

Haryana Tribune

VARSITIES MULL ROADMAP FOR DEVELOPED INDIA

Two-day national conference at HAU to strengthen agricultural education & research concludes. [P2»](#)



KARNAL STEPS UP DRIVE TO GET TOP RANK IN SWACHH SURVEY

The Karnal MC also focuses on Indri, Taraori, Nissing, Assandh, Gharaundera and Nilokheri MCs. [P3»](#)



SHOW FROM THE 80s RAJNI IS BACK IN NEW AVATAR

Karan Razdan, writer of the original series & writer-director of its 2.0 version, tells us what made him revisit the show. [P4»](#)



FORECAST	
VERY DENSE FOG	
TEMPERATURE	
HISAR	MAX: 17°C MIN: 8°C
ROHTAK	MAX: 17°C MIN: 8°C
PANIPAT	MAX: 17°C MIN: 7°C
KARNAL	MAX: 18°C MIN: 7°C
SUNSET	WEDNESDAY 5.39 PM
SUNRISE	THURSDAY 7.14 AM

WEDNESDAY | 7 JANUARY 2026 | HARYANA

₹21 crore recovered as Rohtak civic body tightens noose on property tax defaulters

RAVINDER SAINI
THEHARYANA NEWS SERVICE

ROHTAK, JANUARY 6 With less than three months left before the close of the current financial year, the Rohtak Municipal Corporation (MC) has stepped up its property tax recovery drive. It has already collected over 75 per cent of its annual target. Against a target of Rs 28 crore, the civic body has so far recovered Rs 21.07 crore and expects to maximise collections by March 31.

Significantly, the amount recovered this year is nearly double that of the previous financial year (2024-25), when the MC collected Rs 11.84 crore in property tax. Officials attribute the sharp increase to strict enforcement measures, including issuance of notices and sealing of properties belonging to major defaulters.

According to official figures, Rohtak MC has 2.29 lakh properties, of which 3,707 are in default, with total pending dues of Rs 5.31 crore. Most of the defaulters are owners of commercial properties such as hotels, banquet halls, restaurants, shopping

661 violators served notices as drive intensifies



₹28 CRORE TARGET	
Property tax target for current financial year	₹28 cr
Property tax recovered so far	₹21.07 cr
Pending property tax dues	₹5.31 cr
Total number of properties	2,20,435
Total property tax defaulters	3,707
Notices issued to defaulters	661
Total properties sealed so far	57
Properties re-sealed after recovery	30 (₹1.38 cr recovered)
Properties still sealed	27
Property tax recovered in 2024-25	₹11.84 cr

57 PROPERTIES SEALED

During the current financial year, the MC has already sealed 57 properties of major defaulters. Of these, 30 property owners subsequently deposited over Rs 1.38 crore, leading to desealing of their premises. However, 27 properties remain sealed due to continued non-payment of dues.

complexes and showrooms, while several government departments have also failed to clear their dues.

"As part of the intensified drive, the MC has recently issued notices to 661 defaulters with outstanding property tax dues of more than Rs one lakh each. They have been warned to clear their dues immediately or face

sealing action. The notices mark the beginning of a stricter phase of recovery, and more defaulters will be brought under its ambit in the coming days," said an official.

During the current financial year, the MC has already sealed 57 properties of major defaulters. Of these, 30 property owners subsequently deposited over Rs 1.38 crore, leading to desealing of their premises. However, 27 properties remain sealed due to continued non-payment of dues.

Meanwhile, Dr Anand Kumar Sharma, Commissioner, Rohtak MC, appealed to the property owners to clear their outstanding dues without delay to avoid sealing action. He said property tax was a crucial source of revenue used for development works, including sanitation and civic infrastructure.

"Non-payment of property tax directly hampers development in municipal areas. Initially, action has been taken against major defaulters, but eventually all defaulters will be served notices for recovery," Sharma added.

meantime, dumping and storage of plastic waste under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023. Under these orders, illegal dumping or loading of plastic waste at any location was strictly prohibited.

He added that dumping plastic waste at unauthorised sites in the Bahadurgarh area promoted pollution and posed a serious threat to public health, quality of life and public peace. Preventive action against such activities was necessary in the larger public interest.

The SDM carried out an evening inspection drive led by Bahadurgarh SDM Abhiram Siwach, accompanied by officials from departments concerned.

The drive was conducted in view of the ban on unauthorised transportation, dumping and storage of plastic waste in the city. The inspection team, comprising officials from the police, Regional Transport Authority and the Bahadurgarh Municipal Council, inspected vacant plots at Chhotu Ram Nagar where pollution-causing activities were reportedly underway.

During the inspection, it was found that plastic waste was being illegally dumped in several plots in violation of prescribed norms. Acting on the spot, the SDM directed officials to seal three such plots and impound four vehicles that were being used for



Plastic waste dumped at a site
In Chhotu Ram Nagar of Bahadurgarh town.
PHOTO: SUNIL THAKUR

dumping plastic waste. Sources claimed that the plastic waste was brought here from other places only for the purpose of storage and later it was sold to illegal units located in nearby areas, which reprocessed them. Moreover, the waste sometimes also catches fire, causing serious environmental hazards.

Siwach said the District Magistrate had imposed restrictions on the illegal

movement, dumping and storage of plastic waste under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023. Under these orders, illegal dumping or loading of plastic waste at any location was strictly prohibited.

