



Vol : 1 Issue : 195, Page : 8

Ranchi, Thursday 15 January 2026

PRGI- JHENG/25/A1434

Email: dreemnation2025@gmail.com Rs: 2.00

On Pongal, PM Modi appeals to Tamil youth to embrace sustainable farming



Agency, New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on the occasion of Pongal, appealed to Tamil youth to adopt sustainable agriculture and play a leading role in environmentally friendly farming. He said that farming should be developed in such a way that it ensures food security, economic prosperity, and environmental protection. The Prime Minister described nature conservation, water management, natural farming, agritech, and

PM Modi visited the home of Union Minister Murugan, offered prayers, and said that Pongal is now a global festival

value addition as the needs of the future and urged the youth to come forward with innovation in these areas. Prime Minister Modi participated in a Pongal celebration at the residence of Union Minister L. Murugan in New Delhi on Wednesday. During the event, he performed traditional rituals, offered prayers to cows, and addressed the gathering. In his address, the Prime Minister described Pongal

Prime Minister Modi extends Makar Sankranti greetings to the nation

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today extended his greetings to the people of the country on the occasion of Makar Sankranti. Today, crowds of people are thronging to take a dip in the holy lakes, wells, and rivers across the country. In Chitrakoot, the place of Lord Rama's penance, people are also taking a holy dip before performing Makar Sankranti rituals. Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrote a message on WhatsApp this morning, "Heartfelt greetings to all countrymen on Makar Sankranti. May this auspicious occasion of Indian culture and tradition, filled with the sweetness of sesame and jaggery, bring happiness, prosperity, and success to everyone's life. May the Sun God bless everyone." A five-day fair has begun at Bharatkoop in Chitrakoot on Makar Sankranti. A large crowd of devotees has gathered at Ramghat in Chitrakoot since morning. Taking a bath with the holy water from five pilgrimage sites at Bharatkoop holds special significance.

as a global festival, stating towards farmers, the earth, and the sun, and conveys a

Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, Rajnath Singh, and others extend greetings to countrymen on Makar Sankranti

New Delhi: Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh today extended their greetings to the people of the country on Makar Sankranti. Opposition leaders and several Chief Ministers of various states were also among those who extended greetings. Union Home Minister Amit Shah said in an X post, "Hearty greetings to everyone on the festival of energy, enthusiasm, and joy, Makar Sankranti. May this festival bring immense happiness and prosperity to everyone's life." Union Minister Nitin Gadkari congratulated the countrymen, saying that may this auspicious festival of Makar Sankranti bring good health, happiness, and prosperity to everyone's life. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, while extending greetings on Makar Sankranti, Uttarayan, Magh Bihu, and Pongal, said that these festivals symbolize new consciousness, auspicious beginnings, and the eternal rhythm of nature.

message of balance between nature, family, and society.

Ansh and Anshika safely rescued; kidnapping gang's network busted thanks to police promptness



Ranchi: A wave of relief and joy has swept across the state following the safe recovery of the missing children, Ansh and Anshika. Chief Minister Hemant Soren expressed his deep satisfaction with this success and praised the efficiency, patience, and professionalism of the Ranchi Police and Jharkhand Police. The Chief Minister congratulated the police team on the social media platform 'X' and extended his condolences and best wishes to the children's families. In his message, the Chief Minister said that the safe rescue of two innocent lives from the clutches of the kidnappers is not only a major achievement for the police but also a comforting piece of news for society. He acknowledged that the case had personally distressed him as well. Initially, the investigation was not yielding the desired results, but the police did not lose patience and, with shrewdness, connected the dots with similar incidents in other

states to reach the criminals. The Chief Minister said that this operation is not limited to the recovery of the children. He clarified that a thorough investigation will be conducted into the kidnapping gangs operating within and outside the state, and the strictest possible action will be taken against all elements involved in this organized crime. He categorically stated that the safety of children is the state government's top priority, and no laxity will be tolerated at any level in such crimes. Hemant Soren congratulated the entire team of Ranchi Police and Jharkhand Police for their promptness and professional work. He also expressed his sympathy to the families of Ansh and Anshika, assuring them that the state government stands with them every step of the way. As soon as the news of the children's safe recovery spread, a wave of relief and happiness swept through the entire area. The families also expressed their gratitude to the police and administration, saying that they received full support during this difficult time. This incident once again underscores the need for vigilance and strong action regarding the safety of children in the state.

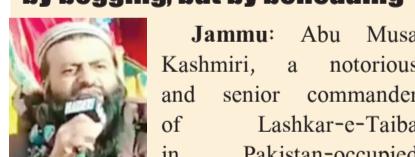
Brief News

Bihu is Assam's most important cultural and state festival: Modi



Guwahati: Bihu is Assam's most important cultural and state festival. It is primarily an agricultural festival, celebrated by all the people of Assam, regardless of their religion or caste. On Wednesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended his greetings to the people of Assam on the occasion of Magh Bihu, saying that it is an occasion of joy, affection, and brotherhood, which showcases the best characteristics of Assamese culture. In a letter, PM Modi said that the essence of Magh Bihu lies in contentment and gratitude. He said, "Heartiest greetings to you and your family on the auspicious occasion of Magh Bihu. Embodying the best of Assamese culture, this beautiful festival is truly an occasion of joy, affection, and brotherhood. Prime Minister Modi said that Magh Bihu marks the end of the harvest season.

Terrorist spews venom, says Kashmir will be obtained not by begging, but by beheading



Jammu: Abu Musa Kashmiri, a notorious and senior commander of Lashkar-e-Taiba in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), has delivered a hate speech near the Line of Control (LoC). Abu Musa Kashmiri openly incited violence against India. Regarding Kashmir, he said that it will not be obtained by begging, but by beheading. According to security sources, the terrorists inside Pakistan have suffered such a blow from Operation Sindoor that they are unable to forget it. Under pressure and facing losses, the terrorist organizations are now giving provocative statements from open platforms to recruit new cadres, rebuild their organizations, and remain relevant in Pakistan. In his speech, Abu Musa claimed that he has sent a message to Pakistan's PM Shehbaz Sharif that the Kashmir issue will be resolved only through jihad and terrorism. This statement once again exposes the truth that India has long been presenting on international forums: that Pakistan wants to keep the Kashmir issue alive through terrorism.

Indian Ministry of External Affairs issues advisory urging Indians to leave Iran immediately

Agency, New Delhi

The Ministry of External Affairs has issued an advisory stating that in view of the ongoing developments in Iran, Indian citizens should avoid traveling there until further notice. The Ministry had issued a similar advisory on January 5th. Meanwhile, the Indian Embassy has advised Indians residing in Iran to leave the country as soon as possible through any available means. The embassy stated, "In view of the evolving situation in Iran, Indian citizens currently in Iran (students,

After the gold scam, now a ghee scam at Sabarimala temple; High Court orders investigation

New Delhi: The Kerala High Court, while ruling on irregularities related to the sale of Aadiyaisitham ghee at the Sabarimala temple, has ordered a vigilance inquiry. The scam involves misappropriation of lakhs of rupees. A division bench of Justices V Raja Vijayaraghavan and K V Jayakumar passed the order based on a report submitted by the Sabarimala Special Commissioner. The report mentioned irregularities in the handling of money from the sale of ghee, and the court, considering it a serious matter, accepted the request for an investigation. The High Court stated that irregularities amounting to approximately Rs. 35 lakh occurred during the periods from November 17, 2025, to December 26, 2025, and from December 27, 2025, to January 2, 2026.

Prayagraj Magh Mela: A surge of faith at the Sangam banks, a rush to take a dip on Makar Sankranti

Agency, Prayagraj

The annual Magh Mela in the Sangam city of Prayagraj has entered its most important and spiritually significant phase. Despite the biting cold and cold wave on the auspicious occasion of Ekadashi, a massive crowd of devotees thronged the banks of the Triveni Sangam. Pilgrims from all corners of the country took a dip of faith at the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the invisible Saraswati. After the successful organization of Paush Purnima, the administration is now focusing entirely on the Makar Sankranti bath on January

Ambassadors of three countries present credentials to the President

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu accepted the credentials presented by the ambassadors of three countries at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Wednesday. According to Rashtrapati Bhavan, those who presented their credentials included the High Commissioner of Trinidad and Tobago, Chandradath Singh, the Ambassador of Austria, Dr. Robert Zeischg, and the Ambassador of the United States, Sergio Gor. On this occasion, the President welcomed all the ambassadors and extended her best wishes for their tenure.



15, which is considered the second largest bathing festival of this fair. On January 3, approximately 3.1 million devotees took a bath on the occasion of Paush Purnima, but this number is expected to cross one crore for Makar Sankranti. The fair administration has made extensive preparations

to manage this massive crowd. According to officials, the number of devotees this year may be almost three times more than in previous years. To ensure smooth movement, bathing ghats stretching approximately 12,100 feet have been prepared at the Sangam banks.

Positive talks on US-India trade deal, Jaishankar and Rubio explore options

Agency, New Delhi

India and the United States are currently at a crucial and sensitive juncture in their bilateral relations. The tensions and fluctuations that have characterized the trade relations between the two countries in recent times now seem to be giving way to renewed hope for improvement. A recent lengthy phone conversation between India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has yielded positive



signals regarding the stalled trade deal. The main focus of the conversation was to resolve the bilateral trade impasse and establish a solid economic framework for the future. This discussion took place at a time when bitterness had increased between the two countries on the trade front. Recently, US

President Donald Trump had warned of imposing heavy tariffs on India, creating concern in the markets and diplomatic circles. The failure of the proposed trade talks on January 13th had also led to disappointment, but this latest discussion between Jaishankar and Rubio has once

again brought both countries back to the negotiating table. Economic experts believe that this conversation could pave the way for progress towards a free trade agreement between the two countries. Besides trade, the two leaders also discussed in detail strategic partnerships in critical minerals, nuclear cooperation, defense, and the energy sector. US Ambassador to India, Kenneth Juster, described the dialogue as extremely positive and indicated that a series of high-level meetings on trade issues could begin next month.

