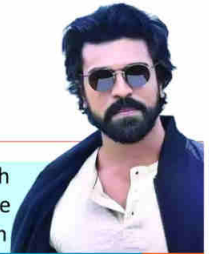




Enough variable bounce to keep us in the game: Prasidh

Honduras threatens to expel US military bases over Trump's mass deportation plans

It's a blessing to work with director Shankar on 'Game Change', says Ram Charan



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Five juveniles among seven nabbed in student murder case

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WEATHER	
Sunrise	7:15 AM
Sunset	5:39 PM
Moonrise	11:03 AM
Moonset	11:15 PM
Today's Prediction	
Maximum	21°C
Minimum	10°C
Tomorrow's Prediction	
Maximum	20°C
Minimum	9°C



A dense fog blankets near Raisina Hill, reducing visibility and creating a foggy silhouette of the Secretariat buildings on Saturday.

## 4 soldiers killed as Army vehicle falls into gorge

The Army said that "while performing duty in Bandipora District, a vehicle of Indian Army skid and fell into the gorge due to inclement weather and poor visibility conditions".

Srinagar  
Four army personnel died and another was injured when their vehicle skidded off the road and fell into a gorge due to inclement weather and poor visibility in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district on Saturday, the second such tragedy in less than two weeks. The accident occurred near SK Payen in the north Kashmir district where the soldiers were on duty, officials said. The region had received snowfall on Thursday and there were foggy conditions on Saturday.

The Army said that "while performing duty in Bandipora District, a vehicle of Indian Army skid and fell into the gorge due to inclement weather and poor visibility conditions". "Injured soldiers were promptly evacuated for medical care with assistance from Kashmiri locals, for which we express gratitude towards the citizens in providing immediate succour," the army's Chinari Corps said in a post on X. "Tragically three



bravehearts lost their lives in the unfortunate accident. Indian Army extends heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families," it said and later added that "one more braveheart succumbed to the injuries". Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and other leaders paid tributes to the soldiers.

Kharge urged authorities to take appropriate measures to avoid such accidents due to inclement weather conditions. On December 24, five soldiers were killed and as many injured when an Army vehicle skidded off the road and rolled down a 300-ft deep gorge in Poonch. The accident had occurred in the Gharoa area when a convoy of six vehicles was en route from Nilam Headquarters to Balmoi Ghora Post. "Deeply grieved by the

loss of lives of Indian Army personnel due to a tragic road accident in Bandipora. The nation is deeply grateful for their service and commitment. My condolences to the bereaved families and prayers for the speedy recovery of the injured" the Lieutenant Governor said in a condolence message. Chief Minister Abdullah extended heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families, offering his prayers for strength and solace during this difficult time. Agency

## Delhi poll: BJP fields ex-MPs against Kejriwal, Atishi

New Delhi  
The BJP on Saturday released its first list of 29 candidates for the Delhi Assembly polls, fielding former MP Parvesh Verma from the New Delhi seat against ex-chief minister and AAP supreme Arvind Kejriwal. It has named another former MP Ramesh Bidhuri from Kalkaji, where Chief Minister and AAP candidate Atishi is in the fray.

The New Delhi seat, held by Kejriwal since 2013, will witness the former chief minister taking on the sons of two other former chief ministers. Verma is the son of Sahib Singh Verma, who had a two-year tenure as chief minister in the 1990s.

Former West Delhi MP Verma started his preparations for contesting from the seat even before he was announced as the official candidate, saying he had been given the go-ahead by national leaders.



The Congress candidate from the seat is former three-term chief minister Sheila Dikshit's son Sandeep Dikshit. The BJP's first list features eight prominent leaders who switched over from the Congress and AAP in recent months.

Former Delhi Congress president Arvinder Singh Lovely has been fielded from the Gandhi Nagar seat in east Delhi, even before he was announced as the official candidate, saying he had been given the go-ahead by national leaders.

## Dense fog cripples Delhi; 81 trains delayed, 19 flights diverted

New Delhi  
Dense fog over Delhi for a second consecutive morning reduced visibility to zero in several areas, leading to 81 trains being delayed and 19 flights getting diverted, officials said on Saturday.

The Met office said there was zero visibility since 11:30 pm on Friday at Palam and 12:30 am on Saturday at Safdarjung. The fog was accompanied by mainly calm surface winds that prevented it from dissipating. The country's largest airline IndiGo had temporarily put arrivals and departures on hold at the airport early in the morning.

An official said 19 flights were diverted at the airport between 12:15 am and 1:30 am due to reduced visibility. Out of them, 13 were domestic, 4 international and 2 non-scheduled flights. More than 200 flights were delayed and operations have returned to normal now, the official added.

At 7 am, general visibility at the Indira Gandhi International Airport was zero in very dense fog. The Runway Visual Range (RVR) at its runways was in the range of 100-250 metres,



with CAT III conditions. Such very dense fog in zero visibility with CAT III conditions at the airport has been prevailing since 11:30 pm on Friday, the Met office said. "While landing and takeoffs continue at Delhi airport, flights that are not CAT III compliant may get affected. Passengers are requested to contact the airline concerned for updated flight information. Any inconvenience caused is deeply regretted," the Delhi International Airport Limited, which operates the airport, said in a post on X at 6:56 am.

CAT III facility allows aircraft to operate in low-visibility conditions. The Northern Railway said a total of 59 trains were running late by up to six hours and 22 by around eight hours.

In a related development, air quality in the national capital was in the 'very poor' category, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) reading of 380 at 9 am, according to Central Pollution Control Board data. An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'.

The minimum temperature settled at 7.8 degrees Celsius, a notch above normal. The Met office has predicted dense to very dense fog during the day. The maximum temperature is likely to settle around 21 degrees Celsius. Agency

## Entire country needs MSP, Punjab not alone in fight: Dallewal's message for Centre

Chandigarh  
Fighting Punjab farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal on Saturday appealed to farmer outfits in other states to fight the agitation seeking legal guarantee to MSP strongly in their states to send a message to the Centre that it is not Punjab's fight alone. During his over 11-minute address at the "Kisan Mahapanchayat" at Khanauri, Dallewal tried to send across a message that his life was not more important than farmers. Seven lakh farmers



have committed suicides in the country and he knows what their families have to go through, Dallewal said at the mahapanchayat called by the two forums which is spearheading the on-going agitation. The 70-year-old farmer leader was brought out in a stretcher and addressed the gathering of farmers while lying on a bed from a stage at the protest site Agency

**HIGHLIGHT**  
Seven lakh farmers have committed suicides in the country and he knows what their families have to go through, Dallewal said at the mahapanchayat called by the two forums which is spearheading the on-going agitation.

## Some people trying to disturb peace by spreading venom of caste politics: Modi

New Delhi  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday attacked Opposition for spreading venom in society in the name of caste and asked people to thwart such conspiracies with a view to strengthening the shared culture and heritage of villages. Inaugurating the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav, the Prime Minister said his government has been focusing on rural development since 2014 and villages will play a key role in realising the dream of Viksit Bharat by 2047. In an oblique refer-



ence to Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and other INDIA bloc leaders, Modi said some people are trying to spread

venom in society in the name of caste and weaken the social fabric. "We have to thwart these conspiracies, and preserve and strengthen the common heritage of our villages," he stressed. Opposition leaders including Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav have been continuously demanding caste census. Modi said that since 2014, he has been consistently in the service of rural India. "Ensuring a dignified

life for the people of rural India is the priority of my government," the Prime Minister said and added that the vision of the government is to ensure an empowered rural India, provide ample opportunities for villagers, reduce migration and ensure ease of life to the people of villages. Talking about the schemes to provide basic amenities in villages, Modi said toilets have been made as part of Swachh Bharat Mission, and crores of people in rural India have been given pucca houses as part of PM Awaas Yojana. Agency

Delhi poll: BJP fields ex-MPs against Kejriwal, Atishi

CONT FROM PAGE 1

replacing incumbent BJP MLA Anil Bajpai. Bajpai had defeated Lovely from the seat in the 2020 polls.

Tarvinder Singh Marwah, a three-time former Congress MP from Jangpura, who joined the BJP in 2022, will contest from the same seat.

He is pitted against senior AAP leader and former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia.

Former transport minister Kailash Gahlot has been fielded from Bijwasan.

The two-time Najafgarh MLA resigned as minister and quit AAP to join the BJP in November.

Rajaj Kumar Anand, who resigned as a minister and quit AAP earlier this year, was fielded from the Patel Nagar seat.

Chhatrapur MLA Kartar Singh, who also switched to the saffron party from AAP, has been fielded from the same seat.

ND Sharma, another former AAP MLA, will contest as a BJP candidate from Badarpur.

The Badarpur seat was held by BJP's Ranvir Singh Bidhuri, who was elected to the Lok Sabha from South Delhi earlier this year.

The saffron party has fielded its national office-bearers Dushyant Kumar Gautam and Ashish Sood from the Karol Bagh and the Janakpuri seats, respectively.

BJP national secretary Manjinder Singh Sirsa will contest from Rajouri Garden, which he had won in the 2015 elections.

Former Congress councillor Kumari Rinku is the BJP's candidate from Seemapuri.

The BJP also retained incumbent MLAs OP Sharma (Vishwas Nagar), Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Vijender Gupta (Rohini), Ajay Mahawar (Ghonda) and Jitendra Mahajan (Rohtash Nagar).

The party has not yet announced its candidates for the two other seats it won in the 2020 polls — Laxmi Nagar and the Karawal Nagar.

Former Delhi BJP president Satish Upadhyay will contest from Malviya Nagar.

# Cong launches 'Jai Bapu Jai Bhim Jai Samvidhan' campaign

New Delhi: The Congress has announced the launch of a 'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' campaign to press for the resignation of Union Home Minister Amit Shah for "insulting" BR Ambedkar, the principal architect of India's Constitution.

Congress leader Pawan Khara said under the campaign, party leaders will organise 'Chauपालs' in every district and tell people how the BJP-RSS has been insulting Ambedkar and demeaning the Constitution for decades.

Launched on January 3, the campaign will culminate on January 26 with a grand rally at Mhow in Madhya Pradesh, the birthplace of Ambedkar, commemorating 75 years of the Constitution and the Republic, Khara said.

"To safeguard his legacy and values, a 'Samvidhan Bachao Rashtriya Padayatra' will be held from January 26,



2025, to January 26, 2026 — connecting villages and towns across India with a powerful message of unity and social justice.

"We reiterate our demand to sack Home Minister Amit Shah for his derogatory remarks against Dr Ambedkar," Khara told reporters.

The Congress leader also accused the BJP leadership of trying to

"normalise the demonisation" of national icons whose contributions to the nation are immense. Such people have certainly created a name for themselves

in the country's history. Icons like Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and Ambedkar cannot be replaced," Khara said.

He also said the campaign aims to awaken and tell the people of the country about BJP's actions and the "insult" to Ambedkar.

Replying to a debate on the Constitution in the Rajya Sabha on December 17, Shah had

claimed. The Congress leader said this issue was also raised at the Belagavi meeting where it was decided that the party will launch a 'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' campaign across the country.

"Under this campaign, we will organise 'Chauपालs' in every district and tell people how the BJP-RSS has been insulting Ambedkar and demeaning the Constitution for decades," Khara said.

The Congress leader also recalled how on November 30, 1949, the Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangh (RSS) described the Constitution as "un-Indian" in its mouthpiece 'Organiser'.

"When Ambedkar ji talked about equal rights for women, RSS burnt his effigy at the Ramilla Maidan. Not just Ambedkar ji, but Gandhi ji's legacy is also being attacked today," he alleged.

The Congress leader also accused the BJP leadership of trying to "normalise the demonisation" of national leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Babasaheb Ambedkar and Jawaharlal Nehru, who left an indelible mark in the country's history.

criticised the Congress for repeatedly taking Ambedkar's name.

"It has become a fashion to say Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar... Had they taken God's name so many times, they would have got a place in heaven," Shah had said.

"We hoped that the home minister would apologise and the prime minister would intervene in this matter. But Prime Minister Modi supported the home minister and became a partner in insulting Ambedkar ji," Khara

PM to launch multiple development projects worth over Rs 12000 crore in Delhi on Sunday

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of multiple development projects worth over Rs 12,200 crore on Sunday in Delhi, which is expected to go to the polls in February.