He added that dumping plastic waste at unauthorised sites in the Bahadurgarh area promoted pollution and posed a serious threat to public health, quality of life and public peace. Preventive action against such activities was necessary in the larger public interest.

The SDM made it clear that such illegal units would not be allowed to operate in Bahadurgarh. Any person found violating the rules would face strict punitive action under various provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sahita.

Appealing to the public, Siwach urged citizens not to engage in illegal activities that increased environmental pollution and endangered public life. He emphasised that ensuring a clean, safe and pollution-free environment was the priority of the administration and required cooperation from all sections of society.



Locals sit around a bonfire in Rohtak on Tuesday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

Rohtak admin asks locals to stay indoors as cold wave intensifies

RAVINDER SAINI
THEHARYANA NEWS SERVICE

ROHTAK, JANUARY 6 In view of the cold wave warning issued by the Meteorological Department, the district administration has issued a comprehensive advisory aimed at minimising loss of life, health risks and economic damage during cold wave conditions.

Deputy Commissioner Sachin Gupta has urged citizens to remain vigilant, strictly follow the advisory and extend help to vulnerable sections, including the elderly, children and those living alone.

He advised residents to keep themselves updated about weather conditions through radio, television and newspapers. In case of symptoms such as cold, fever, nose bleeding or excessive shivering, people should seek medical advice immediately. Unnecessary travel during severe cold

conditions should be avoided, while staying indoors, keeping dry and consuming warm fluids has been recommended. He cautioned against lighting coal or fire stoves in closed rooms due to the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Highlighting the importance of nutrition, Gupta said people should consume vitamin C-rich fruits and vegetables to maintain immunity and body temperature. He also stressed that heads, necks, hands and feet should be properly covered. In case of hypothermia symptoms such as numbness, drop in body temperature or extreme shivering, immediate medical assistance should be sought.

The advisory also focuses on safeguarding agriculture during cold-wave conditions. The farmers have been advised to carry out light and frequent irriga-

MC team inspects bulk waste producers, warns them for not complying with rules

Waste mgmt systems checked at hotels, hospitals, edu institutions in Y'nagar & Jagadhri

SHIV KUMAR SHARMA
THEHARYANA NEWS SERVICE

YAMUNANAGAR, JANUARY 6

The Municipal Corporation, Yamunanagar-Jagadhri (MCYJ), has begun cracking down on bulk waste generators to achieve a better ranking in Swachh Survekshan-2025. In this connection, a special team of the MCYJ conducted surprise inspections at various hotels, hospitals and educational institutions in the twin cities Yamunanagar and Jagadhri and thoroughly examined the waste management system.

During the inspection, several institutions were warned for not following the Solid Waste Management Rules 2016. This campaign was launched on the instructions of Municipal Commissioner Mahabir Parsad and aimed at effectively implementing the Solid Waste Management Rules 2016 in the twin cities.

According to information, a team consisting of Sanitation Inspector Sushil Sharma; Information, Education and

Communication (IEC) Expert Akash Kumar and Durgesh Kumar found that many bulk waste producers were not collecting wet and dry waste separately.

The team found that some establishments didn't have on-site composting facilities and others didn't display information boards related to waste management.

Besides, deficiencies were also found in maintaining necessary records related to waste disposal. Sanitation inspector Sushil Sharma said the management of the establishments were told that bulk waste producers were required to compost the wet waste of their establishments.

He also said that segreg-



A team of Municipal Corporation inspects a hotel in Yamunanagar.

IEC expert Akash Kumar said the role of bulk waste generators was crucial in the swachh survey.

"Hotels, hospitals and educational institutions generate large amounts of waste daily. Therefore, if these institutions comply with the regulations, the sanitation system of the twin cities can be significantly improved," said Akash Kumar.

He appealed to the operators of the establishments to voluntarily comply with regulations and cooperate with the MCYJ. Sanitation Inspector Sushil Sharma further said this campaign would not be limited to warnings.

He said further inspections would be conducted in the coming days and legal action would be taken against bulk waste generators who ignored the regulations, along with fines.

"This campaign of the MCYJ will continue in future also to ensure that the twin cities become clean, beautiful and environmentally friendly," said Sushil Sharma.

Y'nagar police ropes in Yamraj to promote traffic rules

ROAD SAFETY MONTH

SHIV KUMAR SHARMA
THEHARYANA NEWS SERVICE

YAMUNANAGAR, JANUARY 6

The Yamunanagar district police have launched a traffic awareness campaign as part of Road Safety Month. Under this campaign, an artist dressed as 'Yamraj' educated drivers and the general public about the importance of following traffic rules. The symbolic portrayal of Yamraj became a major attraction for the public and helped draw attention to road safety messages.

Police



An artist dressed as 'Yamraj', along with police officials and residents, in Yamunanagar.

Chamkaur Singh said that, under the guidance of Superintendent of Police

Kamaldeep Goyal, the district police will conduct the Road Safety Month campaign till

January 31. He stated that the primary objective of the initiative is to raise public awareness about traffic rules and reduce road accidents.

According to Singh, this unique and effective traffic awareness campaign has been launched jointly by the district traffic police and the Anti-Corruption and Crime Prevention Organisation.

"During the campaign, Yamraj conveyed the message that ignoring traffic rules can lead to untimely death. Through impactful dialogues, the consequences of not wearing helmets, overspeeding, driving in the

wrong direction and jumping traffic signals were explained, leaving a strong impact on the public," said Singh.

He added that Kashif Pal Rana, SHO of the Traffic Police Station, was keeping a special vigil during the drive.