Lok Sabha Speaker meets parliamentary representatives from Kenya, Maldives, Trinidad and Tobago, and Seychelles

Agency, New Delhi

Ahead of the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of Commonwealth Parliaments, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla met with parliamentary representatives from Kenya, Maldives, Trinidad and Tobago, and Seychelles to discuss strengthening bilateral relations and parliamentary cooperation. Sharing details of these meetings on social media, he highlighted India's historical, cultural, and democratic ties with these countries and expressed



his commitment to enhancing cooperation in the future. On the social media platform X, Om Birla shared information about his meeting with the Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya, Dr. Moses Masika Wetangula, stating that they had a warm and fruitful discussion. He mentioned the shared historical ties between India and Kenya, discussing Mahatma

Gandhi's time in Africa and the contributions of the Gujarati community in Kenya. Birla said that the relations between the two countries have now transformed into a multifaceted partnership, encompassing high-level visits, trade and investment, and people-to-people contacts. In another post, Birla described his meeting with the Speaker of the People's Majlis of Maldives, Abdul Raheem Abdullah, highlighting the long-standing India-Maldives relationship based on shared democratic values and mutual respect.

Digvijay Singh will not go to the Rajya Sabha, several leaders in the running, Kamal Nath may get a chance



New Delhi: Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Digvijay Singh, the "Chanakya" of Madhya Pradesh politics, has suddenly announced that he will not go to the Rajya Sabha, causing a stir in political circles. Digvijay Singh's term is ending in April, but his announcement that he will not seek re-election to the Rajya Sabha has sparked discussions within the Congress party from Delhi to Bhopal. Political circles are abuzz with speculation about why Digvijay Singh suddenly lost interest in the Rajya Sabha. The question is also being raised as to who the Congress will send to the Rajya Sabha from Madhya Pradesh in his place.

Two-Day Makar Sankranti Festival Inaugurated in Bhagalpur

Correspondent.DN

Bhagalpur: The two-day Makar Sankranti festival, organized jointly by the Department of Art and Culture, Bihar, and the Bhagalpur District Administration, was formally inaugurated by Dr. Naval Kishore Chaudhary, IAS, District Magistrate, by lighting the ceremonial lamp. Present on the stage during the inauguration ceremony were Mr. Pradeep Kumar Singh, IAS, Deputy Development Commissioner, Assistant Collector, Director DRDA, and District Art and Culture Officer Mr. Ankit Ranjan. On the occasion of the inauguration, Ankit Ranjan, District Art and Culture Officer, welcomed everyone and, in his welcome address, provided details about the program. He informed that the two-day Makar Sankranti festival, based



on the rural culture of the Anga region, is being held on January 14th and 15th at Anga Sanskriti Bhawan, Bhagalpur Museum, Bhagalpur. On the first day, folk artists from the rural areas of Bhagalpur have been invited to perform on stage. The cultural performances include Angika folk songs, folk dances, and dance dramas. On the second day of the festival, January 15th, a performance of the play "Madhyama Vyayoga" by

Bhasa will be staged, and a poets' meet featuring young and senior poets from Bhagalpur will be held.

In his address, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Singh, IAS, Deputy Development Commissioner, Bhagalpur, recited a poem and shared his thoughts on the importance of Makar Sankranti. District Magistrate Dr. Naval Kishore Chaudhary, IAS, in his address, inspired everyone to stay connected to their roots and said that the Department

of Art and Culture is continuously organizing cultural programs based on folk culture, and everyone should participate in them. In today's program, young artists who had brought laurels to Bhagalpur at the state-level youth festival mesmerized everyone with their performance of the Angika folk song 'Godna'. Artists from other rural areas also enthralled the audience with their renditions of traditional songs, harvest songs, and

planting songs, immersing everyone in the rich Angika culture. The stage was managed by Kumar Gaurav. Finally, the District Art and Culture Officer introduced himself to each artist individually in Angika language and informed everyone that the artists must register themselves on the Bihar Artist Registration Portal, because they will only get opportunities for stage performances after obtaining a registration number.

Deputy Commissioner Inspects Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Baghisha, Directs Strengthening of Basic Facilities

Correspondent.DN



Pakur: Deputy Commissioner Mr. Manish Kumar, IAS, held a review meeting with the school administration at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Baghisha (Pakur). A detailed discussion was held on various issues related to the school's academic, co-curricular, and infrastructural aspects. The meeting began with the Principal presenting information on the school's current status, student enrollment, class-wise admissions, and the problems faced in running the school. Following this, a presentation was given on the school's yoga, sports, and other extracurricular

activities. The Deputy Commissioner inquired about various academic aspects, including the boy-girl ratio among students, results of board and non-board examinations, and the status of science and humanities streams. He emphasized ensuring fairness and equal opportunities in all activities. Important Decisions

Regarding Basic Facilities: During the inspection and meeting, the school administration apprised the Deputy Commissioner of various needs. In response, the Deputy Commissioner assured that construction work in the upper area would be completed expeditiously, approved the installation of two handpumps on the school

premises, directed necessary action to resolve the problems of garbage, food waste, and sewage disposal, assured the installation of two floodlights for better lighting on the premises, approved two 2-ton capacity air conditioners and two RO water purifiers for the smooth functioning of the school, and instructed that the process for constructing a two-story cultural hall be initiated and tenders be invited for the building construction. He stated that Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya is an important institution for talented students from rural areas, and providing better academic and residential facilities to the students studying here is a priority for the administration.

Special camp organized to resolve land acquisition issues and disburse compensation amount as per the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner



Correspondent.DN

Deoghar: As per the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner cum District Magistrate, Mr. Naman Priyesh Lakra, IAS, a special camp is being organized to resolve the land acquisition problems related to the government's highly important projects, the Madhupur Bypass Railway Line Project and the Deoghar Bypass Ring Road. In this regard, on the third day of the special camp, a land acquisition camp was organized from 10:30 AM at the Panchayat Bhawan, Suggapahari-II, to resolve the land acquisition issues and disburse compensation related to Mauza-Nawadih

Inspection of Sadar Sub-division, DCLR and Land Acquisition Office conducted by Dr. Naval Kishore Chaudhary, IAS

Correspondent.DN

Bhagalpur: District Magistrate Dr. Naval Kishore Chaudhary, IAS, conducted a thorough inspection of the Sadar Sub-division office, the Land Reforms Deputy Collector's office, Bhagalpur, and the Land Acquisition office, Bhagalpur. During the inspection, he also observed the cleanliness and maintenance of all the rooms and chambers of the three

offices, as well as the filing system. He reviewed all the registers and the status of

case disposal in the Sub-divisional court and the Land Reforms Deputy Collector's court.

During this time, he gave several instructions to the Sub-divisional Officer Sadar, DCLR Sadar Ms. Apeksha Modi, and the District Land Acquisition Officer, and directed them to ensure their prompt compliance. On this occasion, Assistant Collector Mr. Jatin Kumar, Additional Collector Revenue, Additional Collector Law and Order, and Additional Collector Disaster Management were present.

Grand organization of Kite Festival 2026 at Biodiversity Park on the occasion of Makar Sankranti

Correspondent.DN

Godda: A grand Kite Festival 2026 was organized at the Godda Biodiversity Park premises on the auspicious occasion of Makar Sankranti. The program was inaugurated by the District Magistrate cum Deputy Commissioner, Godda, Ms. Anjali Yadav IAS, Superintendent of Police, Godda, Mr. Mukesh Kumar IAS, and Deputy Development Commissioner, Godda, Mr. Deepak Kumar Dubey IAS, by flying kites. The main objective of this program was to increase public awareness about traditional festivals,

and Pathariya under the Madhupur Bypass Railway Project. In addition, a meeting was held with the landowners to resolve any disputes related to land acquisition. Through the meeting, a genealogy was prepared according to the list of objections. Efforts were made to resolve any disputes among the landowners so that the land acquisition department could finally disburse the amount to the landowners' accounts. It is worth noting that a special camp is being organized Panchayat-wise since January 12th. The concerned officers, Circle Inspector, revenue staff, etc., were present on the occasion.

Godda: A grand Kite Festival 2026 was organized at the Godda Biodiversity Park premises on the auspicious occasion of Makar Sankranti. The program was inaugurated by the District Magistrate cum Deputy Commissioner, Godda, Ms. Anjali Yadav IAS, Superintendent of Police, Godda, Mr. Mukesh Kumar IAS, and Deputy Development Commissioner, Godda, Mr. Deepak Kumar Dubey IAS, by flying kites. The main objective of this program was to increase public awareness about traditional festivals,



and Pathariya under the Madhupur Bypass Railway Project. In addition, a meeting was held with the landowners to resolve any disputes related to land acquisition. Through the meeting, a genealogy was prepared according to the list of objections. Efforts were made to resolve any disputes among the landowners so that the land acquisition department could finally disburse the amount to the landowners' accounts. It is worth noting that a special camp is being organized Panchayat-wise since January 12th. The concerned officers, Circle Inspector, revenue staff, etc., were present on the occasion.

Godda: A grand Kite Festival 2026 was organized at the Godda Biodiversity Park premises on the auspicious occasion of Makar Sankranti. The program was inaugurated by the District Magistrate cum Deputy Commissioner, Godda, Ms. Anjali Yadav IAS, Superintendent of Police, Godda, Mr. Mukesh Kumar IAS, and Deputy Development Commissioner, Godda, Mr. Deepak Kumar Dubey IAS, by flying kites. The main objective of this program was to increase public awareness about traditional festivals,

Grand Inauguration of Mandar Mahotsav - 2026 on the sacred land of Mandar

Correspondent.DN

Banka: I had the privilege of attending the official inauguration ceremony of the 'State-level Mandar Mahotsav' in the historical and mythological Mandar region of Banka. All the esteemed dignitaries of Banka district were present with me on this glorious occasion. Together, we lit the lamp to inaugurate this three-day festival. The confluence of faith, culture, and tradition visible in the foothills of Mandar on this auspicious occasion of Makar Sankranti is truly unique. Special Attraction: Agricultural Exhibition This year, the district administration has also organized a grand 'Agricultural Exhibition' at the fair. This exhibition is an excellent platform to introduce our farmer brothers to new technologies and modern farming practices. I



urge all of you to enjoy the fair and also take advantage of this exhibition. Heartfelt Welcome and Gratitude: We extend a warm welcome to all the devotees and tourists who have come from every corner of Bihar. We are grateful to the people of Banka, whose cooperation has enabled this event to reach new heights every year. The administration has made robust arrangements for the convenience and safety of the devotees.

This land of Mandar mountain, which witnessed the churning of the ocean, is a symbol of pride for all of us. Let us all be a part of this legacy.

