with his father, Nishantha had the admission papers ready.

All that goodwill, all those



Pathum Nissanka scored a hundred against Australia. AP

small acts of faith from people who barely knew him, came full circle on Monday. At the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium, the son of a flower-seller and a groundsman became the first man to score a hundred in the 2026 T20 World Cup – against Australia in a must-win match.

To send Sri Lanka through to the Super Eights. The hundred came off 52 balls. Ten fours, five sixes. The kind of innings that defied Australia's plans and rewrote Sri Lanka's tournament. Compact in stature like Romesh Kaluwitharana, explosive in shot production, Nissanka didn't just bat – he announced himself on the biggest stage.

He pulled, drove, carved. And swept. "The wicket was pretty good today and I played my normal game," Nissanka would say later through translator Jehan Mubarak, his words

measured, understated. Normal game. As if hitting the first hundred of a World Cup against Australia was just another day at the office.

The plan had been simple. "We needed a good powerplay. We got a good partnership with Kusal Mendis and we were able to continue from there." Then it was just about seeing it through, he said. Waiting for the ball to come to his strengths, happy that he got several of those balls and was able to get the boundaries.

Waiting for the ball. He had learned patience the hard way – watching his mother sell flowers, his father tend the pitches, waiting for coaches to find him, for florists to fund him, for the world to notice. Australia couldn't find an answer. Their bowlers had planned for pressure, for Sri Lankan nerves, for the weight of expectation. What they had-

between those two moments lay early mornings at a temple flower stall, a father tending pitches at Kalutara, a florist's allowance sent quietly each month. None of it promised a night like this. That only made it possible. The blessing had travelled.

n't planned for was a 27-year-old who had already negotiated harder odds than this.

Fittingly, his name means "hope" in Sinhala. On Monday, he became more than hope.

When he reached his hundred at Pallekele, the celebrations swelled around him. He didn't move much at first. Just a slow lift of the bat. A glance upward. The noise rolled on without him. Years ago, on the steps of Kalutara Bodhiya, he had signed school admission papers because a coach could not find his house. That one required none.

Between those two moments lay early mornings at a temple flower stall, a father tending pitches at Kalutara, a florist's allowance sent quietly each month. None of it promised a night like this. That only made it possible. The blessing had travelled.

Shami of course, but also England hero Akash Deep. But the team was determined to not be overwhelmed.

The IPL auction happened along the way, but Augib had already set the stage for a rewarding season, where he has now tallied 53 wickets.

**Temperament** Picked for North Zone last year, Augib had already brought his calm temperament to an earlier sticky situation. Batting in pursuit of 269 against Hyderabad in the Vijay Hazare, J&K found themselves at 90/7. Augib was padded up pretty early when the third wicket fell and the coach asked him, "Abhi jaoge batting koya baad mein?" "Abhi jaunga Sir, (Will you bat now or later?) I will bat now," he had said.

Augib would score a century that day and pull the long faces in the dressing room out of their funk. The team had reckoned another special season was underway, perhaps better than their best-ever

possible, for the pacer, who took 9 wickets in the semis against Bengal including a 5-87 in 26 long overs in the first innings, and also added a handy 42 off 54 batting at No 9. So a Ranji final joins a long list of 'impossibles' J&K have ticked off, as Augib, now 29, adds the Test spot to that list.

Baramulla wasn't exactly a boulevard of broken stumps even 4 seasons back, but the natural outswing bowler, quickly expanded his repertoire to start moving the ball both ways, aided by a wrist position that had reminded J&K bowling coach P. Krishna Kumar, the first instance he saw him, of Mohammed Shami.

In a quirk of fate, Shami who has already snared 8 wickets in the first 20 overs as J&K finished on 302 against Bengal posted 328, stands in the way of the team making a historic final. "Augib's wrist position was like Shami's, extremely tough for batsmen to pick," the coach would tell The Indian Express back then. Since then, the pacer and coach

have worked on his strength, on cranking up the speed, bowling close to the stumps, and the release action for the in-swing.

Augib had confessed his admiration for Dale Steyn – modelling his aggressive outswinger on the South African – has always been one for long, painstaking spells on the back of his natural stamina, and the ability to suddenly produce a devilish whizzer. Against Bengal, he sent back captain Abhimanyu Easwaran both times (42 and 54), but his scalps also included 42 and 54 in 26 overs by 83 runs.

Augib would score a century that day and pull the long faces in the dressing room out of their funk. The team had reckoned another special season was underway, perhaps better than their best-ever

possible, for the pacer, who took 9 wickets in the semis against Bengal including a 5-87 in 26 long overs in the first innings, and also added a handy 42 off 54 batting at No 9. So a Ranji final joins a long list of 'impossibles' J&K have ticked off, as Augib, now 29, adds the Test spot to that list.

Ranji Trophy

#### Auqib, with Shami-like wrist position, takes J&K to history's brink

**Shivani Naik**  
Mumbai, February 17

HIS 83-YEAR-OLD grandmother, a cricket fanatic in Baramulla, had first patted Auqib Nabi on the back, for landing an IPL stint with Delhi Capitals at last year's auctions. And then promptly proceeded to tell Jammu & Kashmir's superbly skilled and consistent pacer, that the highest glory would be to play for the Indian national team.

On the cusp of taking J&K into a historic Ranji Trophy final – though they are a good 83 runs away from the target of 126 at 43/2 at Kalyani – Auqib has set his sights on an even higher goal – an India Test spot. Not just donning the white-ball Blues and doing well in the IPL, but the ultimate dream, encouraged by his grandmother, nurtured by his classical-cricket loving teacher-parents, and followed through by the man himself.

All cricketing targets have at

ZIMBABWE THROUGH TO SUPER 8

# World cricket's much-liked giant-slayers back in big league

Zimbabwe's passage to next stage of T20 World Cup a story of resurgence after years of struggle and turmoil

Sandip G  
New Delhi, February 17

AFTER DECADES of turbulence and resilience, Zimbabwe deserved the slice of fortune that had evaded them through their cricketing journey this century. The washout in Pallekele meant they qualified for the Super Eights of the ICC T20 World Cup, their biggest achievement since making the Super Six at the 1999 ODI World Cup. But the feat has deeper meaning and wider ramifications. It's a moment of catharsis; a filip for the sport itself that Zimbabwe is re-acquainting with the old giant-killing habits that once made them equally feared and loved.