As part of a special initiative, the Anti-Corruption and Crime Prevention Organisation distributed helmets on the spot to two-wheeler riders who were not wearing them, encouraging safer driving practices. Meanwhile, those who were already following traffic rules and wearing helmets were honoured with flowers.

Varieties mull roadmap for developed India

Tribune News Service

HISAR, JANUARY 6
The two-day conference organised by the Indian Agricultural Universities Association (IAUA) at Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University (HAU) concluded here today. Vice-Chancellors from agricultural, horticulture, animal husbandry and fisheries universities across the country participated in the conference.

Addressing the gathering, the IAUA president and Vice-Chancellor of GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, Dr Manmohan Singh, said it is a platform to give new direction to agricultural education, research and innovation in the country, ultimately strengthening farmers, students and the national economy. He said there are 74 agricultural universities in the country, which are playing a key role in developing latest technologies and improved varieties in agriculture, enhancing horticultural production, and evolving

advanced practices in animal husbandry and fisheries.

Dr Singh said making agriculture profitable, increasing production, ensuring nutritional security and promoting innovations have now become major responsibilities of agricultural universities. He added that the primary objective of IAUA is to share the excellent work being done by different universities and to ensure solutions to challenges on the roadmap for the role of agricultural universities

government, so that universities can perform their roles more effectively.

HAU Vice-Chancellor Prof BR Kambaj said discussions were held during the conference on the roadmap for the role of agricultural universities in making India a developed nation by 2047. He said the conference acts as a bridge for sharing latest technologies and finding solutions to agricultural challenges. He called upon universities to cooperate with each other through memoranda of understanding in the field of research, which would yield better outcomes.

Prof Kambaj said discussions were held during the conference on the roadmap for the role of agricultural universities

and the recommendations of the conference would prove to be a milestone in advancing agricultural education, research and extension.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research Additional Director General Dr Ajit Singh Yadav said that under the National Education Policy 2020, agricultural universities can include certain important topics in undergraduate and postgraduate courses as per their requirements, enabling students to gain knowledge to address local agricultural problems. He said agricultural universities can work together with ICAR to resolve their issues effectively.

Former IAUA president Dr Parinder Kaushal, Secretary Dr Dinesh Kumar and other office-bearers also participated in the conference. Vice-Chancellors from various universities, the Registrar of HAU, Deans of different colleges, Directors, officers and scientists were present on the occasion.



Vice-Chancellors and officials of universities engage in discussions during a conference. TRIBUNE PHOTO

JJP submits memo, seeks CBI probe into 'irregularities' in HTET results

ANIL KAKKAR

SIRSA, JANUARY 6

Leaders of the Janayak Janta Party (JJP) submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner on Tuesday, urging a CBI investigation into alleged irregularities in the 2024 Haryana Teacher Eligibility Test (HTET) results. The memorandum was addressed to the Governor of Haryana.

The delegation, led jointly by Yash JJP-in-charge Sharat Singh Godara and District Youth President Rajendra Suthar, raised concerns over transparency, fairness and credibility of the HTET results. They highlighted that after the results were initially prepared, they were suddenly recalled, and the reasons behind this move have not been made public.

The memorandum also questioned the selection of a public sector undertaking to prepare the results, despite its lack of prior experience in handling such exams. It pointed out that while the initial results were prepared in just



JJP leaders submit a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner in Sirsa on Tuesday.

30 days, the revised results were declared in 110 days.

The party alleged that 1,284 candidates were declared successful in the revised results without publishing their scores on the Haryana School Education Board website, and their biometric verification remained incomplete. They demanded that the roll numbers of these candidates be made public.

The memorandum also noted that the High Court allows candidates two years to obtain their OMR sheets, but in HTET 2024, candidates were given only 10 days. The party demanded clarity on whether the OMR sheets were destroyed, which they said would violate the court's order, raising serious questions of malpractice.

The entire process of HTET 2024 is under suspicion due to these hidden irregularities. Lakhs of young candidates' futures are at stake," the memorandum said. It urged the Government

to order a CBI probe to ensure impartiality and take strict action against those responsible.

JJP leaders, including Urban Youth president Deepak Bhaita, district president Ashok Verma, National Executive Chief Secretary Radheshyam Sharma, District Office In-charge Har Singh Bharti and District Press Spokesperson Amar Singh Jyani, along with other office-bearers and party workers, were present on the occasion.

SDM inspects drug de-addiction centre at Dabwali hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SIRSA, JANUARY 6

SDM Arpit Sangal on Tuesday inspected the drug de-addiction centre at the General Hospital in Dabwali of Sirsa district, reviewing its outpatient services, treatment facilities and counselling programmes for patients.

During the visit, Sangal checked the medical facilities, medicine stock and the counselling services provided to patients. He first visited the outpatient department (OPD) counter to learn about patient registration procedures and daily OPD numbers. He asked doctors and staff about the number of patients visiting the centre each day, besides the kind of treatment being provided.

Sangal instructed hospital staff to ensure that no patient has to wait unnecessarily and emphasised treating patients with sensitivity. He also reviewed the availability of medicines and other essential equipment for

Directs doctors to provide regular counselling to patients



SDM Arpit Sangal inspects the de-addiction centre in Dabwali.

treating drug addicts, checking the stock register to ensure there was no shortage of critical drugs.