He will also undertake a ride in Namoo Bharat Train from Sahibabad RRTS Station to New Ashok Nagar RRTS Station.

Marking a significant milestone in enhancing regional connectivity, the PM will inaugurate the 13 km stretch of Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Namoo Bharat corridor between Sahibabad and New Ashok Nagar, worth around Rs 4,600 crore.

With this inauguration, Delhi will get its first Namoo Bharat connectivity. This will significantly travel between Delhi and Meerut and benefit millions of people through high-speed and comfortable travel along with unmatched safety and reliability.

The PM will also inaugurate the 2.8 km stretch between Janakpuri and Krishna Park of Delhi Metro Phase-IV worth around Rs 1,200 crore. This will be the first stretch of Delhi Metro Phase-IV to be inaugurated. The areas of West Delhi such as Krishna Park, parts of Vikaspuri, Janakpuri, among others, will be benefited.

The PM will lay the foundation stone of the 26.5 km Rithala - Kundli section of Delhi Metro Phase-IV, worth around Rs 6,230 crore. This corridor will connect Rithala in Delhi to Nathpuri (Kundli) in Haryana, significantly enhancing connectivity in the North-Western parts of Delhi and Haryana.

## Gleneagles BGS Hospital Completes Bilateral Lung Transplant

New Delhi: Gleneagles BGS Hospital, Bengaluru, proudly announces the successful discharge of Mrs. Vinoda M, a 44-year-old patient, following complex bilateral lung transplantation.

This remarkable achievement underscores the hospital's dedication to advanced thoracic care and innovative surgical excellence.

Mrs. Vinoda, diagnosed with end-stage interstitial lung disease, had been experiencing severe breathlessness and persistent cough for over eight months, requiring high-flow oxygen therapy at home.

With her condition progressively worsening, she was evaluated and registered for a bilateral lung transplant with Karnataka SOTTO (JSK). On November 13, 2024, she underwent a bilateral sequential lung transplant after a size-matched, blood group-compatible deceased donor was identified.

The procedure, performed on veno-arterial ECMO support, was led by Dr. Balasubramani

Govini, Director and HOD of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery, and Heart Lung Transplant. Commenting on the procedure, Dr Govini said, "This case highlights the intricate planning and precision required for such high-risk transplants. The successful outcome is a testament to our team's expertise and commitment to world-class care."

Post-operatively, Mrs. Vinoda faced challenges, including respiratory muscle weakness and infections. Under the guidance of Dr Apar Jindal, HOD Pulmonology & Lung Transplant Programme, a multidisciplinary team ensured comprehensive care, including tracheostomy management, targeted antibiotic and antifungal therapy, and intensive rehabilitation. Reflecting on the case, Dr Jindal stated, "This success illustrates the importance of a collaborative approach and the unparalleled dedication of our team to achieving positive outcomes for our patients."

## Non-appearance in response to proclamation a 'stand-alone offence': SC

New Delhi:

The Supreme Court has held that non-appearance in response to a proclamation is a "stand-alone offence" and can continue even if the proclamation is extinguished.

The apex court delivered its verdict on January 2 on an appeal challenging a June 2023 judgement of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

The bench dealt with legal questions, including whether the proclaimed offender status of an accused under the provisions of the CrPC can subsist if he stands acquitted during trial in connection to the very same offence.

"In conclusion, we hold that section 174A IPC is an independent, substantive offence, that can continue even if the proclamation under section 82 CrPC is extinguished. It is a stand-alone offence," a bench of justices CT Ravikumar and Sanjay Karol said.



Section 82 of the erstwhile Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) deals with proclamation for a person absconding.

Section 174A of the erstwhile Indian Penal Code (IPC) pertains to non-appearance in response to a proclamation under section 82 of the CrPC.

"The purpose of section 82 CrPC, as can be understood from a bare reading of the statutory text is to ensure that a person who is called to appear before a court, does so," the bench said, adding that the object and purpose of section

174A of the IPC was to ensure penal consequences for defiance of a court order requiring a person's presence.

It noted what happens if the status under section 82 of the CrPC was nullified, that is, the person subjected to such proclamation, by virtue of subsequent developments was no longer required to be presented before a court of law.

"Then, can the prosecution still proceed against such a person for having not appeared before a court during the time that the process was in effect. The answer

is in the affirmative," it said.

While referring to the language of section 174A of the IPC, the bench said this implies that the "very instance at which a person is directed to appear, and he does not do so, this section comes into play".

"So, while proceedings under section 174A IPC cannot be initiated independent of section 82, CrPC, that is, can only be started post the issuance of proclamation, they can continue if the said proclamation is no longer in effect," the bench said.

## Amit Shah inaugurates Sushma Bhawan dedicates it to working women

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday inaugurated Sushma Bhawan, a new block of a working women's hostel in the capital, officials said.

The facility named after late BJP leader Sushma Swaraj aims to provide safe and dignified accommodation for working women, symbolising the government's commitment to women's empowerment, an official statement said.

The inauguration of Sushma Bhawan marks a step forward in providing working women with secure and accessible housing while paying tribute to the legacy of a leader who remains an inspiration in Indian politics, it added.

Praising the legacy of Sushma Swaraj, a former external affairs minister who also served as the chief minister of Delhi for



a brief period in 1998, Shah highlighted her contributions to Indian politics and women's upliftment.

He emphasised that Sushma Bhawan will serve as a testament to her dedication to the empowerment and well-being of women.

The new hostel block, which can accommodate 80 women, is part of a larger

initiative by the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) to provide safe housing to working women, the statement said.

Lauding the effort, Shah noted that additional housing facilities are in the pipeline, aligning with the BJP government's vision for holistic urban development, the statement said.

Shah also virtually inaugurated a veterinary hospital at Moti Bagh, emphasising the Narendra Modi government's focus on comprehensive urban development.

Investments made by the Central government in developing Delhi's infrastructure amounted to Rs 68,000 crore over the past decade, he said.

## Haryana IAS Officers Association hosts New Year Lunch

Komal Ramola Chandigarh:

On the occasion of the New Year, the Haryana IAS Officers Association organized a luncheon in Haryana Nivas on Saturday. Governor, Bandaru Dattatraya and Chief Minister, Nayab Singh Saini attended the event as special guests. Cabinet Ministers, Shyam Singh Rana and Ranbir Gangwa, also remained present. The Association's President and Chief Secretary, Dr. Vivek Joshi and Secretary Dr. Amit Agrawal welcomed the Governor and the Chief Minister.



The Chief Minister extended heartfelt New Year wishes to the Haryana IAS Officers Association. He encouraged the officers to work with new resolutions and vision in the new year, ensuring that the benefits of government schemes reach every eligible beneficiary.

He said that dishes made from millets are not only beneficial for health but are also helping farmers become economically stronger by selling millet-based products. Millets are

necessary for both health and the environment, said Nayab Singh Saini.

The President of the Haryana IAS Officers Association and Chief Secretary Dr. Vivek Joshi, while welcoming the Governor and Chief Minister said that the Association regularly organizes seminars, training programmes, and other events to enhance administrative efficiency. Today's event is part of this ongoing initiative, said Dr. Vivek Joshi.

Advt Contact: 9818-799941

CHANGE OF NAME  
I, Lajwanti W/O Late Sh. Daya Ram S/o 1198, Block BC, East, Shamli Bagh, North West Delhi-110088, declare that I known as Lajwanti @ Shikharika Devi as in some of my documents my name is mentioned as Lajwanti whereas in some others it is mentioned as Shikharika Devi. Both Shikharika Devi and Lajwanti are one and the same person name.

PUBLIC NOTICE  
IT IS TO INFORM TO GENERAL PUBLIC THAT MY CLIENTS NAMELY, SH. INDER DEV THAKUR SOANATHA THAKUR R/O PLOT NO. - 97, KHARSA NO. - 522, NEAR SHIV MANDIR NITHARI, NORTH WEST DELHI, NEW DELHI-110086, IS FRESH NAGAR, NEW DELHI HAS DISOWNED AND BREAK OFF ALL HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS SON NAMELY MAHESH AND HIS WIFE MANISHA DEVI W/O MAHESH THAKUR BOTH R/O PLOT NO. - 97, KHARSA NO. - 522, NEAR SHIV MANDIR NITHARI, NORTH WEST DELHI, NEW DELHI-110086, AND DISOWNED HIM FROM THEIR ALL MOVABLE AND IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES AS THE NAMED MAHESH AND HIS WIFE MANISHA DEVI HAS DEVELOPED DISORDERED ATTITUDE AND NOT IN CONTROL OF MY CLIENT. HENCE, MY CLIENT SHALL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY OF THEIR ACT, DEEDS, WHOMS/EVER, DEALS WITH THEM, SHALL DEAL AT HIS OWN RISK AND RESPONSIBILITIES.  
THROUGH ADVOCATE ROHIT BHARDWAJ M.No. 8384071034 E-mail: rohitbhardwaj25@gmail.com

NEWS IN BRIEF

**Delhi Metro corridor from Rithala to Kundli to open soon**

**New Delhi**  
Chief Minister Atishi announced that the foundation stone for a new Delhi Metro corridor from Rithala to Kundli will be laid on Sunday.

She said during a press briefing that the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) project connecting regions across Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Rajasthan will be inaugurated, along with the extension of the Delhi Metro Magenta Line from Janakpuri West to Krishna Park.

Delhi government has contributed Rs 1,260 crore to the RRTS project, which is jointly funded by the Centre and the governments of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Rajasthan, she said.

"The new Rithala-Kundli metro corridor and the RRTS project represent a significant milestone in strengthening inter-state connectivity and easing transport challenges," Atishi said.

"The extension of the Magenta Line will also improve accessibility in West Delhi, reducing travel time and making commuting more convenient," she added.

The RRTS project will connect key regions across the participating states, and priority is given to setting up three corridors: the Delhi-Alwar corridor, the Delhi-Panipat corridor, and the Delhi-Meerut corridor.

Together, these projects aim to enhance the public transport network, reduce traffic congestion, and contribute significantly to the economic growth of Delhi and its neighbouring states, Atishi said.

**Police deport 5 Bangladeshi nationals staying illegally in Delhi**

**New Delhi**  
The Delhi Police has deported five Bangladeshi nationals, including a woman and two children, who were found staying illegally in the capital, an official said on Sunday.

"We deported them on January 1. The operation was part of an intensified drive against unauthorised migrants under the directive of the Delhi LG and the Commissioner of Police," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Ankit Singh said.

He said that the team targeted unauthorised colonies, slums and labor camps in the district. During police raids, resulted in the apprehension of five individuals, identified as Mohammad Shahid (53), Nazrul Sheikh (50), his 25-year-old wife and their two children, all hailing from Bangladesh's Bagerhat district.

During interrogation, the individuals admitted to entering India illegally and were found in possession of Bangladeshi citizenship documents and mobile numbers. They were subsequently presented at the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) and deported to Bangladesh, said the DCP.

**Delhi sees season's longest zero visibility spell**

**New Delhi**  
Dense fog enveloped the national capital on Saturday, reducing visibility to zero for an unprecedented nine-hour stretch, the longest spell of the season, according to the weather department.

The dense fog led to the delay of 81 trains while 15 flights got diverted on Saturday, according to officials.

"Zero visibility prevailed for nine hours at Palam between 6 pm and 3 am (UTC), marking the longest spell of the season."

The city's primary weather station, Safdarjung, recorded eight hours of zero visibility, as per the IMD.

With the maximum temperature in the city set-



led at 20 degrees Celsius, 0.7 notch above average and the minimum temperature was recorded at 7.8 degrees Celsius, 0.9 notch

above the normal, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

The relative humidity during the day ranged between 96 and 100 per cent, it said.

For Sunday, the weather department has predicted a

partly cloudy sky. The predominant surface wind is expected to blow from the southeast at a speed of less than 4 kmph during the morning hours.

Smog and moderate fog are likely in most areas, with dense fog expected in a few places during the morning. The wind speed is forecast to gradually increase to 8-10 kmph from the southeast in the afternoon, before decreasing to less than 6 kmph in the evening and night.

Smog or shallow to moderate fog is likely during the evening and night, it said.