It was a triumph of two generations of Zimbabwean cricketers. One that saw the good and hard times; political unrest crumpling their dreams, the pangs of living in a post-colonial world, poverty and inflation sweeping by. The other was born into the milieu of an unstable economy, hyperinflation, rampant unemployment, and grew up in a repressed social environment.

Robert Mugabe had begun his tenure in 1980 with a Bob Marley song and a vision that cricket could make Zimbabwe a nation of gentlemen. Two decades later, the once benevolent leader had become despotic, forcing mass exodus of white Zimbabweans.

Into this uncertain world was born the current brigade. One of them was their pace bow-

ling hero Blessing Muzarabani. He was born into penury. His parents died when he was eight. His grandparents sold fruits and tomatoes to support a family that also included five siblings. He had no sports shoes or formal training. But cricket transformed him, he lingered on beside the nets at the Takashina Cricket Club. As destiny was to wink, former Zimbabwe skipper Tatenda Taibu noticed his height and love for the game.

Fellow pacer Brad Evans is the son of former cricketer Craig. The latter stayed back during the period of crisis and encouraged his son to pursue the sport. With Richard Ngarava, the left-arm seamer, they formed an efficient pace-bowling trifecta. Evans is slippery and hits the deck, the six-foot-eight-inch Muzarabani discomfits with bounce and produces sharp seam movement. Ngarava is 6'6" and seams the ball. Grooming them to world-beating standards is West Indian legend Courtney Walsh, the bowling consultant.

Opening batsman Brian Bennett was born in Harare, but his cricketing smarts were shaped in South Africa. Every year, his father, a blueberry farmer who played club cricket with Andy and Grant Flower would take him to the cricket festival in Eastern Cape. Last year, he reeled off the fastest hundred by a Zimbabwean (against England).

The youngsters are well groomed by battle-scarred, seasoned hands. The tides of life



Zimbabwe's resounding victory over Australia allowed them to pip the giants to a place in Super 8. AP

have taken them through different routes. Sikandar Raza, who spent three years at the Pakistan Air Force boarding school but was denied a pilot's licence because of an eye condition, had deliberated quitting the sport and becoming a software professional. But the love for the game was unshakeable and its myriad charms pulled him back. He became a franchise freelancer, performing odd jobs to sustain his family. Zimbabwe's dalliances with suspensions became infrequent. More games, even though against the lower-tier teams, meant more exposure and revenue. "At least, we did not need to burn our kits," Raza would say.

It's a story of those that simply refused to let the game slip into oblivion. Graeme Cremer left the country of his birth and relocated to Dubai where his wife, a pilot, joined

the Emirates. He took up a coaching job at the Rajasthan Royals Academy in Dubai and had nearly committed himself fully to a coaching profile before his old friend Brendan Taylor asked him if he could dust up the old association. He had no second thoughts.

Taylor, whose injury cut short his World Cup sojourn, was the glue that gelled the past and present of Zimbabwean cricket. He turned 40 this month, and carries both the wealth and burden of a long career. He was one of the architects of Zimbabwe's heist against Australia at the 2007 ICC World T20, and was touted as the future of their batting. But the turmoil around him left him tormented, he took a three-year break from Tests, tried his fortunes in franchise cricket without glowing success, served a three-year ban for not informing the ICC about a

match-fixing approach, spent time in rehab for drug addiction and alcoholism. But he waged and won the battles for a late blaze for his country.

Their re-emergence cannot pass by without the stories of those that left the country at the stroke of the century, due to political upheaval. Two of their finest — Murray Goodwin and Henry Olonga — emigrated to Australia. Goodwin turned into a real estate agent and groomed his sons to represent Australia in age-group cricket; Olonga became a singer. Neil Johnson shifted to South Africa and became a coach. The Flower brothers transformed into coaches of repute. Heath Streak, one of the finest all-rounders then, chose the road to perdition before passing away three years ago. It was a day Zimbabwe's lost generation would have rejoiced too.

## Behind Australia debacle: Bad luck, Smith's exclusion

Sriram Veera  
Mumbai, February 17

AROUND 2 AM in Australia, the texts began. Bharat Sundaresan and Tom Morris were on air for *Sen Radio*, calling the T20 World Cup, when their phones lit up. Australian fans, awake in the middle of the night, furious. About Cameron Green. About Steve Smith sitting in the stands. About a team that had flown halfway across the world and was losing to Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka.

The received wisdom has always been simple: Australians play T20, they just don't feel it. The Big Bash is background noise. The T20 World Cup is something that happens. The real game, the real identity, lives in the baggy green, in five-day Tests, in the mythology of the Ashes. The ODI World Cup, at a push.

"Not if you saw some of the texts," Sundaresan says. "I see it this way: had Australia won the games against Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka, the fans wouldn't have not been so enthused about following the World Cup. They would have said, 'yeah that was expected'. And continued focusing on the footy season now that Ashes is well past us. But since they are losing, and since it's the World Cup, the anger is pouring."

The anger was specific, which is always the sign that it's real. Cameron Green, 25, had become the face of everything the selectors had got wrong — the favourite who didn't deserve his place. And then there was Steve Smith, flown in as an SOS, sitting unused while Australia crashed out, which the texts called — "an insult".

Ian Healy didn't mince it. "This is an Australian cricket low point." He'd seen enough. So had Mark Waugh. "Look at the selections," Waugh said on Sen's breakfast show. "Glenn Maxwell, Cooper Connolly,



Australia's Nathan Ellis with skipper Mitchell Marsh . AP

Green and Josh Inglis — these guys are all out of form. Maxwell and Connolly have not made a run for three months between them."

Healy went further, the way only former players can when they've stopped being polite. "A selection misguidance was a year ago when they prioritised power over batmanship and over-confidence over grit." He listed what had gone wrong with the clinical efficiency of a man who'd kept wicket his whole career and learned to see the field clearly. Green at three. Tim David at four. Josh Inglis at five, getting bounced around. "The team it left us with," Healy said, "are all finishers, no starters."

Part of this was misfortune. Josh Hazlewood — who had just helped RCB win their first IPL title — gone. Mitch Starc, gone. Pat Cummins, gone. Three world-class bowlers, two injured, one retired. What remained was Stoinis and Maxwell and Connolly sharing the bowling, which Healy called with a certain precision, "part-timers who can be handy." It's difficult to see Australia losing the game against Sri Lanka after putting that total. But it's also difficult to see Australia collapsing, from 160 for 4 to 181 all out.

