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Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck seek judge's approval of divorce settlement



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MARKET

SENSEX	NIFTY
78199.11	23707.90
234.12	91.85
GOLD	SILVER
77,491.00	90,762.00
333.00	208.00

WEATHER

Sunrise	7:16 AM
Sunset	5:41 PM
Moonrise	12:41 PM
Moonset	2:29 AM
Today's Prediction	
Maximum	18°C
Minimum	9°C
Tomorrow's Prediction	
Maximum	18°C
Minimum	7°C

India's GDP to grow 6.4% in 2024-25, slowest in 4 yrs

The advance estimates will be used in preparation for the Union Budget to be presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Lok Sabha on February 1.

New Delhi
India's economic growth rate is estimated to slip to a four-year low of 6.4 per cent in 2024-25, mainly on account of poor showing by the manufacturing and services sector, according to government data released on Tuesday.



The gross domestic product (GDP) rate of 6.4 per cent will be the lowest since the Covid year (2020-21) when the country witnessed a negative growth of 5.8 per cent. It was 9.7 per cent in 2021-22; 7 per cent in 2022-23 and 8.2 per cent in the last fiscal ended in March 2024.

The first advance estimates of National Income for 2024-25 released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) is lower than the 6.6 per cent projected by the Reserve Bank in December 2024. It is also a tad lower than the finance ministry's initial projection of 6.5-7 per cent.

The advance estimates will be used in preparation for the Union

Budget to be presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Lok Sabha on February 1.

The economic growth slowed to a seven-quarter low of 5.4 per cent during the July-September period. It was 6.7 per cent in the first quarter (April-June).

The manufacturing sector output is expected to decelerate to 5.3

per cent from a high of 9.9 per cent recorded in the previous fiscal, NSO said.

The services sector, comprising trade, hotels, transport and communications, is estimated to expand at 5.8 per cent against 6.4 per cent in 2023-24.

On the other hand, the farm sector is estimated to record a growth of 3.8

per cent in the current fiscal, up from 1.4 per cent in 2023-24.

"Real GDP has been estimated to grow by 6.4 per cent in FY 2024-25 as compared to the growth rate of 8.2 per cent in Provisional Estimate (PE) of GDP for FY 2023-24," NSO said.

Nominal GDP is likely to grow at 9.7 per cent in FY2026," she said.

cent in 2023-24.

According to the data, nominal GDP (GDP at current prices) is estimated to attain a level of Rs 324.11 lakh crore in 2024-25 compared to Rs 295.36 lakh crore in 2023-24, showing a growth rate of 9.7 per cent.

The size of the economy, as per the current estimates, is USD 3.8 trillion (@Rs 85.7/USD) during 2024-25. Aditi Navar, Chief Economist, Iera opined that while the NSO's implicit H2 FY2025 projections seem reasonable, some of the sectoral numbers could report higher growth prints.

"In our view, the GDP growth in FY2026 will be crucially influenced by global uncertainties as well as domestic uncertainties, amidst considerable base effects. Benefiting from an anticipated capex push in the upcoming Budget, we project the GDP growth at 6.5 per cent in FY2026," she said.

CONTD ON PAGE-2

Centre earmarks memorial for Pranab Mukherjee



New Delhi
About four years after the death of former President Pranab Mukherjee, the Centre has approved a memorial for him at Rashtriya Smriti Sthal, a complex designated for the last rites and commemorative sites of Presidents, Vice Presidents, and Prime Ministers (PMs) in the national capital.

Mukherjee, a Congress veteran, served as the 13th President from 2012 until 2017. He was the first person from West Bengal to hold the post. He died on August 31, 2020.

Noted Kathak dancer and his daughter, Sharmista Mukherjee, met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday to convey her gratitude for honoring her father.

"The Competent Authority has approved the earmarking of a site within the designated site within the

HIGHLIGHT
The memorial will be built within the Rashtriya Smriti complex, Union Ministry of Housing informs the late leader's daughter

"Rashtriya Smriti" complex (a part of the Rajghat precinct) for erecting a Samadhi of Late Sri Pranab Mukherjee, former President of India," read a letter from the Land and Development Office (L&DO) of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, sent to Sharmista.

After the meeting with Modi, she posted on a micro-blogging site that she was "immensely touched by the unexpected gesture" from the PM.

"Called on Hon'ble PM Narendra Modi ji to express thanks and gratitude from the core of my heart for his CONTD ON PAGE-2



Workers clear the plaza at the Capitol as snow falls on Tuesday.

Delhi to vote on Feb 5, results on Feb 8: CEC

New Delhi
Polling for all 70 assembly seats in Delhi will be held on February 5 as a triangular contest is on the cards with the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress aiming to halt the Aam Aadmi Party from coming to power for a third successive term.

Announcing the schedule on Tuesday, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said votes will be counted on February 8.

The last date of filing of nominations is January 17 and the scrutiny of nominations will be done by January 18.

Candidates will be able to withdraw their nominations till January 20.

"It is a single-phase election... We have deliberately kept polling on a Wednesday so



HIGHLIGHT
The CEC claimed that it is "impossible" to change voter turnout data and therefore the allegations of the sudden jump in poll percentage post 5 pm is misconceived.

more people come out to vote... like we did in Maharashtra. The entire election process will be completed by February 10," Kumar told a press conference.

He dismissed allegations that names eligible voters were removed from voters' list.

Kumar asserted that

no deletion can occur without thorough documentation, field verification, and giving the concerned individual an opportunity to be heard.

He emphasised that the process for additions and deletions is transparent, rigorous, and immune to arbitrary changes. Agency

SC to examine age bar in India's surrogacy laws

New Delhi
The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to examine on February 11 issues over the age bar for surrogate mothers and others under the laws.



A bench comprising Justices B V Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma, which heard about 15 petitions challenging the provisions of the Surrogacy Regulation Act and the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2021, asked the Centre to file its written submissions in the case.

Additional solicitor general Aishwarya Bhati, representing the Centre,

said she would file the written submissions and the government would abide by the apex court's directions.

The court underscored the need to pass an interim order in the case.

The 2021 surrogacy laws set age limits for intended parents and surrogate mothers. According to the law, the intended mother must be between 23 and 50 years of age, and the intended father must be between 26 and 55 years of age.

surrogate mothers. According to the law, the intended mother must be between 23 and 50 years of age, and the intended father must be between 26 and 55 years of age. Agency

126 killed, about 200 hurt as massive quake hits Tibet

Beijing
A 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck near one of Tibet's holiest cities on Tuesday, killing at least 126 people and injuring 188 others with tremors also shaking buildings and forcing people to run to the streets in neighbouring Nepal.



According to regional disaster relief headquarters, the quake jolted Dingri County in Xigaze in Tibet Autonomous Region in China at 9:05 am Tuesday (Beijing Time). The US Geological Service, however, put the quake's magnitude at 7.1.

At least 126 people have been confirmed dead and 188 others injured as of 3 pm Tuesday (local time), state-run

Xinhua news agency reported. Chinese President Xi Jinping has ordered all-out rescue efforts to carry out relief and rescue operations in the affected areas.

Xi ordered utmost efforts to treat the injured and urged efforts to pre-

vent secondary disasters, properly resettle affected residents, and handle the aftermath work effectively. Following the quake, China Earthquake Administration launched a level-II emergency service response and sent a work team to the site to

HIGHLIGHT
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assist with disaster relief efforts. Xizang Autonomous Region also issued a level-II emergency response to the quake.

Some 22,000 disaster relief tents, including cotton tents, cotton coats, quilts and folding beds, together with special relief materials for high-altitude and frigid areas, have been dispatched by central authorities to the quake-hit area. Over 1,500 local

firefighters and rescue workers have also been dispatched to the ground.

Xigaze also known as Shigatse is close to the border with India. Shigatse is considered one of the holiest cities of Tibet. It is the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama, a key figure of Tibetan Buddhism whose spiritual authority is second only to the Dalai Lama.

The epicentre was located in Tsoqo Township of Dingri County, which has a population of approximately 6,900 people within a 20-km radius. There are 27 villages within this area.

Official data show Dingri County has a population of over 61,000 people. Agency

India's GDP to grow 6.4% in 2024-25, slowest in 4 yrs

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Dharmakirti Joshi, Chief Economist, Crisis, said the decline in government capital expenditure, a key driver of post-pandemic recovery, during the second quarter is unlikely to be compensated for in the rest of the fiscal.

"The urban economy is grappling with the dual challenge of high inflation and slowing credit growth. The Reserve Bank of India's recent data indicates consumer confidence has moderated in urban areas, and growth in retail credit, which has a larger footprint in the urban economy, has slowed," he said.

Further, as per the NSO, the nominal Gross Value Added (GVA) is estimated to attain a level of Rs 292.64 lakh crore in 2024-25 against Rs 267.62 lakh crore in 2023-24, showing a growth rate of 9.3 per cent.

Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) at constant prices has witnessed a growth rate of 7.3 per cent during 2024-25 over the growth rate of 4 per cent in the previous financial year.

Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GFCE) at Constant Prices has rebounded to a growth rate of 4.1 per cent compared to the growth rate of 2.5 per cent in the previous fiscal.

NSO also said the per capita income (at current prices) is estimated to increase by 8.7 per cent to Rs 2,00,162 per annum. It was Rs 1,84,205 in the preceding fiscal.

Centre earmarks memorial for Pranab Mukherjee

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government's decision to create a memorial for Baba. It's more cherished considering that we didn't ask for it. Immensely touched by this unexpected but truly gracious gesture by the PM," her post on X stated.

Sharmistha further said that she couldn't describe her feelings in words.

"Baba used to say that state honors shouldn't be asked for; they should be offered. I'm so grateful that PM Modi did this to honor Baba's memory. It doesn't affect Baba where he is now—beyond applause or criticism. But for his daughter, words are not sufficient to express my joy," she also wrote.

On his birth anniversary, December 11, Modi said that Pranab was a statesman and contributed to the development of the country.

"Remembering Shri Pranab Mukherjee on his birth anniversary, Pranab Babu was a one-of-a-kind public figure—a statesman par excellence, a wonderful administrator, and a repository of wisdom. His contributions to India's development are noteworthy. He was blessed with a unique ability to build consensus across the spectrum, and this was due to his vast experience in governance and his deep understanding of India's culture as well as ethos. We will keep working to realize his vision for our nation," he posted on X.

Do away with VIP culture in temples, says Vice Prez Dhankhar

New Delhi

Vice-President Jageed Dhankhar

on Tuesday stressed the urgent need to reflect on the deep political divisiveness in the country. "The political climate in the country is as much a challenge as climate change. We have to work to harmonise it. We cannot ignore our long-term gains. The political temperature in the country needs to be moderated by rational minds. All our stances must be dictated and purified firmly by one consideration — the goodness of the nation. Because this country, home to one-sixth of humanity, is the nerve centre, cultural centre, and spiritual centre of the planet," he said.

Addressing the gathering after inaugurating the Queue Complex and Jananadeep at Sri Kshethra Dharmasthala, Karnataka, on Tuesday, he urged leaders to rise above bitterness. "Politics is not for bitterness. Politicians will have different ideologies. They must have. India is defined for its diversity because the diversity converges into unity. But why should there be political bitterness? The object of politics should not be power alone. Power is important. It should be used to serve the society and the nation," he asserted.

Referring to the VIP culture, he said it is an aberration. "It is an in-

curtion when viewed through the anvil of equality. It should have no place in society, much less in religious places. The very idea of VIP darshan militates against divinity. It should be dispensed with," he remarked. Calling for equality in religious institutions, he added, "Religious institutions are emblematic of equality since there is no individual higher before the Almighty, the God. We should re-instill the idea of equality in religious institutions. I hope this Dharmasthala, being led by a luminary of all times, will serve as an example of egalitarianism and let us shun VIP culture."

Addressing concerns about law and order, Dhankhar condemned the destruction of public property and nefarious activities by rogue elements. "Imagine in a country like ours, people challenge law-enforcing authorities. They challenge public order. They come to the streets if there is court summons. Is this the way to function in a country that is Bharat? Anyone who challenges law and public order must be held accountable. How shameful it is for us. How painful it is when we see public property being destroyed, public property being set on fire. They are enemies of the nation. These people, these nefarious elements must be dealt with in



"Politics is not for bitterness. Politicians will have different ideologies. They must have. India is defined for its diversity because the diversity converges into unity. But why should there be political bitterness? The object of politics should not be power alone. Power is important. It should be used to serve the society and the nation," he asserted.

an exemplary manner. They must be brought to law. Their cases must be fast-tracked. This country of 1.4 billion cannot suffer this kind of public nuisance, destruction of public property," he cautioned, adding, "The world is appreciating our trains. One after the other we have trains and there are some people who stone them. They are rogue elements of society. They should not have our respect. They must be singled out, pinpointed, and strongly dealt with."

On the importance of dialogue in a democracy, he stated, "Dialogue and expression define democracy. If our right of expression is curtailed, or diminished, the best of an individual cannot come forward. But if those

who are obligated, constitutionally mandated to engage in dialogue but engage in disruption, then things go wrong."

Emphasising the role of the Panch Pran in national transformation, he said, "The foundation of our national transformation, which is taking place, can get accelerated if all individuals, all citizens commit to five pillars, which I call as 'Panch Pran.' One, we must promote social harmony. We must believe in social harmony that transcends diversity, and converts diversity into national unity. We must believe in family life and family enlightenment by nurturing patriotic values at the grassroots with children. We must care for our environment, environment-friendly lifestyle, and environmental values. Look at

our worships, they are environment-friendly. We are sure we don't have another earth to cohabit. We can't allow this existential challenge to overtake us. We must be environment-friendly. I call upon everyone in the country to believe in Swadeshi. Be vocal about the local. That will promote employment. That will save precious foreign exchange. You will believe in it. And lastly, our Constitution gives us fundamental rights. But we must focus on fundamental duties. Our duties are sacred. They take nothing much. If you go through the fundamental duties, you'll be inspired, motivated to follow them," he said.

Appealing to corporates, he encouraged them to actively support religious institutions through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). "I call upon corporates, Indian corporates, to come forward, generously contribute out of their CSR funds for the development of infrastructure, for health, for education, the infrastructure around such religious institutions," he said. "Because these religious institutions are beyond places of worship. They are the nerve centre of our culture. This will help imbibe in our youth, in our children, cultural values that make this country different from other countries," he said.

Kharge targets BJP for inflation, GST ahead of union budget



New Delhi

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party for inflation, and "senseless" rates of Goods and Services Tax (GST) ahead of the union budget.

Kharge, taking to X, came heavily down on BJP raising concern over the increasing prices of foods, medicines and everyday essentials. He questioned the BJP over their plans to tackle the "backbreaking" inflation.

"Is there any plan to increase public savings in the budget? Or will you continue to trouble the public with back-breaking inflation? Over the past 6 months, everyday things have seen a huge jump. Essential medicines, oil, tea, coffee, biscuits, soap, etc.,

Everything's price has become a problem for the people!" Kharge wrote on X. He also targeted the BJP over GST, saying that the people are troubled by "senseless rates." "Every person is troubled by the senseless rates and tax burden of GST. Consumption fell, whole India is worried about economic slowdown!" he wrote. Furthermore, Kharge raised questioned the point of Pradhan Mantri Consultations, held by

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, if they do not intend to discuss how inflation will be reduced?"

He alleged that BJP's job is to "loot" the public and "benefit its billionaire friends."

"BJP's job is to loot the public and benefit its billionaire friends. In the coming elections, the awakened public will teach a lesson to the BJP and will give such a result," Kharge wrote on X.

Earlier on Monday, Nirmala Sitharaman chaired the eighth Pre-Budget Consultation meeting with stakeholders and representatives from trade unions.

The consultations focused on understanding the perspectives of trade unions regarding the upcoming budget. This interaction is part of the government's annual pre-budget tradition, aimed at gathering inputs from diverse sectors to shape policies and allocate resources effectively.

The Union Budget 2025-26, expected to be presented in February, is anticipated to address key economic challenges and promote growth. The Finance Ministry conducts several pre-budget consultation meetings annually with experts, industry leaders, economists, and state officials.

Haryana CM Saini met Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil in New Delhi

New Delhi

A joint meeting between Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini and Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma was held under the chairmanship of Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil in New Delhi on Tuesday. In the meeting, the issue of providing surplus water of Yamuna river from Hathnikund to Rajasthan was discussed.

Giving information after the meeting, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini said that a detailed discussion took place regarding the provision of surplus water from the Yamuna River to Rajasthan.

A joint task force comprising officials from both Haryana and Rajasthan will soon be formed to work on this matter. This task force will prepare a detailed project report (DPR) for the proposed scheme in the coming days. He mentioned that during the rainy season, surplus water flows in the Yamuna, and this scheme would facilitate the use of that water for drinking water supply in various districts of Rajasthan. The Upper Yamuna



River Board will also provide technical support for the successful implementation of this scheme. The Chief Minister informed that the MoU has already been signed between the two states under the initiative of the Union Ministry of Jal

Shakti. Further action on this MoU was discussed in today's meeting. During the meeting, the Chief Minister also requested technical support from the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti to address the 'issue of Sem' (an issue where the groundwater of the lands comes up and the land becomes a swamp and marshy area) in various areas of Haryana. In response, Union Minister for Jal Shakti Shri CR Patil assured that a technical team would be sent to the state soon to assist in resolving the issue.

Secretary Ashok Kumar Meena, Additional Secretary Rakesh Kumar Verma from the Ministry of Jal Shakti and officials of the Rajasthan Government and Upper Yamuna River Board were also present on this occasion.