The SDM highlighted the importance of counselling in addition to medical treatment. "Drug addiction is a social evil. It can be treated not just with medicines but also with proper counseling and family support," he said. He directed doctors to provide regular counselling to patients.

Narnaul judicial officers take part in anti-drug walkathon

Marks culmination of month-long drive by DLSA

SUNIT DHAWAN

NARNAUT, JANUARY 6

Under the guidelines of the National and Haryana State Legal Services Authorities, an anti-drug walkathon was organised in Narnaul city on Tuesday to promote a drug-free society.

Led by District and Sessions Judge Narendra Suri, who is also the Chairman of District Legal Services Authority, the event saw enthusiastic participation from local residents,

My Bharat volunteers, NCC cadets, students and representatives of social organisations.

The participants raised slogans like "War against drugs, with Mahendragarh" and took a collective pledge to eradicate drug abuse from the district. The walkathon started from the Government PG College and concluded at PWD Rest House.

Addressing the partici-

pants, Narendra Suri said the rising trend of drug addiction is a serious concern.

He maintained that the goal is not just to enforce the law but to rescue the youth from this menace through awareness.

Chief Judicial Magistrate-cum-DLSA Secretary Neelam Kumar said special awareness drives, panel discussions, legal literacy camps

and seminars are being regularly conducted at schools and colleges as part of the drive against drugs.

The event was attended by the judicial officers, District IT Officer Prashant Kumar, Prof Narender Yadav, Principal Vinod Khargwal, Major Virendra Sekhwal, District My Bharat officer Nitayanan Yadav and several prominent residents.



Judicial officers, district administration officials and residents participate in a walkathon at Narnaul on Tuesday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

CAMPUS NOTES

SIX FACULTY MEMBERS PROMOTED



Kaithal: Six faculty members of RKSD College, Kaithal, have been promoted under the Career Advancement Scheme (CAS) of Kunshetra University with due approval of the university and the Department of Higher Education, Panchkula. Dr Ruppal Mau, Head of the Hindi Department, has been promoted as Professor, while Dr Sanjay Garg (Mathematics), Dr Rakesh Mittal (History) and Dr Alka Goyal (Physics) have been promoted as Associate Professors. Dr Rachna Sardana (Commerce) and Anjali (English) have been awarded the selection grade. College governing body president Ashwani Shoreswala and Principal Gagan Mittal congratulated the promoted teachers.

LECTURE ON SHORT FILM-MAKING

Ambala: The Department of Mass Communication and Video Production at GMN College, Ambala, organised an extension lecture on short film-making with the aim of providing students with technical knowledge and creative insights related to film production. The session witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, reflecting their keen interest in mass media and filmmaking. The resource person for the lecture was Anil Rai, Assistant Professor at the Sports University of Haryana, Rai (Simpal). He elaborated on the technical and creative processes involved in short film-making, emphasising that it is a creative art form requiring a strong concept, careful planning and effective use of modern technology. He highlighted the growing popularity of short films in the digital era and explained how online platforms have opened new avenues for young film-makers to present their ideas and address social issues creatively and effectively. The college Principal, Dr Rohit Dutt, appreciated the initiative, stating that such lectures enhance students' practical understanding and expose them to emerging opportunities in media and film production. The event was coordinated by Rajender Meenaw, Assistant Professor and in-charge, and Dr Chandrpal Punia, the Head of the Department. Assistant Professor of Punjabi Department Rajender Kaur and Assistant Professor of Political Science Department Dr Trupti were also present.

WEBINAR ON GURU TEGH BHADUR

YAMUNAHRAPUR: Guru Nanak Khalsa College, Yamunaharpur, organised an international webinar on the topic "Beyond Happiness and Sorrow: Guru Tegh Bahadur's Roadmap for a Ideal Sanidhni Soldier" under its Academic Society Critique, Jagnohan Singh Gill, the general secretary of Panjab Sahitya Sabha, Calcutta, was the special speaker at the event, and Gurcharan Singh Lamba, Editor of Sant Sipahi Patrika, USA, was the main speaker. In his special lecture, Gill narrated the glorious story of Guru Tegh Bahadur's historical impact, struggle and sacrifice. He said Guru Tegh Bahadur was a personality who had the qualities of a visionary leader and philosopher. He set an example of sacrifice by choosing the path of martyrdom. Literary creation was also a special quality of the Guru's personality, he added. Lamba, the main speaker, presented his views on the serious thinking and liberal nature of Guru Tegh Bahadur. He said the valiant ninth Sikh Guru could foresee that in the coming time, oppression would reach its peak and it was necessary to have an army of martyrs ready to deal with this oppression. The college Principal, Dr Avinder Singh Bhalla, appreciated the initiative.

SESSION ON CYBERSECURITY & AI



Karnal: Delhi Public School (DPS), Karnal, hosted a session by Arth Bhander, a California-based high school student and the founder of Young Leaders in Cybersecurity and AI (<https://YLCA.tech>) – a fast-growing youth-led initiative working to empower teenagers to make the digital world safer through cybersecurity awareness and responsible AI education. He emphasised that cybersecurity is not only a career pathway but a life-skill, and that responsible AI is essential as technology becomes deeply integrated into everyday education and society. DPS Karnal nominated six students to join the YLCA Global Ambassador Programme starting January 2023, where they will receive structured guidance to lead cybersecurity and responsible AI initiatives. YLCA Programme Advisor and Mentor, Anjali Mangat, Senior Director, Cybersecurity and AI, Microsoft (USA), also addressed the students, motivating them to learn about the emerging technologies with strong ethics, discipline and purpose.