But misfortune only explains so much. Before the tournament, Australia had

toured Pakistan and lost the T20 series there, fielding three debutants while resting their stars, and former Pakistan captain Moin Khan had said what everyone was thinking: "It is as if they are fulfilling a formality." It was clear that this Australian team wasn't going to cut it on spin-friendly tracks.

Mitchell Marsh had retired from Test cricket to focus entirely on this tournament. He was, by all accounts, genuinely excited. And then the campaign collapsed around him — injuries, form, selections that defied the evidence — and Australia were out.

Some of them don't even play their own domestic T20 league. Travis Head skips the Big Bash, plays IPL, flies to the World Cup. He made runs against Sri Lanka but the lower half couldn't finish what he started. Which is exactly when you'd want a Smith walking out to bat. The non-selection of Smith was, in the end, what the whole thing came to mean. "The most baffling non-selection I can remember for ages," Waugh said. "You've got to be smart enough to see which players are in form and which players are out of form."

Around 2 am in Australia, the fans were paying attention. They were awake, and angry, and texting into the dark. Not because they don't care about T20 cricket. Because they do.



Shri Narendra Modi  
Prime Minister



Shri Mohan Charan Majhi  
Chief Minister, Odisha

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# Economy

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026

17

'SEVERAL INDIAN MODELS RATED BETTER THAN MANY LARGE INTERNATIONAL AI SYSTEMS'

## 'IndiaAI Mission 2.0 to focus on UPI-like AI service for MSMEs'

In a boost for India's compute capacity, will add 20,000 GPUs to the existing 38,000 GPUs

Soumyarendra Barik  
New Delhi, February 17

INDIA IS working on the next phase of its AI Mission, and is focusing on creating a bouquet of ready-to-use artificial intelligence (AI) solutions in key sectors for medium and small businesses, which will be made available on a common digital platform, akin to UPI, Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters on day two of the India-AI Impact Summit, Vaishnav also announced that India will scale its compute capacity beyond the existing 38,000 GPUs with the addition of 20,000 GPUs in the coming weeks.

Unlike many other countries where AI infrastructure is controlled by a few firms, India has provided AI compute access to a wide section of its population, he said.

Regarding India's sovereign AI models, the Minister stated



Ashwini Vaishnav, Union Minister for Electronics & IT at the India AI Impact Summit 2026 on Tuesday. ANI

several models launched at the Summit have been tested and measured against multiple parameters. When compared with global models, several Indian models have been rated better than many large international AI systems, underscoring India's innovation capabilities.

He also noted that Stanford has ranked India among the top three AI nations globally.

Acknowledging the chaos that ensued on day one of the summit that saw long serpentine queues, forcing many to wait for hours just to clear security checks and reach the halls, Vaishnav said that the summit saw a "huge response" from young people.

To a question on the impact of AI tools on India's IT services,

Vaishnav apologises for chaos on day 1 of India AI Summit

Soumyarendra Barik  
New Delhi, February 17

AS DAY two of the India-AI Impact Summit began, Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav apologised for the chaos and crowds that ensued on the opening day of the flagships event. He also said that a war room has been made operational to address any issues being faced by visitors.

"This is the biggest AI summit in the entire world. The response is phenomenal. The energy is palpable. We can see the organisation is very smooth

main, we believe that content creators, especially news creators, must get a fair remuneration for the content they are creating," said Vaishnav.

"That is something that we sincerely believe as a government, and I think the public policy should also be oriented towards that. We are talking to the big platforms they have, more-or-less, shown inclination towards the process by which fair remuneration to content creators, especially the news creators who are the part of the conventional media

where the content is used by digital platforms," the minister added.

now. If anybody has faced any problems yesterday, we apologise for that," he said at a press conference Tuesday.

Addressing criticism over overcrowding, Vaishnav said more than 70,000 people attended the summit on Monday, highlighting the high interest in the event, especially among young people.

"Whatever feedback you have, please share with us. We are open-minded. We will make efforts to make the experience smoother and enjoyable for all of you," the Union minister added.

A committee constituted by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, in a white paper last year, recommended a mandatory blanket licence requiring all AI companies to pay royalties for using copyrighted work to creators.

The recommendations suggest that a committee constituted by the government would decide the royalty fee. If implemented, India would become the only country to prescribe a statutory licensing regime for AI developers, with royalty rates prescribed by a government-appointed committee.

Today, it is easy to create an AI model. You rent Graphics Processing Units (GPUs), or the hardware needed to perform complex calculations and process digital visual, take data from open source organisations, like Common Crawl, use open-source algorithms, and create a model. But what problem are you really looking to solve? One does not have to build a mega, trillion-parameter AI model, for which you might need large computing power...

If ChatGPT wants access to such computing power, it is understandable, because they are creating general-purpose large language models (LLMs). I'm not saying we should not build such models. But if you are

Lack of Maths PhDs a genuine problem for India, but not key for building AI solutions: CoRover CEO

EXPRESS  
INTERVIEW



ANKUSH SABHARWAL  
CEO, CoRover

that's flagged is the lack of high-quality Indian datasets for AI models to train on. Do you feel there's a gap?

It depends on what people are planning to do with the data. It's easy to say that I want all the data out there. But, if you are solving specific problems for a travel company, you partner with them and use their data. If you are building something for defence, you seek data from them.

building such a model, then you need to have the resources and the vision for the next 10 years to build, while not making any money.

**Are you exclusively utilising the subsidised GPUs available under the Centre's IndiaAI Mission, or relying on other resources?**

We have multiple partners. We have L&T, Tata Communications, and we are also partnered in the IndiaAI Mission, under which everyone has to submit a use case and they can then get GPUs at a subsidised rate. But again, our focus is not to just burn GPUs. We want to have the things which work on edge devices to really democratise the technology.

**But do you actually get GPU access for much cheaper through the AI Mission?**

Yes, the hourly GPU rates under the IndiaAI Mission are much cheaper. The market rate is around Rs 400 per hour, and under the subsidised rates, we can get it for around Rs 67. It also depends on what you are building. Google has many services, and you have to see what you are building—LLM, or fine-tuning a model, or something else. Based on that, you have to choose an approach.