PM to lay foundation inaugurate slew of projects in Andhra on Wednesday

Amaravati

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit Visakhapatnam on Wednesday to lay the foundation for a few important projects and inaugurate a few others. This will be the Prime Minister's first visit to the state, after he assumed the office of PM for the third consecutive term in 2024.

The NDA alliance in Andhra Pradesh consisting of TDP, BJP and Janasena played a key role in forming the union government. Accompanied by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and others, Modi will lay the foundation for a railway zone at Visakhapatnam.

PM to lay foundation inaugurate slew of projects in Andhra on Wednesday

Amaravati

Likewise, he will lay the foundation for NTPC's integrated green hydrogen hub at Pudimadaka, Nakkapalli mandal, Anakapalli district. As part of this project, the public sector company will invest Rs 65,370 crore in three phases.

The Prime Minister will virtually launch Krishnapatnam Industrial Park, a Rs 1,518 crore project coming up on a 2,500-acre land parcel in the first phase. It is expected to generate employment opportunities for 50,000 people. Similarly, Modi will also virtually lay the foundation for a Rs 1,877 crore bulk drug park in Nakkapalli.

Deletions impossible without due process: CEC

New Delhi

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Tuesday dismissed allegations of manipulation in electoral roll, saying no deletion can occur without thorough documentation, field verification, and giving the concerned individual an opportunity to be heard.

Kumar emphasised that the process for additions and deletions is transparent, rigorous, and immune to arbitrary changes. Speaking at a press conference to announce the schedule for Delhi Assembly polls, the chief election commissioner (CEC) said, "Every step of the electoral roll process is rooted in transparency and accountability. Deletion of names is not possible without adhering to strict proce-

dures, and every party has the right to raise objections at various stages."

Kumar also detailed the comprehensive process governing the maintenance of electoral roll.

For additions, names are included only after thorough foot-and-field verification by booth-level officers (BLOs), he said.

"Regular meetings are held with the representatives of political parties, who have the right to appoint booth-level agents (BLAs). Weekly lists of claims and objections are shared, and both draft and final rolls are published on the Election Commission's website. Polling station rationalisation is also carried out with the consultation of all the stakeholders," the CEC said.

Shah launches 'Bharatpol' for international police assistance

New Delhi

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said it was time Indian investigation agencies use modern technology and techniques to nab fugitives as he launched the 'Bharatpol' portal to facilitate faster international assistance for agencies.

Speaking at the launch of 'Bharatpol' at the Bharat Mandapam here, the minister underlined that the real-time interface was the most important feature of the portal developed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). It will allow central and state agencies to easily connect with the Interpol and speed up their investigations, he said.

It is a time that we use modern technology and techniques to nab and bring to justice the fugitives who absconded from India after committing a crime," Shah said.

"We have to keep an eye on global challenges and upgrade our internal systems. Bharatpol is a step in that direction," he said.

He said the new portal will allow central and state probe agencies to share and obtain information on their cases from the 195 member nations of the Interpol.

The three new criminal laws brought by the Modi government last year will ensure that trials against fugitives and absconders are conducted in a better manner.

PUBLIC NOTICE

General Public is hereby informed that Mr. Pankaj Swaroop Bhushan Kapoor (Aadhar No. 715886395419) and Smt. Neeta (Aadhar No. 79738664029) W/o. Sh. Bharat Bhushan Kapoor, Rio House no. A-4-541, Paschim Vihar, West Delhi-110063, have disowned/debarred their elder son namely Sh. Damani Kapoor, Aged 32 years (Aadhar No. 924063237233), being most disobedient person and disown him from all of their movable and immovable properties anywhere in India. Anybody dealing with him shall be doing at their own risk and liability and their clients shall not be responsible for the any act done by Mr. Damani Kapoor in near future.

PANKAJ SWAROOP ADVOCATE DELHI HIGH COURTS CHAMBERS LAWYERS CHAMBER BLOCK, DELHI MOBILE NO. 9910211654

PUBLIC NOTICE

All concerned are hereby inform through this public notice that my client Mr. Ashish Kumar and Smt. Rishma both R/o B-12, GALLI NO. 11, Jaitpur extension, Part-2, Badarpur New Delhi 110044 has disowned and debarred their son namely Mohammed Jeeshan and his daughter in law namely Shabnam daughter of Mohammad Yusuf from all their movable and immovable properties because their son and daughter-in-law are out of control of my clients. My clients has served all relations with them. Anyone dealing with them may do so at his/her own risks, costs and consequences.

Yagnendra Nath Srivastava ADVOCATES CH. NO. 666 DWARKA COURT CHAMBERS LAWYERS CHAMBERS BLOCK SECTOR-18, DWARKA NEW DELHI-110075.

PUBLIC NOTICE

"It is hereby notified for General Public that my clients Sh. Jagpal Singh Pandey and Kamal Singh and his wife Smt. Urmila Pandey has severed all their relations with their son Ashish Singh Pandey and his wife Megha Pandey, and has debarred them from inheriting any movable and immovable properties of my clients, due to their misbehavior, unbecoming act and neglecting their duties towards my clients. If anybody deals with them, shall do so at his/her own risk and my clients shall not be responsible for any act of above-named persons in any manner whatsoever."

YASH PAL JOLLY ADVOCATE CH. NO. 267, WESTERN WING, HAZARI COURTS, DELHI-110066 MO. 9871424896

NEWS IN BRIEF

Land worth Rs 480 cr freed from encroachment

Noida
Land worth about Rs 480 crore was freed from encroachment by the Gautam Budhka Nagar district administration at Sorgha village of Noida on Tuesday afternoon. Here, illegal colonies were being built by land mafia by encroaching upon land illegally.

On Tuesday afternoon, following the orders of district magistrate Manish Kumar Verma, the anti-encroachment drive was launched at Sorgha village of Noida. According to the district administration, the officials had received information about this encroachment earlier also. After that, when the investigation was done, the information was found to be correct. So the encroachment was removed on Tuesday.

It is being told that the illegal colony was being built on about 250 bighas of land. The price of the land is being said to be around Rs 480 crore. District magistrate Manish Kumar Verma said that such persons trap innocent people by bluffing them. After that, they grab lakhs of rupees.

Model of film city to be presented in Maha Kumbh

Noida
The model of the international film city being developed in the Yamuna Authority area will be presented in front of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chief minister Yogi Adityanath during the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh.

A special stall is being prepared for this event on January 13 where the model of the film city and a short film based on it will be screened. This film city to be built in Yamuna Authority area will be an example of modern technology and grandeur.

Ashish Bhutani, CEO of Bhutani Infra, the company which is building the project, informed that this film city will become an example for the whole world. The model of the film city will be presented for the first time in Maha Kumbh.

This film city will be known for its state-of-the-art sound system, locations, lighting effects and grand studio sets. The biggest sets and studios will be made available to filmmakers here. The facility of shooting 30 films simultaneously makes it a unique project in India. The Yamuna Authority has transferred 230 acre of land to the company for the first phase of the project. The map has been submitted to the authority and approval for the Bhoomi Pujan is awaited. The company has claimed that if all the necessary procedures are completed on time, the construction work of the first phase will be completed in five years. The company also said that if it get possession of the entire land, the project can be completed in seven years.

Atishi claims Centre 'snatched away' her official house; BJP says 'Delhi CM' lying

New Delhi
Delhi chief minister Atishi on Tuesday alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre evicted her out of the official chief minister's residence, a day before the Election Commission announced the schedule for the assembly elections in the capital.

"The schedule for Delhi elections was announced today. Last night, the BJP-led central government, for the second time in three months, threw me out of my official residence, which has been allotted to me as being the CM. They cancelled the allotment of the CM residence through a letter and snatched away the residence from an elected CM of an elected govt," Atishi said.

Continuing her attack on the BJP, the chief minister added, "They did the



same thing three months back. When I was elected as the CM, the belongings of me and my family were thrown on the streets. BJP thinks they will stop our work by snatching our houses, abusing us and making below-the-belt remarks about our families. But, I want to tell people of

Delhi that the work won't stop even if they take away our home."
Atishi's allegations were supported by her cabinet colleague Saurabh Bhardwaj, who said, "BJP doesn't care to work for the people of Delhi. They don't care if children are getting education, or if people are get-

ting electricity. All they do is to do something against AAP leaders."
Today, BJP has done something that we couldn't think of. BJP has once again removed Delhi CM Atishi's belongings from his official residence. You all must remember when they did it earlier as well. I

don't think this would have happened anywhere in the world before."

BJP's IT cell head Amit Malviya rejected Atishi's charges, saying, "Delhi Chief Minister Atishi Malviya is LYING. She was allotted Sheesh Mahal on 11-02-2024. She hasn't still occupied it because she doesn't want to offend Arvind Kejriwal. Hence, the allotment was withdrawn and two more bungalows have been offered to her, instead."

Malviya shared a purported letter issued by the Delhi government's Public Works Department which said, "Under these circumstances and for several reasons, the offer of allotment of Bungalow No. 6, Flag Staff Road, issued to Ms. Atishi, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Delhi vide letter No. F.A(6 Flag Staff Road)PWD&H/2024/1472-73 dated 11-10-2024 by Public Works Department

Secretariat, Govt. of NCT of Delhi stands withdrawn, with immediate effect."

In the light of withdrawal of offer letter dated 11.10.2024, it is further proposed by PWD to offer two bungalows viz Bungalow No. 2 at 8 Raj Niwas Lane, Civil Lines, New Delhi & Bungalow No. 115 at Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi to choose one, for which a separate offer letter will be issued to Ms. Atishi, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Delhi."

The Election Commission on Tuesday announced that the assembly election in Delhi will be held in a single phase on February 7, and result will be declared on February 8. "It is a single-phase election. We have deliberately kept polling on a Wednesday so more people come out to vote... like we did in Maharashtra," CEC Rajiv Kumar said at a press conference.

Man arrested in Delhi for stabbing wife's alleged lover



New Delhi
A 36-year-old man from Nepal accused of stabbing his wife's suspected lover in Delhi, was arrested following a cross-border search, an official said on Tuesday.

The accused, Mustafa, was apprehended in Delhi on Sunday when he returned to check if the victim had succumbed to his injuries.

Police said the accused, who had been working in Kuwait, reportedly received a divorce request from his wife and discovered her alleged relationship with a factory colleague.

"The accused was continuously following daily routine of his wife and the man. On November 23, the accused repeatedly stabbed the 32-year-old man near his Mukundpur residence."

"After the attack, he fled to the Nepal border, frequently changing phone numbers to evade capture," a senior police officer said. According to the police, teams were sent to the Nepal border and more information was collected about the accused. "Our team got to know that the accused will be in Delhi to attack the victim again. The victim, who was critically injured, has recovered significantly but remains under medical observation."

Mustafa was arrested from the Bhalasa Dairy area on Sunday, said the officer. The police said the accused was arrested for attempt to murder charge and further investigation is underway.

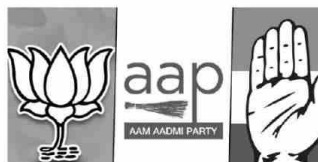
AAP, BJP, Congress exude confidence about Delhi polls victory

New Delhi
Leaders of the three principal contenders for the Delhi Assembly exuded confidence about winning next month's polls, the dates for which were announced on Tuesday.

Poling for the 70-member Delhi Assembly will be held on February 5 and the votes counted on February 8, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar announced.

All India Mahila Congress president Alka Lamba said, "I appeal to the people to participate in large numbers in this festival of democracy. Your single vote can play a crucial role in solving the issues you face." Lamba is the Congress candidate against Chief Minister Atishi from the Kalkaji seat.

The BJP's North West Delhi MP Yogender Chandel also expressed confidence about his party's victory. "We have been waiting for this moment for a long time. After Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally, BJP workers are determined and ready to fight the elections. We are preparing to wash away the stain of all these



years," he said. The BJP MP was referring to Modi's January 5 rally in Rohini during which he had hit out at the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP, which he again attacked with the "aapda (disaster)" jibe, and said, "Only one voice is reverberating in Delhi — 'Aapda nahi sahenge, badal kar rahenge (will not tolerate disaster, will bring change).'" Slamming the Delhi government, Chandola asserted that it would be held accountable for its performance during the past decade.

"The Delhi government will have to answer for what it has done in the past 10 years," he said. He also said AAP leaders' recent announcements were a result of their realisation that they had not done enough. "The residents of

Delhi are demanding answers for the false promises they made." He also hit out at former chief minister Kejriwal, highlighting recent controversies surrounding his leadership.

"We are committed to these elections. The BJP will form the government here and our chief minister will be appointed," the MP said. Meanwhile, AAP supreme Kejriwal said the Delhi polls would be a contest between the "politics of work and politics of abuse" and asserted that his party would form the government in the national capital.

"This election will be between the politics of work and the politics of abuse. The people of Delhi will have faith in our politics of work. We will definitely win," Kejriwal said in a post on X.

Delhi wakes up to a chill with mild temperature changes

New Delhi
Delhi woke up to slightly varying minimum temperatures on Tuesday morning, with an air quality index (AQI) of 337 at around 9:30 am.

As per the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data recorded at 9:30 am, the AQI in Alipur was at 325, Ashok Vihar at 337, the AQI was recorded at 322, and at Bawana, it was 324 at RK Puram—all falling into the 'very poor' category.

Earlier today, Delhi was shrouded in a thick layer of fog as the cold wave gripped the city, accompanied by plummeting temperatures and biting winds.

The temperature recorded by the India Meteorological Department on Tuesday was 11.6 degrees Celsius in Delhi at 5:30 am.

'Fight between politics of work and abuse': Kejriwal on Delhi elections

New Delhi
The stage is set for Delhi's 2025 Assembly elections, with AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal hailing the contest as a battle between the 'politics of work' and 'politics of abusing'.

The AAP Chief has rallied AAP volunteers, calling them the party's greatest strength and urging them to rise with determination to defeat the opposition's machinery.

Senior AAP leaders have reinforced the party's confidence, showcasing AAP's transformative achievements in healthcare, education, electricity, and women's welfare, while challenging the BJP's lack of vision and agenda. With the BJP still silent on candidates and plans, AAP leaders remain confi-



dent that Delhiites will once again place their trust in the proven governance of Arvind Kejriwal on February 5th, choosing progress over the politics of abuse.

Reacting to the announcement, AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal wrote on X, "The election schedule has been announced. All volunteers should gear up with full strength and enthusiasm to take the field. Even their massive machinery fails in

the face of your passion. You are our greatest strength. This election will be a contest between the politics of work and the politics of abusing. The trust of Delhi's people will remain with our politics of work. We will surely win."

Senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia, made a strong appeal for their support by highlighting the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal and his transformative governance. He emphasised that the people of Delhi will once again choose a Chief Minister who ensures good health for their families. He said, "Delhiites will vote for a leader who has provided 24-hour electricity and ensured zero electricity bills, ensuring the lives of countless families in the city."

as 2008 and facing harassment from Directorate of Education, MCD and DDA, it said. The LG, while approving the regularisation of these schools, has instructed that the same be done in confirmation with the provisions of applicable building bye-laws, statutory requirement for fire safety,

LG approves regularisation of 150 un-aided schools in unauthorised colonies

New Delhi
Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena has approved regularisation of 150 un-aided schools in unauthorised colonies, a Raj Niwas statement said on Tuesday.

The approval was given on Monday. According to the statement, these schools, where



the access of roads is six metres or above, lie in areas

such as Narela, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Colony, Najafgarh, Sangam Vihar, Asola, Nathupura, Deoli, Badarpur, Shyam Vihar, Bhagat Vihar, Munda, etc.—all unauthorised colonies.

"The issue of regularisation of these schools had come up prominently in LG's 'Samvaad/RajNiwas' with principals/teachers of

private schools on December 20, 2024. Saxena had then promised that he will look into the matter and very soon get it sorted," the statement said.

These schools, where thousands of students mostly belonging to economically weaker sections, study have been awaiting regularisation since as long

as 2008 and facing harassment from Directorate of Education, MCD and DDA, it said.

The LG, while approving the regularisation of these schools, has instructed that the same be done in confirmation with the provisions of applicable building bye-laws, statutory requirement for fire safety,

structural safety/stability, etc., it stated.

Saxena had earlier convened a meeting on this matter with the Chief Secretary along with officials of Education Department, MCD and DDA, wherein the hardship being faced by these schools and their students was discussed, the statement said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to the public at large that my client SH. POORAN CHAND S/O LT NATHULAL R/O H No. D-177 GAULI NO. 7 GAMRI EXT. GARI MENDU DELHI 110053, hereby declaring/debaring/disowning his Daughter namely Dolly from his life, Properties and estate. Moveable or immovable situated at Delhi or outside of Delhi because She is not under the control of my client. And my client will not be responsible/liable for any act, deed and thing done by them since today. (HONEY & SWEETY) Advocate Seat No. 7 Gajanan Block, Tis Hazari Courts Delhi-54

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to the general public that my clients Sh. Mohammad Kamal Akhtar & Smt. Husan Jahan, R/O 2454, chatta jam bag, Itraha bahram khan, daryaganj, Delhi-110022 from this date i.e 06.01.2025. Disown/Dishinherit their son, Mohammad kamran Akhtar and his wife Ms. Afsha from all their movable and immovable properties due to their bad behavior and disrespect towards them. My clients will not be responsible for the acts and deeds of Mohammad kamran Akhtar and Afsha in future. SUMIT KUMAR SHARMA Advocate 637, w. w., Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known that my client Smt. Dharambiri, aged 74 W/o Sh. Om Pal, R/O H No. 306, Street No.3, Meet Nagar, Gokal Puri, North East Delhi, Delhi-110094, served this notice is hereby given to public at large that she cut off all communications and relations and disinherit her grandson Sh. Reetkanch Pandhal aged 24/50 Sh. Rajnesh Pandhal R/O H No. 306, Street No.3, Meet Nagar, Gokal Puri, North East Delhi, Delhi-110094, and he has no claim or title to any moveable and immovable properties of my client. Therefore, my client's grandson i.e Sh. Reetkanch Pandhal has no power or authority to incur any debts on the security of my client's properties and any person hereafter giving him any loan or advance shall be doing so entirely on his own risk and responsibility. My client shall not be responsible for any of his conduct, malicious, activities, abuse and disobedience. My client shall not be liable for any debts, or things done by Sh. Reetkanch Pandhal in future. SUMIT PANCHAL Advocate Office at- E-426, First Floor, Street No. 2, Hardev Puri, Shahdara, Delhi-110093

CHANGE OF NAME

Inavpreet Malhotra, W/o Sh. Harcharan singh R/o 137/8 Badah, mohal (35/84), Kullu, Himachal Pradesh, 175126I have changed my name Navpreet to Navpreet Malhotra consent note.