Three-Day Photo Exhibition on "Developed India @ 2047" Inaugurated at Bausi, Banka

Correspondent.DN

Banka: A three-day photo exhibition and awareness program on "Developed India @ 2047," organized by the Central Bureau of Communication, Bhagalpur unit of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, was inaugurated at the Mela Ground in Bausi from January 14th to 16th. The exhibition was inaugurated by cutting the ribbon by Mr. Ramnarayan Mandal, MLA of Banka and former minister of the Government of Bihar, and Mr. Puran Lal Tudu, MLA of Katoria. The awareness program was inaugurated by them by lighting the lamp. Speaking as the chief guest at the program, Mr. Ramnarayan Mandal, MLA of Banka and former minister of the Government



of Bihar, said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of making India a developed nation by 2047 will surely be realized. He said that creating awareness among the general public is crucial in ensuring the successful implementation of all government schemes. Katoria MLA Puran Lal Tudu discussed various schemes of the Government of India and the efforts being made towards a developed India.

of the various schemes being run by the Government of India. During the program, a quiz competition on the schemes run by the Central Government is also being organized, and those who give correct answers are being rewarded on the spot. During the program, cultural performances on the government schemes were also presented by artists from the registered cultural troupe of the department, including artists from Lok Kala Manch, Darbhanga. The program was conducted by Mr. Prakash Kumar Singh, Regional Publicity Officer, Patna, and the vote of thanks was given by Mr. Abhishek Kumar. Mr. Adarsh Kumar and Mr. Prabhat Kumar of the Central Bureau of Communication made significant contributions to this event.

Special camp organized to resolve land acquisition issues and disburse compensation amount as per the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner



Correspondent.DN

Deoghar: As per the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner cum District Magistrate, Mr. Naman Priyesh Lakra, IAS, a special camp is being organized to resolve the land acquisition problems related to the government's highly important projects, the Madhupur Bypass Railway Line Project and the Deoghar Bypass Ring Road. In this regard, on the third day of the special camp, a land acquisition camp was organized from 10:30 AM at the Panchayat Bhawan, Suggapahari-II, to resolve the land acquisition issues and disburse compensation related to Mauza-Nawadih

During this time, he gave several instructions to the Sub-divisional Officer Sadar, DCLR Sadar Ms. Apeksha Modi, and the District Land Acquisition Officer, and directed them to ensure their prompt compliance. On this occasion, Assistant Collector Mr. Jatin Kumar, Additional Collector Revenue, Additional Collector Law and Order, and Additional Collector Disaster Management were present.

by the commendable cooperation of the district administration, concerned departments, voluntary organizations, and local citizens. Finally, all the participants celebrated the festival of Makar Sankranti with enthusiasm and joy and praised the event. Present on the occasion were City Police Station In-charge Mr. Dinesh Mahli, District Tourism Expert Mr. Alok Kumar, Lokmanch Secretary Sarvajeet Jha, District Art and Culture Coordinator Surjeet Jha and announcer Manish Singh, staff of the District Sports Department, and other dignitaries.

Brief News**Chura Dahi Feast Organized at Torpa and Karra Police Stations on Makar Sankranti**

Khunti: On the occasion of Makar Sankranti, a curd and flattened rice (dahi-chura) feast was organized at the Torpa and Karra police station premises on Wednesday. Members of the peace committee and other dignitaries participated in the feast and enjoyed flattened rice, curd, jaggery, and sesame sweets. On this occasion, Karra Police Station in-charge Mukesh Hembram said that today we all sat together under the pretext of the dahi-chura feast. He said that mutual love is an important part of life. Torpa Police Station in-charge Mukesh Kumar Yadav said that the people of the Torpa police station area have always been cooperative with the police administration and in the coming times, everyone will work together for society and live in brotherhood. He said that we have to make Torpa a crime-free area. On this occasion, SI Amarendra Kumar Mandal, Roshan Khakha, Mukhiya John Topno, Vinita Nag, Deputy Chief Santosh Kar, Raju Sahu, Dharmendra Kumar, Kalim Khan and others were present at the Torpa police station. At the Karra police station feast, SI Deepak Kant, JMM's Sheikh Firoz, Anoop Horo, Dev-Mahadev, Vishnu Prasad Soni and others were present.

Makar Sankranti is not just a festival, but a symbol of Indian culture and tradition: Neelkanth Singh Munda

Khunti: On the auspicious occasion of Makar Sankranti, a traditional curd and flattened rice (dahi-chura) feast was organized at the residence of former State Rural Development Minister Neelkanth Singh Munda at Levin Bagan on Wednesday. Several prominent political and social workers and dignitaries from the district were present on this occasion. The objective of the event was to keep the cultural tradition of the festival alive and to strengthen mutual harmony and social unity. BJP District President Anand Kumar, former District President Kashinath Mahto, District General Secretary Nikhil Kandulna, Rupesh Jaiswal, along with several senior party leaders, workers and common people participated in the dahi-chura feast. The guests wished each other a Happy Makar Sankranti and enjoyed the traditional delicacies. A festive and cordial atmosphere prevailed throughout the event. On this occasion, former minister Neelkanth Singh Munda welcomed the attendees and said that Makar Sankranti is not just a festival, but a symbol of Indian culture and tradition. The Dahi-Chura (curd and flattened rice) feast reflects the rich cultural heritage of Eastern India, including Jharkhand and Bihar, and serves to unite society. He added that such events promote social harmony, brotherhood, and mutual understanding. BJP District President Anand Kumar also highlighted the significance of Makar Sankranti, stating that the festival conveys a message of new energy, new thinking, and positive change. He said that amidst political engagements, such traditional events provide an opportunity for party workers and members of society to connect with each other. At the end of the program, all the guests appreciated the event and thanked former minister Neelkanth Singh Munda for its successful organization. The spirit of camaraderie and goodwill among those present at the feast was clearly evident.

Body of unidentified youth recovered, police launch investigation

East Singhbhum: On Wednesday, police recovered the body of an unidentified young man in the Telco police station area. The news of the body's discovery spread quickly, creating panic among the local residents, and a crowd gathered at the scene. Upon receiving the information, the Telco police immediately reached the spot, cordoned off the area, and began an investigation. In the preliminary investigation, the police suspect that the youth was murdered by having his throat slit with a sharp weapon. According to police officials, the condition of the crime scene suggests that the murder was committed elsewhere, and the body was later dumped in the Telco police station area. No bloodstains, signs of struggle, or any other incriminating evidence were found at the spot where the body was recovered, further strengthening the suspicion that the crime was committed elsewhere. Currently, the deceased has not been identified. The police are trying to determine the age of the youth and ascertain his place of residence. Missing person reports filed at nearby police stations are being reviewed to confirm his identity, and people living in the surrounding areas are also being questioned.



Khunti: The first annual anniversary celebration of the Maa Mansa Devi Temple will be held on January 15th in Birhu village, Khunti. A procession carrying sacred water will begin at 8 AM from the temple grounds. The procession will collect water from the Tajna River at the Birhu Chhath Ghat and then circumambulate the village before returning to the Mansa Devi temple premises. Following the puja and havan (fire ritual), prasad (offerings) and kheer (rice pudding) will be distributed. A community feast (Mahabhandara) will be held at 6 PM, followed by a 12-hour continuous devotional singing program (Akhand Kirtan).

Photo: DREEM NATION

Ansh and Anshika, who went missing from Ranchi, safely recovered; inter-state human trafficking syndicate busted

Agency. Ranchi

Jharkhand Police safely recovered two young children, Ansh and Anshika, who had gone missing from the Dhurwa police station area of Ranchi, from Chitarpur in Ramgarh district on Wednesday morning. Two accused involved in the case, residents of Aurangabad district in Bihar, have also been arrested. The safe recovery of the children brought relief to their families as well as the police administration. The police had announced a reward of Rs 2 lakh each, a total of Rs 4 lakh, for anyone providing information about the children. Considering the seriousness of the

case, the Jharkhand Police formed a special team and launched a large-scale intensive operation. During a press conference held at the Jharkhand Police Headquarters, Director General of Police (DGP) Tadasa Mishra said that a special team of 48 police officers was formed under the special monitoring of Additional Director General (ADG) of the Crime Investigation Department (CID) Manoj Kaushik and under the leadership of Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Rakesh Ranjan. The DGP said that this case is not limited to kidnapping but points to an inter-state syndicate involved in human trafficking. Several other

people may also be involved. The police investigation is still ongoing, and the entire network will be exposed soon. He said that after the children went missing from Shalimar Market on January 2, the Ranchi Police started all possible efforts. Posters with pictures of Ansh and Anshika were put up throughout the city and on public transport. Police officers also appealed to the general public for

cooperation through their WhatsApp statuses. Three mobile numbers, including those of the children's father and the Sub-Divisional Police Officer (DSP) of Hatia, were made public, through which information was collected continuously. The DGP said that during the investigation, more than 500 CCTV footages were analyzed, and suspicious activities were verified. In addition, more than 5,000 vehicles were checked to investigate their possible involvement. Accused persons involved in similar cases in various states were also verified, and their connection to this incident was investigated. To locate the children, extensive publicity was carried out through posters at railway stations, bus stands, auto-rickshaw stands, markets, and other prominent locations in various districts of Jharkhand. Intensive surveillance was conducted using drones in potential and suspicious areas of Jagannathpur and Dhurwa police station jurisdictions. The dog squad also played a crucial role in solving the case. A 'Hue and Cry' notice was issued across the country by CID ADG Manoj Kaushik. Various child welfare organizations also made commendable contributions in disseminating information. The DGP congratulated the team for successfully carrying out this difficult and sensitive operation, stating that all police officers and personnel involved would be rewarded for their promptness and courage. The children's parents were also present during the press conference. Tears of joy welled up in their eyes as they were reunited with their children after 13 days. They expressed their gratitude to the police administration and everyone who assisted in the operation.