The maximum and minimum temperatures are expected to settle around 18 and 10 degree C, respectively.

At 7 am, general visibility at the Indira Gandhi International Airport was zero in very dense fog. The Runway Visual Range (RVR) at its runways was in the range of 100-250 metres, with CAT III conditions.

Such very dense fog in zero visibility with CAT III conditions at the airport has been prevailing since 11:30 pm on Friday, the Met office said.

"While landing and take-offs continue at Delhi airport, flights that are not CAT III compliant may get affected. Passengers are requested to contact the airline concerned for updated flight information. Any inconvenience caused is deeply regretted," the Delhi International Airport Limited, which operates the

airport, said in a post on X at 6.56 am.

CAT III facility allows aircraft to operate in low-visibility conditions.

The Northern Railway said a total of 59 trains were running late by up to six hours and 22 by around eight hours.

In a related development, the air quality in the national capital remained in the 'very poor' category.

Delhi's 24-hour average AQI was recorded at 378, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'.

**Five juveniles among seven nabbed in student murder case**

**New Delhi**

The Delhi Police has nabbed seven people, including five juveniles, in connection with the murder of a 14-year-old school student in east Delhi, an official said on Saturday.

The suspects were planning to flee Delhi when they were nabbed.

The police also recovered the knife used in the murder and other critical evidence.

The Class 9 student was attacked outside a school in east Delhi's Shakarpur area on Friday.

"Investigations revealed that during a break at 4 pm, a classmate of the victim allegedly borrowed a mobile phone and made a call. The accused classmate allegedly discussed a dispute with the victim and instructed the person on the line to 'send people'," Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Abhishek Dhania said.

Around 6 pm, as the students left the school, the accused classmate was seen waiting outside with a group. The situation escalated when another juvenile, an accomplice of the accused student, stabbed the victim in his right thigh, causing severe injuries. The attackers then fled the spot, Dhania said.

School staff immediately administered first aid and took the victim student to Hedgewar hospital. He was referred to GTB Hospital due to the severity of the injuries but he succumbed, the police said.

Critical evidence, including the accused's blood-stained clothes and shoes and the knife and its cover, were seized. The police are investigating the specific roles and motives of each individual involved, Dhania said.

**Ashwini Vaishnav interacts with students at NDMC's 'Exam Warrior' initiative**

**New Delhi**

Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Railways and Electronics & Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnav, took part in the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC)'s Exam Warrior Art Festival, inspired by the book of Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi.

The initiative aims to help students build positivity, confidence and creativity so they can approach exams with a calm and balanced mindset.

Around 4,000 students shared their thoughts



"Investigations revealed that during a break at 4 pm, a classmate of the victim allegedly borrowed a mobile phone and made a call."

Three specialised teams conducted extensive review of CCTV camera footage, interviewed witnesses and analysed technical evidence to identify the suspects, Dhania said. "Their coordinated efforts led to the apprehension of all seven accused while they attempted to escape."

Among those apprehended were five juveniles and two adults -- college student Saarthi (19) and dairy shop owner Aman Kumar (31).

The AAP government provides free 20,000 liters of water per month and over 12 lakh households in the city have benefitted from the scheme, he added.

The AAP is seeking to return to power for the fourth consecutive term after the elections to the 70-member Delhi Assembly next month.

**Kejriwal promises to waive 'inflated' water bills**

**New Delhi**

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday promised to waive the "inflated" water bills received by people in Delhi if his party returns to power in the upcoming assembly polls in the national capital next month.

In a press conference here, Kejriwal said that people were "distressed" due to water bills worth thousands and lakhs of rupees being sent to them by the Delhi Jal Board.

He alleged that the inflated water bills started arriving after he went to jail and urged people not to pay those bills.

"I have said this earlier, but today I am making a formal announcement: when AAP comes back to power after the assembly polls, these inflated bills will be waived. Those who think their bills are incorrect need not pay them," the former Delhi chief minister said.

The AAP government provides free 20,000 liters of water per month and over 12 lakh households in the city have benefitted from the scheme, he added.

The AAP is seeking to return to power for the fourth consecutive term after the elections to the 70-member Delhi Assembly next month.

**Delhi man cons 700 woman on dating apps**

**New Delhi**

Delhi Police has arrested a 23-year-old man who allegedly scammed over 700 women after befriending them on dating applications by posing as a US-based model, officials said on Saturday.

The cyber police station of West district arrested Tushar Bisht on charges of exploiting online platforms such as Bumble and Snapchat to lure his victims, blackmail them using private photos and videos, and extort money, a statement issued by Delhi Police said.

"Posing as a US-based freelance model, the accused created fake identities using a virtual international mobile number and photographs of a Brazilian model," Deputy Commissioner of Police (West), Vichitra Veer, said in the statement.

Bisht used the fake profiles to connect with women aged between 18 and 30 years on various online dating platforms.

"His primary targets were users of Bumble, Snapchat and WhatsApp," the statement said.

The DCP said Bisht engaged his victims' trust by engaging in conversations, and convinced them to share private and intimate images and videos.

"Once he obtained the content, he resorted to blackmail, threatening to leak the sensitive material online, or sell them to dark web unless the victims paid him," the DCP said.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the accused interacted with over 500 women on Bumble and 200



others on Snapchat and WhatsApp, police said.

The accused's mobile phone contained incriminating evidence, including objectionable data of victims, a virtual mobile number, and details of financial transactions involving extortion.

The police also seized 13 credit cards linked to various banks, the statement said.

The matter came to light on December 13, last year, when a Delhi University student filed a complaint with the cyber police station claiming that she had connected with the accused on Bumble earlier in the year.

Posing as a US-based model visiting India for work, he gained her trust through consistent chats.

As their interactions deepened, the accused persuaded her to share private photos and videos on Snapchat and WhatsApp. Despite repeated requests to meet in person, he always evaded with excuses, the DCP said.

"The situation escalated when the accused sent her a private video she had shared, and demanded money. Pressured, the victim made small payments, citing her financial constraints. However, the relentless demands drove

herto inform her family and lodge a complaint," the DCP said.

After registering an FIR, a special team was formed which identified Bisht as the perpetrator and tracked him to Shakarpur in east Delhi. A raid was conducted, leading to his arrest, the statement said.

Revealing the modus operandi, the DCP said during interrogation, Bisht admitted to using a virtual international mobile number for over two years, which he obtained through an app. Using this number, he registered on dating and chatting platforms, projecting himself as a glamorous model.

His fake profiles included fabricated stories and photographs to make them appear authentic.

Once he established connection with his victims, he persuaded them to share intimate content.

"Initially, he did this for amusement but later he turned it into a calculated scheme to extort money. He confessed to possessing private content of numerous women and blackmailing several of them for financial gains," Vichitra Veer said in the statement.

Bisht hails from a middle-class family based out of Shakarpur. His father works as a private driver, his mother is a homemaker, while his sister is employed in Gurugram.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is for the general public information that my Client Rambhajan S/o Late Sh. Ram Swaroop R/o WZ-25B, Naraina Village, New Delhi-110028, has/have debarred, disown and break down all the relationship from his wife Poonam Devi (Wife) and Rajni Devi (Daughter) from all my moveable and immovable properties either self acquired or ancestral situated all over India due to their misconduct, disobedience and mis-

behavior attitude and I reside separately on ground floor. My client will not be responsible in future for his acts or deeds which was done by him/her.

**SANJEEV RAWAT ADVOCATE**  
CHAMBER NO.556, DWARKA COURT COMPLEX, DWARKA, NEW DELHI

By the virtue of relinquishment deed dated 03/01/2025. The actual physical possession of the said property is already with my sister. Thus, I and my legal heirs, successors, nominee(s), assignee(s) etc have been left no right, title, interest, claim or concern of any nature with the said property. My sister / Ms. Jyoti has become the sole, absolute and exclusive owner of the said entire property, with full right to use and enjoy the same as absolute owner without any claim.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

J. Parvash Kumar S/o Late Shri Subhash Chander R/o D-530, Top Floor, Tagore Garden Extn., New Delhi-110027, declares that out of natural love and affection, have agreed to voluntarily and without any monetary consideration relinquished all my rights, title, interest and share in the property bearing No. H. No. 87-A, Jawala Heri, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi-110063 along with the land underneath, with all rights of ownership and other rights pertaining to the same, by the virtue of relinquishment deed dated 03/01/2025.

The actual physical possession of the said property is already with my sister. Thus, I and my legal heirs, successors, nominee(s), assignee(s) etc have been left no right, title, interest, claim or concern of any nature with the said property. My sister / Ms. Jyoti has become the sole, absolute and exclusive owner of the said entire property, with full right to use and enjoy the same as absolute owner without any claim.

**Delhi police pay homage to the Martyrs National Police Memorial**



**New Delhi**

As a mark of respect and to pay homage to the Martyrs who have laid down their lives in the line of duty, Delhi Police today held a Band Display, Parade & Retreat Ceremony at National Police Memorial, Chanakyapuri.

Starting today Delhi Police will hold a ceremony on all weekends of this month as a segment of year long series of events under which all CAPPs and Delhi Police have been allocated a month each to hold ceremonies in evening hours of weekends.

These events stand as a testament to the unwavering commitment and bravery of those who have laid down their lives in the line of duty. Participants of today's programme included families of Delhi Police personnel and visitors at the memorial.

**OFFICE OF THE BLOCK DEVELOPMENT OFFICER BHAWARNA, DISTRICT KANGRA (H.P.)**

No: 50 Date: 03/01/2025

**QUOTATION NOTICE**

The Block Development Officer, Development Bhawarna invites the item rate in sealed quotations for Supplying of building material(F.O.R.) from Suppliers/Vendors (having valid GST No.) for the execution of departmental works under jurisdiction of Dev. Block Bhawarna.

S.No.	Description of Item	Unit
1.	Crushed Sand	Cu M
2.	Crushed Aggregate 10mm	Cu M
3.	Crushed Aggregate 20mm	Cu M
4.	Crushed Aggregate 25mm	Cu M
5.	Crushed Aggregate 40mm	Cu M
6.	Crushed Aggregate 50mm	Cu M
7.	Builder Stone	Cu M
8.	Bricks 2nd Class	Per No
9.	Bricks 1st Class	Per No
10.	Cut Stone	Cu M
11.	Form Work	Sq M

1. Date of release of invitation for quotation Up to on 2. 25-01-25 at 10.00 A.M.  
3. Last Date/Time for receipt of Quotation: - on 27-01-25 at 3.00 P.M.  
4. Cost of Form: -1000/- (non-refundable)  
5. Security Deposit: -10,000/- only in favor of undersigned in form of Demand Draft.

Block Development Officer, Bhawarna, District Kangra

**Delhi LG VK Saxena inaugurates 10-acre park in Daryaganj**

**New Delhi**

Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena on Saturday inaugurated a 10-acre DDA park in Daryaganj, an official statement said.

The park, Kranti Udyan, is part of the larger project of redevelopment of four parks contiguous to the Walled City along the Mahatma Gandhi Marg, opposite the Samadhi Complex, it stated.

It aims to integrate and develop parks spanning 35 acres across around 1.7 kilometres along the Ring Road, inspired by the Kartavya Path near India Gate, the project is designed to offer similar recreational opportunities to the people in lush green

settings, the statement said.

The project combines a formal garden, a neighbourhood park, and a Mughal garden against the backdrop of heritage monuments. It has been redeveloped under the guidance and supervision of the LG, it said.

On May 6, 2023, the LG

visited the four parks along Mahatma Gandhi Marg -- Delhi Chalo Park, Ghata Masjid Park, Urdu Academy Park, and Sadbhavana Park. Because the site falls under protected and regulated zones of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), all plans were formally approved by the ASI and the National

Monument Authority, it said. Two of these parks, Ghata Masjid Park and Urdu Academy Park, were combined and have been renamed Kranti Udyan, the statement said.

Spanning nearly 10 acres, Kranti Udyan encompasses organic forms and is designed as a neighbourhood park, it said.