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that Mr. Vivan Bengani S/o Mr. Sandeep Bengani owner of Commercial Plot no. A-7 & A-8, area 114+810= 924 sq. yds., part of Kharsa no. 156, at village Mohanmadpur Kadim, industrial plot, Pargna Jalalabad Tehsil Modinagar, & Dist. Ghaziabad, U.P. vide two separate Sale Deed dated 22.10.2024, doc. no. 21793 executed by Mrs. Virbala W/o late Mr. Dharamveer & Sale Deed dated 02.12.2024, doc. no. 24377, executed by Mr. Nitin Kumar S/o Ranveer Singh, in SRO-Modinagar-GZB, and there is no other legal heirs of late Dharamveer except his wife Virbala & late Ranveer Singh his legal heir his son Mr. Nitin Kumar as per mutation in revenue record and said property to be financed by AU Small Finance Bank Ltd, if anybody has any change/interest/title/third Party in the said property of any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing and with proof within 07 days on the below mentioned address, failing which I am aware that in case default with the mortgage property that all borrower / Owners are responsible for the same. Satvendra Gautam Advocate Shop no. 3, Property no. 126, Lal Karna Ghaziabad, U.P

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all concern that my clients Shri Kanhya Lal Gupta S/o Shri Ganesh Shah Gupta & Smt. Bindu Devi Gupta W/o Shri Kanhya Lal Gupta, R/O A-5, Durga Vihar, Deoli, New Delhi-110080 hereby disown and disinherit their son Mr. Ravi Kumar and his wife Ms. Annapurna Gupta for all intents and purposes and further declare that they shall have no right, title or interests in the movable and immovable properties of my clients. My clients further restrain them from entering in their house. It is further clear that my clients shall not be responsible for their acts, omission and further will not be held responsible while they deal with anyone in any manner for any purpose and intent. RAWI LOMD & ASSOCIATES (ADVOCATES AND CONSULTANTS) Chapter No. 437, Lawyer's Block Saket Courts, New Delhi-110017

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is the information of the General Public that my client Rajni Kumar, S/O Kewal Krishan, and the wife of Rajni Kumar namely Monica Arora, R/O TA-57 FF Om Vihar Uttam Nagar, West Delhi, Delhi-110059 have disowned and disinherited his/her son namely Paras Arora and his wife from all of her immovable, movable properties/assets due to personal family disputes with my client Rajni Kumar, S/O Kewal Krishan, and the wife of Rajni Kumar namely Monica Arora, R/O TA-57 FF Om Vihar Uttam Nagar, West Delhi, Delhi-110059 It is informed that he will not be liable for his mischievous act. CHIRAG ARORA ADVOCATE Ch. No. 344, 1st Floor, Western Tis Hazari Court, Delhi-110054

EASTERN RAILWAY

CORRECTION
No. 1 to Tender No. DCPM-GS-SINT-SDAH-04-24-25 dated 06.01.2025 published in the newspaper by CPM, Eastern Railway, Sealdah. New tender document for the above tender naming "Tenderdocumentuptdated copy07.01.2025.pdf" has been added & old tender document naming "Tenderdocument06.01.2025.pdf" has been deleted in IREPS portal. This update has been done for adding Annexures for schedule item 1 to 54. (SDAH/308/2024-25)
Tender Notice are also available at Website www.easternrailway.co.in
Follow us at: @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

Kejriwal hits out at BJP as party launches campaign song for Delhi assembly polls

New Delhi
Aam Admi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal took potshots at the BJP at an event where the party launched the campaign song for the 2025 Delhi assembly elections.

The Election Commission is set to announce dates for the 2025 Delhi assembly polls on Tuesday.

"The polls of Delhi are like a festival for its people. We celebrate it. Not only the people of Delhi but the entire nation eagerly awaits the campaign song of the AAP. People would call me and ask, 'When is the campaign song going to



launch," Kejriwal said at an event where the party released the campaign song. "We dedicate this song to

the people of Delhi as well as the country and appeal to the people to spread it through parties, birthdays

and other events," he said. Taking potshots at the BJP, without taking its name, Kejriwal said, "That

one political party of our country which is engaged in abusive languages. What is the name of the political party," he asked the crowd.

"I know they will like the song. Their leaders can lock their rooms and play the song," Kejriwal said in a lighter vein.

The Aam Admi Party on Tuesday launched its 2025 election campaign, releasing a campaign song dubbed, 'Phir layenge Kejriwal' (Will bring back Kejriwal).

Besides, Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, the party leader Manish Sisodia and other leaders were also present at the event.

AAP won 62 out of the 70 seats in the 2020 assembly elections and BJP secured eight seats.

Earlier, Aam Admi Party Chief Arvind Kejriwal claimed that "Large-Scale" fraud in voter addition and deletions in the New Delhi Assembly seat is taking place.

In a post on X, Kejriwal cited a letter from Chief Minister Atishi sent to Delhi Chief Electoral Officer. "Large-scale fraud taking place in voter additions and deletions in the New Delhi assembly. Delhi CM Atishi ji writes this letter to CEC presenting evidence and seeking time to meet," he said.



New Delhi
Welcoming the Election Commission's announcement of the Delhi polls, BJP chief J P Nadda on Tuesday urged the people of the national capital to choose a government that focuses on improving the standard of living, combating corruption, reducing pollution, and providing quality services to make everyday life easier.

In a post on 'X', he said, "I welcome the Election Commission of India's announcement of the Delhi Assembly Elections."

He said elections are the biggest festival of democracy, adding that they are a medium to keep the country and the state advancing on the path of development and good governance.

"I urge the people of Delhi to choose a government that focuses on improving the standard of living, combating corruption, reducing pollution and providing quality services to make everyday life easier," the BJP chief said.

"Under the guidance of Hon. PM Shri @narendramodi ji, the BJP government has been continuously working towards the comprehensive development of Delhi and will further our efforts to turn the dream of a 'Viksit Delhi' into a reality," Nadda further said in the post.

He said elections are the biggest festival of democracy, adding that they are a medium to keep the country and the state advancing on the path of development and good governance.

Earlier in the day, the ECI announced the schedule for the Delhi Assembly elections. The national capital will have a single-phase polling on February 5 and the counting on February 8.

The term of the 70-member Assembly ends on February 23, and elections have to be held before that to constitute a new House. The national capital has traditionally seen Assembly polls in a single phase.

The Assembly polls in the national capital will witness a three-cornered fight between the ruling AAP, and opposition BJP and Congress.

In the 2020 Assembly polls, the AAP won 62 Assembly seats and BJP won eight constituencies, while in 2015 polls, AAP bagged 67 seats and BJP won only three seats. The Congress drew a blank on both these occasions.

Noida Authority seals flats worth crores in Wajidpur village; CEO warns

Ajeet Kumar
Noida

Illegal constructions are being carried out in rural areas. Noida Authority CEO Dr. Lokesh M has given instructions to take strict action against illegal construction.

On Tuesday, the illegal building was sealed in Wajidpur village. This action was taken on the land of Khasra numbers 168, 198 and 199, which is the notified land of Noida Authority.

Noida Authority officials said that the encroacher was constructing the flat without any permission. The authority issued notices to the encroachers several times under Section-10, but they continued the work of illegal construction.

In this case, the Allahabad High Court also passed orders to vacate the land on 20 August 2024. Despite this, the encroachers continued the construction work, bypassing the orders of the court. Officials said that last month the Thana Expressway was instructed to stop the construction work, but it also had no effect.

On Tuesday, the police force and the Noida Authority team took joint action and sealed the building. The cost of this building is several crores of rupees. CEO Dr. Lokesh M has warned that those who occupy land in the authority's notified area will not be spared.

GDA continues to take strict action against illegal construction & illegal colonies



Shiv Kumar
New Delhi

As per the instructions of the Vice Chairman, the colony being developed illegally in Mansarovar Park was demolished under the leadership of In-charge Enforcement Zone-05 on Tuesday.

During the action, the boundary wall and roads built under the colony were also demolished.

The demolition proceedings were completed peacefully in the presence of In-

charge Enforcement, Assistant Engineer, Junior Engineer, all the staff of Enforcement Zone-05 and GDA Police Force.

GDA again instructed the builders and developers that proper map approval is necessary for any construction work in the Ghazabad Development Authority area.

Also, the general public is informed not to buy / sell any disputed property. This campaign against illegal construction will continue lawfully.

Refused pay hike bike showroom staff steals Rs 6 lakh from workplace held

New Delhi

Delhi Police has arrested a 20-year-old youth employed with a bike showroom for allegedly stealing Rs 6 lakh and electronic items from his workplace after his request for a salary hike was turned down, an official said on Tuesday.

Police have recovered Rs 5 lakh and two expensive cameras from Hasan Khan, the accused, and efforts are on to recover the remaining stolen items, Deputy Commissioner of Police (West), Vichitra Veer, said.

The incident occurred on December 31 when Rs 6 lakh in cash and several electronic items were stolen from the showroom at Naraina in west Delhi, the DCP said.

During probe, police identified Khan as the prime suspect after scanning more than 100 CCTV footage and questioning the other showroom staff, the officer said.



Police have recovered Rs 5 lakh and two expensive cameras from Hasan Khan, the accused, and efforts are on to recover the remaining stolen items, Deputy Commissioner of Police (West), Vichitra Veer, said.

Khan, a technical staff employed with the showroom for more than a year, used his skills to snap power supply at his workplace in a bid to evade identification.

"He also wore a helmet while committing the theft to conceal his identity. During interrogation, Khan admitted to committing the crime, claiming he was upset after the showroom management turned down his request for a salary hike," the DCP said.

Prakash Utsav of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji celebrated with great zeal in Sadar Bazar

Hemant Kumar
New Delhi

The Prakash Utsav of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji was celebrated with great pomp and show by the Federation of Sadar Bazar Trade Association in Delhi Sadar Bazar.

The event was held under the chairmanship of Chairman Paramjit Singh Pamma and President Shri Rakesh Yadav.

On this occasion, all the traders prayed for the whole world to be free from dis-



eases. On this occasion, Paramjit Singh Pamma and Rakesh Yadav said that all

the traders who came prayed to stop the spread of diseases.

They said that earlier also, in the epidemic of Covid, the way the disease had spread all over the world, we get freedom only by the prayers and kirtans of God.

On this occasion, distribution of Prasad was organized by the traders in which many traders including Paramjit Singh Pamma, Rakesh Yadav, Kamal Kumar, Deepak Mittal, Varinder Arya Kuldeep Singh, Ramesh Sachdeva, Abhay, Shekhar Kataria were present.

Delhi court extends stay on Bikaner House attachment

New Delhi

A Delhi court on Tuesday extended till February 1 the interim stay on the attachment of Bikaner House, owned by a Rajasthan municipal council.

District judge Vidya Prakash extended the stay after being informed by Nokha Municipal Council that it had challenged the order directing it to deposit Rs 50.31 lakh arbitral award it owed a company in the Delhi High Court.

On November 29, the district court stayed its earlier order on the attachment of Bikaner House. Ordering the stay, the judge said a 2020 arbitral award in favour of Enviro Infra Engineers Private Limited had attained finality after an appeal of the municipal council was dismissed in 2024.

The judge in November, 2024, granted a conditional stay on the attachment, subject to the municipal council depositing an FDR before the court.

On September 18, the court observed a non-compliance of its directions and found it a fit case to issue warrants of attachment of Bikaner House.

The court passed the order on a plea seeking enforcement of the award passed by the arbitral tribunal on January 21, 2020. The court also restrained the council from transferring the property or its sale, gift or otherwise.

The court observed a non-compliance of its directions and found it a fit case to issue warrants of attachment of Bikaner House.

The court passed the order on a plea seeking enforcement of the award passed by the arbitral tribunal on January 21, 2020. The court also restrained the council from transferring the property or its sale, gift or otherwise.

CAT 2024: Delhi HC junks plea over error in exam results

New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday refused to set aside the common admission test (CAT) 2024 results for admissions in IIMs and other business schools.

Justice Tara Vitasta Ganju, while pronouncing the order, dismissed a petition challenging the CAT 2024 results declared on December 19, 2024.

"There is no reason to set aside the result of CAT 2024. The petition is dismissed," held the court.

The exam was conducted on November 24, 2024, and a provisional answer key was released on December 3 the same year.

Petitioner Aditya Kumar Mallick, who claimed to have written the exam, raised an objection over the provisional answer key and said there was an error in an answer declared for one of the questions of the English comprehension section.

He said despite the objec-



Justice Tara Vitasta Ganju, while pronouncing the order, dismissed the CAT 2024 results declared on December 19, 2024.

The petitioner sought a direction to set aside the results and appoint an expert committee to ascertain the correct answers.

The plea said IIM Calcutta hurriedly declared the results on December 19, 2024, without giving any reason or affording him time to take the legal recourse.

The petitioner said the result was expected in the second week of January, 2025, and the haste in declaring results in December, 2024, "spoke volumes".

The petitioner therefore sought a direction to set aside the results and appoint an expert committee to ascertain the correct answers.

3 Bangladeshi nationals staying illegally in Delhi deported

During interrogation, Ali disclosed was first deported in 2012 along with his family, who had been residing illegally in Delhi since 1994.

New Delhi

Police have deported three Bangladeshi nationals who were residing illegally in the national capital, following two separate operations, an official said on Tuesday.

A verification drive was conducted to identify illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, following orders from Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena last month. Police said that on January 6, the RK Puram Police Station team apprehended a 32-year-old Bangladeshi man, Mohamad Akkas Ali, alias Akash. Police received a tip-off that he was trying to rent a room in the Ekta Vihar area.

Formation of Cong govt in Delhi will end 11 yrs of corruption, destruction: Yadav

New Delhi

Delhi Congress chief Deveninder Yadav on Tuesday said that the formation of a "people-friendly" Congress government after February 8 will pave the way for Delhi's development and end 11 years of corruption and destruction by the BJP and A governments.

Yadav's reaction came just after the Election Commission of India announced that the assembly polls in Delhi will be held on February 5 and the votes counted on February 8.

"Today, the dates of formation of a people-friendly government of Congress have been announced. Today, the dates have also been announced when Delhi will become pollution free, garbage-free, the national capital will be free from crime and Yamuna river will be cleaned," Yadav stated.



He further claimed that the date has also been announced when the Congress government will implement the ₹2,500 'Pyari Didi Yojna'. This means that the time has been decided for the people of Delhi who are eager to see the Congress government in the national capital.

The date has also been announced when the "Sheesh Mahal" will be opened to the public, where a poor family will be allowed to stay every day, he said.

Qazi Mohammad Nizamuddin, AICC In-charge of Delhi, said that on February 8, people will fulfil their "Congress Hai Jaruri" demand in Delhi.

"It will be a big day for the people of Delhi when they will see the end of 11 years of corruption and destruction by the BJP and A governments. The Congress government will restore law and order and make the city safe for women," Nizamuddin alleged. Earlier in the morning, Jharkhand Minister

of Panchayati Raj Dipika Singh Pandey said that the Congress works for the welfare of the people and delivers on its promises.

Addressing a press conference here, Pandey said that Sheila Dikshit was the first chief minister to implement the Ladli Yojna to empower the girl child from economically weaker sections when Congress was in power in Delhi.

"When the Ladli Yojna was first implemented in 2008-2009, the budgeted amount was ₹86.44 crore, and the amount was increased to ₹112.29 crore in 2013-14, but the first thing the Kejriwal government did was to slash the Ladli Yojna funds to ₹95.64 crore, then to ₹85.30 crore and by 2023-24, the amount was reduced to ₹42.95 crore, which exposed Kejriwal's attitude towards girl child from poor families," Pandey alleged.

Cross-border drug cartel, 5 Kg Heroin recovered

Chandigarh: Punjab police has dismantled a cross-border drug cartel that was operating with the help of drone technology to smuggle drugs from Pakistan.

Punjab's Director General of Police (DGP), Gaurav Yadav, took to X to announce the breakthrough, revealing that the Amritsar Commissionerate Police arrested four individuals involved in the illegal trafficking operation.

According to DGP Yadav, the arrested individuals were in contact with Pakistan-based smugglers who used drones to push narcotics across the India-Pakistan border.

"In a major breakthrough, Amritsar Commissionerate Police has busted a cross-border drug cartel by arresting 4 accused who were in contact with #Pakistan-based smugglers using drones to push drugs across the border. 5 Kg Heroin recovered, and an FIR under the NDPS Act has been registered at PS Chheharta, Amritsar. Investigations are ongoing to trace backward and forward linkages," the DGP wrote in his post.

Authorities have also registered an FIR under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act at the Chheharta police station in Amritsar. Investigations are continuing, with Punjab Police working to trace both the "forward and backward linkages" of the cartel.