SPECIAL LECTURE ON GURU GOBIND SINGH

YAMUNAHRAPUR: Guru Nanak Khalsa College, Yamunaharpur, organised a special lecture on "Sri Guru Gobind Singh's Impact on Indian History" under its Academic Society Critique. Dr Paramjeet Singh Mehta, a noted writer and thinker of Punjab, who was the main speaker, narrated the glorious story of sacrifice of Guru Gobind Singh. He described Guru Gobind Singh as a visionary leader, philosopher and saint-poet. "Along with the creation of history, literary creation is also a special quality of the Guru's personality," he remarked. Dr Viney Chandel, Associate Professor at Hindi Department, was the event coordinator, while Amitpal Singh, Assistant Professor at Punjabi Department at English Department, was the co-convenor. Ranjeet Singh Jauhar, the president of the college governing body, said the special lecture was a meaningful academic endeavour.

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Karnal steps up drive to achieve top rank in Swachh Survekshan

PARVEEN ABOA

HARIBALI NEWS SERVICE

KARNAL, JANUARY 6
With an aim to secure the top rank in Swachh Survekshan 2023-24 and to improve the performance of municipal bodies across the district and also five adopted MCs of the state, the Karnal Municipal Corporation (KMC) has intensified its efforts. It has focused on capacity-building in all the MCs.

Karnal city got third rank in the country in the 'Swachh Shehar' category (population 50,000-3 lakh) in Swachh Survekshan 2024-25, emerging as Haryana's first city to receive the award from President of India Droupadi Murmu. Karnal scored an impressive 11,067 out of 12,500, earned a 3-star Garbage-Free City rating, and achieved Water Plus status. Earlier, Karnal had ranked 115th in 2023. After this achievement, on the call of the Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on initiative Swachh Shehar Jodi (SSJ) was started, under which Karnal was assigned mentoring five smaller municipal bodies—Siwan, Islampur, Narnaul, Kalarwali and Rajound, turning the city from a performer into a mentor on urban hygiene.

Apart from these adopted MCs, the KMC focuses on Indri, Tarsoori, Niasing,



The Karnal Municipal Corporation office. FILE

Assandhi, Ghamunda and Nilokheri MCs of the district. The KMC is making efforts with the help of these MCs to improve their rankings.

Mayor Renu Bala Gupta with experts of the KMC has already visited all five adopted MCs, exhorting these to make efforts to achieve the goal of improving the ranking by ensuring cleanliness.

"I have already visited these MCs and recently I have held a meeting with the officials of KMC and other MCs. Our focus is on capacity building in all MC," said Renu Bala Gupta.

She emphasised the officials and employees will

ensure proper cleanliness in their MCs, for which directions had been issued and duties assigned.

All MCs have been asked to upload the progress report of cleanliness on the portal on a daily basis, which will be reviewed, she added.

The Mayor said a training programme had already been organised to train staff members on filling and updating details on the MIS portal. They have also been made aware about the Swachh Survekshan toolkit and key evaluation parameters, including Information, Education and Communication (IEC)

activities, citizen and student awareness programmes, installation of creative structures under the waste to wonder initiative, establishment of reduce, reuse and recycle (RRR) centres, door-to-door waste segregation, regular cleanliness drives, city beautification, Safai Mitra Samman Abhiyan and distribution of Safai Kits, she added.

De Vaishali Sharma, Commissioner, KMC, said they were well prepared for the Swachh Survekshan 2023-24. They had constituted teams for public outreach to make people aware about segregation of waste, cleanliness in their vicinity and other aspects. Healthy sanitary inspectors, motivators along with others are spreading awareness while visiting door to door as well as commercial spaces.

She said their door-to-door waste collection teams were working with dedication. "Night sweeping is being done by the KMC employees," she said.

Additional Municipal Commissioner (AMC), Ashok Kumar said the officials of the adopted MCs of the district had been directed to strengthen sanitation standards, streamline waste management systems and ensure excellent performance in the survey.

The Tribune

TIME CAPSULE

CHARLIE HEBO'S PARIS OFFICES ATTACKED (JAN 7, 2015)

Testing freedom of expression

On January 7, 2015, two gunmen stormed French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo's Paris offices, killing 12 persons, including eight journalists and cartoonists. The attackers, brothers Cherif and Said Kouachi, targeted the satirical magazine for publishing cartoons depicting Prophet Muhammad — a practice the publication had maintained despite years of death threats.

Shouting "We have avenged the Prophet", they escaped but were killed two days later while a third attacker murdered four more hostages at a supermarket.

Al-Qaeda had explicitly listed the magazine's editor in a 2013 death list for insulting Islam. The violence, thus, represented ideological extremism's attempt to silence perceived religious mockery through lethal force.

Over 1.5 million Paritians marched in solidarity, with #JeSuisCharlie trending globally as supporters framed the killings as an assault on democratic values. Yet Muslim leaders protested that freedom of expression does not extend to religious mockery.

When Charlie Hebdo republished Muhammad cartoons, violent protests erupted across West Asia, North Africa and South Asia.

The debate that incident stirred centred on whether freedom of expression is absolute. John Stuart Mill's utilitarian defence provides the strongest intellectual foundation for protecting Hebdo's cartoons. Mill argues that silencing any opinion — regardless of offensiveness — causes irreparable societal harm by impeding knowledge and moral progress. In On Liberty, he defends absolute freedom "on all subjects, practical or speculative, scientific, moral or theological", insisting censorship sacrifices "the entire moral courage of the human mind".