**Another common problem**

Yes, this problem is genuine.

That's why you see fewer research papers and deep tech companies coming from India. To build hardcore deep tech platforms, you really need hardcore research-oriented techniques. We definitely need to be strong in analytical, mathematical, computer science, and programming skills. But, we also have to leverage our strengths... To create meaningful AI solutions, one does not need deep tech solutions or mathematical skills. To create strong AI platforms, you need deep tech, and that only a few of us can do right now. But a wide range of people can build AI solutions.

## India's first private sector helicopter FAL by Tata, Airbus opens in Karnataka

Sukpal Sharma  
New Delhi, February 17

TWO YEARS after it was announced, India's first private sector helicopter final assembly line (FAL) — to manufacture Airbus' best-selling H125 helicopters — was inaugurated on Tuesday at Vemagal in Karnataka's Kolar district.

The facility, built by Tata Advanced Systems (TASL) in partnership with European aerospace major Airbus, was inaugurated virtually by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting French President Emmanuel Macron. The project, seen as a big boost to aircraft manufacturing in India, was first announced on Republic Day in 2024 in conjunction with Macron's visit to India at the time.

While Modi and Macron inaugurated the facility virtually from Mumbai, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu, and France's Minister of the Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Catherine Vautrin, were present at the FAL site for the inauguration. The delivery of the first made-in-India H125 helicopter is expected in early 2027, and the FAL will serve the Indian market as well as other markets in the region.

Although the H125 is primarily a civil helicopter, plans now also include a military version, H125M, to be offered out of the Indian factory with high levels of indigenised components and technologies. Airbus sees it as an 'ideal successor' to Cheetah and Chetak helicopters used by the Indian armed forces



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### E. EXPLAINED

#### H125M may replace Chetah, Cheetah

Although the H125 is primarily a civil helicopter, plans now also include a military version, H125M, to be offered out of the Indian factory with high levels of indigenised components and technologies. Airbus sees it as an 'ideal successor' to Cheetah and Chetak helicopters used by the Indian armed forces

sion, H125M, to be offered out of the Indian factory with high levels of indigenised components and technologies. Airbus sees the H125M as an "ideal successor" to Cheetah and Chetak helicopters used by the Indian armed forces. These helicopters were a result of an industrial collaboration agree-

ment dating back over 60 years between Airbus and government undertaking Hindustan Aeronautics.

Moreover, civil helicopter use in India lags many other countries where choppers are routinely used for a number of purposes. India's massive population and notable economic growth make it an attractive potential market for increased civil helicopter use.

Vemagal was announced as the location of the H125 FAL in October. Airbus and TASL had originally shortlisted eight potential sites for the FAL, top Airbus Helicopters officials had said in July 2024. TASL and Airbus have a broader partnership with the Tata group company already having a final assembly line for the Airbus C295 military aircraft in Gujarat's Vadodara. The India FAL for the H125 will be the fourth production unit for the single-engine helicopter with an initial annual production capacity of 10 helicopters. FULL REPORT ON [WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM](#)

Technology (MeitY). The officials launched a study on AI adoption and impact on manufacturing MSMEs by Athena Infonomics in partnership with the National Institute for Smart Government and line ministries of MSMEs, textiles, and pharmaceuticals.

Remarking that India's battle for AI will be won or lost

on the factory shop floor, Rohit Kansal, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Textiles said the country's long-term economic shift cannot solely be determined by digital native businesses and will eventually be decided by the use of AI to modernise legacy industries like textiles, food processing, leather.

"Productivity improvement

in these sectors and MSMEs

will matter far more for national income than incremental gains in already digitised sectors," Kansal said.

FULL REPORT ON [WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM](#)

## QUALITY CONTROL TO EMISSION CHECKS

### AI-linked use cases offer potential for MSMEs to scale up

Aanchal Magazine  
New Delhi, February 17

FROM ARTIFICIAL intelligence-enabled quality inspection to detect weaving or dying defects in real time in textiles, or predictive maintenance tools reducing machine downtime, or identifying the source of a specific solvent in a contaminated cough syrup, or real-time measurement using AI to track emissions, energy intensity continuously rather than retrospectively — these were some of the case scenarios cited by policymakers at the India AI Impact Summit on Tuesday.

These AI-linked interventions could not only help scale up manufacturing but also improve quality and competitiveness of the country's industrial sector going ahead.

In this transition towards AI, officials said the key role will need to be played by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) — over 76 million in number, of which about one-fifth are in manufacturing.

"While large enterprises typically have ways to finance this transition and are able to make the necessary investments, smaller enterprises and enterprises in traditional sectors like textiles, may or may not necessarily be in the position to make the kind of investments which are needed to support this (transition)," said S Krishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information

**In the transition towards AI, officials said the key role will need to be played by MSMEs — over 76 million in number, of which about one-fifth are in manufacturing**

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FULL REPORT ON [WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM](#)

## BRIEFLY



The Maruti Suzuki e-Vitara SUV at its Gujarat plant. REUTERS

### BAAPLAN LAUNCHED

**Maruti Suzuki expands range; drives in first electric model e-Vitara**

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki India Tuesday formally entered the electric vehicle (EV) segment with the launch of its first battery EV e-Vitara in the country. The EV penetration in India has been hovering around 4-5% for the last two years, and it is time that this market takes an exponential leap, said Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Officer (Marketing and Sales) Partho Banerjee. The e-Vitara was launched at Rs 10.99 lakh with BaaS (Battery-as-a-Service) ownership plan and comes with 61kWh and 49kWh battery pack options with a drive range of up to 543 km.

PTI

**Dabur names Mohit Malhotra global CEO**

**Bangalore:** Consumer goods maker Dabur India said Tuesday that its board has redesignated Mohit Malhotra as global CEO with immediate effect and appointed Herjit Bhalla as CEO for its India business effective April 15, 2026.

PTI

## • MARKETS

	Gold	US Dollar
Sensex	₹1,51,865	\$90.67
8375996	25725.40	
173.81	42.65	
0.21%	0.17%	

NOTE: GOLD, SILVER RATES AS PER INDIA BULLION AND JEWELLERS ASSOCIATION DATA GOLD PER 10G, SILVER PER 1KG; CRUDE OIL (INDIAN BASKET) AS OF FEBRUARY 13, 2026

## India engaging with global partners from position of strength, says EAM Jaishankar

Hitesh Vyas  
Mumbai, February 17



**From a position of strength, India is engaging international partners more intensively. This is demonstrated in recently concluded trade deals"**

S JAISHANKAR,  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

awaits bilateral trade pact with America.