Meanwhile, on January 5, in a crackdown against narcotic-drones, Border Security Force recovered a quadcopter (drone) from a sugarcane field along the border in Amritsar district, according to a press statement.

BSP will contest Delhi elections on its own: Mayawati

Lucknow: The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) on Tuesday said it will not form any alliance and contest the assembly elections in Delhi on its own.

Party chief Mayawati said BSP is a party of the poor and the oppressed, which stays away from muscle and money power.

Mayawati, in a post on X, further expressed hope that the Election Commission would ensure the Delhi Assembly polls were not tainted by the "misuse of government machinery, communalism, and other vile propaganda".

"BSP is fighting this election on its own strength with full preparation and strength. It is expected that the party will definitely perform well in this election," she posted.

"Elections are the backbone of democracy and BSP, a party of the poor and the oppressed, which stays away from muscle and money power, expects from the Election Commission that in order to conduct free and fair elections, it will protect the elections from being contaminated by communalism and other disgusting propaganda along with misuse of government machinery," she said.

If something happens to Dallewal, Centre may not be able to handle situation: Farmer leaders

Chandigarh: Punjab farmer leaders on Tuesday said if something untoward happens to Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who is sitting on a fast-unto-death, then the Centre may not be able to handle the situation which could arise thereafter.

Farmer leader Abhimanyu Kohar stressed that the Centre should resolve the farmers' issues in a serious manner. According to farmers, Dallewal's health is "deteriorating" each passing day and "anything can happen to him".

Dallewal, 70, who is the convener of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political), has been on the indefinite hunger strike at the Khanauri border point between Punjab and Haryana since November 26 over farmers' various demands including a legal guarantee of the minimum support price for crops.

Dallewal, whose fast-unto-death entered 43rd day on Tuesday, has so far refused to take any medical aid. Addressing the media, Dr Avtar Singh, who is part of a



Farmer leader Abhimanyu Kohar stressed that the Centre should resolve the farmers' issues in a serious manner. According to farmers, Dallewal's health is "deteriorating" each passing day and "anything can happen to him".

team from NGO '5 Rivers Heart Association' said Dallewal's health condition worsened on Monday evening. His blood pressure dropped and he vomited while lying on the bed, said the doctor. His condition is deteriorating every day and anything can happen to him, he said.

Meanwhile, a team of government doctors also examined Dallewal

at the Khanauri border. Farmers said Dallewal's condition remained critical on Tuesday and that he was not able to talk to anyone.

Farmer leader Kohar said, "God forbid if anything untoward happens to Dallewal ji, then perhaps the situation may not remain under control of the Central government." The Centre should make efforts so

that the situation does not reach that level, he said. "If anything happens to Dallewal, then there will be a 'blot' on the tenure of the present government at the Centre which may never be cleaned," said Kohar. Lashing out at the Union government, he said it never happened even during the British rule that when a person is sitting on fast-unto-death

Sambhal violence result of BJP conspiracy: SP fact-finding team

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav has alleged that the BJP government has deliberately caused the Sambhal incident through its officials.

"People are still facing injustice in Sambhal on a large scale. Pressure is being put on people as false cases are being filed against them. The district magistrate and the police administration are resorting to unconstitutional and undemocratic ways. There was no riot in Sambhal, innocent youths were killed by police bullets. If the Samajwadi Party forms a government in UP, we will conduct an impartial investigation into the Sambhal incident and punish the culprits," he announced.

Akhilesh Yadav, in a press conference here at the state party office on Tuesday, released the report of a SP delegation led by leader of the Opposition in the assembly Mata Prasad Pandey and council leader Lal Bihari Yadav on Sambal violence.

The report by the 18-member fact-finding



team says the BJP government wants to destroy the brotherhood of the country and wants to spread hatred and discrimination in society. When the Places of Worship Act was in force in the country, what then was the need to survey the Shahi Jama Masjid in such a hurry, it asked.

Akhilesh Yadav said human beings have no value in the BJP government. The BJP is a divisive party and is against brotherhood. "BJP is a heartless party. Even as many injustices and atrocities are taking place, this government has shown no sympathy to the victims. No one is getting justice in the BJP government and no one is being heard," he stated.

The SP president asked why the Samajwadi Party delegation

stopped from meeting the victims after the incident in Sambhal. After all, what did the government want to hide? The injustice done to the people by the police administration in Sambhal has never been seen before. The police beat people, filed false cases against them and tortured them to extract their statements. When Samajwadi Party leaders went to meet the victims in jail, action was taken against the jailer based on caste discrimination.

The SP chief said the BJP government has two scales. One is injustice against the PDA and the other is corruption. Discussion about corruption is common. Now, BJP people themselves have started accusing each other of corruption.

Money earned by Panchayats will now be utilized for Gaushalas: CM

Komal Ramola Chandigarh: Haryana Chief Minister, Nayab Singh Saini said that the government has taken a significant step towards the Gauvansh Sanrakshan in the state.

He said that the government has decided to earmark all the land designated for Gau Charan across the state, and the money collected by the Panchayats for leasing this land will now be used for the Gaushalas. Directions have also been issued to the officers concerned to prepare a roadmap under which the land designated for Gau Charan can be allocated to Gaushalas according to their needs for growing fodder, said Nayab Singh Saini.

The Chief Minister said this while addressing the gathering at the Gau Seva Samman District Panchkula on Tuesday. During the ceremony, the Chief Minister released a fodder grant of Rs 216.25 crore for the Gaushalas. He also facilitated the Gaushalas Sanchalak for becoming self-reliant.



etc. Marketing support will be provided by the government for the sale of these products. Solar energy plants have been installed in 330 Gaushalas. The work of installing solar power plants in the remaining Gaushalas will also be completed soon so that the Gaushalas can become self-reliant, said Sh. Nayab Singh Saini.

The Chief Minister said that the government is providing electricity to the Gaushalas at the rate of Rs 2 per unit. He said that the Animal Husbandry and Dairying Department will promote the indigenous breed of cows under the Gau Sam-

vardhan and Gau Sanrakshan Yojana. This will promote the production of indigenous milk and efforts will be made to get a profitable price for it, he said.

Nayab Singh Saini said that all the Gauvansh in the state, whether it is Nandi, Gaumata, calf or heifer, will be tagged and this data will be available online, the report of which will be seen by him himself. Our society is once again moving towards the old culture. Today, when it is the birthday of the child or the parents at home, the family members go to the Gaushalas and serve the cows. This is our culture, he said.

Himachal govt committed to modernising Police Department: CM

Shimla: Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Tuesday said that the state government will provide all possible assistance to ensure modernisation of the Police Department.

Presiding over a review meeting of the Police Department, Sukhu said that to ensure better public service, police stations would be categorised based on population, geographical factors, and rural and urban areas. Appropriate staff strength would be provided for improved efficiency.

He said that registered police posts would be authorised to register FIRs by integrating the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and System (CCTNS) into these posts.



"Police reforms were essential for enhancing public services and the state government was also ensuring stringent laws against criminals. An Anti-Drug Act would be formulated to combat drug peddlers in an effective and efficient manner," the

Chief Minister said that the state government would also address the issue of staff shortages by filling the vacant posts. He added that the recruitment process for 1,226 police constables and 30 Sub Inspectors was underway.

Chief Minister said. Sukhu said that a data warehouse and clearing agency would also be set up in the Police Department to store and organise data from multiple agencies for analysis and decision-making.

He emphasised the need to adopt cutting-edge technology to enhance service delivery and operational efficiency.

"The state government is committed to strengthening the State Disaster Response Force. The competent authority would be empowered to hire requisite vehicles for the relief and rehabilitation operations during any disaster or emergency," he said, adding that temporary deployment of Home Guards would be done in SDRF until the permanent staff is recruited in this Force.

equate funding for the digitisation of 86 designated response centres. Home Guards will be deployed in various Boards and Corporations to maintain law and order," he said, adding that a Home Guards Battalion Training Centre would be constructed at Markand in Bilaspur district to improve training facilities.

"The state government is committed to strengthening the State Disaster Response Force. The competent authority would be empowered to hire requisite vehicles for the relief and rehabilitation operations during any disaster or emergency," he said, adding that temporary deployment of Home Guards would be done in SDRF until the permanent staff is recruited in this Force.

Contractual employees of Punjab Roadways, PRTC call off strike



Chandigarh: Contractual employees of the Punjab Roadways and Pepsu Road Transport Corporation on Tuesday called off their strike after the state government assured them of holding a meeting on January 15 to discuss their demands.

The protesters had begun a three-day strike on Monday to press their demands, including regularisation of their jobs.

Punjab Roadways, Panibus, PRTC Contract Workers' Union president Resham Singh Gill said the strike was called off after they were assured of a meeting at the Punjab chief minister's office on January 15 to discuss their issues.

Due to the strike, commuters had faced inconvenience as they were left stranded at

various bus stands across the state.

According to the protesters, around 2,800 buses of Punjab Roadways and Pepsu Road Transport Corporation (PRTC) had stayed off the roads.

Around 8,000 contractual employees were participating in the strike.

The contractual employees have been demanding regularisation of their jobs and a salary hike, among other things, Gill said.

A few days ago, the union held a meeting with Punjab Transport Minister Laljit Singh Bhullar regarding its demands but there was no resolution, he said.

CM attends Gau Seva Samman Samaroh at Panchkula, releases Rs 216.25 crore as fodder subsidy for Gaushalas

AAP failed to tackle drug abuse in Punjab, need consistent efforts: BJP

Chandigarh: Punjab BJP state vice president Arvind Khanna on Tuesday criticised the Aam Aadmi Party government for its alleged failure to tackle drug abuse in the state during its three-year tenure. In a statement, Khanna called for sincere efforts and action instead of introducing new policies, asserting that the government has demonstrated its inefficiency by repeatedly failing to address the issue.

Khanna highlighted that hundreds of youth have fallen victim to drug abuse over the past three years, holding the government accountable for the crisis. Referring to the chief minister's earlier promises, Khanna pointed out that in 2022, he had pledged to eradicate drugs within four weeks, a promise that went unfulfilled.

A similar assurance was made last year, to

eliminate drugs by January 26, but with no tangible outcomes, he said. "This new policy announcement is evidence that the government has surrendered to drug peddlers," Khanna claimed. He criticised the administration for allegedly making empty promises that have only led to public disappointment. Khanna urged the government to focus on honest and effective measures instead of unrealistic declarations.

Khanna also demanded accountability from AAP state president Aman Arora, questioning who would take responsibility for the deaths of young people who succumbed to drugs during the past three years. He stressed that only genuine and consistent efforts could rid Punjab of this menace, not hollow announcements.

Human metapneumovirus: A world of worry once



By Priyanka Saurabh

Human metapneumovirus, part of the Pneumoviridae family, is a respiratory virus that causes illnesses ranging from mild colds to more severe lung infections such as pneumonia and bronchiolitis. Although less recognized than flu or respiratory syncytial virus, human metapneumovirus is an important cause of respiratory illnesses worldwide, especially during winter and spring. The virus poses a particularly great risk to vulnerable populations such as young children, the elderly, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems. The virus can cause great difficulties for them, so it is important to raise awareness and take preventive measures. Infants and young children are particularly vulnerable to severe respiratory conditions such as bronchiolitis and pneumonia.

To prevent its spread, health authorities in China have emphasized preventive measures such as hand washing, wearing masks, and timely testing. Symptoms of HMPV in adults often resemble the common cold or flu.



hospitalization due to their severity. Symptoms range from persistent cough and fever to more serious conditions such as bronchiolitis and pneumonia. Its similarity to other respiratory illnesses complicates diagnosis and treatment.

Older adults, 65 years of age or older, as well as people with chronic health problems such as asthma or COPD, are more likely to have complications. During pregnancy, HMPV can cause respiratory problems, which can put the health of both mother and baby at risk. People who have weakened immune systems, whether due to a medical condition or treatment such as chemotherapy, are at higher risk of having severe symptoms. A recent outbreak of hMPV in China has highlighted the potential seriousness of this virus, especially in vulnerable groups. Most infections occurred in children under 14 years of age, with many cases requiring

hospitalization due to their severity. Symptoms range from persistent cough and fever to more serious conditions such as bronchiolitis and pneumonia. Its similarity to other respiratory illnesses complicates diagnosis and treatment.

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sneezes, or talks, causing respiratory droplets to spread into the air. The virus can also spread through physical contact with an infected person, especially if someone touches their face, eyes, or mouth. The virus can persist on surfaces, and touching contaminated objects such as doorknobs or mobile devices increases the risk of infection. Small respiratory particles can remain suspended in the air, especially in crowded or poorly ventilated spaces.

Symptoms of human metapneumovirus resemble those of other respiratory infections, making accurate diagnosis dependent on specific laboratory tests. This molecular test detects the genetic material of the virus with high accuracy and is considered the gold standard for diagnosing human metapneumovirus. Rapid antigen tests give quick results but are less sensitive than PCR tests. Most people recover from human metapneu-

movirus in about 7 to 10 days without complications. However, certain groups are at higher risk of serious complications. Human metapneumovirus can cause viral pneumonia, with severe cases requiring hospitalization and intensive care. Infants and young children often experience inflammation and blockage of the airways, leading to difficulty breathing and wheezing. Human metapneumovirus can worsen existing respiratory conditions such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. These infections, such as bacterial pneumonia, can develop as complications due to a weakened immune system. Respiratory complications caused by human metapneumovirus during pregnancy may risk maternal and fetal health.

Human metapneumovirus has no specific antiviral medication. The main goal of treatment is to manage symptoms and pre-

vent complications. It is essential to recover and maintain strength. Medications such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen can control fever and body aches. In severe cases, supplemental oxygen or mechanical ventilation may be needed. Patients with complications such as pneumonia may need to be closely monitored in the hospital. To prevent HMPV, it is important to focus on preventive measures, as there is currently no vaccine available. To reduce the risk of infection, follow these measures. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available. Stay away from individuals who show symptoms of respiratory illness. Avoid crowded areas during outbreaks. Be sure to regularly clean surfaces that are frequently touched, such as door handles, phones, and countertops. Wearing a mask during an outbreak or flu season can help reduce exposure to respiratory droplets. If you have any symptoms, it is important to stay home to prevent the spread of the virus. Being aware of human metapneumovirus and its potential impact is important for early detection and prevention.

(Priyanka Saurabh, Research Scholar in Political Science, Poet, freelance journalist, and columnist)

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 correct solution.

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

Solution, Sudoku

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

THE WISDOM TREE

BY SUVEEN KUMAR

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

If one thing that will ever make a difference in someone's life is not how smart-mouth you are but how sweet-heart you are, if one think that would ever make a difference in someone's life is not how much you could impress someone but how well you cared someone, if one thing that would ever make a difference in someone's life is not how much favour you got but how much favour you gave to ones who didn't have any. Have your own rules of life but most importantly, believe in them. Words we speak out of our ego are meant to be overheard, actions we take out of our ego are meant to be ignored, things we give out of our ego meant to be passed on.

will fall in love, you can just hug and they will forever be yours. When your love is not working for someone you want to give then give it to someone who wants to receive, when your wealth is not making someone you want to make then give it to someone who lacks it great. Say good words because they don't hurt, be nice because that is how you were, be kind because it is vanishing from the world. You don't have to have a perfect reason to do good things, to do good things even bad excuses are accepted. Making a difference is not always making things different, it is sometimes keeping things from being different that is beautiful, it is sometimes stopping things from changing to different that is best in form.

You have to be different to make a difference in your life but you don't have to be different to make a difference in someone else's life. You can be just you and they will be no more they, you can just smile and they

Moral: The best way to make a difference is knowing what needs to be different and then helping it to be different.



Transforming Indian Democracy through ONOE

Independent India adopted democracy. It was a choice in favour of recognizing and accepting the existence of differences which could at times be oppositional. Democracy, in other words, was associated with plurality of ideas and ways of life. India was re-born as a nation-state in very difficult circumstances. Perhaps no other country by then was born in a situation more difficult than that of India. Freedom came with free- dom, unprecedented violence and trauma of displacement of the countrymen.

Independent India faced three kinds of challenges. The first and the immediate challenge was to shape a nation that was united, yet accommodative of the diversity in our society.

It was in this situation that independent India started on its journey to achieve several objectives.

Independent India faced three kinds of challenges. The first and the immediate challenge was to shape a nation that was united, yet accommodative of the diversity in our society. The second challenge was to establish democracy. Independent India's Constitution granted fundamental rights and extended the right to vote to every citizen. India adopted representative democracy based on the parliamentary form of government. These features ensure

that the political competition would take place in a democratic framework. A democratic constitution is necessary but not sufficient for establishing a democracy. The challenge was to develop democratic practices in accordance with the Constitution. The third challenge was to ensure the development and wellbeing of the entire society and not only of some sections.

The first general election was also the first big test of democracy in a poor and illiterate country. Till then democracy had existed only in the prosperous and mostly literate countries, mainly in Europe and North America. Consequently India faced these challenges and solved them to a great extent but the major and the real challenge now was to evolve effective policies for economic development and eradication of poverty.

Democracy is a rule of the majority, in India the poor are in majority, so democracy must be a rule of the poor. Elections which are held to create the conditions of growth and progress must not become the hurdles of growth due to their frequent occurrence

at national as well as at the gross root level at village Panchayats. To overcome these hurdles the present government under Prime Minister Modi is battling for 'One Nation One Election'.

A committee was appointed under the Chairmanship of Ex-President Ram Nath Kovind. The report on "One Nation, One Election" was released by the High-Level Committee in March 2024. The committee was tasked with examining the feasibility of holding simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and other local bodies across India. The report advocates for the implementation of simultaneous elections to reduce the frequency of polls and improve governance efficiency.