**Three Accused Arrested in Attempted Murder Case**

Agency. East Singhbhum

In a major operation on Wednesday, police arrested three accused in connection with a life-threatening attack that took place in front of house number 388, Line Number 27, Duiadungri, under the Golmuri police station area. A case (Case No. 06/2026) was registered at the Golmuri police station, and the police initiated an investigation based on the written application of the victim, Sarabjit Singh (35). The incident occurred on January 9, 2026, when Sarabjit Singh was seriously injured in an attack by Sukhraj Singh, Junaid, Ubaish, Sohel, and 10-15 of their associates using deadly weapons such as cleavers, baseball bats, and sticks. Considering the



severity of the attack, the police registered a case under several serious sections of the Indian Penal Code. During the investigation, on January 13, the Golmuri police launched an intensive raid operation, resulting in the arrest of three named accused involved in the case. The arrested accused are Mohd. Junaid Raza alias Junaid (21), Owais Ansari alias Ubaish (22), and Sohail

Hussain Khan alias Sohail (21). All three accused are residents of the Golmuri police station area. Based on the information provided by the accused, the police recovered three cleavers, one knife, and other incriminating items used in the crime. The recovered items include three mobile phones, two chillums for consuming cannabis, a lock cutter, playing cards, and other items. After their arrest, the three accused were duly sent to judicial custody. According to police records, the arrested accused also have a criminal history. Several serious cases, including assault, molestation, serious crimes, and cases under the POCSO Act, have been registered against them at the Golmuri police station in the past.

The first annual anniversary celebration of the Maa Mansa Devi Temple will be held on January 15th in Birhu village

Khunti: The first annual anniversary celebration of the Maa Mansa Devi Temple will be held on January 15th in Birhu village, Khunti. A procession carrying sacred water will begin at 8 AM from the temple grounds. The procession will collect water from the Tajna River at the Birhu Chhath Ghat and then circumambulate the village before returning to the Mansa Devi temple premises. Following the puja and havan (fire ritual), prasad (offerings) and kheer (rice pudding) will be distributed. A community feast (Mahabhandara) will be held at 6 PM, followed by a 12-hour continuous devotional singing program (Akhand Kirtan).

Agency. East Singhbhum

Police in East Singhbhum district have made a sensational breakthrough on Wednesday in the murder case of Tarapado Mahato, the husband of the deputy village head and operator of a Common Service Center (CSC), who was shot dead in Khadiya Colony under Galudih police station area. Police have arrested two youths involved in the murder and sent them to jail, while continuous raids are being conducted to apprehend other accused. Rural SP Rishabh Garg, while disclosing the details of the case, said that the arrested accused include Vikas Dubey alias Rahul Dubey (21), a resident of Zone Number-1 under Birsra

Nagar police station area, and Abhishek Kumar alias Golu alias Happy (21), a resident of Kharangajhar under Telco police station area. Both were stopped during a vehicle checking drive near Chandni Chowk in the MGM police station area. During questioning and search, a country-made pistol, the motorcycle used in the crime, a blood-stained knife, and an empty cartridge were recovered from them. Police investigation revealed that the reason for the murder was an old land dispute. The deceased Tarapado Mahato had previously filed an FIR against Jitendra Dubey regarding this dispute. Jitendra Dubey is currently lodged in Ghatshila jail in an arms act case. According to the police, while in jail,

If Rivers Are Not Saved, the Future Will Be Bleak: Saryu Roy

Agency. East Singhbhum

Calling the conservation of rivers the greatest need of the hour, Jharkhand West MLA Saryu Roy said on Wednesday that if rivers are not saved today, future generations will have to pay a heavy price. He said that the Swarnarekha Festival, organized by the Swarnarekha Area Development Trust and Yugantar Bharati, is not just a religious event, but a campaign to create awareness in society. During the river worship ceremony at Domuhani Ghat, he appealed to the people to stop polluting the rivers, as nature itself cleanses them every monsoon. He questioned why billions of rupees would need to be spent on cleaning if we simply stopped polluting the rivers. The river worship ceremony was performed at the confluence of the Swarnarekha and Kharkai rivers amidst Vedic chants under the guidance of the renowned scholar Vinod Pandey. Saryu Roy and Manav Kedia participated as the hosts. The ceremony, which began with Shanti Path (peace prayers) and a pledge, was attended by Ghanshyam Mishra, Subodh Srivastava, and Steel, as the chief guest.



Ajay Kumar, Kulwinder Singh Pannu, Manju Singh, Prem Saxena, Vikas Sahni, Vinod Singh, Arjun Yadav, Praveen Singh, Shamshad Khan, Santosh Bhagat, Tarak Mukherjee, Rakesh Kumar, and Sunil Verma. On the occasion of the 21st Swarnarekha Festival, this year river worship was performed at five major ghats of Jamshedpur—Domuhani Ghat (Sonari), Gandhi Ghat (Mango), Bhojpuri Ghat (Baridhi), Pandey Ghat (Bhuiyadih), and Bodhanwala Ghat (Bistupur)—where a large number of devotees gathered. At Bodhanwala Ghat, the event, organized under the aegis of the Kharkai Swarnarekha Conservation Committee, had Rajesh Rajan, Head of Corporate Communications at Tata Steel, as the chief guest.

Chandan and Amit, on a skating journey across India, reach Torpa; welcomed by locals

Agency. Khunti

Chandan Mehta (18), a resident of Sitakund in Gaya, Bihar, and Amit Soni (17), from Jehanabad district, are currently making headlines for their unique and adventurous journey across India. The two young men embarked on a skating journey across the entire country on November 16, 2025. The purpose of this journey is to spread religious and cultural awareness and to share their ideas with people across the country. Chandan and Amit are traveling to various states and religious sites across India on skates. In this process, they reached Jagannath Puri in Odisha, where, after offering prayers, they left for Ayodhya Dham.



While on their way to Ayodhya, the two reached Torpa on Wednesday, where local people appreciated their courage and determination and welcomed them. During their journey, the two young men said that their main demands are to grant the status of 'National Mother' to the cow and to declare India a Hindu nation. For this, they are trying to spread awareness by interacting with people in different places. They believe that strengthening India's cultural and spiritual identity is a necessity in today's times. Chandan and Amit aim to visit all 52 Shakti Peethas across the country. However, they also said that they have visited 14 Shakti Peethas so far. They say that this journey is not only limited to religious pilgrimage but is also a means of connecting

with India's diverse culture, traditions, and people. When asked about the challenges they face during the journey, both said that covering long distances on skates is not easy, but their enthusiasm and faith inspire them to move forward. At night, they usually stay in a temple complex and continue their journey from there the next morning. When asked how long the journey across India would take, both said that there is no definite estimate. Their goal is not a time limit, but the fulfillment of their resolve. The journey will continue until the objective is achieved. In Torpa, people saluted the spirit of these young men and wished them a safe and successful journey.

Gumla was the coldest district in Jharkhand, Yellow alert issued for cold wave

Agency. Ranchi

Jitendra Dubey hatched the conspiracy to commit the murder and arranged for the shooters through his brother Chhotu Gorai. The SP said that Chhotu Gorai prepared Jagarnath Gorai for the murder for Rs 1.5 lakh. After this, Jagarnath Gorai lured Vikas Dubey and Abhishek Kumar with Rs 10,000 each to involve them in the crime. On the day of the incident, all the accused reached Khadiya Colony on the same bike. When Tarapado Mahato was closing his shop, Abhishek and Jagarnath entered the shop. First, Abhishek attacked him with a knife, seriously injuring him, and then Jagarnath shot him dead. After committing the crime, all the accused fled the scene.

Jharkhand experienced a severe cold snap on Wednesday. Gumla was the coldest district in the state, where the minimum temperature was recorded at 1.8 degrees Celsius. This information was provided by the Meteorological Department, the highest temperature recorded in the state during the last 24 hours was 27.4 degrees Celsius in Chaibasa and the lowest was 1.8 degrees Celsius in Gumla. On Wednesday, the weather remained clear in Ranchi and surrounding areas from morning, but cold winds blew at a moderate speed throughout the day, maintaining the feeling of a biting chill throughout the state. There is no possibility of any increase in temperature for the next three days, while after that, the temperature may gradually rise by two to three degrees Celsius over the next two days. According to the Meteorological Department, a cold wave is likely to prevail in some parts of the northwestern, central, and southern districts of the state. The department has issued a yellow alert in this regard. Meteorologists said that cold winds are blowing from the northwest, causing

Murder Solved: Conspiracy Hatched Over Land Dispute

Agency. East Singhbhum



Nagar police station area, and Abhishek Kumar alias Golu alias Happy (21), a resident of Kharangajhar under Telco police station area. Both were stopped during a vehicle checking drive near Chandni Chowk in the MGM police station area. During questioning and search, a country-made pistol, the motorcycle used in the crime, a blood-stained knife, and an empty cartridge were recovered from them. Police investigation revealed that the reason for the murder was an old land dispute. The deceased Tarapado Mahato had previously filed an FIR against Jitendra Dubey regarding this dispute. Jitendra Dubey is currently lodged in Ghatshila jail in an arms act case. According to the police, while in jail,

Photo: DREEM NATION

Rajnath Singh Calls for Honouring IPKF Soldiers' Sacrifices in Sri Lanka

New Delhi, Agency: The sacrifices made by Indian soldiers during Operation Pawan in Sri Lanka nearly four decades ago should be honoured, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Wednesday, appearing to criticise the governments in the 1990s for not publicly recognising their contributions.

He said the Modi government is not only acknowledging the contribution of the Indian troops in the operation with an "open heart", but it is also in the process of recognising their contribution at every level.

The defence minister made the remarks at an event that was hosted on the occasion of the Armed Forces Veterans' Day.



"Today, when the entire nation is remembering its soldiers, commemorating their contributions, and expressing

gratitude, I also want to remember all the veterans who participated in the peace-keeping operation in Sri

Lanka nearly 40 years ago as part of the IPKF (Indian Peace Keeping Force)," he said.

"The decision taken by the then government to send Indian forces to Sri Lanka is open to debate. I don't want to get into it. But I believe the sacrifices made by our IPKF soldiers who participated in Operation Pawan should be respected," he said. India had lost around 1,200 soldiers during the Indian Peacekeeping Force's stay in Sri Lanka between July 1987 and March 1990.

India and Sri Lanka signed a historic peace accord on July 29, 1987 following which New Delhi deployed the IPKF in the island nation to bring

peace in Tamil-dominated areas that had witnessed widespread violence and civil strife for years. However, peace eluded the regions and the IPKF was eventually pulled out.

While the decision to send the IPKF was taken by the Rajiv Gandhi government the troops were pulled out of the island nation when VP Singh's dispensation was in power.