From a position of strength, India is engaging international partners more intensively. This is demonstrated in recently concluded trade

technology, skills and talent, he noted. Speaking about the global scenario, the foreign minister said the world has entered into a volatile and uncertain era, possibly the most turbulent in living memory, with long-standing assumptions and expectations now becoming questionable.

"The established global order is clearly changing before our very eyes. Replacements are hard to create and we appear to be headed for a long twilight zone. This will be messy, risky, unpredictable, perhaps even dangerous," Jaishankar said.

The family-owned company, known for its colourful building blocks, currently operates four branded stores in Gurugram, Bengaluru and Chennai, and plans to prioritise major metros for further expansion. It competes with US toy-makers Mattel and Hasbro and domestic brand Funskool in India's toy market, which consultancy Ken Research valued at about \$1.8 billion.

Mandon said online accounts for about 50% of its India sales and quick commerce accounts for just over 10%. The India business has been growing at more than 50% annually, she said, compared with single-digit global growth.

REUTERS

New Delhi

epaper.indianexpress.com

**'AI can help with power sector complexities'**

**Mumbai:** AI integration can help manage complexities in the power sector in India, where the share of renewables is expected to grow in the years to come, an expert from the International Energy Agency (IEA) said.

PTI

**Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Ltd.**  
**Notice Inviting Tenders (E-Tendering Process)**

Specification No.	Tender Inviting Authority	Name of the Work
30	CE / IT-RAPDRP	Annual Maintenance Support for the existing SAP S4 HANA ERP Software and Automation

For details of works / Procurement / Due date of submission / Opening, viewing and downloading of e-tenders, please visit the websites [www.tnpsc.org](http://www.tnpsc.org), [www.tenders.tn.gov.in](http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in), [www.tntenders.gov.in](http://www.tntenders.gov.in), DIFR/1159/Tender/2026

कार्यालय अभियान मुख्य अभियान, संघीय, अजमेर  
सार्वजनिक नियमित विभाग, संघीय, अजमेर

क्रमांक:-अमृता / अन्तर्गत एक-2 (३०) निवारा/वी-३५१  
NIB No.-PWD 2526 AS56  
UBN No.-PWD 2526WLOB 22625

निवारा सचिवान संख्या 24 वर्ष 2025-2026

राज्यालय के राज्यालय मार्गदर्शक के ओर से प्रोत्तेजिंग पर्सनल के अनुसार भौतिक विभाग लिए में भवन नियमित कार्य के लिए उपलब्ध की गयी है। इसका नियमित विभाग, राज्यालय में पर्सनल अवधि गत्या संस्थान के अनुसार विभाग / केन्द्र संस्थान के आधिकारिक संस्थान / केन्द्रीय लोक नियमित विभाग / डाक एवं दूर संस्थान विभाग / रेलवे इन्फ्रारेट में पर्सनल एवं अधिकारी के संस्थान से नियमित प्रकार में इं-प्रोजेक्ट इनियिटिव के आधार पर अधिकारी की जारी है। इ-नियिटिव से संबंधित विवरण वर्तावान <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> एवं <http://sppt.rajasthan.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकता है।

हस्ताक्षर:-  
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DIP/C/2975/2026

**ARMY LAW COLLEGE, PUNE**

Old Pune-Mumbai Highway (NH-4),  
Saibaba Seawadham, Kanhe, Pune - 412106

Contact No: 02114-297339 & Mob 8149930388, 9971435277,  
Website: [www.alcpune.com](http://www.alcpune.com)

**AMENDMENT TO NOTICE FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)**

- Refer our Advertisement on the subject published in Times of India, Indian Express & Navbharat Times (Delhi edition) and Lokshakti & Maharashtra Times (Pune edition) dated 28 Jan 26.
- Following Amendments are hereby carried out in the para 2 of above-mentioned advertisement:

- Para 2.3. Last date for Submission of EOI & Bids - 17 Feb 2026 (1200 hours)
- Para 2.4. Opening of Technical Proposals - 17 Feb 2026 (1300 hours onwards)

Read:

- Para 2.3. Last date for Submission of EOI & Bids - 27 Feb 2026 (1200 hours)
- Para 2.4. Opening of Technical Proposals - 28 Feb 2026 (1300 hours onwards)

3. Detailed scope of work will be strictly as per EOI uploaded on college website [www.alcpune.com](http://www.alcpune.com)

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**SK-122, FIRST FLOOR, SECTOR-116**

**NOIDA (GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR)**

E-mail: pmunit45@yahoo.in

NIT No.: 298/M-10/21

Dated: 16.02.2026

**इ-नियिटिव सूचना**

उत्तर प्रदेश जल नियन्त्रण (नगरीय) की ओर से अधिकारीका द्वारा ADDITIONAL

**WORKS FOR CONSTRUCTION**

**OF VICE-PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE I NO. TYPE-III**

**STAFF QTRS.-2 NOS.-II**

**STAFF QTRS. 1 NO. AND LEFT OVER WORK OF 0.25 UNIT BOYS AND 0.25 UNIT GIRLS**

**DORMITORY WITHOUT WARDEN RESIDENCE AT JNV:**

**ASHOK NAGAR (MP) के नियमित**

**कार्य की अनु-लगत रु. 219.88**

**लाख, हेतु दिनांक 25.02.2026**

**के अपराह्न 05.00 बजे हैं-नियिटिव**

**एनीमिट्रिकों को जाती है। उत्तर कार्य हेतु**

**इ-नियिटिव प्राप्त दिनांक 17.02.2026**

**से दिनांक 25.02.2026** के अनु-उत्तर

**प्रदेश सरकार की e-procurement की**

**वेबसाइट <https://etender.up.nic.in>**

**से डाउनलोड किये जा सकते हैं तथा**

**इ-नियिटिव दिनांक 26.02.2026** को

**01:00 बजे कार्यालय**

**परियोजना प्राप्तकार्य, गूँगट-45, रीफ**

**एफ औपेसोन, 03090 जल नियमित**

**एसबी-122, प्रधान तल,**

**शेषटर-116, नोएडा में खोली जायेंगी।**

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**<https://etender.up.nic.in> पर**

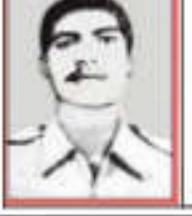
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**उल्लेख है।** समर्पण शुल्क पत्र (Corrigendum) <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर

**उल्लेख है।** समर्पण शुल्क पत्र (Corrigendum) <https://etender.up.nic.in> प

## SALUTE THE SOLDIER

### BORDER SECURITY FORCE



**CONSTABLE RAJBIR**  
04.04.1965 –  
18.02.1988  
Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawan Constable Rajbir on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, he sustained fatal bullet injuries while fighting militants in Malipur, Punjab and made ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.