The report envisions several amendments. It proposes amending constitutional provisions, including Articles 83 and 172 (which set the terms for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies), Article 85 and 174 (related to the dissolution and summoning of Parliament and Assemblies), Article 356 (President's rule). The report recommends holding si-

multaneous elections in a phased manner initially, while ensuring logistical preparedness and consensus among stakeholders.

To start this vibrant growth mechanism there will be challenges, such as Voter Turnout, voter participation, achieving agreement among states and political parties, above all the legal and constitutional complexities. The Kovind report emphasizes the importance of maintaining federalism and democratic integrity while pursuing the concept of "One Nation, One Election." The traditional election practice will increase the costs attributed to several factors. Rising prices contribute to higher logistical and operational expenses. With over 96 crore (960 million) registered voters, accommodating a larger electorate requires more resources. Ensuring free and fair elections necessitates significant investment in security infrastructure. Political parties are investing heavily in digital platforms and social media to reach a broader audience, further escalating costs. These escalating expenses have prompted discussions

about electoral reforms, including the proposal for simultaneous elections to reduce costs and improve governance efficiency.

The "One Nation, One Election" concept aims to synchronize all elections in India, to be held once every five years. Proponents argue that simultaneous elections will reduce election costs, minimize policy paralysis, and ensure the smooth flow of development work. Opponents argue that simultaneous elections may undermine federalism, as local issues and regional parties may get subsumed by national.

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45 mn VVPAT slips counted, not a single discrepancy found: CEC Kumar

■ The CEC pointed out that any minor errors, such as technical glitches in some of the older machines or mock poll data not being cleared, are handled with precision.

New Delhi
Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Tuesday underscored the integrity of India's electoral process, asserting that not a single discrepancy has been found in votes counted through electronic voting machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips.



RAJIV KUMAR
CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER

Kumar was addressing a press conference to announce the schedule for the Delhi Assembly elections. "Let me tell the nation today. After the Supreme Court mandated in 2019 that five VVPATs must be counted from each assembly constituency, over 67,000 VVPATs have been checked. This translates to more than 4.5 crore (VVPAT) slips being verified. And let me assure you that not even the difference of one vote has been found with the new machines since 2019," he said.

The CEC also pointed out that any minor errors, such as technical glitches in some of the older machines or mock poll data not being

cleared, are handled with precision.

"There could be instances where a machine's data is set aside during the counting process. However, these instances are reviewed thoroughly and the slips are counted if they could potentially impact the victory margin," he explained.

Kumar highlighted that the guidelines for every aspect of the electoral process, from electoral rolls to machine handling, are rigorously followed and shared

with political parties.

The CEC reiterated the transparency and robustness of the election mechanism, dismissing allegations of vote tampering.

"Our process is not only thorough but also transparent. Form 20, which contains the exact details of winners and losers, is handed over to all candidates," Kumar said.

The Election Commission has been subjected to scrutiny and demands for greater accountability, including the

counting of all VVPAT slips, by opposition parties.

Will tell Centre no Delhi-specific provision can be made in Budget: CEC

The Election Commission will write to the cabinet secretary, informing that no Delhi-specific provision can be made in the Union Budget that can disturb the level-playing field, CEC Rajiv Kumar said on Tuesday.

Polling for the 70-member Delhi Assembly will be held on February 5 and the votes counted on February

8. Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Kumar announced.

Responding to a query about the Union Budget, scheduled days ahead of the polls, Kumar said, "We will write to the cabinet secretary that no Delhi-specific provision can be made in the Union Budget that can disturb the level-playing field."

The last date to file nominations is January 17 and the scrutiny of nominations will be done by January 18. Candidates will be able to withdraw their nominations till January 20.

Bypolls to two assembly constituencies — Milkpur in Uttar Pradesh and Erode in Tamil Nadu — will also be held according to the same schedule.

"Scars created during poll campaigns may remain forever" Polarisation during

poll campaigns can leave scars that may last forever, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said on Tuesday and added that political parties should ensure that lines were not crossed.

Kumar said words and

phrases such as "democratic backsliding" and "democratic recession" were being used around the world, and issued a word of caution to the political parties.

"World over, if you look at democracies, words like 'democratic backsliding', 'democratic recession' are being used. Country after country, you can see what is happening," he said.

The campaign period is becoming so polarised in one country after another that the scars created during that time do not fade even during non-campaign periods, he added.

"Therefore, it is extremely necessary that campaigns are regulated, political parties also become sensitive and responsive, not cross lines which are being crossed the world over," Kumar said.

He also said Indian elections were always cited as an example. "It is a gold standard."

"Aggression during campaigns sows seeds of impatience and younger generations are weaning away from elections," he added.

SC bats for periodic legislative review of laws for efficacy, gaps



New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said there should be periodic legislative reviews of laws to check the efficacy and deficiencies in the implementation.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kottiswar Singh made the remark while hearing a plea of former Union minister Maneka Gandhi against the 45-day limit imposed for filing election petitions under the Representation of the People Act.

"Whenever a new law is enacted, there should be its legislative review from time to time. Reviews should not only be confined to judicial reviews but there should be even legislative review. You may have it every 20 years, 25 years or say 50 years, it will help in examining the shortcomings, if any," the bench said.

He also said Indian elections were always cited as an example. "It is a gold standard."

"Aggression during campaigns sows seeds of impatience and younger generations are weaning away from elections," he added.

The apex court, which refused to examine Gandhi's plea on the ground that it couldn't legislate and open floodgates, said there should be an expert body which could undertake the review and flag deficiencies and grey areas.

The apex court, which refused to examine Gandhi's plea on the ground that it couldn't legislate and open floodgates, said there should be an expert body which could undertake the review and flag deficiencies and grey areas.

Senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, who represented Gandhi, agreed with the court's view and said there should be an audit of legislations.

INS Tushil, Navy's latest guided missile stealth frigate, completes visit to Dakar, Senegal

Staff Reporter
New Delhi

INS Tushil, the Indian Navy's latest guided missile stealth frigate, has completed its inaugural port visit to Dakar, Senegal, enhancing bilateral relations between the two nations.

During its three-day stay at Dakar, Captain Peter Varghese engaged with Rear Admiral Abdou Sene, Chief of Staff of the Senegalese Navy, to discuss strengthening naval cooperation and shared maritime security initiatives.

The visit included a Subject Matter Expert (SME) exchange, showcasing the Indian Navy's NISHAR - MITRA terminal and a joint Yoga session involving the Yoga Association of Senegal and Navy personnel.

The ship welcomed around 150 visitors from the Indian diaspora and lo-



The visit included a Subject Matter Expert (SME) exchange, showcasing the Indian Navy's NISHAR - MITRA terminal and a joint Yoga session involving the Yoga Association of Senegal and Navy personnel.

the Indian Navy's growing presence in the region.

INS Tushil concluded the visit by undertaking a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the Senegalese naval vessel PHM Niani upon departure. This visit highlights the importance of cooperative efforts in promoting regional security and marks a significant step in enhancing interoperability between the two navies.

Nityanand Rai Reviews ITBP 63rd Raising Day Parade

Khordha (Odisha)

The 63rd ITBP Raising Day Ceremony was celebrated in Khordha on Tuesday, featuring a parade. ITBP jawans showcased their skills during demonstrations for counter-terrorism operations.

Minister of State for Home Affairs Union minister Nityanand Rai participated in the program and said ITBP jawans have made great contributions for the country.

"The borders of our country, especially those covered in snow and high peaks of cold regions, are kept safe by the relentless efforts of our young jawans. They work in extreme conditions, with temperatures plunging to minus 50 degrees, yet their determination, courage, and commitment ensure our nation's security. The entire country takes pride in the efforts of the ITBP," said Union



Minister.

Nityanand Rai added "The ITBP enjoys the trust of the Prime Minister, the confidence of the Home Minister, and plays a crucial role in safeguarding the borders of our country. Today, on the founding day of the ITBP, we celebrate its unwavering success. When an enemy faces the ITBP, they lack the courage to challenge it. I wish continued success to the ITBP in the years to

progress can only be achieved through this sense of peace.

He commended the ITBP and other Central Armed Police Forces for their unwavering commitment to realizing India's vision of becoming a developed nation under PM Modi's leadership.

"A nation is truly secure only when it enjoys internal peace. It is with this sense of peace that we can drive forward progress. The ITBP, along with all other institutions of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), is steadfastly committed to realizing India's vision of becoming a developed nation under the Prime Minister's leadership. The ITBP has made significant contributions to this cause and continues to work with unwavering determination to ensure India's bright and secure future," he said.

To this, Justice Gavi said that the matter would be decided before the court closes for summer vacations in May.

Earlier, the top court had said that reservation cannot be on the basis of religion.

The apex court was hearing a batch of pleas challenging the Calcutta High Court's May 22, 2024 verdict that struck down the OBC status of several castes in West Bengal granted since 2010.

Last year, the apex court had asked the West Bengal government to provide quantifiable data on social and economic backwardness of fresh castes it had included in the OBC list and their inadequate representation in public sector jobs.

Ashwini Vaishnav launches official calendar of Government of India

New Delhi

Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnav and MoS for Ministry of Information and Broadcasting L. Murugan on Monday launched the official calendar of the Government of India at the Rail Bhawan.

While addressing the launch, the Railways Minister said that the theme of the calendar was public welfare through public participation.

"The theme of the calendar this year is public welfare through public participation. If you look at the calendar, it shows the how through the vision and programs of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we have been able to bring a big change in the lives of the people..." Vaishnav said during the launch.

Meanwhile, Minister Ashwini Vaishnav will deliver the keynote address at the second edition of the Pune Public Policy (PPPF 2025) on January 11.

The two-day festival, themed "Envisioning a USD 10 Trillion India," will focus on critical issues such as education, national security, and digital infrastructure, all



Meanwhile, Minister Ashwini Vaishnav will deliver the keynote address at the second edition of the Pune Public Policy (PPPF 2025) on January 11.

aimed at shaping India's growth towards this ambitious economic goal. On Day 2 of the event, panels will explore various topics, including education, national security, and urban development, with prominent speakers such as Karthik Muralidharan, Aseem Gupta, and Anirudh Burman.

The second day will also feature several high-profile sessions. Panels will cover important themes like "Education: Preparing Our Demographic Dividend" and "National Security Strategies for a \$10 Trillion Economy." Anirudh

Burman from Carnegie India and Aseem Gupta, Principal Secretary of Urban Development, are among the key personalities who will deliver insights into the issues facing urban development, according to an official release. Additionally, the festival will bring together a distinguished group of visionaries, including Murlidhar Mohol, Minister of State for Civil Aviation, and Vijay Gokhale, Former Foreign Secretary of India. These individuals will contribute to discussions that drive India's policy dialogue forward.

Legislators should be respectful even while dissenting says SC

New Delhi

The Supreme Court has said that legislators should be respectful even while dissenting, as it fixed for final hearing a plea challenging the expulsion of RJD leader Sunil Kumar Singh from the Bihar Legislative Council for his remarks against Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kottiswar Singh fixed January 9 for hearing the matter in detail, after it prima facie disapproved of the statements made by Singh on February 13, last year, during a heated exchange in the House.

New Delhi
Maldivian Defence Minister Mohammed Ghassan Maumoon will pay a three-day visit to India from Wednesday to deepen bilateral engagement ties amid a thaw in relations between the two countries.

Maumoon will hold wide-ranging talks with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh besides meeting several senior officials in the national capital.

Indian Navy Assistance to Malaysian Flagged Sailing Vessel running low on fuel

Staff Reporter
New Delhi

A Malaysian-flagged sailing vessel BIT with five Chinese nationals onboard was reported to be running low on fuel on 04th January 25.

Subsequently, the sailing vessel transiting 225 nautical miles west of Indira Point, sought fueling assistance from Indian Navy through #IFCIRE. Responding swiftly, a surveillance aircraft was deployed to monitor the movement of sailing vessel and diverted mission deployed Indian Naval Ship Kirchi to provide assistance.



On 07 January, INS Kirchi intercepted the vessel and provided 1000 litres of fuel, enabling the vessel to safely resume its voyage to its next port of call. Indian Navy remains steadfast in its resolve to ensure safety of all mariners in Indian Ocean Region.

India Maldives to hold high-level defence talks on Wednesday

New Delhi

The visit by the Maldivian defence minister comes over eight months after India withdrew its military personnel from the island nation following a demand by its pro-China president Mohamed Muizzu.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will hold a bilateral meeting with Maumoon in New Delhi on January 8, the defence ministry said.

It said the two ministers will review the various facets of bilateral defence cooperation, including training, exercises and defence projects to enhance the capability of the Maldives National Defence Forces as well as supply of defence equipment.

"The Maldives occupies a special place in India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy, which aims to bring stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean Region," the ministry said.

"Both nations are key players in maintaining safety

and security of IOR, thus contributing to India's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)," it added. Maumoon will also visit Goa and Mumbai. The Maldives is one of India's key maritime neighbours in the Indian Ocean Region and the overall bilateral ties including in areas of defence and security witnessed an upward trajectory under the previous government in Male.

ADC Rohit Rathore inspected village panchayats

Rajan Panchhi
Mandi:

Additional Deputy Commissioner Rohit Rathore inspected the village panchayats of Pounta and Bagh of Sarkaghat subdivision on the complaints of irregularities in the village panchayats of Pounta and Bagh of Sarkaghat subdivision for many days.

Complaints were being received for a long time about irregularities in the development works in these two panchayats. Regarding this, the Additional Deputy Commissioner reached these two panchayats for inspection and thoroughly examined the records. During this, SDM Sarkaghat Swati Dogra, District Development Officer Gop Chand Pathak and Block Development Officer Gopalpur Vivek Paul were also with him.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Rohit Rathore said that complaints were constantly being received about irregularities in the development works in the village panchayats of Pounta and Bagh that the work is not being done in the panchayats and whatever is being done somewhere is not being done properly.

He inspected these two panchayats along with the District Development Officer and BDO and all the records were examined. In the investigation, prima facie irregularities have been found in the development works in both these panchayats.

All eyes now on Milkipur assembly by-poll in Ayodhya

Ayodhya:

Political activities have gained momentum in Uttar Pradesh following the announcement by the Election Commission of the date for the by-poll to the prestigious Milkipur assembly seat in Ayodhya on February 5.

The ruling BJP and the opposition Samajwadi Party (SP) have locked horns over the seat. The SP has already announced Ayodhya SP MP Awadhesh Prasad's son as its candidate, while the BJP is yet to name anyone.

According to the EC's schedule, the notification for the by-polls will be issued on January 10, with the last date for filing nominations set for January 17. Scrutiny of papers will take place the following day, and January 20 will be the last date for the withdrawal of nominations.

Polling will be held on February 5 and counting of votes will take place on February 8.

While the SP is fully confident after winning the Lok Sabha seat in Ayodhya, the BJP wants to overcome the disappointment of its defeat by winning this seat. After its defeat in the by-elections to nine seats in November 2024, BSP supreme Mayawati announced that her party would not contest the by-elections. In such a situation, there will be a direct contest between the ruling BJP and the SP in Milkipur.

UP govt to bear 'community contribution' for JJM, waives 10 pc

Lucknow:

The Yogi Adityanath government has announced a significant relief measure for the villagers of Uttar Pradesh under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), waiving 10 per cent community contribution for 'Har Ghar Naal' scheme. In a significant move, the state government has decided to the community contribution for the Har Ghar Naal scheme, sparing the rural population from any financial burden.

Earlier, the scheme required villagers to contribute 10 per cent of the capital cost for providing tap water connections to every household.

However, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has emphasized that this expense should not burden the common people, reaffirming the government's commitment to public welfare, officials here on Tuesday said.

Notably, a total of 40,951 schemes worth Rs 1,52,521.82 crore (1.52 lakh crore) have been approved under the Jal Jeevan Mission in the state, with the Centre and state sharing



The Yogi Adityanath government has announced a significant relief measure for the villagers of Uttar Pradesh under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), waiving 10 per cent community contribution for 'Har Ghar Naal' scheme.

Rs 71,714.68 crore each. The government has relieved villagers of the Rs 9,092.42 crore community contribution by allocating Rs 2,000 crore in the current financial year's budget, benefiting 2.33 crore families.

The schemes aim to provide clean drinking water to the rural population of Uttar Pradesh. Initially, community

contribution involved collecting 5 per cent of the capital cost in villages with a higher SC/ST population and 10 per cent in other villages. However, the government, considering access to clean drinking water a basic public welfare responsibility, has decided to exempt the rural population from this contribution.

Currently, the community contribution is being covered by the state governments of Haryana, Bihar, Odisha, and West Bengal. In Rajasthan, the Chief Minister has announced that the state government will bear the cost, while in Madhya Pradesh, the matter is still under consideration. While

Uttarakhand HC stops mining operations in Bageshwar reprimands: officials

Nainital:

The Uttarakhand High Court has suspended all mining activities in the state's Bageshwar district with immediate effect following reports on damage to dwellings due to sandstone mining and reprimanded the state officials for turning a blind eye to the problem.

The January 6 direction of a bench comprising Chief Justice Guhananath Narendar and Justice Manoj Tiwari came after high court-appointed court commissioners Mavank Joshi and Shaunir Dhuja submitted a report on the issue.

The report underlined the emergence of cracks on the walls of houses across villages in Banda area in the district. The high court summoned and sought the version of the director of geology and mining department apart from the secretary, industrial development department, and the district magistrate on January 9.

The high court said the report's findings were not only alarming but also shocking.

"The report and the photographs clearly

demonstrate the lawless manner in which mining is being done in the area," said the court. The court said the local administration was turning a "blind eye to the transgression".