# Building Human Capital - the essence of the Delhi Model

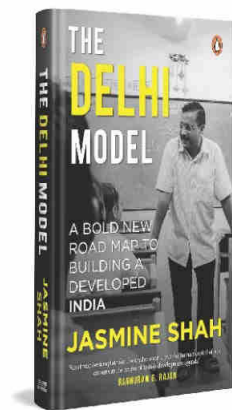


By Jasmine Shah

It's hardly a secret that even after seven-eight years of independence, India ranks pathetically low in global human development index. India's rank in the United Nation's Human Development Index (HDI) dropped in the last 10 years—from 130 in 2014 to 134 in 2023-24. On the 2023 Global Hunger Index, India ranks 111 out of 125 countries. These rankings mirror a truth known only too well among development experts and politicians alike. No nation of unhealthy and poorly-educated people can ever become a great and powerful nation, no amount of foreign direct investment or rhetoric around GDP growth is going to fix these issues automatically, only elected governments can do so through willful and thoughtful interventions.

As Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal made these issues his government's mission when setting about the promise of transforming Delhi—not for global investors or tourists, but for the people living in Delhi. Deep reforms were initiated in all areas that affected Delhi's aim: a healthy, educated, and affluent citizenry. Such as education, healthcare, water and sanitation, electricity, public transport, air pollution, social welfare and inflation. The results speak for themselves. Throughout its two terms, the AAP government in Delhi was the only one nationally to consistently spend over half of its budget on social sectors—with education and health receiving the largest push. Expenditure on social welfare quickly became an article of faith for the government.

Driven by this radical vision, the AAP government built over 22,700 new classrooms in Delhi government schools in its first nine years, compared to 24,100 classrooms built in the preceding seven decades. The school infrastructure in all existing schools was fundamentally transformed and upgraded to world-class standards with many schools sporting AC auditoriums, modern libraries, swimming pools and some even housed hockey turf grounds. An



all-out focus on pedagogy and teaching quality saw government schools consistently trump private schools in Class 12 CBSE results from 2016 onwards. Bucking the national trend of reducing enrolment in government schools, over two lakh students have left Delhi's private schools to join government schools. An increasing number of government school students clear JEE and NEET examinations every year—their numbers touching a record high of 700 and 1,414 respectively in 2024. In a rare international recognition, the New York Times in 2022 carried a front-page feature on how AAP's education model transformed the lives of millions of poor families in Delhi.

The AAP government made parallel strides in healthcare. It created India's first health guarantee model through a three-tier system comprising mohalla (neighbourhood) clinics, polyclinics and tertiary care hospitals that provide free-of-cost care to every citizen, rich or poor, for any kind of ailment. The novel concept of mohalla clinics, introduced for the first time in India, received much global acclaim for its ability to make affordable and quality primary health-care services available at the doorstep of every citizen. Over nine years, Delhi's 540 mohalla clinics have registered over seven crore outpatient visits,

serving over 60,000 patients every day through free consultations, tests and medicines. Government hospitals underwent a makeover too to cater to increased demand. The preceding governments over seven decades had created a capacity of 9,523 beds in Delhi's government hospitals by 2015; the AAP government added 41,85 beds or nearly 44 per cent capacity in the next nine years, with construction projects expedited to add another 16,000 beds by 2026 at an advanced stage.

The government also made substantial headway in water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. Free lifeline water was provided to every household of Delhi for up to 20,000 litre per month to secure a basic human right. The government made unprecedented investments in expanding the reach of the water supply network and sewage network to unserved areas, especially unauthorised colonies that house a third of Delhi's population. Over 12,000 km of water pipelines were laid, increasing the share of unauthorised colonies having access to piped water supply from 54 per cent in 2015 to 99.6 per cent in 2024. Another 2,100 km of water pipelines were laid to remote rural areas and resettlement colonies, while 3,500 km of old pipelines were replaced. Put together, the AAP government installed

over 1,000 km of water pipelines every year in the national capital. Additionally, over 4,400 km of sewer lines were laid to unauthorised colonies during this period, increasing the share of the sewage network from just 13 per cent in 2015 to 57 per cent in 2024.

In the power sector, the electricity distribution network was upgraded and made reliable—Delhi transitioned in five years from a region witnessing long power cuts every summer to the first Indian state with 24 x 7 power supply. To make electricity affordable for all, the AAP government ensured to keep electricity tariffs in check over both its terms, even as the tariffs continued to rise year on year in most Indian states over the last decade. In 2015, the AAP government decided to provide 50 per cent subsidy on domestic electricity bills up to 400 units. Expanding the subsidy, from 2019 onwards, it started providing free lifeline electricity up to 200 units to every household and 50 per cent subsidy on bills between 200 and 400 units. A massive expansion in solar and renewable energy was initiated with the result that its share in Delhi's installed capacity increased from virtually nil in 2015, one-third by mid-2024. Plans are underway to switch to 50 per cent renewable power by 2027.

Air pollution was perhaps the toughest challenge for the AAP government—not due to a lack of will or knowledge, but because the problem is truly regional in nature and requires coordinated actions from all the state governments in the National Capital Region. Yet, the AAP government took a series of unorthodox actions. First, it shut down all thermal power plants within Delhi's boundaries. Second, it ensured all 1,627 industrial units in Delhi transitioned from polluting fuels such as coal, diesel, etc. to green energy. Third, it initiated a massive greening drive planting nearly three crore trees and increasing Delhi's green cover to a record 23 per

cent in 2021. Fourth, it implemented an ambitious electric vehicle policy which allowed both to arrange as the EV cost of a car with a 12 per cent registration rate among new vehicles, the highest in India so far. Fifth, it modernized and increased the fleet of Delhi's public bus system to a record 7,700 vehicles, including nearly 2,000 electric buses. The collective net result is an unprecedented decline by 45 per cent in pollution levels over the last decade—contrary to the gloomy picture usually painted about Delhi's air pollution.

Apart from sectoral reforms, the AAP government also undertook steps to create a strong social safety net for marginalised populations in the city. In March 2017, the Delhi Cabinet approved a hike of 96 per cent in Delhi's minimum wages, making it the highest in India so far. The step reportedly benefited more than 50 lakh workers in Delhi. With annual hikes to reflect inflation, an unskilled worker in Delhi in mid-2024 was legally entitled to a minimum wage of ₹17,494 per month—compared to the national minimum wage of ₹5,340 per month, and ₹10,250 per month in the neighbouring Uttar Pradesh. For over nine lakh senior citizens, women in distress and disabled individuals covered under the government's social security pension schemes, the AAP government hiked the pension amount from ₹1,500 to ₹2,500 per month—the highest in India.

The Delhi Model of governance, with a commitment to building human capital and promoting social welfare, is reflected in its core, rejects the myth for GDP numbers and glossy infrastructure projects as the primary marker of progress.

About author: *Jasmine Shah* served as the Vice-Chairperson of the Dialogue and Development Commission, Delhi government. This article is an excerpt from her book *'The Delhi Model'* published by Penguin.

## Breaking Time Sudoku

What to do

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digit 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only one correct solution.

			4		8	7			
					5	6			
1	6						9	5	
		8	4		2		5		
	3						4		
	5		7		9	2			
3	8							6	9
		7	8						
4	2		1						

## Solution, Sudoku

3	5	8	7	1	6	2	9	4
2	6	7	5	4	9	3	8	1
4	9	1	3	8	2	7	5	6
5	2	4	1	3	7	9	6	8
9	8	6	2	5	4	1	3	7
7	1	3	9	6	8	5	4	2
1	4	2	6	9	3	8	7	5
8	3	5	4	7	1	6	2	9
6	7	9	8	2	5	4	1	3

## THE WISDOM TREE BY SUVEEN KUMAR

### REFLECTION

Everything clearly reflects. It reflects when you are loved, it reflects when you are unloved, it reflects when you are relaxed, it reflects when you are disturbed, it reflects when you think of someone and blush, it reflects when someone waits for you and you rush, a mere reflection of love sweetens everything around you and a bare reflection of love poisons everything around you. Eyes with kindness, mouth with sweetness, skin with softness and thoughts with greatness stay desirable. Don't let anything come in you that you don't want the world to see, because everything that is in there will reflect. Everything throws some signals that are felt by everyone around you. Reflection doubles your power when it brings you inside out and it halves your power when it brings you outside in.

life is easy when you and your reflection are on the same page, life is difficult when you are your reflections don't really talk to each other and life is death when your own reflection is your enemy. Clean yourself everyday as you get yourself dirty everyday, nourish yourself everyday as you fight a battle everyday, cherish yourself everyday as you remain with yourself everyday, adjust with yourself everyday as you change yourself everyday, hold your self everyday as you let fall yourself everyday, save yourself everyday as you spend your self everyday, praise yourself everyday as you insult yourself everyday, celebrate yourself everyday as you find yourself everyday.

**Moral: Be so clean in life that you can feel proud of your reflection.**



By Priyanka Saurabh

# Increasing stress among civil servants becomes a hindrance in serving the nation

Stress, fatigue, and declining productivity due to increasing workload and public expectations are growing concerns among civil servants. This phenomenon adversely affects the efficiency of governance. Civil servants working at the grassroots level are the ultimate implementers and executors of a range of government policies and are the fundamental force for social stability and harmonious development. Currently, the level of stress in civil services is high as the ever-increasing expectations of the welfare state, conflicting and difficult pressures due to coalition politics, media pressure, civil society movements, etc., demand immediate results from the civil servants. In such complex situations, only those civil servants are able to succeed who have high stress management and the ability to manage their own and others' emotions. This highlights the need for comprehensive reforms to create a flexible administrative structure capable of addressing the challenges of modern governance.

Bureaucrats face toxic work environments, verbal abuse, and constant multitasking, which significantly impact mental health. Most IAS officers suffer from insomnia and burnout due to the long hours they spend managing relief operations. Rapidly evolving stakeholder demands and limited training add to bureaucrats' stress and reduce adaptability. District collectors grappled with vaccine logistics during the pandemic, exposing outdated training in crisis management. The fear of being questioned under weaponised rates increases stress and undermines decision-making. An IRS officer faces disproportionate scrutiny over procedural lapses in implementing new tax policies. A volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world worsens their challenges.

Bureaucrats handling climate change policies struggle to integrate scientific data due to inadequate training. Symptoms such as physical fatigue, irritability, and low creativity reduce their ability to handle governance tasks effectively. Bureaucrats managing projects suffer from reduced efficiency due to persistent stress-related fatigue. The negative impact of bureaucratic burnout on governance efficiency. Burnout reduces response time, leading to delays in policy implementation and public service delivery. Slow action during the 2018 Kerala floods delayed relief efforts and increased public grievances. Fear of risk due to burnout prevents experimentation in governance processes. Digital governance projects in rural areas lacked innovative ideas, leading to suboptimal results. Stress-related inefficiency fuels public distrust and dissatisfaction with governance. A health department in a northeastern state reported poor coordination during a malaria outbreak, which affected response measures. Fatigue and mental stress increase the risk of critical policy errors, reducing the quality of governance. Flaws in implementing the Direct Benefit Transfer scheme led to financial exclusion for marginalised communities.

reforms for a resilient administrative structure. Regular training on emerging challenges, leadership, and technology, hold AI integration workshops for officers managing smart city projects to increase efficiency; provide concrete rewards for innovation; and allow safe margins for experimentation in decision-making. Maharashtra's Innovative Rural Housing Scheme of officers received special recognition, promoting bold governance approaches. Simplify and modernize service rules to reduce regulatory fear and encourage autonomous decision-making. Gujarat streamlined bureaucratic processes in its solar energy policies, speeding up project approvals. Establish policies that promote flexible schedules and personal time for reflection.

ic fatigue, mental health, skill development, and encouragement for initiatives needed to enhance governance efficiency. A supportive framework empowers civil servants to perform with clarity and resilience. As Gandhiji said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Ensuring their well-being will help bureaucrats serve the nation with renewed purpose and vigor. Improving resilience and reducing stress plays a vital role in preventing depression and anxiety among grassroots civil servants. These findings can help society and government departments to better understand the mental health status of grassroots civil servants and provide guidance for formulating relevant management and prevention measures and create high-quality work environments for grassroots civil servants.