**SH H R SHARMA, AC, PMG**  
15.04.1941 –  
18.02.1993  
Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Commander on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, he sustained fatal bullet injuries while fighting militants in Srinagar, J&K. He fought bravely and made ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. His sacrifice and gallant action have been aptly recognized by GOI by awarding him with PMG (Posthumously).



**CONSTABLE RANJIT SINGH**  
30.06.1967 –  
18.02.1998  
Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawan Constable Ranjit Singh on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, he made ultimate sacrifice while defending his post during heavy snowfall in Mandir Mandi area, Poonch (J&K).

### CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE



**VEER BALIDANI CONSTABLE SAYED ABDUL AHUID**  
05-01-1964 To  
18-02-1990  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable Sayed Abdul Ahuid of 5 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice when he was attacked by militants while performing duty at Tattoo ground in Srinagar on 18 February 1990. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.



**VEER BALIDANI CONSTABLE L. B. SUNDRESHA**  
69 BN  
10-5-1960 To  
18-02-2000  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable L. B. Sundresha of 69 BN, who made the supreme sacrifice while countering an ambush in Tral, J&K on 18 February 2000. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.



**VEER BALIDANI CONSTABLE M. BASKER REDDY**  
69 BN  
13-07-1966 To 18-02-2000  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable M. Basker Reddy of 69 BN, who made the supreme sacrifice while countering an ambush in Tral, J&K on 18 February 2000. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.



**VEER BALIDANI CONSTABLE G. DHANANJAY**  
69 BN  
12-06-1976 To  
18-02-2000  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable G. Dhananjay of 69 BN, who made the supreme sacrifice while countering an ambush in Tral, J&K on 18 February 2000. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.



**VEER BALIDANI CONSTABLE D. D. PATIL**  
69 BN  
01-08-1967 To  
18-02-2000  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable D. D. Patil of 69 BN, who made the supreme sacrifice while countering an ambush in Tral, J&K on 18 February 2000. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.



**VEER BALIDANI CONSTABLE AMRA RAM**  
31 BN  
03-07-1967 To  
18-02-2008  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable Amra Ram of 31 BN, who made the supreme sacrifice while countering an ambush in Tral, J&K on 18 February 2000. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.



**VEER BALIDANI CONSTABLE SURESH KUMAR**  
31 BN  
02-11-1966 To  
18-02-2008  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable Suresh Kumar of 31 BN, who made the supreme sacrifice while countering an ambush in Tral, J&K on 18 February 2000. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.



**VEER BALIDANI CONSTABLE LAKHWINDER SINGH**  
31 BN  
01-03-1970 To  
18-02-2008  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable Lakhwinder Singh of 31 BN, who made the supreme sacrifice while countering an ambush in Tral, J&K on 18 February 2000. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.



**VEER BALIDANI CONSTABLE GOVIND SINGH**  
111 BN  
28-03-1982 To  
18-02-2009  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable Govind Singh of 111 BN, who made the supreme sacrifice while countering an ambush in Tral, J&K on 18 February 2000. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.



**VEER BALIDANI CONSTABLE MANOJ KUMAR**  
111 BN  
25-11-1981 To  
18-02-2009  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable Manoj Kumar of 111 BN, who made the supreme sacrifice while countering an ambush in Tral, J&K on 18 February 2000. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.



**VEER BALIDANI CONSTABLE KANAI MAJE**  
208 COBAR BN  
10-03-1992 To  
18-02-2020  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable Kanai maje of 208 COBAR BN, who made the supreme sacrifice while countering an ambush in Tral, J&K on 18 February 2000. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.



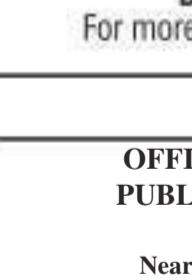
**VEER BALIDANI HEAD CONSTABLE AJEET SINGH**  
204 COBRA BN  
15-01-1978 To  
18-02-2020  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Head Constable Ajeeet Singh of 204 COBRA BN, who was seriously injured in a fierce encounter with Maoists on 10 February 2020 and breathed his last during treatment on 18 February 2020. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.



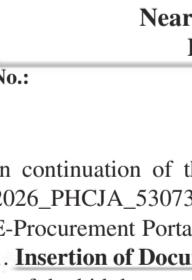
**VEER BALIDANI HEAD CONSTABLE SANDETER YADAV**  
111 BN  
22-03-1973 To  
18-02-2009  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Head Constable Sandeter Yadav of 111 BN, who made the supreme sacrifice while countering an ambush in Tral, J&K on 18 February 2000. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.



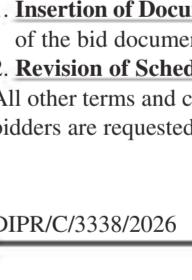
**VEER BALIDANI HEAD CONSTABLE AJEET SINGH**  
204 COBRA BN  
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18-02-2020  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Head Constable Ajeet Singh of 204 COBRA BN, who was seriously injured in a fierce encounter with Maoists on 10 February 2020 and breathed his last during treatment on 18 February 2020. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.



**VEER BALIDANI HEAD CONSTABLE SANDATER YADAV**  
111 BN  
22-03-1973 To  
18-02-2009  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Head Constable Sandater Yadav of 111 BN, who made the supreme sacrifice while countering an ambush in Tral, J&K on 18 February 2000. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.