The report, it said, prima facie demonstrated further mining operations, which had damaged houses, was likely to trigger landslides and a definite loss of lives.

The court said trained officers permitting mining operations at the base of the villages' hill-ock, which had habitations on the top, was an irony.

The high court was hearing a suo moto case over news reports on cracks developing in houses due to stearite or soapstone mining activities.

It was reported several villages of Kanda Tehsil of Bageshwar had developed cracks.

Previously, a bench of acting Chief Justice Manoj Kumar Tiwari and Justice Pankaj Purohit had appointed the court commissioner to assist the court in understanding the problems of the villagers and directed them to submit a report. The court will hear the matter on January 9.

Health system in Himachal is in bad shape: JR Thakur

Rajan Panchhi
Mandi:

Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur said in the name of system change, the health of the state's health system is bad. People are not getting treatment. People are not getting stents, the hospital is not able to provide surgery equipment and other necessary things. The facilities that were being provided immediately and free of cost in the previous government, today people have to crave for them.

People are going home without treatment or are compelled to waste their hard-earned money. This is happening only because of the government's negligence. Leave aside other hospitals, hospitals like IGMC are themselves sick. This kind of march is not tolerable in the name of system change. Even in the Indra Gandhi Medical College located in the capital, the government is not able to provide even the smallest medicines. After this, the head of the state stands on big platforms



and says that we have made the health system of international level. The state does not need such an international system. The Chief Minister should understand that diseases cannot be cured by big talks, for that medicines, doctors, technicians, and equipment are needed. The government should stop playing with the lives of the people. Jairam said that patients who come for minor operations are sent home without operation. Even the kits for the most common tests

and medicines used in routine are not available in IGMC. Whatever world-class efforts were made by the previous government for the treatment of people in the state, the Chief Minister has destroyed them in one stroke. If the condition of hospitals considered to be very sensitive in institutions like IGMC is like this today, then what will be the condition of the state. The Chief Minister is requested to kindly think seriously about the ruined condition of

1100 Priests to perform Maha Yajna at Kumbh Mela for 'Gau Mata's national recognition

Prayagraj:

At the 2025 Prayagraj Kumbh Mela, the largest Maha Yajna (sacred fire ritual) will be organized to honour 'Gau Mata' and push for her recognition as the National Mother of India.

The sacred ritual, aimed at eradicating the practice of cow slaughter in the country, will take place in the camp of Jyotish Peethadishwar Jagadguru Shankaracharya Swami Avimuktेश्वरानand Saraswati. This will be the largest Yajna camp at the Kumbh Mela site, involving 1100 priests performing daily Yajnas for an entire month.

The Yajna will be conducted in 324 kunds (sacred fire pits), arranged in a nine-shikhar formation (nine peaks), symbolizing spiritual elevation and unity. Each kund will have three priests, meaning a total of 1100 priests will engage in the ritual for nine hours daily. The primary aim of the Yajna is to raise awareness about cow protection and call for the cow to be granted the status of National Mother.



Describing the purpose of this Yajna, Mukundanand Brahmachari stated, "Lord Shri Ram and Lord Krishna hold the highest importance in our lives, and in their lives, 'Gau Mata' holds the greatest significance. In our country, cows are being slaughtered, and this practice should end. They should be given the highest respect."

He further elaborated that the work for this Yajna has been underway for over a month, with 50 volunteers working daily to construct the Yajna Mandap (ritual pavilion). As of now, the construction of the

kunds is 75% complete. Brahmachari also shared that 35 breeds of indigenous cows will be housed in the camp, with Gaushalas (cow shelters) being constructed for them. "Our cow protectors from across the country, who are bringing these indigenous cows for the Lord, have already set out and will soon arrive at the camp," he added (ANI).

Meanwhile, with only one week left for the Maha Kumbh Mela, thousands of devotees along with sadhus and seers from across India and the world have started to arrive in Prayagraj. In this grand spiritual

gathering, Naga sadhus have been captivating people with their special attire and Hatha yoga practices.

Among them, Naga Sadhu Pramod Giri Maharaj has become a topic of discussion at the Mahakumbh Mela. He performs a remarkable ritual every morning at 4:00 am, bathing with 61 pots of cold water despite the biting cold when most people prefer to stay indoors during such freezing early hours.

Pramod Giri Maharaj follows this by applying ash to his body and sitting by the sacred fire for a long time. The notable aspect is that the number of pots he uses increases daily.

The Mahakumbh held once every 12 years, is scheduled to begin on January 13 and conclude on February 26 in Prayagraj. Over 45 crore devotees are expected to attend the event. During the Mahakumbh, devotees will gather at the Sangam, the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers, to take a holy dip believed to absolve sins and grant moksha (liberation).

Swachhata Rath Yatra launched to support a grand and clean Mahakumbh

Mahakumbh Nagar:

In a collective effort to realize the Yogi government's vision of a grand and clean Mahakumbh 2025, government agencies, public representatives, and local citizens are working together to ensure the success of this historic event. As part of this initiative, the Swachhata Rath Yatra was launched in Prayagraj to promote cleanliness and raise public awareness, drawing significant community participation.

The Swachhata Rath Yatra was launched to ensure Prayagraj reflects a spirit of cleanliness for the devotees and tourists attending Mahakumbh. With the Mahakumbh Nagar route passing through the city, the initiative aims to maintain a pristine environment for the millions of visitors expected during this grand event.

The rally was flagged off from Chowk Kot-



wali by Mayor Umesh Chand Ganesh Kesharwani. Speaking on the occasion, the Mayor said that the Swachhata Rath Yatra aligns with the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's commitment to a clean Mahakumbh.

He described the event as 'Jan Jagran Yatra' aimed at making Prayagraj clean, healthy, and disciplined. Citizens were urged to avoid littering, use dustbins, and refrain from using single-plastic use. The event received enthusiastic support from the local population, with many actively participating.

The Swachhata Rath Yatra, organized by the Municipal Corporation of Prayagraj, commenced from Kotwali Chowk with the aim of promoting cleanliness and public awareness ahead of the Mahakumbh. A grand clean chariot was beautifully decorated

with a majestic statue of Mother Ganga, sculptures of sadhus symbolizing the Mahakumbh, and adorned with trees and plants. The Yatra traversed various routes across the city before concluding at the Ram Bhawan intersection.

Street play artists carrying dustbins of different colors performed alongside the chariot, spreading awareness about proper waste segregation by using separate dustbins for wet and dry waste.

Adding to the message, a cleanliness-themed music band performed throughout the Yatra, further amplifying the call for maintaining a clean Prayagraj during the Maha Kumbh.

A large number of Safai Mitras (sanitation workers) and Municipal Corporation staff also actively participated, emphasizing the importance of their role in keeping the city clean.

Dhama meets Mandaviya seeks funds for sports infrastructure projects

Dehradun:

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama on Tuesday met Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in Delhi and sought funds for the construction of a high-altitude sports centre and a multipurpose sports hall in each development block of the state, an official release issued here said.

Dhama also apprised Mandaviya about the preparations being made in Uttarakhand for the upcoming National Games.

More than 10,000 players from across India will participate in the games that will be held from January 28 to February 14. Sports infrastructure is being developed in the state to provide world-class facilities to players.

Dhama told Mandaviya, "Organizing the National Games will develop sports culture in Uttarakhand, Dhama

said.

The chief minister requested Mandaviya to approve the required funds for the construction of a high-altitude sports centre at Dhanpuri in Almora district and for building a multipurpose sports hall in each development block to provide high-level training to players, according to the release.

He urged the Centre to clear an earlier proposal for operating an ice skating rink on the Maharana Pratap Sports College campus here and sought funds for upgrading the government-run Adventure Training Centre in Tehri district's Shivpuri.

He also sought financial assistance for the construction of an indoor artificial rock climbing wall on the campus of the National Institute of Sports College in Champawat district, the release said.

Congressman Suhash Subramanyam takes oath on Gita

Washington: Congressman Suhash Subramanyam, who is the first Indian American Congressman from the East Coast, took oath of office on Bhagavad Gita, making him possibly the only lawmaker to do so on the holy Hindu book.

Subramanyam's mother, who immigrated through Dulles Airport, watched her son being sworn-in on the Bhagavad Gita.

Tulsi Gabbard, 43, the first Hindu American to be ever elected to the US House of Representatives, was the first lawmaker to take the oath on Gita. She was first sworn on January 3, 2013 representing the second Congressional District of Hawaii as a member of the House of Representatives.

Gabbard, who converted to Hinduism as a teenager, is now a nominee for the powerful position of Director of National Intelligence.

"My parents got to see me sworn in as the first Indian American and South Asian Congressman from Virginia," Subramanyam said in a statement after his swearing in.

"If you had told my mother when she landed in Dulles Airport from India that her son would go on to represent Virginia in the United States Congress, she might have not believed you, but my story is the kind of promise that America holds. I am honored to be the first, but not the last, to represent Virginia's 10th in Congress," he said.

Singapore passes law protecting potential scam victims

Singapore: Singapore on Tuesday passed a new law providing the police with powers to order banks to restrict the banking transactions of potential scam victims.

"The Protection from Scams Bill comes as scams remain a 'grave concern' in Singapore, said Minister of State for Home Affairs and Social and Family Development Sun Xueliang as she tabled the Bill for a second reading in Parliament.

"This Bill, passed unanimously, allows the police to act decisively and close a gap in our arsenal against scammers," Channel News Asia quoted the minister as saying in the House.

"The Bill will allow specified officers, including those from the police and Commercial Affairs Department, to issue restriction orders to banks if there is reasonable belief that account holders will be making transfers to scammers.



These restriction orders will suspend money transfers, the use of ATM facilities and all credit facilities, although individuals will still be provided access to their monies for daily living expenses.

"The intent is to buy the police more time to engage and convince the individual that he is being scammed, including through enlisting the help of his family members," Sun told the

House.

She added that the restriction orders would involve the seven Domestic Systemic Important Banks (DSIBs) - DBS, OCBC, UOB, Citibank, HSBC, Maybank and Standard Chartered Bank - which account for the vast majority of consumer bank accounts in Singapore.

The orders can also be issued to non-DSIB banks if there is reason

to believe that victims will make transfers to scammers.

Sun said the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is "mindful of the need to strike a balance between protecting an individual from further harm and not unduly inconveniencing him".

Several safeguards are in place, such as requiring restriction orders be issued only "as a last resort if all other efforts to convince the

individual have failed". Individuals can also appeal to the Commissioner of Police against the restriction orders - a process that MHA will ensure is expeditious, Sun added.

The Bill will limit the duration of a restriction order to "a maximum of 30 days at the outset". Each order may be extended up to five times if the officer deems it necessary.

After five extensions, the restriction order "must lapse" even if the victim is still at risk of transferring more money to the scammer," said Sun.

"MHA takes a practical approach to this. We cannot handhold the victim indefinitely, nor do we have the resources to do so," said the minister.

Close to SGD 15.8 billion has been set aside under banks' "money lock" feature to protect customers from potential scams.

Sri Lanka President To Visit China Ahead Of Budget



Colombo: Sri Lanka's president will travel to the island's largest bilateral lender China next week ahead of his first national budget, the information minister said Tuesday.

The visit comes a month ahead of President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's first budget, which is expected to outline his plans to sustain the country's painful recovery from its worst economic meltdown in 2022.

Dissanayake will begin a three-day visit on January 14, said Nalinda Jayatissa.

It will be his second foreign trip - after visiting regional powerhouse India last month - since being elected in September.

China accounted for

more than half of Sri Lanka's \$14 billion debt borrowed from other governments at the time the island defaulted on its sovereign debt in 2022 when Colombo ran out of foreign exchange to pay for essential imports such as food, fuel and medicines.

Leftist Dissanayake has already endorsed a \$2.9 billion, four-year IMF bailout loan program negotiated by his predecessor in 2023, and plans to maintain high taxation to shore up state revenue.

After much delay, the Sri Lankan government concluded a restructuring of both bilateral loans and international sovereign bonds last month, ending its bankrupt status.

Over 22,000 bureaucrats in Pakistan possess dual nationality

Islamabad: In a surprising development, a National Assembly (NA) panel was informed that over 22,000 bureaucrats in Pakistan possess dual nationality, raising concerns about national security.

As the NA's standing committee on Interior met on Monday with Raja Khuram Nawaz in the chair, members sounded alarm over the practice and called for



stringent measures to restrict the practice, especially for bureaucrats, judges and members of

the parliamentarians, according to The Express Tribune newspaper.

The meeting was deliberating on the proposed legislation that would grant Pakistani passports to citizens of countries with which Islamabad has dual nationality agreements.

During the meeting, it was also revealed that 22,000 bureaucrats hold dual citizenship.

Committee member Abdul Qadir Patel expressed surprise that while members of the

National Assembly and judges were prohibited from holding dual citizenship, bureaucrats were not. He proposed that the bill should include a provision to ensure that individuals with dual nationality should not be appointed as bureaucrats.

Patel also challenged the argument that politicians are not given dual citizenship due to the need to safeguard state

secrets.

Agha Rafiullah of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) demanded detailed statistics on Pakistani citizens holding dual nationality, including how many have renounced their foreign citizenship and whether NADRA, the official registration body, possessed data on which countries these individuals were affiliated with.

The committee mem-

ber also raised concerns about the relaxation of dual nationality rules, citing the example of the chairman of NAB (National Accountability Bureau), the top anti-corruption body, reported the paper.

Pakistan allows dual nationality with certain countries like the US, but it is forbidden for those in the armed forces, parliamentarians and judges of superior court.

BUSINESS

Microsoft to invest 3 bn in AI cloud expansion in India

Bengaluru: Microsoft will invest USD 3 billion (about Rs 25,700 crore) to expand its cloud computing and artificial intelligence capabilities in India, its chief executive officer Satya Nadella said on Tuesday.

The tech giant will also train 1 million people in AI skills in India by 2030, Nadella said, addressing a conference attended by startup founders and executives from technology firms here.

Nadella is the latest in the list of tech tycoons to have visited India - the nation of 1.4 billion people that is emerging as an AI battlefield.

Chip maker Nvidia chief Jensen Huang, AMD's Lisa Su and Meta chief AI scientist Yann LeCun had in recent months visited India, home to millions of programmers and technology services providers like Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys and Wipro.

Nadella said the USD 3 billion invest-

ment in India would be the "single-largest expansion" done in the country. "The diffusion rate of AI in India is exciting."

He, however, did not give a time frame for the spending.

Microsoft provides its cloud computing services under the Azure brand name. It has over 60 Azure regions comprising more than 300 data centres.

"In India, we are excited about all the regions that we have. We have Central India, South India, West India, and South Central India. We also have the capacities that we built up with Jio. We have a lot of regional expansion happening," Nadella said.

When Nadella last visited India in February 2024, he announced the company would provide 2 million people in the country with AI skilling opportunities by 2025, focused on training individuals in smaller cities and rural areas.

India GDP Growth Forecast: 6.2% in FY25, HSBC Says

Mumbai: Real GDP growth will come lower than the official estimate at 6.2 per cent in the ongoing fiscal year and inch up to 6.5 per cent in FY26, a foreign brokerage said on Tuesday.

The Q2FY25 growth number at 5.4 per cent was disappointing, HSBC said in a report, adding that it expects the gross value added growth in the December quarter to go up to 6.5 per cent.

"Our 100 indicators analysis shows that growth indicators have improved since September, but remain weaker than June," the report said.

It said 65 per cent of the indicators are growing at a positive clip in the December quarter compared to 55 per cent in the July-September period, and added that improvements have



been the clearest in agriculture, exports, and construction.

Even urban consumption, which has been discussed a lot in recent weeks in a concerning way, has shown some improvement in the December quarter, the report said.

The brokerage said utilities and private in-

vestment indicators continue to remain subdued, and things are still not as good as the June quarter, when about 75 per cent of the indicators were growing positively.

It can be noted that the Ministry of Statistics expects the FY25 GDP growth to come at 6.4 per cent as per the latest estimates, while the

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had last month revised down its projection to 6.6 per cent from 7.2 per cent.

On inflation, it pegged the FY25 price rise to come at 4.9 per cent and cool down to 4.4 per cent in FY26.

"We forecast inflation to fall from 5.5 per cent in November to 5.3 per

The Q2FY25 growth number at 5.4 per cent was disappointing, HSBC said in a report, adding that it expects the gross value added growth in the December quarter to go up to 6.5 per cent.

cent in December, and to just-below 5 per cent in January," the report said.

The RBI is likely to deliver two rate cuts of 0.25 per cent each during the February and April policy reviews, the brokerage said.

"Some of the responsibility to push up growth will fall on the shoulders of the monetary policy," it said.

The brokerage said the fiscal math shows that tax revenues are softening, and expenditure will have to be disciplined in FY26, if the fiscal deficit target is to be met.

Vedanta Aluminium secures 2nd position in S&P Global CSA

New Delhi: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest aluminium producer, has been recognized for its exceptional sustainability efforts, securing the 2nd position in the S&P Global Corporate Sustainability Assessment (CSA) for the aluminium sector globally. With an overall score of 77, based on the robust Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) parameters, this achievement marks a significant milestone for the company in its ongoing commitment to sustainability. What makes this achievement even more remarkable is that for the fourth year in a row, Vedanta Aluminium features among the top companies globally in these rankings.

S&P Global CSA represents a highly prestigious family of global benchmarks that track the performance of leading companies based on economic, environmental, and social criteria. The S&P Global ESG Score measures a company's performance on and management of material ESG risks, opportunities, and impacts informed by a combination of company disclosures, media and stakeholder analysis, modelling approaches, and in-depth company engagement via the S&P Global CSA.