International human rights law codifies this Millian absolute. Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights protects freedom of expression "regardless of frontiers" and "in the form of art". The UN Human Rights Committee declared that "blasphemous laws are incompatible with the Covenant, unless they qualify as incitement". The European Court of Human Rights similarly protects expression that "offends, shocks or disgusts", affirming that artistic freedom is "essential for democratic society". The Venice Commission called for abolishing all blasphemy laws.

Yet critics questioned whether freedom of expression exists isolated from power dynamics. Some argued Hebdo's repeated depictions of Muslims as "threatening" amplified Islamophobia in France. Now, this points to incitement. Still, the consensus remains robust: international law's three-part test for legitimate restrictions requires demonstrating necessity, proportionality and legitimate aims. Religious offence alone fails this threshold. The Rabat Plan, endorsed by the UN, recommends repealing blasphemy laws entirely. The Charlie Hebdo tragedy thus vindicated Mill's prediction: free societies must tolerate offensive speech rather than permit assassination to determine what may be published, affirming freedom of expression as an absolute democratic necessity.

LOVNEET BHATT

Online applications invited under Post Matric scheme

CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 6

The Haryana Government has invited online applications for the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Caste students and under PM-YASAVI Component-II for students belonging to Other Backward Classes and Denotified Tribes for availing benefits during the academic session 2025-26.

An official spokesperson said the applicants must belong to the Scheduled Caste category for PM-SAC and to the Other Backward Class or Denotified Tribe category for PM-YASAVI Component-II.

The spokesperson further informed that eligible students can apply for the academic session 2025-26 through the National Scholarship Portal at <http://scholarships.gov.in> up to February 28, 2025. Additional details are available on the department's website www.haryanscb.gov.in.—TNS

Caste category for PM-SAC and to the Other Backward Class or Denotified Tribe category for PM-YASAVI Component-II.

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Why Karnal civic body has banned mobile phone use during office hours

Move aimed at improving work efficiency, strengthening office discipline



EXPLAINER KARNAL

PARVEEN ABOA

KARNAL Municipal Corporation (KMC) Commissioner Vaishali Sharma has imposed a ban on the unnecessary use of mobile phones during office hours. The order prohibits employees from using mobile phones for non-official purposes while at work. Here is what you need to know about the order, its impact and reaction of the employees.

* What prompted the Commissioner to take this step?

As per officials, the decision was taken after repeated observations that many employees remained engaged with their mobile phones during working hours. They noticed that the employees were busy scrolling through phones instead of attending to official duties. Time was being wasted on social media platforms such as Instagram reels and other non-work-related content. This not only disrupted workflow but also affected the pace and quality of public service delivery. Besides, it caused delays in official work and inconvenience to the general public. The order prohibits employees from using mobile phones for non-official purposes while at work. The move is aimed at improving work efficiency, strengthening office discipline and ensuring better public service delivery.

* How will the ban be implemented on the ground?

As per the instructions, employees, except those exempted, will be required to deposit their mobile phones with their respective branch heads during office hours. For communication purposes, staff members have been instructed to use landline phones, whether for official or personal calls. The officials have also underlined that the step will help maintain official secrecy and reduce unnecessary



Karnal Municipal Corporation officials interact with the public during a camp. FILE PHOTO

distractions at the workplace.

* Are there any exemptions to the ban?

The administration has granted exemptions to some employees, including branch heads, personal assistants, and staff working at the portal. These employees require mobile phones mainly for OTP authentication and portal-related work. Officials involved directly in digital and portal-based operations have also been exempted.

* What happens if the employees violate the order?

The authorities made it clear that strict compliance was mandatory. Any violation of the instructions will invite disciplinary action against the employee concerned. The administration believes that the firm enforcement was necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the decision. At present, the implementation is in its initial phase and the authorities are observing the positive and negative impact of the order as a couple of MCs highlighted that earlier works were done on phone, but now they have to visit the office for the works of the general public. However, some of the employees are happy with the decision, saying their mobile numbers have become common and the general public, MCs and politicians kept calling them, due to which their work was hampered.

* Has such a ban been imposed earlier in Karnal?

A similar restriction was earlier

enforced at the Deputy Commissioner's office at the Mini Secretariat, where employees across various branches were prohibited from using mobile phones during office hours. This ban was imposed by DC Uttam Singh. Employees were required to deposit phones with the City Magistrate's office or respective unit heads. That order followed a previous directive enforcing a formal dress code, banning jeans and making trousers and shirts mandatory.

* Is this ban contradictory to the government's digital push?

This is one of the key concerns raised by the employees. Some staff members argue that the ban contradicts the government's emphasis on digital governance. They point out that many branches rely heavily on OTP and mobile communication for quick sharing of reports, replies and official correspondence. They say restricting mobile use could slow down internal coordination and operational efficiency.

* What is the reaction of the employee associations?

The move has drawn criticism from employee unions. They termed the ban an "attack on the freedom of employees" and demanded that it be withdrawn. They say mobile phones are now an essential tool in administrative functioning and cannot be completely separated from office work.

Hisar MC starts anti-encroachment drive at Rajguru market



Municipal Corporation officials remove encroachments at Rajguru market in Hisar.