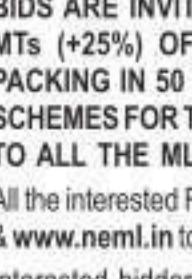
**VEER BALIDANI HEAD CONSTABLE AJEET SINGH**  
204 COBRA BN  
15-01-1978 To  
18-02-2020  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Head Constable Ajeet Singh of 204 COBRA BN, who was seriously injured in a fierce encounter with Maoists on 10 February 2020 and breathed his last during treatment on 18 February 2020. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.



**VEER BALIDANI HEAD CONSTABLE SANDATER YADAV**  
111 BN  
22-03-1973 To  
18-02-2009  
DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Head Constable Sandater Yadav of 111 BN, who made the supreme sacrifice while countering an ambush in Tral, J&K on 18 February 2000. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.



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**UVVN LTD.**  
H.O.: 'UJJWAL', Maharan Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006  
Telephone: 0135 - 2763808, Fax 0135-2763508  
CIN No.: U40101UR2015G0C0586, Website : www.ujvn.com

Letter No 134

Tender Notice Dated 17.02.2026

Office of the Executive Engineer (Civil-Maintenance), Yamuna Bhawan, Yamuna Colony, Dehradun invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below :

Tender No. 15/EECM/DDN/2025-26

Name of work- M&R Type II (CT, E&F) Residences of UJVN Ltd. at Yamuna Colony, Dehradun.

Estimated cost- Rs. 21.05 Lac (Exclusive of GST)

Date of availability of bid document on website: From 14:00 hrs of 18-02-2026

Last date for submission of tender : Up to 14:00 hrs of 12-03-2026

For full & further details, kindly visit our website : [www.ujvn.com](http://www.ujvn.com)

The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website : [www.ujvn.com](http://www.ujvn.com)

Executive Engineer (Civil-Maintenance)

"Avoid Wasteful use of Electricity"

## NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY

### E-TENDER NOTICE

DRM / Electrical, North Western Railway, Jodhpur for & on behalf of the president of India, invites E-tender for the following work. 1. Complete details of tenders can be seen on Website No :- <http://www.reps.gov.in> 2. Date & time of closing of e-tender :- 10.03.2026 up to 15.00 hrs. 3. Date & time of opening of e-tender :- After 15.00 hrs. on 10.03.2026. Tender No. : 50/2025-26

Name of Work : Provision of Air conditioners at all branches in DRM office and strengthening of power supply system at DRM office and other associated locations. Approx. Cost of the work (Rs.) : Rs. 18127925.66 For detailed information visit <http://www.reps.gov.in>

246-AJ/26

Follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/NWRailways) [Twitter](https://www.twitter.com/NWRailways)

## GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA

### TENDER NOTICE

S.R. No.

NAME OF BOARD/CORP/ AUTH

NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER

OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)

AMOUNT / END (APPROX.) IN RUPEES

WEBSITE OF THE BOARD/CORP/ AUTH

NODAL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL

I

MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE, NANGLA CHOURAHI

COMMUNITY CENTER IN PANCHAYAT GHAR IN WARD NO 10 + 1 WORK

Closing Date 20.02.2026

Rs. 44,82,849/-

<https://etenders.hry.nic.in>

9812892699 acy.nargi@haryana.gov.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : [www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in) or [www.etenders.hry.nic.in](http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in) No- 43076/HRY

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NODAL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL

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MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, GOHANA

OPERATION, CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE OF COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC TOILETS FOR ONE YEARS IN M.C. GOHANA

16.02.2026 23.02.2026

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<https://etenders.hry.nic.in>

01263252013 ro-gohana@haryana.gov.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : [www.haryana](http://www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in)

## Classifieds

## PERSONAL

I, Rakesh Prajapati S/o Kanhaiya Lal, 185, D-Block, Gali No-4, Sangam Vihar, Delhi-62 have changed my name to Rakesh Kumar.

0071019487-1

I, Raghuwan, S/o Ramesh Jha, R/o, RZF-763/30, Gali No.5, Raj-Nagar Part-2, Palam Colony, New Delhi-110077, have changed my name to Raghuwan Jha.

0040839564-3

I, Poonam Bhadauria C/o Mohit Kumar, 1041, Housing Board Colony Sector-62, Ballabgarh Faridabad-121004 have changed my name to Poonam Bhadauria.

0071019489-1

I, P No. 50321-R, Rank CMDE, Name C. UDAY BHASKAR, R/o HOUSE NO.73, SAINIK FARMS, KHANPUR, PUSHPA BHAWAN, SOUTH DELHI, DELHI-110062 have changed the name of my spouse/ dependent from C. IRA BHASKAR TO IRA BHASKAR for all future purposes.

0040839525-1

I, No. 14620475Y RANK Ex NK ANIL MON Z R/o DDA FLAT NO. 59, SHAHEEN BHAGAT SINGH APARTMENT, PKT-3, PHASE-2 SECTOR-14, N.S.I.T Dwarka, Delhi-110078 have changed the name of my minor son ALDEN RAYCE to ALDEN RAYCE ANIL vide affidavit date 16-2-26 before Delhi.

0071019483-1

I, Nishi Aggarwal, D/o Naresh Kumar Mittal and Veena Rani Mittal, R/o 26/501, Nirala Estate, Phase-2, Greater Noida West, Uttar Pradesh, hereby declare that my parents' names have been incorrectly recorded as Naresh Kumar and Veena Mittal in some of my records. I state that the correct names of my parents are Naresh Kumar Mittal and Veena Rani Mittal. Henceforth, for all purposes and future records, the correct names shall be read and treated as Naresh Kumar Mittal and Veena Rani Mittal.

0040839667-1

I, Nida Fatima W/o Nazir Ahmad Mir R/o J-132, SF-J-Block, Saket, Delhi-110017 have changed my name to Nida Mir.

0071019500-1

I, Neelam W/o Mulkia, holder of Indian Passport No. V6456034, R/o Vpo. Dhakwala, Hoshiarpur, Pin-146111, Punjab, India have changed my name Neelam and surname Neelam. All concerned please note.

0040839612-1

I, NP Sharma S/o Bholu Sharma, 199, Gali No-7, J-II-B Gupta Colony, Sangam Vihar, Delhi-62 have changed my name to Narayan Sharma.

0071019484-1

I, NAMAN SHEEL KUMAR s/o LAXMAN SWAROOP KUMAR r/o 38A, Block-11, Tilak Nagar, Delhi-110018 have changed my name to NAMAN SHEEL permanently. Naman is given name and SHEEL is surname.