"In Operation Pawan, Indian forces displayed remarkable courage and valor. Many soldiers attained martyrdom in the line of duty. There can be no doubt about their courage and sacrifice," Singh said. "Our government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is

not only accepting the contribution of the peacekeepers who participated in Operation Pawan with an open heart, but it is also in the process of recognising their contribution at every level," he said.

Singh also recalled Modi paying tributes to the Indian soldiers at the IPKF memorial in Colombo during his trip to the island nation in 2015.

"We are also recognising the contribution of the IPKF peacekeepers at the National War Memorial in New Delhi and we are also giving them full respect," he said.

Modi paid tributes to the fallen warriors of the IPKF at the memorial during his trip to Sri Lanka in April last year as well.

J&K vital pillar of India's national-security architecture: Northern Army commander

New Delhi, Agency: Northern Army Commander Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma on Wednesday said Jammu and Kashmir is a vital pillar of India's national-security architecture, not only because of its geographical importance but also due to its strong military ethos and human resources.

Addressing a gathering at the concluding ceremony of the 10th Veterans-Day celebrations in Rajouri, the Army commander also lauded the region's contributions to the armed forces. Jammu and Kashmir is not only strategically important, but is also a vital pillar of the nation's core security architecture in terms of human resources and military tradition," Lt Gen. Sharma said.

Highlighting the region's contribution to the armed forces, he said with a population of nearly 1.5 crore, Jammu and Kashmir accounts for around 4 to 5 per cent representation in India's border security forces. "This is a significant contribution when seen in proportion to the overall strength of the armed forces," he said.

Referring to the rich military legacy of the region, Lt Gen. Sharma said



Jammu and Kashmir is deeply rooted in diverse regimental traditions that reflect a unique spirit of patriotism and sacrifice.

The exceptional performance of prestigious regiments such as the JAK Rifles, JAK Light Infantry and Dogra units in every war is a matter of pride for the soil of Jammu and Kashmir and its people," he said.

The Northern Army commander pointed out that the Union Territory is home to nearly 45,000 veterans and 975 "Veer Nari", who continue to

serve the country in different capacities.

"Through their discipline and patriotism, our veterans have also made valuable contributions in disaster management and in other civic roles, strengthening military-civil fusion," he added.

Recalling the role of veterans during Operation Sindoora, Lt Gen. Sharma said their experience, local knowledge and valour played a key role in boosting the morale of the troops deployed in border areas.

Encroachments and illegal mining severely damaging Aravalli ecosystem, study warns

New Delhi, Agency: Encroachments, deforestation, illegal mining and rapid expansion of urban infrastructure in the Aravalli ranges have severely impacted groundwater recharge, biodiversity, air quality and climate regulation, according to a new study.

The report noted that extensive diversion of forest land, particularly around the Sariska and Bardod wildlife sanctuaries before the 1980s, led to a sharp decline in native forest cover. This resulted in the fragmentation of crucial wildlife habitats and water catchment areas.

The research, titled Ecosystem restoration of the Aravalli Landscape, was conducted by the Sankala Foundation with support from the Embassy of Denmark in India and the Haryana State Forest Department. It adopted an integrated approach to tackling ecological degradation by linking environmental sustainability with biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, livelihood security and human rights.

The Aravalli range, one of the

world's oldest mountain systems, serves as a critical natural barrier and a life-supporting ecosystem for the National Capital Region and the Indo-Gangetic Plains. However, the study highlighted that this fragile ecosystem, spread across four states and 29 districts and home to more than 50 million people, is under severe threat.

"Deforestation, unsustainable land use, rapid urbanisation, widespread land degradation and desertification have placed immense pressure on the Aravallis," the report stated during its launch on Wednesday by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav.

It further noted that encroachments, illegal mining and infrastructure development have weakened the Aravallis' ability to function as a green barrier, accelerating desertification and threatening the ecological stability of the northern plains. To address these challenges, the Sankala Foundation has proposed a site-specific, evidence-based and community-inclusive eco-restoration model.

Air hostess dies by suicide in Maharashtra

ex-partner booked for abetment

New Delhi, Agency: A 21-year-old air hostess has allegedly committed suicide in Maharashtra's Thane district, prompting police to register a case of abetment against her former partner, officials said on Wednesday.

The woman was found hanging at her residence in Kalyan (East) on December 28, 2025.

Following an investigation into her mobile phone and financial records, the Kelvewadi police registered a First Information Report (FIR) on January 10 against her 23-year-old former partner for abetment of suicide, an official said. According to the complaint filed by the victim's mother, her daughter failed to answer her phone calls on the night of December 28, following

which a neighbour checked her house at Anusuya Niwas in Kalyan and found her hanging from a ceiling hook. She was rushed to Rukminibai Hospital, where doctors declared her dead, the official said. Her family claimed that she and the accused had been in a relationship since 2020.

The accused allegedly threatened to make some of her photos public, refused to marry her and got into a relationship with another woman recently, which drove her to suicide, they alleged.

Upon reviewing her phone and bank statements after her last rites, the family reported several grievances. The chat records and marks on her body suggested the accused frequently assaulted her.

SC gives split verdict on validity of Section 17A of anti-graft law

New Delhi, Agency: The Supreme Court on Tuesday delivered a split verdict on the constitutional validity of Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA) which mandates a prior approval from the competent authority to launch a probe against a government official.

A Bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and KV Vishwanathan, which reserved its verdict on the contentious issue on August 6, 2025, penned separate dissenting verdicts.

Terming it an attempt to "protect the corrupt", Justice Nagarathna held



that no prior sanction was needed from the competent authority to probe a government official while Justice Vishwanathan chose to uphold the provision even as he read it down.

Having regard to the divergent opinions expressed by us, we direct the Registry to place this matter before the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India for constituting an appropriate

Bench to consider the issues which arise in this matter afresh," the Bench directed.

The verdict came on a PIL filed by the Centre for Public Interest Litigation challenging the validity of Section 17A of the Act introduced through an amendment in 2018. The petitioner had contended that the requirement of prior approval for investigating a public servant reintroduced a protection that had already been struck down by the Supreme Court in Vineet Narain vs Union of India and Dr Subramanian Swamy vs Director, CBI.

US eyes deeper civil nuclear cooperation with India after SHANTI Act

New Delhi, Agency: The United States has expressed interest in capitalising on India's newly enacted nuclear legislation to deepen civil nuclear cooperation and expand opportunities for American companies.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio conveyed this during a phone call with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, congratulating India on the passage of the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act.

"He expressed interest in capitalising on this important development to enhance US-India civil nuclear cooperation, expand opportunities for American companies, advance shared energy security goals, and secure critical mineral supply chains," US State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson



Tommy Pigott said in a readout of the conversation.

According to the readout, Rubio

their shared commitment to strengthening economic cooperation. The two leaders exchanged views on regional and global developments, reaffirming a common vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Jaishankar later described the interaction as productive, noting that a wide range of strategic and economic issues were discussed.

Just concluded a good conversation with @SecRubio. Discussed trade, critical minerals, nuclear cooperation, defence and energy. Agreed to remain in touch on these and other issues," the External Affairs Minister said in a post on X.

The outreach comes at a sensitive moment in India-US relations, marked by recent frictions over trade policies and US tariffs linked to India's continued imports of Russian crude oil.

Against this backdrop, the emphasis on civil nuclear collaboration and critical mineral supply chains signals an effort by both sides to reinforce long-term strategic and technological ties.

Parliament cleared the SHANTI Bill in December last year, with President Droupadi Murmu subsequently giving her assent, turning it into law. The legislation significantly opens India's civil nuclear sector to private participation in power generation, while retaining government control over strategic fuel-cycle activities such as mining and enrichment. Replacing legacy frameworks such as the Atomic Energy Act of 1962, the SHANTI Act allows private entities to build, own and operate nuclear power plants, a move expected to boost clean energy capacity while strengthening regulatory oversight.

IQ Bomb vs. Gong

PA Siddharth

These days, instead of common sense, the world leader is trumpeting religious dogma, or rather, ringing bells. The people, consumed by the opium of religion and lost in the country's golden past, are adoring the IQ of their leaders, and leaders with Einstein-like IQs are showing bells to the public in the name of solving problems. People have forgotten to ask questions. Organizations that once organized candlelight vigils after an accident are now searching for

candles in the light of the leaders' highest IQs. But as they say, there's darkness under the lamp. So, even after searching, they can't find candles, and all questions are being sacrificed in the burning fire of knowledge in the netherworld of leaders' IQs. Journalism, from being thrashed in the arena of money by power, has transformed into blasphemy, ripping off logic and facts. Hunger is the truth of every era—"Hungry Pet Na Hoy Bhajan Gopala." Journalism also comes from the same society that produces politicians, law-

makers, officials, and pseudo-intellectuals imbued with the highest IQ, patriotism, and sensitivity to the core. So, journalism, transformed into bell-ringing, via reprimands, is now busy ringing the bells of power 24x7. Contemporary questions of public and national interest, and the blaring of Trump's day and night insults to the world leader, are drowned out by this ringing of bells. Anurag Dwari, a journalist who maintains his spine even in the bell-ringing era, when asked a simple question about the incident from a sensitive minister

after nearly two dozen people died from drinking sewage water in Indore, a city declared the country's cleanest by the Triple Engine government, he waved his bell and walked away. It felt as if Ram Rajya, dancing at a nearby intersection, was inviting everyone to join him in the bell-ringing phangra.

The tag of "our leader" shines like a badge on the chests of all the sycophants. Meanwhile, judges, officials, and pseudo-intellectuals are competing to join the ranks of sycophants. When the country's highest

court not only granted Rashtrasabha a reprieve from paying taxes on coal brokerage, but also ordered governments to refund the taxes he had paid to date, and postponed the bail of student leaders languishing in jail for five years until next year, it seemed as if the goddess of justice had abandoned the scales and taken up the bell in her hand.

The thunder and flame of these IQ bombs are so intense that the deafening noise of religious bells has deafened people, their tongues have sunk into their

stomachs, and their eyes have become dazzled. The situation is such that whenever a leader, lawmaker, official, or pseudo-intellectual opens their mouths, bells ring across the country. People, ringing bells, pass through the deep, dark caves of good days, dreaming of a happy and secure future, confident that they have defeated Mungeri Lal. In a few days, they will be able to create their own universe, separated from the energy fields of time and space. They have created both the incarnation and the bell.