(Priyanka Saurabh, Research Scholar in Political Science)

Bureaucrats face toxic work environments, verbal abuse, and constant multitasking, which significantly impact mental health. Most IAS officers suffer from insomnia and burnout due to the long hours they spend managing relief operations. Rapidly evolving stakeholder demands and limited training add to bureaucrats' stress and reduce adaptability. District collectors grappled with vaccine logistics during the pandemic, exposing outdated training in crisis management. The fear of being questioned under weaponised rates increases stress and undermines decision-making. An IRS officer faces disproportionate scrutiny over procedural lapses in implementing new tax policies. A volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world worsens their challenges.

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# Rijiju offers 'chadar' at Ajmer dargah on PM's behalf reads out Modi's message

**Ajmer**  
Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday offered a ceremonial 'chadar' sent by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Ajmer dargah on the 'Urs' of Sufi saint Khwaja Moimuddin Chishti and read out the prime minister's message which called on people from across religions to work together in harmony. Khadim (caretaker) Afshan Chisti offered prayers on behalf of the prime minister at the shrine.

Rijiju said in different periods in India, various saints and fakirs went among the people and illuminated their lives and left their indelible mark with the message of humanity.

"One of them, Khwaja Garib Nawaz, played an important role in increasing love and harmony in the society. His ideals dedicated to peace and brotherhood will continue to inspire generations. It will continue to inspire to do everything possible for the creation of a strong country and society," he said while reading out Modi's message.



The minister also launched a web portal of the dargah, the 'Garib Nawaz' app for pilgrims and an operations manual for the conduct of 'Urs'.

"On the web portal and app, devotees will get detailed information about the life of Khwaja Moimuddin Chishti Sahab as well as his teachings.

Talking to reporters later, Rijiju said the message of brotherhood and peace goes from the dargah of Khwaja Moimuddin Chishti to the

entire country and the world. Khwaja Moimuddin Chishti is also known as Garib Nawaz.

"Today I have come to the dargah with Prime Minister Modi's 'chadar'. I have had the good fortune of coming here to Khwaja Moimuddin Chishti Dargah. I prayed for peace," Rijiju said after offering the 'chadar'.

"The message from Ajmer Dargah goes to the whole world. Along with presenting the prime minister's 'chadar',

I read out his message," he said.

The prime minister has been annually sending a 'chadar' to the dargah.

In his message, the prime minister mentions that every sect and every religion should come together and work together for the country, society and world peace, the minister said.

Lakhs of people come here and they should get a chance to offer prayers peacefully, especially the elderly, women

and children, he said.

"There should be a system for that. A manual has been launched for that and I will try to provide all possible help from my ministry to improve the system," Rijiju said.

"Come here and feel how much impact the dargah has on our lives," he added.

"While offering the chadar sent by the prime minister, I have prayed that all the people in our country live in peace and friendship and contribute to the progress of the country," he said.

Minister of State and MP from Rajasthan Bhagirath Chaudhary, Dargah Deewan Zaimul Abedin Ali Khan's son Nasrudin Chishti, representatives from the dargah committee and khadims were present on the occasion.

Elaborate security arrangements were made for the visit of the minister, who took a flight to Jaipur and then proceeded to Ajmer by road. He was received by the BJP's state minority morcha leaders at the airport.

"On this auspicious occasion of Urs, we want that a good atmosphere should be created in the country. No

one should do anything that can affect the harmony of our country," Rijiju told reporters at the airport.

Be it a Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Parsi, Buddhist or Jain, everyone is welcome at the dargah, he said.

Asked about a petition in a local court claiming that the dargah has been built over a Shiva temple, Rijiju said, "I have just come to offer 'chadar'. I have not come here to show or tell anyone, I am going with the message (of PM) for the country that all the people in our country should stay well."

In November, a court in Ajmer admitted a petition claiming the dargah was built over a Shiva temple and issued notices to the Ajmer dargah committee, the Ministry of Minority Affairs and the Archaeological Survey of India.

Hindu Sena president Vishnu Gupta, who filed the petition, had called on the prime minister not to send a 'chadar' this time.

"Urs" is held at the Ajmer Dargah to commemorate the death anniversary of Khwaja Moimuddin Chishti.

## 2,500 water police personnel deployed to ensure safety for Kumbh Mela



**Mahakumbh Nagar**

Ensuring the safety of devotees expected to participate in Mahakumbh 2025, the Yogi government has implemented robust security measures along the Ganga and Yamuna rivers, with a special focus on the Sangam area. To provide maximum protection, a large contingent of Water Police personnel has been deployed, equipped with state-of-the-art technology to monitor every inch of the sacred confluence.

Advanced equipment, including underwater drones, and sonar systems, is being utilized for round-the-clock surveillance of the Sangam area. Lifeboats, FRP speed motor boats, and other emergency response tools have also been introduced to ensure immediate action in case of emergencies. The well-trained Water Police personnel are fully prepared to handle any disaster or unforeseen situations during the event.

Around 2,500 Water Police personnel have already been deployed for shoreline security. To further strengthen safety measures, three dedicated Water Police stations have been established, functioning 24/7 to monitor the safety of devotees.

A central control room is monitoring security operations across the Mahakumbh area, supported by 17 sub-control rooms spread across the fairground. The manpower will be further increased, with an additional, 1300 Water Police personnel joining the team before the fair officially begins. This will bring the total number of Water Police personnel to 3,800, ensuring extensive security coverage throughout the event.

The Yogi government has equipped the Water Police personnel with cutting-edge technology to secure the Ganga and Yamuna riverbanks. Deep-water barricading has been implemented along an 8 km stretch, supported by two floating rescue stations, where specially trained personnel are stationed to respond swiftly to any incident.

Additionally, 11 FRP speed motor boats have been deployed for continuous patrolling of the Sangam area. The six-seater boats ensure constant vigilance and rapid response to emergencies.

To provide immediate medical assistance, four ambulances equipped with modern medical facilities have also been stationed at strategic points along the rivers.

Along with this, 25 rechargeable mobile remote area lighting systems have been installed. Furthermore, four Ananda motorboats equipped with changing rooms have been deployed. The Water Police personnel have been equipped with a 2 km long river line, significantly aiding in traffic control on the Yamuna River during Mahakumbh 2025. To further strengthen safety and rescue operations, they have been provided with 100 diving kits, 440 lifebuoys, over 3,000 rescue tubes, 200 throw bags with ropes, 29 tower light systems, an underwater drone, and a sonar system. These advanced tools empower the Water Police to not only safeguard the riverbanks but also monitor and ensure security across all activities taking place in the water, enhancing preparedness for the grand event.

## UP develops 1240 night shelters to protect needy from cold wave



**Lucknow**

With extreme cold wave condition sweeping across Uttar Pradesh for the past 48 hours, the state government has set up 1,240 night shelters and temporary accommodation facilities across the state, equipped with all the necessary resources to help poor people stay warm.

On Saturday, dense fog engulfed most parts of the state forcing disruption in vehicular, rail and air traffic movement. All schools upto standard 8th standard have been closed for a week in most districts including Lucknow, Mathura, Agra and Bareilly.

heating arrangements to ensure that women feel safe and their needs are met.

Officials have been instructed to monitor the condition of the shelters and heating arrangements through technical means. A control room established in the Relief Commissioner's office directly communicates the status of shelters, heating, and blanket distribution. Any shortcomings identified through feedback are addressed promptly. The state government has also directed the municipal corporations to inform the public about the available night shelters. Detailed lists of shelters are being displayed in each zone, and information is also provided on digital screens at bus stations and major locations. This ensures that people can easily find the nearest shelter.

In line with the CM's directives, adequate budget allocations have been made to address winter-related issues in all districts. District Magistrates and Municipal Commissioners have been instructed to regularly inspect the night shelters and heating arrangements.

## UP's tourism and hospitality sector thrives under CM Yogi's leadership

**Lucknow**

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Uttar Pradesh is witnessing remarkable growth in the hospitality sector, which is thriving alongside the state's booming tourism industry.

With an increasing influx of tourists, the state has become one of the most significantly benefited regions in India, paving the way for consistent growth in employment opportunities across hospitality and related sectors.

According to a report by Global Hiring Indeed, job vacancies in the tourism and hospitality sector increased by 50% in 2023. Experts predict an additional 24% growth in the coming years. This surge is expected to benefit cities like Ayodhya, Varanasi, Braj, Jewar, and their surrounding areas.

Ayodhya has emerged as a hotspot for the hospitality industry, especially since the construction of the Ram



Temple began. Many renowned brands are eager to establish hotels in the city, with approvals already granted for over two dozen projects, including Taj Hotels. Local hotels are also expanding and upgrading their properties to meet rising demand.

This trend, however, is not limited to Ayodhya. Other popular tourist destinations in the state are also witnessing similar growth. Jewar, home to Asia's largest international airport, is quickly becoming a preferred

location for the hospitality sector. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath envisions integrating tourism with local communities to transform it into a people's industry. He has emphasized leveraging major events like the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, the Makar Sankranti celebrations, and the Kichdi Mela at Gorakhnath Temple to boost tourism.

The government is actively supporting initiatives to encourage residents to turn these events into unique and welcoming experiences for

tourists and pilgrims. To attract investors to the hospitality and tourism sector, the Yogi government is considering offering additional concessions for hotel construction in major cities such as Ayodhya, Lucknow, and Varanasi.

Some relaxations in land-use norms have already been provided, and the government is actively encouraging homestay initiatives to further enhance tourism infrastructure.

According to Bhavya Malhotra, a former Banquet Manager at ITC Maurya, New Delhi, a well-functioning hotel ideally requires three service providers per room across departments such as front office, housekeeping, food and beverages, laundry, finance, HR, horticulture, and sales. Smaller properties may operate with fewer staff, but maintaining at least two employees per room is crucial to deliver satisfactory customer service, he stated.

## Sikkim Bailey bridge collapses with overloaded truck none injured

**Gangtok**

A 25-year-old bailey bridge in Sikkim collapsed when an overloaded truck was crossing it on Saturday, officials said.

The 200-foot bridge, located over Lachung Chu River, was on the Lachung-Katoo Road. No casualties were reported in the incident as the bridge did not fall into the river and the driver of the truck was rescued safely.

An official in the North Sikkim district administration said vehicles are being diverted through an alternative bridge, which can be used by tourists and locals till the collapsed bridge is repaired and re-stored.

Officials of the district administration will visit Lachung and assess the damages caused by the collapse and plan repair and restoration work accordingly. All departments and agencies concerned, including Border Roads Organisation and Indian Army, will be consulted before restoration work on the bridge begins," he said.

Tourists need not panic as the alternative route is functional, popular tourist destinations in the area are open and passes are being issued by the tourism department, the official said. Dorjee Chewang Lachungpa, the pipon (village headman) of Lachung, said no tourist vehicle was stranded on either side of the bridge as they have been diverted through an alternative bridge.

He said Katoo is primarily an army area and does not fall in the route leading to the popular tourist spots in the area.

He requested authorities to start repair work at the earliest to restore connectivity along the Lachung-Katoo route. Sonam Norgay Lachungpa, president of the Travel Agents Association of Sikkim (TAAS), also issued a clarification stating that contrary to certain reports that Lachung, Yumthang and Yumtsamdong have been cut off from the rest of the region due to the bridge collapse, these areas remain accessible.

## UP gov't launches initiative to curb stubble burning

**Lucknow**

Uttar Pradesh government has launched a unique initiative, "Paral Ke Badle Govansh Khaad" (cow manure in exchange for stubble) aimed at curbing stubble burning and promoting sustainable farming practices, officials said on Saturday.

The initiative, launched on October 28, 2024, seeks to address environmental pollution caused by stubble burning while benefiting farmers through the distribution of cow manure for organic farming, a statement said.

Under the campaign 2.90,208.16 quintals of straw were collected across the state and 1,55,280.25 quintals of cow manure were distributed to farmers. "The manure is being used to enhance soil fertility and encourage sustainable agricultural practices," it said.

Several districts including Varanasi, Banda, Budhan, Jalaun, Bareilly, Amethi, Siddharthnagar, and Bahraich performed notably well during the campaign with large-scale collection of straw and distribution of manure, the statement added.

## UP chief secretary invites people of J-K to attend Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj

**Jammu**

Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh visited Mata Vaishno Devi and Mata Bhadrakali shrines on Saturday, and invited the people of Jammu and Kashmir to attend the Maha Kumbh to be held from January 13 to February 26 in Prayagraj.