0040839518-1

I, Mrs Karanjit Kour wife of JC-573102F, Sub Jagroop Singh resident of Divangarh, have hereby declared that I changed my name from Karanjeet Kour to Karanjit Kour vide affidavit No-IN-JK07407871202193Y dated 07th February 2026.

0020509231-1

I, Mohammad Wakil Mansuri S/o Mohammad Abid Hussain R/o House No.64, Kh.No.132, Left Portion, 2nd Floor, Street No.9, Village Wazirabad, Near Ishra Chowk, P.O. Burari, North Delhi-110084 have changed my name from Abdul Wakil to Mohammad Wakil Mansuri for all intent and purposes.

0040839512-1

I, Meena Basnet, wife of L/NK Gobin Prajuli, an Indian Army with Gorkha Regiment vide Army No. 5050680W, a resident of Kanglatonghi Mandir, PO and PS Sekmai, Imphal West, Manipur, do hereby declare that my real name has been wrongly recorded as Meena Prajuli in my husband's service record. Therefore, my real name, Meena Basnet, will be used for all future purposes.

0040839602-1

I, Mulkia S/o Nathi Ram, holder of Indian Passport No. T9695325, R/o Vpo. Dhakwala, Dist. Hoshiarpur, Punjab, India have changed my name Mulkia and surname Mulkia. All concerned please note.

0040839510-1

I, Kamlawati Tiwari W/o-Dinesh Tiwari, Address-D-594, mandir marg Delhi-110001, have changed my name to Kamla tiwari.

0040839545-2

I, KM.RAKHI MITTAL, W/O, AMBARIKH GARG, R/O, C/102, RADHA PURAM COLONY, GANESWARA, MATHURA, UTTAR PRADESH-281004, have changed my name to RAKHI GARG.

0040839536-1

I, BACHA SINGH F/o 14639120H Rank Ex NK PULIKUMAR R/o H.NO. G/22, STREET NO. 2, KARAWAL NAGAR, DELHI-110094 have changed my name to BACHA SINGH vide affidavit date 9-2-2026 before Delhi.

0071019490-1

I, JEET BALA W/o-NITIN MAURYA, R/o-A-2B, SHIVANGI KUNJ, MADIPUR, PASCHIM VIHAR NEW DELHI-110063, have changed my name from JEET BALA to ISHA, ISHA & JEETA BALA both are same and one person. I shall be known as ISHA for all future purposes.

0040839602-2

I, Hiradhar Mandal S/o Kalu Mandal R/o B-4, Sector-3 Phase-3, Dwarka Delhi-78, have changed my name to Hira Lal Mandal.

0040839663-1

I, Himanshu,S/o-Dinesh Tiwari,Address-D-594 mandir marg Delhi-110001, have changed my name to Himanshu Tiwari

0040839545-1

I, Harry S/o Davender Singh, R/o T-29/N3A, Baljeet Nagar, Patel Nagar, Delhi-08 have changed my name to Harry Singh.

0071019480-1

I, HANIYA D/O MOHAMMAD USMAN R/O R-194, GALI NO-8, RAMESH PARK, LAXMI NAGAR, DELHI-110092 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO HANIYA USMAN

0071019499-1

I, CHAUDHARI ASHABEN ASHOK BHAI, Spouse of No. T7C180162(HSUB) CHAUDHARI ASHOK BHAI, resident of Village& PO-Boriyari, Tehsil& District Mahesana, Gujarat-384335, have changed my name from CHAUDHARI ASHABEN ASHOK BHAI to CHAUDHARI ASHABEN ASHOKBHAI, vide affidavit IN- DL5529161324513Y, dated:17/02/2026, before Notary, Advocate: Rajkumar, Regd.No.-6536, New Delhi.

0040839525-1

I, Bhavin Adlaka, s/o Father Vijay Adlaka, House-no.199, sector-14, Faridabad-121007, changed my name to Bhavinn Adlaka

0040839536-3

I, Asvika Nigam, D/o Tarun Nigam, R/o Tower 1/803, North Close, Nirvana Country, Sector-50, Gurugram-122018, do hereby declare that I had changed my name from Khanak Nigam to Asvika Nigam. For all future purposes, i shall be known by my changed name, Asvika Nigam.

0040839513-1

I, Amanpreet Kaur W/o Sunpreet Singh R/o G-76, 2nd floor, Sant Nagar, Tilak Nagar, Delhi-110018 hereby declare that my daughter name has been changed from Gursharan Kaur to Rehamat Kaur. Henceforth, she shall be known as Rehamat Kaur for all purposes.

0071019456-1

I, Abeer Mohammed Shahid, D/o Mohammed Shahid, R/o, P-151-C, Sabauli-North Aliganj, Sector-C, Sitapur Road, Behta, Bakshi-Kala-Talab, Lucknow-226021, declare that my name appears as "Mohammad Abeer Shahid" in my Class-10 marksheets due to middle name appearing first. My correct name is Abeer Mohammed Shahid, and I shall be known as such henceforth. Both names refer to the same person.

0040839663-4

I, Jameel Ahmad S/o Aziz Ahamed, 5, SF, Royal Apartments, Village Joga Bai, Jamia Nagar, Delhi-25 have changed my name to Jameel Ahamed.

0071019505-1

I, Khushnuma W/o.Ehteshamul, R/o-T-17, Qali Qabristan Wali, Model-Basti, Rani Jhansi Road, Delhi-110006 Have changed my name to Khushnuma Parveen.

0040839547-1

I, Tarun Kumar S/o Sh.Ram Sumer R/o C-4 CP, 14/202, Janakpuri, Janak Puri C-4, West Delhi, Delhi-110058 is also known as Tarun Gupta. Both names are of one and the same person.

0040839512-3

I Sugandh Verma D/o Narendra Kumar born on 30-05-2000 residing at C-11/56 Sec-3 Rohini Delhi 110085 have changed my name to Sugandh vide affidavit

0050284196-1

I, Meena Basnet, wife of L/NK Gobin Prajuli, an Indian Army with Gorkha Regiment vide Army No. 5050680W, a resident of Kanglatonghi Mandir, PO and PS Sekmai, Imphal West, Manipur, do hereby declare that my real name has been wrongly recorded as Meena Prajuli in my husband's service record. Therefore, my real name, Meena Basnet, will be used for all future purposes.

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