Editorial

Don't make your stomach a grave

Himachal, which has run counter to the mountain lifestyle, has exposed itself to medical challenges. If two million people in the state are suffering from obesity, is this not a wise use of food and money? The results of the National Family Health Survey-5 are a warning to Himachal. Considering the survey, 53 percent of women in the state suffer from anemia, and 55.4 percent of children under five years of age also suffer from this disease. Furthermore, 13 percent of Himachalis are suffering from diabetes. This means that Himachal has expanded its disease burden beyond the national average. The strange situation is that even in Himachal's tribal areas, the contradictions in lifestyle are leading to diseases previously unseen. For example, a survey by Tanda Medical College found that people in areas like Bharmour are suffering from heart disease. Perhaps there was a balance between mountain life and the diet of the citizens, which was overlooked by various aspects of progress. Daily routines have changed, and so has community and collective behavior. The grocery market became a food market, and the home's hearth also burned in the market's entourage. The food trade has expanded beyond what Himachalis used to eat. The dining table at home is a bit troubled by the aroma of online orders, as food has now become a guest in the neighborhood. Some appeals also come from Himachal's Dham, where eating changes one's pulse.

Falling Rupee and Fast GDP Growth

Economists and policymakers generally believe that a limited rupee depreciation can support exports, discourage non-essential imports and protect domestic industry...

Since independence in 1947, the Indian rupee has gradually weakened against the US dollar. It fell from ₹3.30 per US dollar in 2024 to ₹83.4 by mid-2025 and to around ₹90 per US dollar by December 2025. The pace of rupee depreciation has varied over the decades, reflecting both domestic policy and international economic conditions.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

In the early years (1947–1966), the rupee depreciated at a rate of approximately 4.4% annually under a fixed exchange rate tied to the British pound. Between 1966 and 1976, following the 1966 devaluation and stricter regulation, depreciation slowed to 1.8% annually. Between 1976 and 1986, the rupee depreciated slightly more, at 3.5 percent annually, due to oil shocks and economic stress. The largest annual decline was 10.9 percent between 1986 and 1996, caused by a balance of payments crisis and a market-determined exchange rate. Following liberalization, the rupee's depreciation slowed since 1996, falling to 3.0 percent annually during 1996–2004, 2.9 percent annually during 2004–2014, and 3.3 percent annually from 2014–2024. Overall, while the decline is structural, policy reforms and economic stability since the 1990s have stabilized this trend.

Although the rupee has depreciated sharply by 4.7 percent over the past year, this appears to be a short-term phenomenon. It is a common belief that a



strong economy implies a strong currency. However, this belief is currently proving to be false. We see that over the past decade, India's economy has been growing faster than other major economies, and for the past five years, it has held the distinction of being the world's fastest-growing economy. The size of the Indian economy (GDP) has increased from US\$2.07 trillion in 2014 to US\$4.18 trillion in 2025. Per capita income has also increased from US\$1554 to US\$2878 during this period. GDP at current prices is projected to more than triple from ₹106.6 lakh crore in 2014–15 to ₹331.03 lakh crore in 2024–25. Interestingly, over the past two years, the rupee-dollar exchange rate has fluctuated. After a relatively stable exchange

rate between April 2023 and mid-2025, the exchange rate has fluctuated, with the rupee depreciating by more than 6 percent in just six months. Interestingly, in the last quarter, India's GDP growth reached 8.2 percent, which is considered quite good amid a global economy turbulent due to geopolitical tensions caused by conflicts and wars, and the unprecedented tariff war initiated by US President Trump.

Rapid economic growth should generally strengthen a country's currency. However, India often experiences a paradox where its currency depreciates significantly even when GDP growth is high. This paradox needs to be understood, as exchange rate fluctuations are not determined by

infra-

structure, including a large vegetable market, a tourist center, and modern bus and taxi stands. Additionally, the Barman-Sunni-Luhri-Rampur double-lane road should be constructed within the next two years, as Beri will be the closest rail link for fruit-producing areas like Spiti, Kinnaur, Rampur, Kotgarh, Ani, and Nirmand, and Karsog, leading them to prefer Beri over Parwanoo or Chandigarh. There are speculations that the construction of this rail line will harm truck operators, but the truth is the opposite.

The Sutlej River valley is rich in limestone, and new cement industries are a suitable solution to the problems faced by truck operators. The arrival of a railway line in central Himachal Pradesh is not only a dream come true but also has the potential to give a new direction to the state's economy. Therefore, the state government should make every effort to expedite the completion of this project.

The most important project is a victim of poli-

Praveen Kumar Sharma

To prevent haphazard construction here, the government should acquire suitable land in Beri and begin timely construction of infrastructure, including a large vegetable market, a tourist center, and modern bus and taxi stands. Additionally, the Barman-Sunni-Luhri-Rampur double-lane road should be constructed within the next two years, as Beri will be the nearest rail line to fruit-producing areas like Spiti, Kinnaur, Rampur, Kotgarh, Ani, and Nirmand. August 15, 2027, will be a historic day for high-speed rail transportation in India, when the Surat-Bilimora section of the Ahmedabad-Mumbai High Speed Rail Corridor will see the first operation of a 320 km/h bullet train.

In 2008-09, the Central Government approved the 63-km Bhanupalli-Bilaspur-Beri new rail line project to expand the rail

network in Himachal Pradesh on a cost-sharing basis. The state's share was 25 percent and the central government's share was 75 percent, with a total cost of ₹6,753 crore (approximately \$1.6 billion). This included land acquisition costs of ₹1,617 crore (approximately \$1.6 billion). One of the conditions stipulated that Himachal Pradesh would bear the entire cost of land acquisition exceeding ₹70 crore (approximately \$70 billion). Given the state's financial situation, this condition has become a thorn in the flesh. The project requires a total of 124 hectares of land, of which 82 hectares have been made available by the state government. However, due to the incomplete acquisition process from Bilaspur to Beri, the state government has not yet handed over this land to the Railways. The total expenditure on this project till now has been Rs 5252 crore, out of which Himachal was to pay Rs 2711 crore, but the state has so far deposited only Rs 847 crore as its share and

Rs 1863 crore is still outstanding, which the present state government has expressed its inability to pay, due to which there is doubt about the completion of this project in the year 2027 even from the proposed target of completion in the year 2024. The importance of this railway line for Himachal Pradesh can be understood from the fact that, with the exception of the border districts of Una, Kangra, and some parts of Bilaspur, the rest of Himachal Pradesh lacks any broad-gauge rail line. Central Himachal, in particular, is far removed from the rail network. This line will not only connect Central Himachal to the rail network, but also, as the next phase of the Beri-Mandi-Manali-Leh rail line, to be built at an estimated cost of ₹13,100 crore, has been declared a strategically important project, with the state incurring no expenses, all of which will be funded by the central government. The new railway line will not only be a means of transportation, but will

also become a powerful vehicle for economic development, including tourism and horticulture, and cultural exchange. The tourism sector will be the primary beneficiary of this rail line, while orchardists and vegetable farmers will be the second most benefited. Mandi, Kullu, Pangi, Lahaul and Spiti, and a large part of Shimla, will have access to a nearby rail line to transport their produce across the country. Due to cheap transportation, the cement industry will touch new heights which will prove helpful in generating income of the state along with employment. The government should begin preparing now to ensure the benefits of this project begin as soon as it is operational. The next phase of the project, which will extend the rail line to Mandi and Manali, will take time to begin. Until then, Beri will be the main hub of this rail line. To prevent haphazard construction, the government should acquire suitable land in Beri and begin timely construction of

FICCI shares expectations from Budget 2026–27, focus on simplifying tax procedures

New Delhi, Agency: Leading industry body FICCI on Tuesday shared its expectations from the Union Budget 2026–27, including suggestions on direct taxes and customs collections.

FICCI said that reducing the backlog of cases before Commissioners of Income Tax (Appeals) is crucial for the success of the new faceless appeal system and for reducing hardships faced by taxpayers due to blocked demands and refunds.

The statement said that currently a large number of cases are pending before Commissioners of Income Tax (Appeals). As of April 1, 2025, around 5.4 lakh cases

involving 18.16 lakh crore were pending.

According to FICCI, the Central Action Plan (CAP) for 2025–26 aims to dispose of 2 lakh cases and resolve disputed demands worth 10 lakh crore across different charges. However, without capacity augmentation or separate tracks and timelines, clearing the backlog will be difficult.

The statement said that pending litigation appears as contingent liability in companies' books, which lowers valuation when Indian promoters sell shares to FDI investors. A large backlog of cases also results in revenue loss for the government.



FICCI has demanded rationalization of provisions to enable release of funds stuck in litigation, ease working capital blockage for taxpayers, and provide for complete stay on demand during appeals without

adversely impacting revenue collection.

FICCI also sought changes in customs rules.

The industry body said that the offices of the Customs Authority for Advance Rulings (AAR) should be expanded and that allowing self-declared extensions would increase certainty in trade, reduce compliance burden and lower litigation.

Currently, CAAR offices are only in New Delhi and Mumbai, even though a significant number of applications come from ports in southern and eastern India such as Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata.

Yajur Fibers disappoints IPO investors hits lower circuit after weak listing

New Delhi, Agency: Shares of Yajur Fibers, a company engaged in the processing and manufacturing of fibers such as flax, jute and hemp, made a disappointing entry into the stock market today with a sharp decline, disappointing its IPO investors. The shares were issued at 174 under the IPO. Today, the stock was listed on the BSE SME platform at 139.20, a discount of 20 percent. After listing, selling pressure emerged and within a short time the shares fell to the lower circuit level of 132.25. Thus, on the very first day of trading, IPO investors suffered a loss of 23.99 percent.