Accompanied by his wife and senior IAS officer Kashmiri Singh and their son, the chief secretary was felicitated by the displaced Kashmiri Pandits at a function organised at the Bhadrakali temple in Jammu.

"Maha Kumbh is being organised in Prayagraj from January 13 to February 26. The chief minister (Yogi Adityanath) has invited people from across the country and the world to take part in it. On behalf of the Uttar Pradesh government, we invite the people of Jammu and Kashmir to the Kumbh," Singh told reporters.

Emphasising the contributions made by Kashmiri Pandits, Singh said, "We want to invite them to the Kumbh."

Speaking about the preparations for the mega



event, Singh said, "A Kumbh city has been set up on 4,000 hectares of land. Preparations are underway for the past one-and-a-half years with Rs 7,000 crore spent on upgrading the infrastructure in Prayagraj."

Elaborating the arrangements, Singh said, "We are ready to welcome 40 crore people to the Kumbh over the next 40-45 days. The Uttar Pradesh government has made all necessary arrangements. We invite the people of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly those from Kashmir, to visit the Kumbh."

Talking about tourism in Uttar Pradesh, the chief secretary said 38 crore tourists visited the state last year. "Our rough estimates

show that one tourist spends Rs 4,000 to Rs 4,500. For the Kumbh Mela, where 40 crore people are expected, we anticipate Rs 1.5 lakh crore in trade and business across sectors like transport, hotels, rentals, restaurants, food and lodging," Singh said.

Highlighting the significance of tourism, he added, "Tourism is one of the most important service sectors for employment generation. With a minimum investment of Rs 10 lakh, one job is created in the tourism sector. In comparison, the manufacturing industry creates one job with an investment of Rs 2-3 crore. The UP government recognises this and it is committed to boosting pilgrimage tourism."



# Decisive Sydney Test heads for exciting finish after Pant's breathtaking fifty

**Sydney**  
Staying true to his aggressive style of play, generational talent Rishabh Pant conjured up a spectacular 33-ball-61 to somehow keep India afloat even as Australia remained in driver's seat in the fifth Test, which is poised for an intriguing finish.

It was largely due to Pant's breathtaking knock that India finished the second day at 141 for 6 for an overall lead of 145. Pant entrained the packed SCG with four monstrous sixes and six boundaries.

His back-to-back sixes off Mitchell Starc into the heritage Ladies Members Stands were for posterity.

Pant's knock prevented Indian second innings from falling apart with the visitors top and lower order struggling to negotiate Aussie attack on a track that was aided seam and bounce.

This was after unheralded bowling duo of Prasidh Krishna (3/42) and Nishit Reddy (2/32) complemented Mohammed Siraj (3/51) and Jasprit Bumrah (2/33) to shoot Australia out for 181.

On a difficult track, Virat Kohli (6) and his top-order colleagues found Scott Boland (3/38) too hot to handle.

Kohli lost his wicket on outside the off stump line for the eighth successive time in this series.

The match is certain to end on the third day but if India will be able to defend the total will very much depend on whether skipper Jasprit Bumrah is fit to bowl full tilt.



Bumrah underwent precautionary scans for an unspecified injury after he left the field in the post-lunch session in which he bowled just one over.

If even a half-fit Bumrah bowls, it won't be easy for Australia to chase even a 175-run target on a track with variable bounce and widening cracks.

**Pant Power**  
Having curbed his natural instinct to attack during a sedate 40 in the first essay after being torn to shreds by the most important member of the Indian coaching staff for indiscreet shot selection at the MCG, Pant perhaps cleared his mind about what he needed to do.

He came in at a time when not just Boland but even debutant Beau Webster was getting the ball to move a

proverbial mile off the deck.

There was steep bounce available at the Randwick End (far end) where Kohli got out. Boland pitched it on hard length and got both seam and bounce. The result was a now familiar dab towards slips as Kohli's future beyond 123 Tests looks doubtful.

This was after both KL Rahul and Yashasvi Jaiswal got a couple of rippers. However once Pant came out, he was a man-on-a-mission as the first ball disappeared into the long-on stand. The fallen pluck shot also came out of the closet. It was exhilarating stuff.

Pant rode on bounce and hit Webster over point but the two sixes off Starc do take the cake. It was understood that Pant was mentally not in frame due to unsolicited sermons from a coaching

staff member, who despite knowing the dashing southpaw's game told him to play otherwise.

At one point, a clueless Pat Cummins was forced to put six fielders near the boundary ropes. The skipper himself who saw the back of Pant, inducing edge from a ball that rose. Indian and Australian fans gave a standing ovation to the diminutive southpaw.

**Third pacer steps up**  
In the post lunch session, Prasidh and Reddy more than made up for skipper Bumrah's absence as India took 51 overs to bowl out the hosts.

Steve Smith's (33) dismissal off Prasidh just before lunch disturbed Australia's rhythm.

Post lunch, Prasidh came from round the wicket from the Paddington End and removed Alex Carey (21) with an angled-in delivery. Carey was looking good but once Karnataka speedster found his length, he was literally unplayable.

Debutant Webster (57) justified his selection with a half-century but it was Reddy, coming for his second spell, sparked a collapse with wickets of Cummins and Mitchell Starc, both done in by subtle movement off the surface.

The final blow was dealt by Prasidh. He used the uneven bounce and cracks off the surface to get one bounce awkwardly at Webster and Jaiswal snuffed the catch. Siraj was menacing during his first spell, grabbing two wickets with perfectly pitched outswingers before Prasidh sent back-in-form Smith after he was involved in a nice little 57-run stand for the fifth wicket with Webster.

## Enough variable bounce to keep us in the game: Prasidh



**Sydney**  
India's overall lead is not even close to the 200-run mark but pacer Prasidh Krishna says the unpredictable nature of the SCG track will keep them in the hunt since batting won't be easy for Australia in the fourth innings because of the variable bounce.

India ended the second day at 141 for six for an overall lead of 145. A win in the Sydney Test will ensure that India retain the Border Gavaskar Trophy.

"It is getting difficult in some areas. The ball is keeping low sometimes but there is enough bounce for us to be in the game and look for those edges. Try and beat them on either side of the bat," Prasidh said during the media interaction.

He didn't put a number on what would be a defendable total for the visitors.

"There is no particular number in mind but then as many runs as we score would be great. We are ready to bowl them out for whatever," the Karnataka speedster, who got the prized scalp of Steve Smith in the first innings, said. Prasidh got Smith at the stroke of lunch but during his spell in the first session, he was guilty of missing his length. He either went too full or too short.

"The difference was when I got back from lunch, I actually looked at where I was bowling. I sat with the analyst and we had a better idea of what my reference point is. When I came in to bowl next, that really helped."

Prasidh came to Australia at least three weeks earlier compared to the senior team and played in the India A games. He looked good at MCG against Australia A.

"I did get a bit of confidence bowling

in Australia and having played some red ball cricket previously in the Duleep Trophy I was in good rhythm.

"When I got the ball in hand, obviously there was a bit of nerves when I started off, the first over went well, the next few didn't go really well. But then I have enough people in the team who I can actually go to sit down and discuss what went wrong, what could have been better."

Prasidh thanked bowling coach Morne Morkel for helping him with his bowling plans.

"Morne and myself, we kind of have a lot of discussions about what has to be done and things are going well for now."

The last Test that he played was in Cape Town in January 2024 and it has been a ride fraught with ups and downs for the lanky speedster, who had to undergo a back surgery in New Zealand.

Asked what changes he has brought in his bowling, he spoke about the mental shift from opening the bowling with Red SG Test for Karnataka and then coming one change for the national team where he got a semi-old Kookaburra with suppressed seam.

"That was a really good learning curve for me because every time I played for my state I was bowling with a new ball, coming here having to bowl one change, I looked at what everybody in the world does when they are bowling one change.

"It was about try and give control to the team, have so much control and be consistent in the lines and the lengths that you are bowling. So I think that is the mental shift that I made and obviously I had to put in some work to try and get myself to that point."

## National Games torch arrives in Bageshwar



**Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami flagged off the torch rally of the Games from Haldwani on December 26, which will reach Dehradun on January 25 after visiting 99 places in 13 districts.**

**Pithoragarh (Uttarakhand)**  
The 38th National Games' torch 'Tejaswini' reached Bageshwar on Saturday with the district sports officials and sports lovers welcoming it.

Uttarakhand is hosting the event for the first time later this month.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami flagged off the torch rally of the Games from Haldwani on December 26, which will reach Dehradun on January 25 after visiting 99 places in 13 districts.

The torch reached Haldwani's Gaularp Stadium on way to Nainital on December 27.

The National Games will be held from January 28 to February 14 at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Dehradun, and its mascot, anthem, logo, tagline and jersey were unveiled by the chief minister.

The purpose of the torch rally is to connect more people with the Games, said the state's sports minister Rekha Arya.

"The voyage of Tejaswini, that began from Dehradun, will culminate in the state capital after travelling a total distance of 3823 km across the state," she said.

## Matsuyama charges into halfway lead Bhatia Theegala way back

**Kapalua (Hawaii)**  
Japanese star Hideki Matsuyama charged into a one-stroke lead through 36-holes at The Sentry as he kept up his bold chase to begin his 2025 PGA TOUR campaign on a winning note.

The 32-year-old had plenty of reasons to be happy at the Plantation Course on Friday as he snared eighth birdies for a bogey-free second round of 65 and 16-under total to lead from fellow major champion, Collin Morikawa (65) in the season-opening USD 20 million Signature event.

Four players -- Corey Conners (66), Maverick McNealy (64), Tom Hoge (68) and Thomas Detry (65) -- were tied third at 14-under.

Matsuyama was however disap-



pointed he didn't go lower as he made pars on three of the par-5s, including a frustrating three-putt on the 18th hole. Matsuyama's trusty iron play saw him convert six birdies from inside of eighth feet while he drained a 35-footer on the

par-3 11th hole with the new putter.

The tenacious Japanese has established himself as the most successful Asian golfer on the PGA TOUR with 10 career titles, which included two victories last season, and he will be keen to add to his tally on the famous holiday isle.

Matsuyama's back-to-back 65s also saw him equal his second-lowest 36-hole score on TOUR, and was one shy of his career-best 129 he opened with en route to victory at the 2024 FedEx St. Jude Championship last August.

After starting his second round with two bogeys in his first three holes, Korea's Sungjae Im fought back with eight birdies to post a 67 and will enter the weekend rounds six off the pace.

## Pant's subdued first innings was surprising: McDonald

**Sydney**  
It was not at all surprising that Rishabh Pant bulldozed the Australian attack with his stroke-play in the second innings but his ultra-defensive approach on the opening day indeed was, Australia head coach Andrew McDonald said on Saturday.

Pant had laboured to 40 off 98 balls, taking multiple blows on his body during his 149-minute stay on the wicket. Pant had said that he was not in a frame of mind to attack.

Pant, though, changed the gears effortlessly in the second innings, hitting Mitchell Starc for two massive sixes. Scott Boland and Beau Webster were not spared either as they too were lotted for a six each.

"First of all, it's not surprising, the way he plays. We were in fact a little bit surprised in the first innings, the way he went about his work. He's got an incredible ability to put pressure back on to bowlers," McDonald said, doffing his hat to India's biggest match-winner in Test cricket in recent years.

However, Australia didn't allow Pant to completely walk away as Pat Cummins dismissed him just when things looked like getting out of hand.

"We're planning for that though, we'll plan leading into the summer. We bounced in and out of a few plans there and clearly kept taking on the boundary riders and was getting away with it and no, it was an innings that you would say was right for that time."

Boland has been difficult match-up for Kohli

Virat Kohli has been out eight times in his nine innings while fishing at deliveries on or outside the off-stump and



Australia head coach praised his bowlers, especially Scott Boland, who sent back the India stalwart four times in five Tests.

Does it seem easy to get Kohli out? "No, it's never easy to get Virat out," McDonald, trying to contain his smile of satisfaction.

"I give full credit to the bowlers and the execution of the plan. It's one thing to have a plan, but then to be able to execute is another thing. It's put him (Kohli) under immense pressure. And, look, he's tried some things."

"He's tried walking out of his crease. He's tried different tactics as well. But clearly that relentless nature of our bowlers, in particular, Scottie (Boland), the match-up has been incredibly difficult for him to combat. But he's never an easy wicket, no."