Tribune News Service

HISAR, JANUARY 6

The Municipal Corporation of Hisar (MCH) launched the drive to remove encroachments from Rajguru Market and other nearby major markets in the town on Tuesday. The MC and the Building and Roads (B&R) Department jointly removed sheds installed outside shops on Railway Road and in front of the railway station.

An MC spokesperson said some traders had kept godowns in the verandah of Rajguru Market which were removed. He said the action would continue until the situation became completely normal. He added that the drive was being carried out on the orders of Mayor Praveen Popli and Municipal Commissioner Neeraj.

The objective of the cam-

paign was to ensure smooth movement in the markets and provide relief to the general public from inconvenience, the spokesperson said.

Popli visited Patel Nagar where the work to repair and renovation of the railway under bridge (RUB) has started, to inspect the work. He said steps had been taken to resolve the problem of waterlogging at the Patel Nagar RUB. Earlier, officials of the Railways and the municipal corporation had jointly inspected the site and submitted a report, following which directions were issued to resolve the issue at the earliest.

Due to the rise in ground-water level, RUB frequently witnesses waterlogging. This had damaged the internal road. The renovation work of the damaged stretch was being carried out by the Railways.

On March 17, 2025, he was added to a WhatsApp group named "ICICI Security Y-4". In the group, messages promising high returns through mutual fund investments were regularly shared, and members were asked to download an application named IC Direct.

After downloading the app, the victim transferred Rs 10,000 to a bank account on March 19, 2025, as his first investment. To gain his trust, the fraudsters transferred Rs

10,650 back to his account on March 24, 2025. Encouraged by this, the victim invested another Rs 10,000 and later Rs 50,000 on March 26, 2025. On March 28, 2025, he transferred Rs 34,000 and Rs 50,000 to different accounts. On April 5, 2025, an amount of Rs 50,000 was credited back to his account, he said.

When the victim later tried to withdraw his funds, the accused demanded additional money in the name of tax. On April 28, 2025, the victim

deposited Rs 3,85,200 as tax. Subsequently, on May 8, 2025, the fraudsters showed him a forged letter bearing the seal of ICICI Securities Limited and got Rs 3,79,327 transferred to a UCO Bank account.

Thereafter, they demanded another Rs 8,50 lakh. When the victim refused to pay, he was removed from the WhatsApp group, following which he realised that he had been cheated, spokesperson added.

In total, the victim was duped of Rs 11,17,527.

Protest planned at Chautala toll plaza over irregularities

ANIL KAKKAR

SIRSA, JANUARY 6

A large protest is planned at the Chautala toll plaza on Wednesday at 10 am led by Comrade Rakesh Pugadia, demanding reforms at toll plazas across the region, including the Bharat-Main Road. The demonstration will involve farmers' groups and several other organisations.

Pugadia said toll plazas at

Chautala, Shergarh, Alub Shahar, Khuian Malana, and Jogevaria often operate with only two lanes open, creating traffic congestion and increasing the risk of accidents, especially in foggy or low-visibility conditions. He demanded that all lanes be opened and more staff be employed to reduce delays for motorists.

In addition, Pugadia raised concerns over the welfare of the toll plaza employees.

Two held for cheating man of ₹11.17L

Tribune News Service

KAITHAL, JANUARY 6

The Kaithal police have arrested two persons allegedly involved in cheating a man of Rs 11.17 lakh on the promise of investing it in mutual funds. The arrests were made by the Cybercrime Police Station during the investigation of a complaint of Rohit Kumar, a resident of Sector 20, HSVP, Kaithal.

The spokesperson of the Kaithal police said the com-

EMILY IN PARIS RENEWED



Netflix has renewed *Emily in Paris*, starring Lily Collins, for a sixth season. The renewal comes less than three weeks after the fifth season premiered on the streaming platform.

Tribune LifeStyle

HARYANA | WEDNESDAY | 7 JANUARY 2024

Wish list

Kristen Stewart has expressed interest in directing a remake of the globally popular *Twilight* saga, stating she would be open to re-adapting the franchise if it is ever rebooted.

Karan Razdan, writer of the original series, *Rajni*, and writer-director of its 2.0 version, tells us what made him revisit the memorable show from the 80s

Rajni is back in new avatar

NONIKA SINGH

Back in 1980s, Basu Chatterjee created a strong woman character, which not only ruled the public conscience but also became their voice. Today, one of Indian television's most powerful and iconic reel women, Rajni, lives again in a new form and avatar.

Karan Razdan, writer of the OG and writer—director of its 2.0 version, shares what made him revisit the memorable show. Even after four decades, Rajni refused to die in his memory, and its poor imitations over the years compelled him to recreate her in *Rajni 2.0* through the character of her daughter, Guditu, which Anupam Kher dubbed as 'masterstroke.' The series is now airing on Doordarshan and its streaming platform Waves.

Razdan shares, "Back in 1985, Rajni had a free ride, for Doordarshan was the only channel. Today, there is a surfeit of platforms, hence the competition is stiff and it's a challenge to make your voice reach out amidst the noise." Add to it the fact that crime rules the roost and thrillers are go-to choice of most film-makers. So, what made him opt for a series with a huge social conscience? Well, Razdan does not go into preaching mode. He avers, "As makers, our first job is to enter-



tain, may be inform and educate too."

Interestingly, making of the series has been a learning experience for him too and while he understood many finer points of *Bhartiya Nyaya Sankalpa*, legal terms like 'natural witness' came as a revelation. His



lead heroine, enthusiastic and feisty Aradhana Sharma too has learnt a thing or two about RERA — Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act — and India's landmark POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) Act.