Yajur Fibers' 120 crore IPO was open for subscription from January 7 to January 9. The issue



received a lukewarm response from investors and was subscribed only 1.33 times overall. The portion reserved for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) was subscribed 1.03 times (excluding anchor investors). The Non-Institutional Investors (NII) portion received only 0.91 times subscription, while the retail investors' portion was subscribed 1.51 times. Under the IPO, 69.20 lakh new shares with a face value of 10 were issued. The funds raised through the IPO will be

used for constructing sheds at a new manufacturing unit, purchasing machinery, increasing production capacity, meeting working capital requirements and for general corporate purposes. Regarding the company's financial position, as per claims made in the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) filed with capital market regulator SEBI, its financial health has strengthened continuously. In FY 2022–23, the company reported a net profit of 3.55 crore, which increased to 4.27 crore in FY 2023–24 and jumped to 11.68 crore in FY 2024–25. In the current financial year, the company has earned a net profit of 7.12 crore up to November 30, 2025. During this period, the company's

revenue also increased continuously. In FY 2022–23, total revenue stood at 61.84 crore, which rose to 84.85 crore in FY 2023–24 and further jumped to 141.99 crore in FY 2024–25. In the current financial year, revenue up to November 30, 2025 stands at 69.99 crore. During this period, the company's debt fluctuated. At the end of FY 2022–23, the company had debt of 34.78 crore, which declined to 26.17 crore in FY 2023–24 but rose sharply to 66.18 crore in FY 2024–25. In the current financial year, as of November 30, 2025, the debt stood at 73.59 crore. Similarly, reserves and surplus increased. In FY 2022–23, reserves and surplus stood at 28.65 crore, rising to 32.91 crore in FY 2023–24 and marginally to 33.44 crore in FY 2024–25.

Victory EV gives shock to investors hits lower circuit after weak listing

New Delhi, Agency: Shares of Victory Electric Vehicles International, a manufacturer of electric two-wheelers and three-wheelers, made a weak debut in the stock market today, giving a major shock to IPO investors. The shares were issued at 41 under the IPO. Today, the stock was listed on the NSE SME platform at 34.45, a discount of 15.98 percent. After listing, selling pressure emerged and soon the shares hit the lower circuit at 32.75. Thus, IPO investors suffered a loss of 20.12 percent on the very first day of trading.

Victory EV International's 35 crore IPO was open for subscription from January 7 to January 9. The issue received a very weak response from investors and was not even fully subscribed. The IPO was subscribed only 0.95 times overall. The Non-Institutional Investors (NII) portion was subscribed 0.91



times, while the retail investors' portion received 0.99 times subscription. Under the IPO, 84.30 lakh new shares with a face value of 5 were issued. The funds raised will be used for capital expenditure, meeting working capital requirements and for general corporate purposes. As per claims made in the DRHP filed with SEBI, the company's financial health has improved continuously..

Armor Security India IPO launched for subscription, bids open till 19

New Delhi, Agency: The 26.51 crore IPO of security services provider Armor Security India was launched for subscription today. Bids can be placed until January 19. After the issue closes, share allotment will take place on January 20, while allotted shares will be credited to demat accounts on January 21. The company's shares are likely to be listed on the NSE SME platform on January 22.

The price band for the IPO has been fixed at 55 to 57 per share, while the lot size is 2,000 shares. Retail investors will have to bid for a minimum of two lots, i.e., 4,000 shares, requiring an investment of 2,28,000. Under the IPO, a total of 46.50 lakh new shares with a face value of 10 are being issued.

In this IPO, only 0.99 percent is reserved for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs). Retail investors have 46.88 percent reserved, Non-Institutional Investors (NIIs) have

47.10 percent, and market makers have 5.03 percent. Saubhagya Capital Options Private Limited has been appointed as the book running lead manager, Skyline Financial Services Private Limited as the registrar, and NNM Securities Private Limited as the market maker.

As per the DRHP filed with SEBI, the company's financial health has strengthened consistently. In FY 2022–23, the company earned a net profit of 2.26 crore, which rose to 2.62 crore in FY 2023–24 and jumped to 3.97 crore in FY 2024–25. In the first

half of the current financial year, from April to September 30, 2025, the company has already earned a net profit of 2.90 crore. During this period, revenue also increased continuously. Revenue stood at 28.97 crore in FY 2022–23, rose to 33.10 crore in FY 2023–24 and further to 36.56 crore in FY 2024–25. In the first half of the current financial year, revenue up to September 30, 2025 stood at 19.69 crore. During this period, the company's debt burden increased continuously. At the end of FY 2022–23, debt stood at 85 lakh, rising to 1.80 crore in FY 2023–24 and jumping to 4.69 crore in FY 2024–25. In the first half of the current financial year, debt rose to 6.01 crore. Reserves and surplus fluctuated. In FY 2022–23, reserves stood at 3.48 crore, declined to 2.24 crore in FY 2023–24, and jumped to 6.21 crore in FY 2024–25. By the end of the first half of the current financial year, reserves reached 9.12 crore.

Electric vehicles gain new momentum in 2025

EV market boosted by PM E-Drive and PLI schemes

New Delhi, Agency: In 2025, the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) made significant efforts to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles in India. Record investments under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the automobile sector and the success of the PM E-Drive initiative have given fresh momentum to India's electric vehicle revolution.

According to an official statement issued on Tuesday, during FY 2024–25, incentives worth around 1,999.94 crore were disbursed to companies under the PLI-Auto



scheme. As of December 31, 2025, more than 13.61 lakh electric vehicles received incentives under the scheme, including over 10.42 lakh two-wheelers, more than 2.38 lakh three-wheelers, 79,540 electric cars and 1,391 electric buses. The PM E-Drive scheme was launched on September 29, 2024, with a total outlay of 10,900 crore. The objective of the scheme is to promote electric vehicles, build charging infrastructure and create a strong ecosystem for EV manufacturing in the country. Under the scheme, 3,679 crore has been allocated for subsidies to

PFRDA forms high-level committee new system to be developed for assured NPS payouts

New Delhi, Agency: The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has constituted a high-level committee to develop a system for assured payouts under the National Pension System (NPS).

According to a Finance Ministry statement issued on Tuesday, this step is in line with the provisions of the PFRDA Act and aims to enhance retirement income security for subscribers.

The committee will be chaired by Dr. M.S. Sahoo, Founder of Dr. Sahoo Regulatory Chambers and former Chairperson of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI). The 15-member panel includes experts from law, finance, insurance, capital markets and academia. The committee is also authorized to invite external experts or intermediaries as special invitees for feedback and advice.



resulted in mixed closing. The FTSE index closed at 10,137.35, down a marginal 0.03 percent. Similarly, the CAC index ended the session at 8,347.20, down 0.14 percent. In contrast, the DAX index closed at 25,420.66, up slightly by 0.06 percent.

Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today. Out of nine Asian markets, eight indices are trading in the green with gains, while one index is trading marginally in the red. The only Asian market in the red is the Straits Times Index, which is currently trading at 4,802.07, down 0.11 percent.

European markets remained under pressure throughout the previous session. However, marginal buying towards the end

resulted in mixed closing.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are giving weak signals today. The US markets closed with losses during the previous session. Dow Jones futures are also seen trading in the red today. European markets closed with mixed results in the previous session.

Meanwhile, Asian markets are generally showing an upward trend today.

Global markets are

West Indies squad announced for T20 series against Afghanistan, Brandon King to captain

St John's, Agency: Ahead of the T20 World Cup 2026, West Indies will play a three-match T20 series against Afghanistan in the UAE. Cricket West Indies has announced a 16-member squad. Regular captain Shai Hope is not part of the series, with Brandon King named captain. King has led the team on a few occasions previously.

Shai Hope, Roston Chase, and Akeal Hosein are currently playing in the SA20 league in South Africa and are therefore unavailable. Shamar Joseph and Evin Lewis return after recovering from injuries. Alzarri Joseph has been rested as a precaution to give him extra time to regain fitness. Quinton Sampson has received his maiden call-up. Rovman Powell has been rested as part of workload management, along with Jason Holder

Under-19 World Cup: Mega event begins January 15, see India's schedule

New Delhi: The Under-19 World Cup begins on 15 January and will be held jointly in Zimbabwe and Namibia until 6 February. Sixteen teams are participating, divided into four groups of four. India are in Group A along with the USA, Bangladesh, and New Zealand.



each group will qualify for the next stage.

Group B includes Pakistan, Scotland, Zimbabwe, and England. Group C consists of Australia,

Japan, Ireland, and Sri Lanka. Group D features South Africa, Tanzania, Afghanistan, and West Indies. The 2026 edition is the 16th Under-19 World Cup. India are the most successful team, having won the title five times. Australia have won it four times, Pakistan twice, while England, South Africa, West Indies, and Bangladesh have each won once. Australia are the defending champions, having defeated India by 79 runs in the 2024 final.

The Indian batter to watch in this tournament is left-handed opener Vaibhav Suryavanshi, who scored heavily in 2025 for IPL, India Under-19, and his domestic team Bihar.

The top two teams from

T20 World Cup: Bangladesh insist on matches outside India, ICC asks them to reconsider

Dhaka, Agency: The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Tuesday held a video conference with the International Cricket Council (ICC), reiterating its decision not to travel to India for the Men's T20 World Cup 2026, citing security concerns. The board wants Bangladesh's matches to be held at venues outside India. While the BCB has requested that its matches be shifted out of India, the ICC has made it clear that the tour-

nament schedule has already been finalised. The ICC has asked the BCB to reconsider its decision, but the board has remained firm. The ICC has highlighted the logistical challenges involved. Both sides agreed to continue discussions to find a possible solution.

In a statement, the BCB said, "On Tuesday afternoon, a video conference was held between the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and the

International Cricket Council (ICC) to discuss the participation of the Bangladesh national cricket team in the Men's T20

World Cup 2026. During the discussion, the BCB reiterated its position regarding its decision not to travel to India due to

security concerns. The board also repeated its request for the ICC to consider shifting Bangladesh's matches outside India."

The BCB was represented in the meeting by president Mohammad Aminul Islam, vice presidents Mohammad Shakawat Hossain and Farooq Ahmed, director and cricket operations committee chairman Nazmul Abedeen, and chief executive officer Nizamuddin Chowdhury.



Mary Kom's ex-husband Onler hits back at fraud allegations, claims she had an affair in 2013



New Delhi, Agency: World champion boxer Mary Kom, who has brought glory to India on the international stage, is currently in the news over her personal life. Mary Kom recently accused her former husband Onler Kom of fraud. Responding to these allegations, Onler Kom has denied them and called them false. In an exclusive conversation with IANS, Onler claimed that Mary Kom was in a relationship with another person while married. He said their marital problems are more than a decade old and that Mary Kom had an affair with a junior boxer in 2013. Since 2017, she has been in a relationship with a person associated with the Mary Kom Boxing Academy. He said he has WhatsApp messages as proof but

chose to remain silent. He added that he has no objection to her moving on, but does not accept being blamed publicly.