This is a pitch for even contests. The traditional SCG wicket is usually a batting paradise and also helps the spinners towards the end but the ongoing Test has unfolded on a green top with variable bounce on offer.

## USA Water Polo is staying with Krikorian and Udovicic for the 2028 Olympics

**Washington**  
USA Water Polo is staying with coaches Adam Krikorian and Dejan Udovicic through the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

The California-based governing body announced the contract extensions for Krikorian and Udovicic on Friday. It's the first major move for Jamie Davis since he took over as CEO of USA Water Polo on Oct. 1.

Los Angeles is the epicenter of American water polo, and the U.S. teams are expected to contend for gold on their home turf.

While Udovicic's return seemed like a formality after he guided the U.S. men to bronze at the 2024 Olympics, there was some question about Krikorian's situation following a heartbreaking finish for the women's team in Paris.

"Adam's accomplishments are unparalleled, and under Dejan's leadership in Paris last summer our men won the program's first Olympic medal since 2008," Davis said in a release. "We have big goals on the journey to LA28 and I'm confident that Adam and Dejan will position us well for victory."

Since Krikorian, 50, took over in 2009, the U.S. women's team has won three Olympic gold medals and six world championships. The program was considered the sport's dominant power before it went 4-3 at the Paris Games and finished fourth.

The U.S. had been the only team to medal in each women's water polo tournament at the Olympics



**While Udovicic's return seemed like a formality after he guided the U.S. men to bronze at the 2024 Olympics, there was some question about Krikorian's situation following a heartbreaking finish for the women's team in Paris.**

since it started in 2000. Speaking right after a last-second loss to the Netherlands in the bronze-medal game in August, Krikorian openly wondered if it might be time for a coaching change.

In the end, Krikorian and USA Water Polo decided to give it another go.

"I am thrilled to continue to be a part of a program that has given so much to me personally and that has had such an enormous positive influence on the sport throughout our country and the world," Krikorian said in a release.

It has been a steady rise for the U.S. men since Udovicic, 54, took over in 2013. Led by Ben Hallock, one of the best centers in the world, the Americans are expected to be one of the top teams going into the LA Games.

"We have an excellent core group of athletes that are entering their prime (and) putting us in a position to achieve what has been my goal since the day I joined USA Water Polo: reaching the top of the podium and winning a gold medal," Udovicic said. "We know this won't be easy but I believe in our team and our staff and am confident the best is yet to come."

**Hundreds of animals killed in Dallas shopping centre fire**

Dallas (US): A fire that broke out at a shopping centre in Dallas on Friday morning killed more than 500 animals, most of which were small birds, authorities said.

The 579 animals in the pet shop at Plaza Latina in North-west Dallas died from smoke inhalation, Dallas Fire-Rescue spokesperson Jason Evans said in a statement.

The flames from the fire never reached the animals. Chickens, hamsters, two dogs and two cats also died, Evans said.

The two-alarm fire took about two hours and as many as 45 firefighters to extinguish around 11 a.m., Evans said.

"While DFR personnel did search and attempt rescue, all animals in the shop unfortunately perished due to smoke inhalation," Evans said.

No people were injured in the fire. The structure of the large, one-story shopping centre was severely damaged, including a partially collapsed roof, Evans said.

The shopping centre includes multiple small businesses and was described on its Facebook page as "a place where people can go to eat, and buy all sorts of Latin goods and services." A post on the page in Spanish asked for prayers for the families who work there.

# Honduras threatens to expel US military bases over Trrtation plans

TEGUCIGALPA: Honduras President Xiomara Castro's comments earlier this week threatening to stop her country's cooperation with the U.S. military if President-elect Donald Trump follows through on promised mass deportations have generated political heat at home, even as the U.S. government has remained silent.

In a New Year's Day speech on a national television channel, Castro said that if Trump goes ahead with mass deportations, Honduras would reconsider military cooperation with the U.S.

"Faced with a hostile attitude of mass expulsion of our brothers, we would have to consider a change of our cooperation policies with the United States, especially in the military realm," Castro said.

She said the U.S. had maintained a presence in Honduran territory for decades without paying a cent and if Honduras are expelled en masse that presence would cease to have any reason to exist in Honduras. She added that she hoped the Trump administration would be open to dialogue.

It was just the latest response in the region to early pronouncements from Trump.

His threat to impose tariffs on Mexico if it didn't do more to stop illegal migration and drug trafficking was met with a suggestion of retaliatory tariffs from that government. More recently Trump criticized charges to transit the Panama Canal and suggested the U.S. could take it back, something Panama's president emphatically rejected.

The main U.S. military presence in Honduras is at Soto Cano Air Base outside the capital. While it is a Honduran



base, the U.S. has maintained a significant presence there since 1983 and it has become a key U.S. launching point for humanitarian and anti-drug missions in Central America.

It is home to Joint Task Force Bravo, which the U.S. Defense Department has described as a "temporary but indefinite" presence.

The U.S. Defense Department declined to comment, noting that it

"pertains to campaign statements and not policy." U.S. Embassy in Honduras did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Castro's political opposition, however, has been quick to denounce the president's comments.

Jorge Calix, a probable presidential aspirant for the Liberal Party in Honduras' Nov. 30 elections, said Castro had put Honduras "in grave danger" for personal and ideological reasons.

Olban Valladares, a political analyst contemplating his own run for office for the Innovation and Unity Party, panned Castro's threat.

"She knows we don't have the ability to threaten the United States in any way, that the damages it would cause Honduras would be terrible," Valladares said. He said the threat could make Honduran migrants even more of a target for the Trump administration.

**Senior official of Pakistan's Kurram district injured in firing**

Peshawar: The Deputy Commissioner of northwestern Pakistan's restive Kurram district was injured when assailants fired on his convoy on Saturday, days after a peace agreement was reached between two warring parties in the sectarian-violence-hit district.

According to sources, the incident took place in the Kojal Baba village near Bagan, when residents opened fire on military vehicles, injuring Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kurram Javedullah Mehsud and three security personnel. Mehsud was in the area to review arrangements for an aid convoy to take food items to the district after the main Peshawar-Sadda-Thall-Parachinar road's opening after 85 days of closure.

Sources said that the firing took place during negotiations between government officials and the protestors who had blocked the main road.

Mehsud was shot three times and was rushed to a hospital in the Lower Alizai tehsil for treatment.

Three protestors were also injured, official sources said.

"We suspect that local spoilers are involved in the attack," said a military official.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government spokesperson Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif said that the situation in Kurram is "under control".

He said all travel and security-related arrangements were in place for the protection of the convoy.

"The DC is undergoing surgery but his condition is out of danger," said Barrister Saif, who was present at the scene along with the Kohat Commissioner and Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG).

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and provincial Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur condemned the attack.

Gandapur condemned the firing and sought a report on the incident from senior officials. He wished those injured in the firing a speedy recovery.

"Such an incident after the Kurram peace agreement is highly regrettable and condemnable," said Gandapur.

# Myanmar releases thousands of prisoners to mark Independence Day

Bangkok: Myanmar's military government has released more than 6,000 prisoners and has reduced other inmates' sentences as part of a mass amnesty marking the 77th anniversary of independence from Britain on Saturday.

They included just a small proportion of hundreds of political detainees jailed for opposing army rule since the military seized power in



February 2021 from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. That takeover was met with

massive nonviolent resistance, which has since become a widespread armed struggle.

State-run MRTV television reported that Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, the head of the military government, granted amnesties covering 5,864 prisoners from Myanmar, as well as 180 foreigners who will be deported. Mass prisoner releases are common on holidays and other significant occasions in Myanmar.

The terms of release warn that if the freed detainees violate the

law again, they will have to serve the remainder of their original sentences in addition to any new sentence.

In a separate report, it said Min Aung Hlaing had commuted the life sentences of 144 prisoners to 15 years' imprisonment. The report provided no details about them.

The report also said that all other prisoners will have their sentences reduced by one sixth,

except those convicted under the Explosive Substances Act, the Unlawful Associations Act, the Arms Act and the Counterterrorism Law, all laws which are often used against opponents of military rule.

Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, the spokesperson for the military government, said in an audio note to journalists that those being released included about 600 prisoners who were pros-

ecuted under Section 505(A) of Myanmar's penal code, which makes it a crime to spread comments that create public unrest or fear or spread false news.

He said Khet Aung, a former chief minister of the southern Kachin state, was among those freed. Khet Aung was arrested soon after the army takeover and was sentenced in April 2022 to 12 years in prison on corruption charges.

## BUSINESS

**Agri Minister Reviews Schemes Ahead of Budget**

New Delhi: Agriculture minister Shivaraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday reviewed various schemes with state agriculture ministers and sought their suggestions on ongoing programmes and budget allocation ahead of the Union Budget.

During a virtual meeting, Chouhan expressed satisfaction over the agriculture and allied sector's likely higher growth rate of 3.5-4 per cent in the 2024-25 fiscal year, and urged state governments to work at a "faster pace", according to an official statement.

He welcomed the State Bank of India's report showing that the rural poverty rate declined to below 5 per cent for the first time in FY24 from 7.2 per cent in FY23.

The minister said the Centre is implementing a six-point strategy to boost the farm sector, including increasing production per hectare through research by ICAR and release of new seed varieties.

The government is also focusing on reducing production costs, promoting micro irrigation, farm mechanisation, technology adoption, and new agricultural methods.

Chouhan highlighted progress in key schemes, including PM-KISAN, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, DAP, fertiliser subsidy, Kisan Credit Card, and Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PMAASA).

"There is continuous progress in the agriculture sector and we are all constantly making efforts for it. I have full faith that we will share suggestions together regarding the budget, improvement in schemes and move forward together in that direction," he said.

Agriculture Secretary Devesh Chaturvedi and other senior ministry officials attended the meeting.

# Data Protection Rules Balance Regulation & Innovation: Vaishnav

New Delhi: The draft protection rules released by the government create a balance between regulation and innovation while completely protecting citizen rights, Union minister Ashwini Vaishnav said on Saturday.

The government issued draft rules for the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act on Friday for public consultation till February 18.

"Rules have to be within four walls of the Act. It is within the ambit of the Act passed by Parliament. These rules have been framed to ensure a balance between regulation and innovation while completely safeguarding the rights of citizens," Vaishnav told PTI in an interview.

The minister said earlier there was only one template available to the world -- the European data protection rule with



a high level of regulation. However, Indian rules have attempted to balance the regulation with innovation to safeguard the boom in the innovation ecosystem developing among start-ups in the country.

He said extensive consultations have been held with the industry and systems such as complaint registration, their handling and distribution, interaction with digital platforms, have been put in place.

The minister said the final rules will be placed before Parliament in the monsoon session for approval and all entities handling data digitally will get two years to calibrate their systems as per the law.

"All the entities cov-

ered under the Act will have to review existing consent within two years after the rules are in place," Vaishnav said.

He said the rules will also have to be validated and verified through voluntarily provided identity proof issued by an entity entrusted by law or the government, as per the draft rules.

Further, parents' identity and age will also have to be validated and verified through voluntarily provided identity proof issued by an entity entrusted by law or the government, as per the draft rules.

The government issued draft rules for the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act on Friday for public consultation till February 18.

**Govt permits export of 2 lakh tonne wheat to Nepal**

New Delhi: The government has permitted exports of two lakh tonne of wheat to Nepal, according to a notification issued on Saturday.

The export is permitted through National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL), the Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in the notification.

NCEL is a company set up with cooperative societies as its promoters.

Though export of wheat is banned to maintain domestic supply, outbound shipments are allowed on the basis of permission granted by the government to certain countries to meet their food security needs and on request.

In a separate notification, DGFT said inputs imported for synthetic knitted fabrics by advance authorisation holders, EOUs (export oriented units) and SEZs (special economic zones) shall be exempted from MIP (minimum import condition).

There is a USD 3.5 per kg MIP on synthetic knitted fabrics, to discourage inbound shipment of cheap fabrics.

"Import of synthetic knitted fabrics... is restricted. However, import is free if CIF (cost, insurance, freight) value is USD 3.5 and above per kilogram. Further, inputs imported by advance authorisation holders, EOUs and SEZs shall be exempted from MIP condition," it said

# Plywood, MDF Industry Embraces Quality Control Norms

New Delhi: After initial resistance, the plywood and MDF board industry has agreed to implement the mandatory quality control norms as they have recognised the long-term benefits of adhering to high-quality standards, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said.