Savor Taste of Wellness: Baker's loaf unveils artisanal breads packed with nutrition

New Delhi: Baker's Loaf, a new artisanal bread brand, made its debut in Delhi NCR, promising to redefine the bread experience with every slice. Using the finest ingredients, Baker's Loaf offers a wholesome, gourmet experience that's perfect for breakfast, snacking, or any meal. Each loaf is a work of art, handcrafted in small batches by skilled bakers who blend passion and precision to create something truly special. Available exclusively on quick-commerce platforms, this brand brings exceptional taste, texture, and craftsmanship to

Savour the Art of Baking

Introducing **Baker's Loaf**

Baker's Loaf - Savour the Art of Baking, has been crafted to deliver freshness, nutrition, and artisanal quality for every meal.

your table.

The range will offer five products, each a testament of the artistry of bread-making. The fibre and protein-rich Oatmeal Bread, made with wholesome rolled oats, boasts a hearty texture and rich flavour. Similarly, the protein-packed Zero Maida Burger buns are crafted with high-quality wheat flour, making every bite a savoury experience.

Additionally, the soft and versatile Hot Dog Bun is perfect for weekend meal creations, while the Parmesan Oregon Footlong with the essence of herbs and cheese is rich in flavour and ideal for experiential mealtime. Lastly, the light and crispy Sesame Soup Sticks add a delightful touch to your favourite soup.

"Baker's Loaf range is a testament to our commitment to quality and innovation. Each variant in this range represents our passion for delivering the finest bread, combining natural ingredients and artisanal techniques. Baker's Loaf is an invi-

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Cricket

Rohit and Kohli's Test future depends on selectors: Gavaskar

Sydney

Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma's Test future is now in the hands of selectors, said former India captain Sunil Gavaskar while advocating an honest deep-dive into the team's downward spiral in the last six months.

Gavaskar spoke about India's recent debacles, including the home whitewash by New Zealand, the way forward and the responsibility on the Ajit Agarkar-led national selection committee to give a fair chance to those waiting in the wings.

Asked about the raging debate surrounding the future of struggling stars Rohit and Kohli, Gavaskar said, "How long they continue is really up to the selectors." "Now that India has failed to qualify for the WTC (World Test Championship) final, it would be pertinent to reflect on the reasons that (why it) happened," he added.

This is the first time since the WTC's inception that India could not make the finals following a 1-3 loss to Australia in the Border-Gavaskar series that concluded on Sunday.

That defeat also meant that the coveted BGT was surrendered to Australia for the first time in a decade. The



primary reason for the debacle was the batting unit's failure to fire with Rohit and Kohli proving to be the weakest link.

Kohli scored 190 runs in nine innings including an unbeaten century, while

Rohit's tally was a dismal 31 from five completed knocks.

Gavaskar didn't mince words while pointing out the repeated failures of the team's batters, who failed to cross the 200 mark six out of nine times during

the series.

"It is clear that in the last six months, the batting failed and that was the main reason that we lost matches that we should have won," the former captain stated.

"So, if changes are required for the new cycle of the WTC which starts in mid-June in England, then hopefully the selectors will take into account who would still be there for the final in 2027 and choose accordingly," Gavaskar put things perspective.

Time for next crop to step up. The 75-year-old former India captain did not take names but said there are some good performers coming up in the domestic circuit and the onus is now on the selectors to give them a fair chance.

"Unless they are given a chance how will we know if those doing well in Ranji Trophy will do well at the international level? Here's where good selections come in," he said.

Gavaskar also complimented the selection committee for unearthing a talent like Nitish Kumar Reddy, who was one of India's three centuries in the just-concluded tour, others being Yashasvi Jaiswal and Kohli.

"Compliments to Ajit Agarkar and his team for seeing the potential in Nitish Kumar Reddy and picking him for the Test squad too," he said of the player, who also enjoys strong backing of head coach Gautam Gambhir.

On the bowling front, Gavaskar said India has enough talent that needs to

be given the requisite opportunities to ensure that a generational star like Jasprit Bumrah is not overburdened. Once again, he refrained from taking names of the potential candidates, who would shape the bowling attack going forward.

"India has got loads of promising pacers who are waiting for an opportunity. Yes, Bumrah should not be overburdened and if others step up then we can have an attack that can win matches in any conditions," he said.

'Be honest'

The culture of putting stars at a pedestal has been an oft-stated problem in Indian cricket. But Gavaskar said it is not very difficult to stay grounded even with that if one is capable of taking an honest look at performances.

"We see our faces in the mirror every day and since we do that to us, we don't notice the changes that have come over the years. Only when we see photos or videos of earlier days do we notice the changes," he explained.

"It is then that we look to make the changes needed to look at our best. To do that, however, we need to take a long honest look at ourselves again," he said.

We know how to beat Aussies: Rabada

Cape Town

Fri South African pacer Kagiso Rabada, no stranger to beating Australia, believes the prospect of facing them in the World Test Championship final at Lord's in June has already sparked anticipation and motivation in his side.

Reigning champions Australia secured their spot in the WTC final with a six-wicket victory over India in the fifth and final Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Sydney, clinching the series 3-1.

South Africa were the first team to qualify after defeating Pakistan by 10 wickets in the Boxing Day Test.

"It's actually quite some distance away, but a big occasion like the World Test Championship final gets you up for it," Rabada said on SuperSport after taking a six-wicket haul in his side's 10-wicket, second-Test demolition of Pakistan that completed a 2-0 sweep.

Up against defending champions Australia, the Proteas will start as underdogs but Rabada, who twice played a big part in winning series against Australia in 2016-17 and 2017-18, is confident of pulling off an upset.

"South Africa versus Australia has always been an intense rivalry, because we play cricket quite similar. We play hard -- and they're going to come hard at us, and we know that. But we also know how to beat them," he said.

About the significance of Test cricket, Rabada said: "One hundred percent, Test cricket is still alive. It's our best format that we've been playing right now."

"When you look at South African cricket and all our legends, they've all been great Test cricketers. The world's best players are Test cricketers, and this series against Pakistan has been a wonderful advertisement for Test cricket, especially in South Africa."

The Proteas don't have any Test assignment in the build-up to the WTC Final at Lord's from June 11-16 and coach Shukri Conrad has said they're looking at the possibility of a one-off match against either Ireland or Afghanistan.

"We're going to try and get a Test match, possibly in the UK, against Ireland or Afghanistan, whoever is free. And if unsuccessful, we'll obviously go out a couple of days earlier, and make sure we camp there really well, probably in Canterbury," said Conrad.

The coach was also at praise for his skipper Temba Bavuma for playing a key role in South Africa's resurgence.

"He's played unbelievably well this summer, and full marks to him," Conrad said.

"I think any captain who wants to lead from the front, they want to lead through performance as well, and that's what Temba's done exceptionally well."

"He's not lost a game as captain of South Africa (winning eight out of nine Tests). Leading from the front, turning out the performances he's had, he's probably in the form of his life."

Clive Lloyd slams proposed 2-tier system

Guyana (West Indies)

Former West Indies captain Clive Lloyd has said it would be a bad idea to have a two-tier Test system to facilitate more series between the big-three nations, saying it would be hugely detrimental for the West Indies and countries who have worked hard to get Test-match status.

The International Cricket Council, in collaboration with cricket boards of India, Australia and England, is exploring the possibility of a two-tier Test system to facilitate more series between the three nations.

The Age had reported that Jay Shah, the new ICC chairman, is set to meet Cricket Australia chair Mike Baird and his England counterpart Richard Thompson later this month to discuss the finer points.

"I think it will be terrible for all those countries who work so hard to get to Test match status and now they'll be playing among themselves in the lower section," Lloyd was quoted saying in the Trinidad & Tobago Guardian.

Expressing dismay over former ICC chairman Greg Barclay's suggestion

that the West Indies be disbanded and play as individual countries, Lloyd said: "We (West Indies) have a great history and now you're going to tell us because of a monetary situation, (we should be disbanded)."

One of the most successful captains in history, Lloyd attributed the disparity in performance between the top-three and the rest to unequal disbursement of funds by the ICC.

"You could imagine they're talking about dismantling the West Indies, that is not the way to go. The way to go is to give them (West Indies and other teams) the same amount of money so they can improve their facilities, get better systems in place so that they can improve their cricket," the 80-year-old opined.

He also criticised the World Test Championship cycle, saying it is not "well organised".

The WTC cycle covers two years but not all 12 Test-playing nations compete in it, with Zimbabwe, Afghanistan and Ireland left out, while the remaining nine teams don't all play each other in the cycle.

Jasprit Bumrah nominated for ICC Men's Player of the Month award

Dubai

Star India pacer Jasprit Bumrah was on Tuesday nominated for the ICC Men's Player of the Month award for December 2024 after his standout performance against Australia in the just-concluded Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

In the month of December, Bumrah took 22 wickets in the three Tests at a phenomenal average of 14.22 and overall, the 31-year-old finished with 32 wickets across five Tests.

Unfortunately, Bumrah could not bowl in Australia's second innings at Sydney because of a back spasm.

His standout spells included nine wickets in both the Brisbane and Melbourne Tests, which played a pivotal role in keeping India in competition.

Competing with Bumrah for the award is Australian skipper Pat Cummins, who guided Australia to 3-1 series win over India, and South African seamer Dane Paterson.

Pacer Cummins showcased fine form, claiming 17 wickets across three Tests against India at an average of



17.64.

His best bowling performance came in Adelaide, a sensational 5/57, which helped the hosts secure a commanding 10-wicket victory.

Cummins also contributed with the bat through crucial knocks of 49 and 41 in Melbourne.

Paterson's bowling efforts against Sri Lanka and Pakistan were crucial in the Proteas' successful campaign.

He took 13 wickets in two Tests at an average of 16.92 as SA sealed a place against the Aussies in the World Test Championship final later this year.

Whitewash at home bigger failure than BGT loss not fair to target Rohit Virat Yuvraj

Dubai

World Cup-winning former all-rounder Yuvraj Singh has said that being whitewashed at home by New Zealand was a bigger low for Team India than the loss of Border-Gavaskar Trophy but refused to join the chorus of criticism against embattled veterans Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

India have endured a difficult last few months in the five-day format, going down 0-3 to an under-strength New Zealand at home, which was a first in the team's Test history. This was followed by a 1-3 drubbing by Australia in the away edition of the Border Gavaskar series.

Both the debacles have been largely attributed to the team's batting frailties, especially those of Rohit and Kohli.

"According to me, losing (to) New Zealand is more hurting (sic). Because they are losing 3-0 at home. You know, that is not acceptable. This (losing BGT) is still acceptable because you have won two times in Australia. And this time you lost," Yuvraj said.

"Australia has been a dominant side for the last so many years, that is my thought," the 43-year-old hero of India's 2011 World Cup triumph said.

While Kohli managed at least a hundred during the series despite continuing to be dismissed whenever he was baited outside the off stump, Rohit was worse with a tally of just 31 runs and had to drop himself from the final Test.

But Yuvraj said it is unfair to lambast the duo given their past achievements.

"We are talking about our greats,



Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, we are saying very bad things about them," he said.

"...people forget what they have achieved in the past. They are one of the greatest cricketers of this time. Okay, they lost, they did not play good cricket. They are getting hurt more than us," he added.

Hopeful that India would bounce back strongly, Yuvraj said he has full faith in not just Kohli and Kohli but also new head coach Gautam Gambhir, who was his former teammate as well.

"I feel that Gautam Gambhir as a coach, Ajit Agarkar as a selector, Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah, they are the best minds in cricket right now," he asserted.

"And they have to decide what's the way for Indian cricket in future," he said. The big-hitting former batter also lauded Rohit for dropping himself from the Sydney Test, saying it was a selfless act.

"I think it is a big thing. I have never seen in the past that the captain's form is not going well and his himself has gone out. And this is Ro-

hit Sharma's greatness that he has kept the team ahead of himself," Yuvraj said.

"I think he is a great captain. Whether win or lose, he will always be a great captain. And in his captaincy, we have played the (ODI) World Cup final. We won a T20 World Cup. We have achieved a lot," he pointed out.

He urged the critics to exercise restraint while dissecting the team's performance.

"Now I was a student of the game and now I am a student of the game. The amount of cricket I have played, they have played more cricket than me," said the man, who played 304 ODIs, 40 Tests and 38 T20 Internationals for India, amassing 11,000 runs across formats.

"I can give my opinion. And my opinion is that when players are not performing, it is easy to say bad about them. But it is very difficult to support them. Media's job is to say bad about them. My job is to support my friends and brothers. For me, they are my family. Simple," he signed off.

Smith Williamson unlikely to feature in PSL PCB awaits clearance for England players

Karachi

Star overseas batters Steve Smith and Kane Williamson are unlikely to make themselves available for Pakistan Super League (PSL) and the PCB is also awaiting clearance from the England Cricket Board (ECB) for participation of their players in the T20 tournament in April-May.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Tuesday said top players such as David Warner, Adil Rashid, Chris Woakes and Mustafizur Rahman will feature in the Platinum category during the players draft on January 11.

The other players in the Platinum category, which is the highest, include Australia's Matthew Short, Riley Meredith, and Steve Smith (subject to confirmation), along with England's Adil Rashid, Gus Atkinson, Jason Roy, Jonny Bairstow, Tom Curran, and Tom Kohler-Cadmore.

New Zealand's Finn Allen, Kane Williamson (subject to confirmation), and Mark Chapman are also part of the platinum category. Sri Lanka's Charith Asalanka and West Indies' Shai Hope are also included in this category.

Apparently Smith and Williamson have excused themselves from the PSL due to prior commitments.

The PSL for the first time will clash with the IPL and the PCB has been making efforts to secure the high-profile overseas players who were not picked in the IPL.

Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan will only be able to participate in the



The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Tuesday said top players such as David Warner, Adil Rashid, Chris Woakes and Mustafizur Rahman will feature in the Platinum category during the players draft on January 11.

league as a batter due to his bowling ban.

Other players in the platinum category include Chris Lynn, Daryl Mitchell, Adam Milne, Tim Southee, Kusal Mendis, David Willey, Usman Khawaja, Zak Crawley, Jason Roy, Michael Bracewell, and Alex Hales.

Australia's wicketkeeper, Alex Carey and a few other foreign players have placed in the Diamond and Gold categories.

“Look its tough and there is always going to be hype when you have a 19-year-old making debut because he is in rare company at his age.”

— Simon Katich



Neeraj does not need coach Zelezny 365 days a year: outgoing AFI president

Chandigarh
Star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra will not train with his coach Jan Zelezny throughout the year and seek his guidance only when required, outgoing Athletics Federation of India (AFI) president Adile Sumariwalla said on Tuesday.

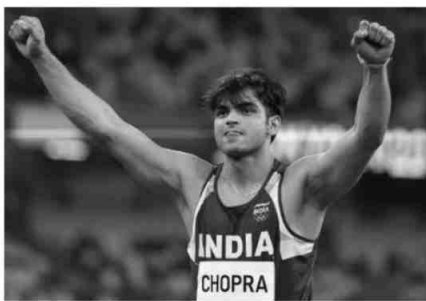
Chopra roped in three-time Olympic champion and world record holder Zelezny (98.48m) as his coach in November 2024, setting the ball rolling for the upcoming season, where he will defend his world title.

Zelezny, 58, is widely considered the greatest javelin thrower of the modern era. The Czech won three Olympic gold medals (1992, 1996, 2000) and as many world titles (1993, 1995, 2001) in his illustrious career.

Chopra till recently worked with German biomechanics expert Klaus Bartzonietz, who also doubled up as his coach. Bartzonietz was more or less with Chopra throughout the year.

"There are different parts to coaching — strength conditioning, technique, biomechanics etc. Normally one coach does not look after all of these and help is taken from others. These days, there is no coach in the world which is attached to one athlete for 365 days," Sumariwalla said on the opening day of the AFI AGM.

"Zelezny will come when he needs to come even if he is not 365 days with Neeraj and that is the way the world is. Neeraj has now reached that stage in his life where he needs to take assistance from different segments — strength training, conditioning, biomechanics, running and throwing.



"That is the way in future for all the events," Chopra, who won a historic gold in the Tokyo Olympics and a silver in Paris Games under Bartzonietz, is currently training in South Africa without Zelezny.

"There were a lot of consultations. A lot of coaches were talked to. Neeraj himself talked to a lot of coaches and we finally decided on Jan Zelezny," said the 67-year-old Sumariwalla about the roping in of the Czech legend.

Sumariwalla, who is a member of the powerful executive board of the World Athletics, ended his 12-year tenure as AFI chief. Asian Games gold-winning former shot putter Bahadur Singh Sagoo replaced him in the key post.

Asked about the aspects of the sport the AFI would have done better during his tenure, he said, "I would have liked more improvement in doping, over-age

issue and overtraining and early specialisation of young athletes. I hope the new team will give enough attention on these issues. "We have laid the foundations and the eco system. I am sure the new team will take to much higher level. We are in the right path and we have to tweak the strategy from time to time depending on the internal and external environment. The direction of the AFI is right." India is one of the top offenders in the world when it comes to doping and, Sumariwalla said, "The AFI is doing whatever it can do within its legal parameters. We can do two things — education and policing. This has to be done at the state and district level where the problem is.

"We have been educating the athletes at every national events. I myself have conducted sessions on doping. "Regarding policing, we give intelli-

gence to NADA, WADA and AIU. We have been requesting NADA from time to time to add more and more name to the Registered Testing Pool and do more out of competition testing." He said a detailed analysis was done by the AFI after the below-par show at the Paris Olympics where most athletes, except for Neeraj Chopra, under-performed.

"We have started taking action on that. We have rejigged the (men's) 4x400m relay team as well as the coaches. We have brought in a Jamaican coach, we have not renewed the women's coach." He did not commit anything when asked how many track and field athletes will compete in the upcoming National Games in Uttarakhand.