"Rajni is an emotion and a huge responsibility. To carry forward the legacy is not easy but I am truly enjoying the weight of the character etched in public memory by the irrepressible Priya Tenkuar," Aradhana says.

Aradhana relates to the indefatigable spirit of *Rajni 2.0* and she emerging stronger with each episode. As a woman she wants the show to deal with issues like marriage.

"Marriage is often perceived as the be-all and end-all of a woman's life. I want this notion to be challenged. Parents should not pressure their daughters to tie the nuptial knot, just for the heck of it," she says.

Interestingly, Razdan has touched upon the same concern in the episodes on the dowry menace. Acutely aware as to how issues have changed in the last four decades, the writer in him is exploring current ones like digital fraud, VIP racism, chit-fund scam, property-related problems, et al.

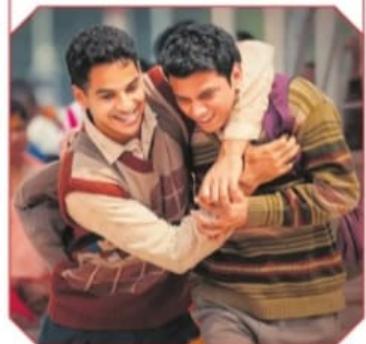
He feels comparisons with the Basu Chatterjee's original are not fair. He says, "It's easier to call out government bodies today. Back then, we were told to pick up after 48 episodes." So, what number is he aiming at today? He replies, "I can go on and on, as long as burning issues present themselves."

Here's a piece of advice from this 'voracious writer' to voracious viewers of today — "You will find the show very relatable since it deals with issues which concern a common man." His advice to women, his core audience is — "Be the change you want to see." For Aradhana, "Silence is not golden and one must raise one's voice especially against oppression."

CHAT UP

HOMEBOUND IN NEXT VOTING ROUND

Indian cinema returned to the global awards spotlight as *Homebound* advanced to the next round of voting in the International Feature Film category at the Academy Awards. The Academy announced that fifteen films from across the world have moved to the next round of voting in the International Feature Film category. The final nominations for the Academy Awards will be announced on January 22.



HAPPY PATEL'S NEW OFFER

A new song, *Chhota Tera*, from Mithila Palkar and Vir Das-starrer *Happy Patel* was unveiled on Monday. The song features lead actors Mithila Palkar and Vir Das giving a unique twist to love songs, as Mithila is seen slapping Vir throughout the song. *Happy Patel: Khatormonk Jason* is a quirky, offbeat spy, which also stars Mona Singh, Sharib Hashmi and Sushmita Tawade along with special appearances by Aamir Khan and Imran Khan.



DEEPIKA'S NEW INITIATIVE

Deepika Padukone celebrated her birthday on Monday by launching an initiative that will empower the next generation of creative talent. Sharing a video on Instagram, Deepika said, "I've been feeling very strongly about identifying incredible creative talent from across the country and giving them a platform to be seen, heard and experienced. I am beyond thrilled to announce the launch of The OnSet Program."



'Singh ni darde...'

MONA

At New York City's mayoral inauguration, Babulicious emerged as an unexpected yet powerful face of diversity — not through a speech or slogan, but the viral song — *Gaddi Re Chaliye* — which is being played at one-year-old's birthday bash to geris, to sangeets across the world, and now an official ceremony!

The Canada-based Punjabi artiste's performance reframed what celebration can look like in a city built by migrants, cultures and contradictions. Unapologetically honest, Babulicious admitted he was nervous moments before stepping onto the stage. But as he put it, "fired by the Mayor's speech and that 'Singh ni darde,' he had the crowd moving with Zohran Mamdani himself joining in singing, 'New York Vich Munda Rehda, Sonnige Panjabi Aaye Aye.'

Known for blending Punjabi rhythms with contemporary beats, his music reflects the lived experience of diaspora: rooted in her/his heritage, but shaped by global cities and hybrid identities. When those sounds filled the inauguration space, they did more than entertain — signalling that the diversity is now being celebrated.

The moment resonated visually as well as musically. The singer in striking fuchsia turban, the newly sworn-in, the first Muslim and the first Millennial Mayor of New York, Zohran Mamdani moving to Panjabi beats alongside

Viral sensation Babulicious, who performed at NYC's mayor Zohran Mamdani's swearing-in ceremony, talks about how he overcame nervousness to be part of the historic event

Bernie Sanders and supporters sent a clear message: leadership does not have to distance itself from culture to be taken seriously. Instead, it can embrace it.

That image travelled quickly across social media, turning Babulicious into a symbol of the ceremony's broader meaning. Reactions were mixed, and that contrast only sharpened the impact. Praise highlighted the joy and authenticity of the moment, while criticism revealed discomfort with seeing immigrant culture so visibly woven into political ceremony. Some on socials mistaking Babulicious to be an Afghan. His response — 'Love and peace to all!' In a city that speaks hundreds of languages, Babulicious didn't need to represent everyone to represent something essential — that New York's identity is lived, dynamic and unapologetically plural.

NAACHE NAACHE LAUNCHED

The *Naache Naache* song from Prabhas-starrer *The Rajasab* was launched in Mumbai recently. The event was attended by actors Malavika Mohanan, Nidhi Agarwal, Ridhii Kumar, Zarina Wahab, and Boman Irani, along with producer Vishwa Prasad. Slated for a pan-India release, *The Rajasab* will hit theatres in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam on January 9.