He said India is introducing modern standards that are often harmonised with prevailing standards in other parts of the world, particularly the developed countries.

India's continuous focus on quality is now



recognised and appreciated within the country and internationally as well, the minister said.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) had introduced quality control orders

(QCO) for plywood, MDF boards, and other wooden products to boost domestic manufacturing and cut imports of sub-standard goods.

Due to the opposition of the domestic industry,

requested that QCO should be put on these products.

"I think that is the message that is gradually percolating down in more and more sectors that this (QCO) will help India's manufacturing sector to grow," Goyal said.

The government has been working in mission mode to develop a robust quality ecosystem in India, the hallmark being the emphasis on superior and safety-compliant products to take the economy to higher echelons of growth and development.

As part of this endeavour, these orders are being rapidly introduced by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) for critical products impacting consumer safety like electrical accessories, laboratory glassware, hinges, copper products and door fittings.

These QCOs have the right ingredients for strengthening the quality standards of "Made in India" products, without compromising on the range of goods being made available to the Indian consumer.

This focused approach for restricting the circulation of sub-standard products shall be a crucial driver for establishing India as a manufacturing powerhouse synonymous with best-in-class quality products.

To enforce strong quality standards for enhancing consumer product safety, there is a strong policy focus on implementation of these orders which is in line with the provisions of the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).



Payal Kapadia's 'All We Imagine As Light' secures spots in BAFTA 2025 longlists



New Delhi  
Payal Kapadia's "All We Imagine As Light" continues its remarkable run on the international awards circuit, securing spots on the BAFTA Film Awards longlists in three categories, including Best Director.

The British Academy on Friday evening shared the results of the first round of voting across 25 categories for its upcoming awards gala.

Kapadia's Malayalam-Hindi movie, which scripted history by becoming the first Indian movie to win the Grand Prix award at the Cannes in May, has made it to three longlists of 10 movies each - Best Film Not in English Language, Best Director and Best Original Screenplay.

Besides "All We Imagine As Light", Sandhya Suri's "Santosh" and Karan Kandhari's "Sister Midnight" are

nominated in the longlist for Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer.

Indian-origin British actor Dev Patel has also found a mention in the longlist for his directorial debut "Monkey Man". Patel is nominated in the Leading Actor longlist.

According to BAFTA, the films mentioned in the longlists will advance to the nominating stage of voting, which started on Friday and will conclude on January 10. The three nods for Kapadia's movie comes weeks after it picked up two nominations at the 82nd Golden Globe Awards. The Malayalam-Hindi film, which marks Kapadia's feature directorial debut, is nominated for Best Motion Picture Non-English Language and the Best Direction - Motion Picture at the awards gala, which will be held on January 6.

# Kiara Advani has been advised to take Rest

Mumbai  
Bollywood actress Kiara Advani has been recommended to take a break due to an intense work schedule, her representative said on Saturday, refuting reports that she has been hospitalized. The reports of her hospitalization emerged after Advani missed the trailer launch event of her upcoming film "Game Changer" on Satur-

day. The representative clarified that Kiara has not been admitted to a hospital and has been advised to rest because of her continuous non-stop work. Kiara was last seen in the 2023 movie "Satyaprem Ki Katha" alongside Kartik Aaryan.

Game Changer, a political action thriller directed by S Shankar, will mark her return with Telugu star Ram Charan after their previous collaboration in the 2019

film "Vinaya Vidheya Rama". The film, also featuring S J Suryah, Anjali, Jayaram, Sunil, Naveen Chandra, and Samuthirakani, is scheduled for theatrical release on January 10. Kiara is shooting for War 2 along with Hrithik Roshan and NTR. She is also the leading lady in Yash's Toxic which is in shooting mode. She has 5-6 new Hindi films that are in various stages of production.

# HBO cancels 'The Franchise' after one season

Los Angeles  
American network HBO has pulled the plug on its latest comedy series "The Franchise" after just one series.

Starring British-Indian actor Himesh Patel in the lead, the show was a satirical take on Hollywood studios' obsession with superhero moviemaking.

Produced by filmmaker Sam Mendes and Armando Iannucci of "Veep" fame, the show had premiered on HBO in October 2024.

"We're so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with the tremendously talented team behind The Fran-



chise,' especially Sam Mendes, Jon Brown, Armando Iannucci, and this hilarious ensemble of actors," an HBO spokesperson said in a statement to entertainment news outlet The Hollywood Reporter.

"While we won't be moving forward with another season, we look forward to collaborating with all of them in the future," the spokesperson added. Created and shown by John Brown, the eight-episode comedy followed a crew of an unloved franchise movie fighting for their place in a savage and unruly cinematic

# It's a blessing to work with director Shankar on 'Game Change': Ram Charan

Mumbai  
South star Ram Charan on Saturday said it was an "enriching" experience to collaborate with acclaimed filmmaker S Shankar for his upcoming film "Game Changer".

The political action film marks Shankar's debut in Telugu cinema after directing several commercially-successful Tamil titles such as "Indian", "Anniyan", "Sivaji: The Boss", "Enthiran" and "2.0".

At the promotional press meet of "Game Changer", Charan recalled meeting the director at an event for Shankar's 2012 film "Nanban", which was a remake of "3 Idiots".

The actor said he wanted to ask the filmmaker to make a film either with him or his father, superstar Chiranjeevi, but couldn't muster the courage to convey it to him.

"I was sitting next to Shankar sir and I was thinking, 'How do I tell him to

make a Telugu film with me or my dad or my contemporary heroes'. But I didn't had the guts to tell him," Charan said.

The actor said during the making of SS Rajamouli's "RRR", producer Dil Raju approached him to be part of a film, which will be helmed by Shankar.

"I don't know how my dad will feel, but I feel blessed that I got to work with him. He should've done it with dad. But I'm very fortunate. It's a blessing to work for five years with Rajamouli Garu and then Shankar Garu, it is so enriching as an actor, there's so much to learn," Charan added.

Charan said Rajamouli and Shankar are both "task masters" and push their actors to give their best.

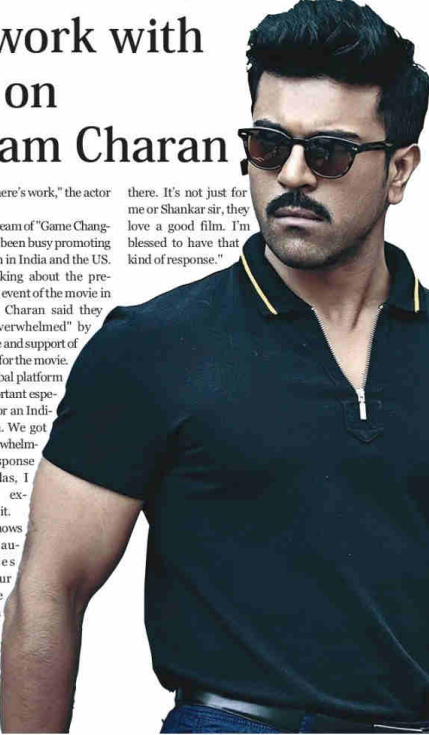
"They expect a lot from every person working on the film. It's very rare to work with such talent and they keep pushing you. There wasn't a day when you could relax. Even if you're a single

shot, there's work," the actor said.

"The team of 'Game Changer' has been busy promoting the film in India and the US. Speaking about the pre-release event of the movie in Dallas, Charan said they are "overwhelmed" by the love and support of people for the movie.

"Global platform is important especially for an Indian film. We got an overwhelming response in Dallas, I hadn't expected it. "It shows global audiences are our true cinema lovers, most of our revenue comes from

there. It's not just for me or Shankar sir, they love a good film. I'm blessed to have that kind of response."



Like to shine light on contemporary history Vikramaditya Motwane

Mumbai  
Filmmaker Vikramaditya Motwane says he adopted a "fly on the wall" approach to show the world that exist within the walls of Tihar jail in his upcoming series, "Black Warrant".

The show is a dramatized adaptation of the book "Black Warrant: Confessions Of A Tihar Jailer" by Sunil Gupta, a former superintendent of Tihar, and journalist Sunetra Choudhury.

"I told my crew constantly that, 'you are a fly on the wall', or you are peeping into somebody's room and feel like you are taking vicarious pleasure out of what is happening on screen. That's been the operative mantra throughout," Motwane said in an interview.

Based on true events, the prison drama series revolves around Gupta, who with his two trusted fellow jailers (played by Parmvir Singh Cheema and Anurag Thakur), confront Tihar's notorious inmates and the deep-rooted politics in the 1980s.

The series will debut on Netflix on January 10.

Motwane, also behind popular OTT series "Sacred Games" on Netflix and "Jubilee" on Prime Video, said he thrives on challenges.

"I'm a student and lover of contemporary history and I like to shine a light on it in an interesting, entertaining and engaging way. That's my approach to everything. I love filmmaking and I'm up for a challenge every time to try something (new)," said Motwane.

In order to show an authentic world of the prison, the filmmaker visited Tihar jail, and talked to Gupta to get insights into the day-to-day operations, including mundane details like how inmates pay for water or how gangs inside prison.

# David Fincher gives 'Seven' a final 4K UHD glow up for its 30th anniversary

Los Angeles  
For David Fincher, seeing "Seven" in 4K was an experience he can only describe as harrowing. That or a high school reunion.

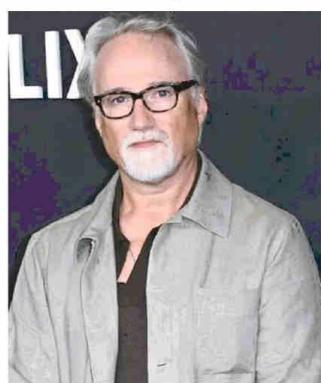
"There are definitely moments that you go, 'What was I thinking?' Or 'Why did I let this person have that hairdo?'" Fincher said in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

He's OK with the film being a product of its time in most respects. But some things just could not stand in high-definition resolution.

"It was a little descript, to be honest," said Fincher. "We needed to resuscitate it. There are things you can see in 4K HDR that you cannot see on a film print."

Ever the perfectionist, he and a team got to work on a new restoration of the film for its 30th anniversary re-release. This weekend the restored "Seven" will play on IMAX screens for the first time in the US and Canada, and on Jan. 7, the 4K UHD home video version will be available as well.

The dark crime thriller written by Andrew Kevin



Walker and starring Brad Pitt and Morgan Freeman as a pair of detectives looking for a serial killer was somewhat of a career-reviver for Fincher, whose directorial debut "Alien 3" had not gone well.

"Seven" was not a sure thing: It was made for only USD 34 million (and only got that when Fincher managed to persuade studio execs to give up USD 3 million more). But it went on to earn more than USD 327 million,

not accounting for inflation, and continues to influence the genre.

Fincher has over the years overseen several restorations of the film (including one for laser disc) but decided this needed to be the last. It's why he insisted on an 8K scan that they could derive the 4K from.

He wanted to ensure that it wouldn't have to be repeated when screens get more advanced.



Dhanashree Verma, Yuzvendra Chahal unfollow each other on Instagram

Mumbai  
Actress-choreographer Dhanashree Verma and Indian cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal have unfollowed each other on Instagram amid divorce rumours. Chahal has also deleted all of his photos with Dhanashree from his Instagram account.

While neither Dhanashree nor Yuzvendra have made any announcement about their separation, rumours of an ongoing rift between them have been circulating on social media since 2023 when Dhanashree removed the surname Chahal from her Instagram account.

The couple got engaged in

August 2020 and tied the knot on December 12 that very year. Dhanashree had even posted her wedding photos alongside the caption, "We started at 'Once upon a time' and found 'Our happily ever after', coz' finally. #DhanashreeYuz for infinity & beyond."

While the home front might be far from ideal, the couple seem to be thriving careerwise. Dhanashree recently appeared in the Punjabi song Jutti Kasuri, sung by Gippy Grewal and Rashmeet Kaur. Dhanashree also shared BTS pictures from the sets of her upcoming untitled film in November last year.