"I am not sure how many will take part. It's a very crucial year, we have World Indoors, World Relays, Asian and World Championships. The calendar has been created for the athletes to peak during the World Championships. We will do whatever is necessary to ensure this.

"I can't say what will happen. We will do whatever is the best interest of the country as well as the athletes." Asked what role he will play in the AFI in future, now that he is no longer its office-bearer, Sumariwalla said, "As far as my role is concerned, I am not going anywhere, I am here to assist Bahadur (president), certain roles like dealing with World Athletics, IOA, IOC and Ministry.

"I will continue to assist in these areas under Bahadur, including being the AFI spokesperson."

Malaysia Open: Leaking roof halts Prannoy's match



Kuala Lumpur
India's HS Prannoy experienced a frustrating start to the season-opening Malaysia Super 100 badminton tournament as his match against Canada's Brian Yang was suspended midway due to a leaking roof at the Axiata Arena here on Tuesday.

Prannoy, returning to action after the Olympics, was leading 21-12, 6-3 when rainwater began seeping through the roof, forcing play to stop on Court 3 about 25 minutes into the match.

After a delay of over an hour, play resumed around 4:15 PM, but the match was halted again as the leak persisted.

Yang was leading 11-9 in the second game when officials decided to suspend the match, which will now resume on Wednesday with the score at 21-12, 9-11. "Prannoy's match has been suspended. He will start with the same score tomorrow. A decision regarding other matches will be taken by 8:30 PM," India coach RMV Gurusaidutt, who was court side, said.

Prannoy had raised the issue with the chair umpire after water started pool-

ing on the left front section of the court. Organisers inspected the area, leading to the suspension.

Matches on Court 2 were also stopped for the same reason, while Court 1 remained operational.

In bizarre scenes, organisers were seen using white towels to dry the courts.

Earlier in the day, India's women's doubles duo of Tressa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand also overcame Orm-nicha Jongstaphanpam and Sukitta Suwachai, beating the Thai pair in straight games in the opening round.

The Indian pair, seeded sixth here, won 21-10, 21-10 in just 30 minutes to secure a place in the round of 16.

On a high following their success in the Syed Modi International Super 300 tournament in Lucknow, Tressa and Gayatri faced little challenge from the seeded Thai pair taking a 17-8 lead in no time.

The second game saw the Thai pair go neck-and-neck till 8-all before Tressa and Gayatri ran away with the game and the match.

"I was very surprised when I heard the term 'opting out'." Ponting says of Rohit's absence



'India to host top javelin competition later this year'

Chandigarh
Olympic gold and silver medalist Neeraj Chopra will headline a star-studded global javelin competition which India will host most likely in September, the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) announced on Tuesday.

This event is in addition to a slew of competitions India has expressed its interest to host, including the marquee 2029 World Championships.

Outgoing AFI president Adile Sumariwalla confirmed that India has expressed interest to host the 2029 World Championships, as well as the 2027 World Relays. The AFI has already submitted its expression of interest to host the 2028 World Junior Championships when the international body chief Sebastian Coe visited the country in November last.

"There will be a top javelin competition in India in which the top-10 javelin throwers in the world will compete. This will be an invitation tournament to be held later this year," Sumariwalla, whose 12-year tenure as AFI chief ended on Tuesday, said on the first day of the AFI Annual General Meeting (AGM).

"Neeraj Chopra will be there. He is part of the team that is organising the event, along with JSW, a foreign firm and the AFI are together creating this competition. This is being done as there is so much interest in javelin with August 7 -- when Chopra won the Tokyo Olympics gold -- being observed as National Javelin Day."

Sumariwalla later said that the event is most likely to be held in September.

Just before the start of the AGM, 2022 Asian Games shot put gold medalist Bahadur Singh Sagoo was elected unopposed as the new AFI chief. Talking about the big global events India is hoping to host in the next four years, Sumariwalla said, "Bids are open at the moment for (2028) World Junior Championships, 2029 World Championships, World Relays (2027) and India is going to bid for all of them. We have put in our expression of interest and so the process has started."

"We might also do a World Half Marathon," he said.

India is hosting a World Athletics Continental Tour bronze-level event in Bhubaneswar on August 10. This will be the first global athletics meet to be hosted by India after the international permit meets, held in the country in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

India to field largest-ever contingent at next week's India Open Super 750

New Delhi
Star shuttlers Lakshya Sen and PV Sindhu will headline host India's largest-ever contingent at the Yonex-Sunrise India Open Super 750 badminton tournament, starting here from January 14.

With top stars like Olympic champions Viktor Axelsen, An Se Young, and world No. 1 Shi Yuqi leading the field, top-tier action is expected at the KD Jadhav Indoor Hall, Indira Gandhi Stadium.

A total of 21 Indian players, including three men's singles, four women's singles, two men's doubles, eight women's doubles, and four mixed doubles pairs, will compete in the USD 950,000 BWF World Tour event, which offers 11,000 ranking points for the champions.

"With so many Indian players competing in a Super 750 event, it's a remarkable sign of the growth and rise of Indian badminton on the world stage," Sanjay Mishra, General Secretary, Badminton Association of India, said in a release.

"This is just the beginning— 2025 promises to be a year where more names will feature alongside the es-



established names, while fresh faces will emerge and shine bringing glory and pride to India. The competition at the IG Stadium will be a testament to the rising caliber of Indian talents," he added.

The tournament, which was elevated to Super 750 category in 2023, saw India field 14 entries in the past two editions, and India's highlights were Chirag Shetty and Satwiksainj Rankireddy reaching the men's doubles final and HS Prannoy making the men's singles semifinals in 2024.

Chirag and Satwik, semifinalists at the 2024 China Masters, will lead India's men's doubles charge. Satwik, returning from injury, will look to regain his form after limited play since the Paris Olympics.

Cameron Norrie accidentally hits spectator with thrown racquet at Auckland ATP event

Auckland
British tennis star Cameron Norrie apologized and avoided disqualification when a racquet he tossed in the air struck a spectator at the ATP Tour tournament in Auckland on Tuesday.

Auckland-born Norrie was facing match point against Facundo Diaz Acosta of Argentina when he lightly tossed his racquet into the air. The racquet struck a woman in a court-side box who was unhurt.

Norrie received a warning from the chair umpire and went on to lose 6-2, 6-3 in the first round of the tournament. He reached the final in Auckland in 2023.

"I wasn't meaning to do that but it's still not ideal to be doing that and I've never done something like that," Norrie said. (The spectator) was laughing and I just said so sorry, I didn't mean to do that." And she said yeah, I'm completely OK."

"That was not a big deal. But as we saw with some other players, you can easily be defaulted if it catches them in the wrong spot or they're not looking or something."

"I was not meaning to do that and it is completely not me to do something like that. A apologized very quickly and I want to apologize in general. I'm not



Norrie received a warning from the chair umpire and went on to lose 6-2, 6-3 in the first round of the tournament. He reached the final in Auckland in 2023.

East Bengal rope in Venezuelan forward Celis in mid-season transfer window

Kolkata
Struggling East Bengal on Tuesday announced the signing of Venezuelan national team forward Richard Enrique Celis Sanchez for the remainder of the Indian Super League season.

Celis last played for Venezuela's first division team Academia Puerto Cabello in October 2024.

A versatile attacker, who can play as both left winger and centre-forward, Celis has represented several top-tier clubs in Venezuela such as Atletico Venezuela CF, Deportivo JBL, Caracas FC and Academia Puerto Cabello, besides Colombia's Millonarios FC and Slovakia's FK Senica.

Celis has also represented the Venezuela national team in the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers and the Copa America in the past.

The 28-year-old brings with him a wealth of experience, having scored crucial goals in over 250 top-tier club matches across domestic leagues and the Copa Libertadores.

Celis played a pivotal role in helping Caracas win the Venezuelan Primera Division title in 2019 and Mil-



lonarios' triumphant 2022 Copa Colombia campaign.

"I am thrilled to join East Bengal, a club with such a rich history and passionate fans. This is a new chapter in my career and I can't wait to embrace the challenges and opportunities ahead in Indian football," Celis stated in a release.

East Bengal head coach Oscar Bru-

zon said, "We expect Richard's talent, skills, commitment and determination to embody East Bengal's values. We hope he'll make a significant impact as we strive together for immediate success."

East Bengal are currently placed 11th in the 12-team ISL, standings, having endured eight defeats and two draws in 14 matches.

China's most successful club folds under weight of debts

Guangzhou
Guangzhou FC, the most successful soccer club in Chinese history, disbanded on Monday due to crippling debts.

The club, formerly known as Guangzhou Evergrande, has been unable to meet the Chinese Football Association's financial entry requirements needed to compete in the 2025 domestic season.

"Due to heavy financial burdens resulted from previous seasons, the club could not pay off all the debt by the deadline," Guangzhou said in a statement. "We express our sincere apology to all the supporters from across the community and we appreciate the understanding and forgiveness of all the fans very much."

After being taken over by property developer Evergrande in 2010, the club started the spending spree in China that made headlines around the world.

Helped by players such as Brazilian international Paulinho and elite coaches such as Marcello Lippi of Italy and Brazil's Luiz Felipe Scolari, Guangzhou won eight Chinese Super League titles from 2011 to 2019. The team triumphed also won the Asian Champions League in 2013 and 2015.

Other clubs followed with world-fa-



mous stars such as Carlos Tevez, Nicolas Anelka, Oscar, Didier Drogba and China's heading to China.

In 2021 however, Evergrande reportedly defaulted of over \$300 billion and, as key players left the club due to financial issues, it was relegated to China's second tier in 2022.

On the same day, Chinese Super League club Cangzhou Mighty Lions also announced its disbandment, as did third tier club Hunan Billows.

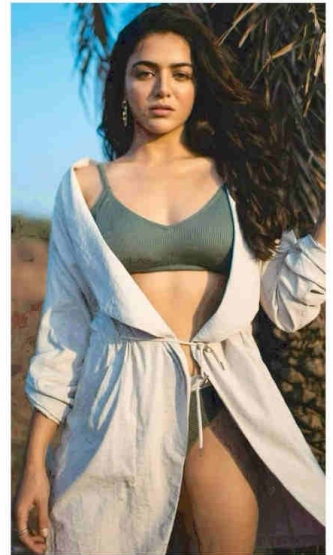
"Only by setting sights on the long term, keeping the financial operation in a healthy status and investing in youth with patience should clubs build a robust future," the Chinese Football Association said in a statement, adding that 49 teams had been deemed financially ready to compete in the top three tiers of the league system in 2025.



Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck seek judge's approval of divorce settlement

Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck have settled their divorce and are asking a judge to finalise their breakup. Lopez filed documents on Monday in Los Angeles Superior Court that show the former couple settled their divorce through mediation in September. After meeting, falling in love and getting engaged in the early 2000s — and starring together in 2003's infamous "Gigli" and 2004's "Jersey Girl" — the couple parted ways, blaming in part the pressure of the public eye.

While most of the financial details of their split were not publicly filed, neither star will pay the other spousal support. Lopez will drop Affleck from her legal name once the divorce is finalised. The superstar couple married in July 2022. Lopez filed for divorce in August 2024, although the couple said in court filings that they separated in April 2023. After meeting, falling in love and getting engaged in the early 2000s — and starring together in 2003's infamous "Gigli" and 2004's "Jersey Girl" — the couple parted ways, blaming in part the pressure of the public eye. But to the delight of many and perhaps the scepticism of others, they reunited two decades later and married. Records filed Monday show the pair resolved the financial aspects of their divorce through mediation and without long-drawn-out proceedings in court. The couple have no children together. Affleck divorced Jennifer Garner, with whom he has three children, in 2018. Lopez has been married four times and has twins with singer Marc Anthony. The settlement documents were first reported by celebrity website TMZ.



Wamiqa Gabbi joins Adivi Sesh in 'Goodachari 2'

A New Delhi actor Wamiqa Gabbi has become the latest addition to the star cast of the upcoming Telugu action spy thriller "Goodachari 2". Headlined by Adivi Sesh, the film is directed by debutant filmmaker Vinay Kumar Sirigineedi. "Goodachari 2", a sequel to the 2018 film "Goodachari", also stars Emraan Hashmi. Gabbi, who has been a part of the projects like "Godna", "Khufiya" and "Jubilee", shared the announcement on her Instagram handle on Tuesday along with the poster from the film. "SPY. ACTION. ADVENTURE. With #G2. Super happy and excited to share the news about my next. Teaming up with my fantastic co-actor @adivisesesh is gonna be kick ass. "Also, Can't wait to meet #Emraan sir on sets! Watch out for THE THUNDER GLIMPSE from #G2, this month end. It's a MONSTER. #Goodachari2," she wrote in the caption. Gabbi was last seen in action thriller "Baby John".

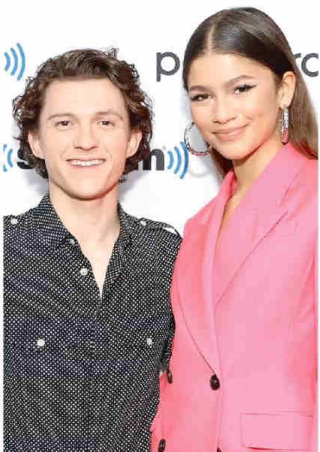


Britney Spears will be very involved in her biopic director Jon M Chu

W Los Angeles icked" filmmaker Jon M Chu, who is set to direct a biopic on pop star Britney Spears, says the singer will be an integral part of the upcoming film. Chu said he has a few ideas about the project but is yet to start working on it. "She's going to be very involved. I haven't really started anything fully yet, but she will be very involved in this. I have ideas and things, an approach, but it's very early," he told Entertainment Tonight on the sidelines of the 82nd Golden Globe Awards ceremony. Chu, also known for films such as "Crazy Rich Asians" and "In The Heights", previously announced he will direct a biopic on Spears based on her 2023 memoir "The Woman In Me". Universal Studios has landed the rights to the book and Marc Platt is attached to produce the project. "The Woman In Me" chronicles the journey of Spears to stardom, her relationships and also explores her conservatorship with her father Jamie Spears which began in February 2008 and lasted for 13 years until November 2021.

Zendaya Tom Holland are engaged family sources

S Los Angeles pider-Man" co-stars Tom Holland and Zendaya are engaged. The news comes after Zendaya stepped out for the 2025 Golden Globe Awards on Sunday flashing a massive diamond ring on her left-hand ring finger to the shutterbugs. Holland, however, gave the ceremony a miss. A family source confirmed to People magazine that Holland and Zendaya, both 28, got engaged during the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Another source told the publication that "everyone close to them knew an engagement was happening", adding Holland had been keen to propose to Zendaya "for a while". "He's always been crazy about her. He always knew she was the one. They have something very special," the source added. Holland and Zendaya, however, are in no hurry to get married. "They will just enjoy things for now and won't rush a wedding. They are both busy with work projects. Tom's always had this sweet way of letting the world know that Zendaya is his. Now, it's official — she really is." The actors will return for the currently untitled fourth "Spider-Man" film that will start filming in summer. They met on the sets of 2017's "Spider-Man: Homecoming", which starred Holland as the titular superhero/Peter Parker and Zendaya as his classmate and love interest, MJ. Holland and Zendaya, both 28, reprised their characters in 2019's "Spider-Man: Far from Home" and "Spider-Man: No Way Home" (2021). They are also set to star in Christopher Nolan's "The Odyssey".



Hugh Jackman Sutton Foster step out hand-in-hand for dinner

H Los Angeles ollywood actors Hugh Jackman and Sutton Foster, who have been rumoured to be dating for a while now, were spotted stepping out for a dinner date holding each other's hands. According to the pictures obtained by People magazine, "The Music Man" co-stars were photographed walking around on Monday in Santa Monica, California. For their date, Jackman, 56, wore a grey jacket and paired it with a pair of white jeans, and Foster, 49, opted for a brown trench olive green dress and black heels. Their public outing comes over a year after Jackman's split with his wife and actor-producer Deborah Lee Furness (59) of 27 years. The former couple, who are adoptive parents to Oscar, 24, and Ava, 19, announced their separation in a joint statement in September 2023. Last October, Foster filed for divorce from her second husband and "Ocean's Eleven" screenwriter Ted Griffin (54). They were married for 10 years and share adopted daughter Emily (seven). Foster and Jackman, who co-starred in the 2022 hit revival of stage production "The Music Man", have spoken highly of each other during the promotions of the classic play which ran on Broadway from December 2021 to January 2023.

Florence Pugh won't do movies like 'Midsommar' again Felt like I abused myself

P New Delhi ollywood banner Zee Studios has announced its line-up for 2025, which includes films such as Anurag Kashyap's globally acclaimed "Kennedy", "Emergency", starring and directed by Kangana Ranaut, and "Fateh", which marks the directorial debut of actor-philanthropist Sonu Sood. After having a successful 2024, the studio is set for several multilingual releases in Ram Charan and Kiara Advani's Tamil-Hindi movie "Game Changer" and "Majaka", a Telugu film which marks Sundeeep Kishan's 30th film. While Zee Studios is yet to reveal the release date of "Kennedy", a Mumbai-set police noir which had its world premiere at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival, "Fateh" — which explores the theme of cybercrime — will be released in cinemas on January 10. "Game Changer", directed by Shankar, will also hit the screens on January 10. Ranaut's much-awaited directorial "Emergency", which delves into the emergency that was imposed by Indira Gandhi for 21 months from 1975 to 1977 and its aftermath, is scheduled to be released on January 17. It will be followed by action thriller "Deva", starring Shahid Kapoor, coming out on January 31.