He said, "She wanted to live alone and wanted another relationship. We are divorced. If she wants another husband, I have no problem, but never blame me. If she wants to blame me, she must provide evidence. I know where she lives and with whom."

On the allegations of financial irregularities, Onler said his current living conditions disprove claims that he has a lot of money. "She says I stole ₹5 crore. Let my bank account be checked. We were together for 18 years after marriage. Now she has gone mad. What do I have? Look at my house. I live in a rented house in Delhi. She is a celebrity. Whatever she says, people will listen."

Onler said he removed his wedding ring because she is not trustworthy. He added that she is going to Lok Adalat and claiming that he took loans and stole property. "If property is in my name, she will have proof, right? Let her bring the proof, then we'll talk."



Navi Mumbai: Gujarat Giants head coach Michael Klinger admitted that repeated fielding errors cost his team heavily. He stressed that despite the defeat against Mumbai Indians, the team's overall commitment and preparation remain strong. Gujarat Giants suffered their first loss of the WPL 2026 season, with poor fielding

undoing the good performances they had shown earlier in the tournament. Mumbai Indians captain Harmanpreet Kaur was dropped three times, and several misfields and overthrows added to their problems, a stark contrast to the high standards set in their first two matches.

Speaking about the performance, Klinger said the

'We can't fault the effort,' says Gujarat Giants coach Klinger on dropped catches against MI

Giants were solid for most of the innings, but things fell apart at the end.

At the post-match press conference, Klinger said, "We fielded really well in the first couple of games. And probably for the first 14-15 overs today as well, we fielded quite well, and then in the last five or six overs all those catches went down."

He acknowledged how costly such mistakes can be against world-class batters, but did not question his players' effort.

He said, "When you give someone like Harmanpreet three chances, it's tough. But at the same time, the effort – I can't fault anything about our effort on the field or the work we're doing in training. They're working very hard with our fielding coach Sarah Taylor and all the other coaches."

Klinger added, "So there's definitely no issue with effort. When you drop good players and miss catches, it's difficult, and

that's something we'll keep working on. We've worked very hard on our fielding, we've had two good performances, and maybe one performance that wasn't at our best level."

Earlier, Gujarat Giants made a tactical change in their batting order after all-rounder Anushka Sharma was ruled out due to a hand injury sustained in the win against Delhi Capitals. In Anushka's absence, Kanika Ahuja was promoted to number three, a significant change as she had batted at number eight in the previous match and did not play in the season opener.

The decision paid off. After Sophie Devine was dismissed early, Ahuja counterattacked with 35 off 18 balls, hitting four fours and two sixes to give momentum to the innings. Explaining the move, Klinger praised Ahuja's performance. He said, "We probably had a few options for that number three spot."



Kokkinakis withdraws from Adelaide International due to shoulder injury

Adelaide, Agency: Australia's Thanasi Kokkinakis withdrew from the Adelaide International on Wednesday due to an injury to his right shoulder, giving his opponent Valentin Vacherot a walkover. As a result, 2025 Shanghai champion Vacherot has advanced to the quarterfinals. The Monegasque player will now face either top seed Alejandro Davidovich Fokina or Australian Rinky Hijikata.

Davidovich Fokina will play Hijikata on Centre Court on Wednesday evening.

Kokkinakis made a strong comeback on Monday evening in the singles after a long wait. He had been away from tennis for around 12 months following surgery for a long-standing pectoral muscle issue. The home crowd favourite was troubled again by a shoulder injury during the match, but despite the pain, he registered a brilliant win in his first singles match at the Adelaide International in nearly a year.

In his first singles match since 15 January last year, the South Australian completed his comeback match despite the pain. He defeated Sebastian Korda in a final-set tie-break, but throughout the match he was clearly struggling with his right shoulder.

After the match, Kokkinakis said, "It's tough. Obviously, serving has troubled my right arm throughout my entire career. There are a lot of 'what if' questions, especially in my mind, if I didn't have these issues. I know small injuries here and there are normal, but I think what I've been through is a bit abnormal."

He added, "It's mentally tough. I spent the whole year in rehab trying to fix it. I had surgery. This felt a bit different from last year's pain. I'll see how it feels tomorrow morning. But yeah, it's tough. It definitely takes the shine off the win."

Last February, Kokkinakis underwent surgery on his right pectoral muscle and shoulder. He then made his return in doubles alongside Nick Kyrgios at last week's Brisbane International, but the injury resurfaced during his singles comeback when he stepped onto Centre Court in his hometown.

Kokkinakis has a protected ranking that allows him to compete in the Australian Open singles starting 18 January, and he is also set to play doubles with Kyrgios. However, his participation in the season's first Grand Slam is now in serious doubt.



Sandeepa Dhar turns up the glamour quotient in a red dress

Actress Sandeepa Dhar knows exactly how to make a style statement, and her recent appearance is a proof of that. Seen in a bold red dress, Sandeepa presented a perfect blend of glamour, confidence, and allure that left fashion lovers and fans thoroughly impressed. The daring silhouette and strategic cut-outs of the red ensemble beautifully complement her toned figure. The halter neckline highlights her collarbones and shoulders, while the figure-

hugging fit accentuates her curves in an elegant yet sensuous manner. The thigh-high slit adds a dramatic touch to the look, creating a perfect balance between sophistication and bold hotness.

What truly makes this look stand out is the way Sandeepa carries it. Her confident posture, fluid poses, and effortless grace turn the dress from a mere fashion choice into a powerful style statement. Soft waves cascading over her shoulders

and minimal makeup keep the look subtle and let the outfit take center stage, while her glowing skin and expressive eyes further enhance her magnetic appeal.

The color red—often associated with passion and power—appears as if it were made especially for Sandeepa Dhar. This shade not only enhances her complexion beautifully but also amplifies her bold on-screen personality, making the look simultaneously fiery and refined.

Husband gifted a divorce notice, separated her from her children...

Celina Jaitley shares her pain

Actress Celina Jaitley is currently going through a very difficult phase in her life. To express her pain, she turned to social media, where she revealed that her husband gave her a divorce notice as an "anniversary gift" and separated her from her children. She also shared that she had to leave Austria at 1 a.m. with the help of her neighbours. In an emotional post on her Instagram account, Celina Jaitley opened up about the traumatic experiences of her life. She wrote that to escape abuse and harassment, she left Austria on the night of October 11, 2025. With this decision, she was forced to part ways with her three children, which left her heartbroken. Celina wrote, "The day I decided to leave Austria to protect my dignity, my children, and my brother, was the day I lost my children. This post is for everyone who is going through an abusive marriage. You are not alone."



Celina shared that she left Austria at 1 a.m. with the help of neighbours and returned to India with very little money. After reaching India, she had to approach the court just to gain entry into her own home. The property was purchased by her in 2004, before her marriage, but her husband is now claiming ownership of it. She also had to take a large loan to fight this legal battle.

Farah Khan praises Nusrat Bharucha's powerful performance in Akeli

Says watching the film raised her blood pressure



When a senior from the film industry acknowledges an artist's hard work, it becomes a special moment. Something similar happened recently when renowned choreographer and director Farah Khan openly praised actress Nusrat Bharucha. As part of The Farah Khan Show

vlogs, Farah visited Nusrat's home. During the meeting, they not only spoke about films but also gave a glimpse of the actress's simple, homely lifestyle. In her vlogs, Farah often visits celebrities' homes, cooks new recipes with them in their kitchens, and gives viewers a tour of their houses, all while engaging in fun conversations. During this episode, Nusrat Bharucha cooked a mutton uppu curry dish for Farah Khan. Farah praised Nusrat's cooking skills, saying that she has a sense of homeliness that sets her apart from other actors.

As the conversation con-

tinued, Farah Khan also brought Nusrat's mother into the discussion and casually asked which of her daughter's films she liked the most as an audience member. Without hesitation, Nusrat's mother named Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety and Akeli. Hearing this, Farah Khan especially mentioned Akeli and described Nusrat's performance as outstanding.

Farah Khan said that doing a film like Akeli is not easy. She told Nusrat that she was alone on screen throughout the film and the entire weight of the story rested on her shoulders.

You can't become good by making someone else look bad: Sonal Chauhan slams paid negative PR

Paid negative PR and social media trolling have now become a major problem in Bollywood. Many actors are troubled by this deliberate spread of negativity. Amid this, actress Sonal Chauhan spoke openly on the issue and said that no one can rise by pulling someone else down.

Sonal believes that competition in Bollywood should exist, but it must be positive and creative. Trolling and paid negativity not only disturb actors' mental peace but also adversely affect their work and hard-earned efforts. She shared her views through an Instagram post, saying, "This paid PR being run against actors needs to stop now. There is no need for so much negativity. No one becomes good by making someone else look bad. Why can't we be happy for each other? Everyone works very hard—if we support one another, the industry environment can become much better. We just need to stay a little positive." Before Sonal, several actors have raised their voices against paid negative PR. Tara Sutaria recently revealed that paid negative PR is being run against her as well. She said that false rumours and trolling are affecting her mental health, and that she wants people to focus on her work rather than fabricated stories. Yami Gautam also described paid hype and negative campaigns as dangerous for the industry. She said it is a form of extortion that will slowly eat away at the entire industry like termites, and appealed to the film fraternity to put an end to this culture.

Farhana says that after coming out of Bigg Boss, if there was one place she wanted to go, it was Kashmir, because it is her homeland—the place she is deeply connected to and where her heart truly belongs.

Farhana shared, "This is my first visit to Kashmir after coming out of Bigg Boss. The experience is very different and special. I have travelled to many countries and states, but I clearly told my

"My heart belongs to Kashmir": Bigg Boss 19 fame Farhana expresses her unwavering love for her homeland

Farhana, a native of Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir, delivered an impressive performance in Bigg Boss 19 and openly expressed her deep love for Kashmir.

She said that after coming out of Bigg Boss, if there was one place she wanted to visit, it was Kashmir—

because it is her

homeland, the place

she is connected to

and where her heart

truly belongs.

team that if I had to go anywhere first, it would be my Kashmir. This is my homeland, the place I am deeply connected to."

The actress also revealed that she was curious to know whether the people of Kashmir felt proud of her and loved her.

She said, "My team kept telling me that the people of Kashmir are very proud of you and support you

immensely. When I heard

this, I was really surprised. When

I reached home and asked what was

going on here, everyone told me that

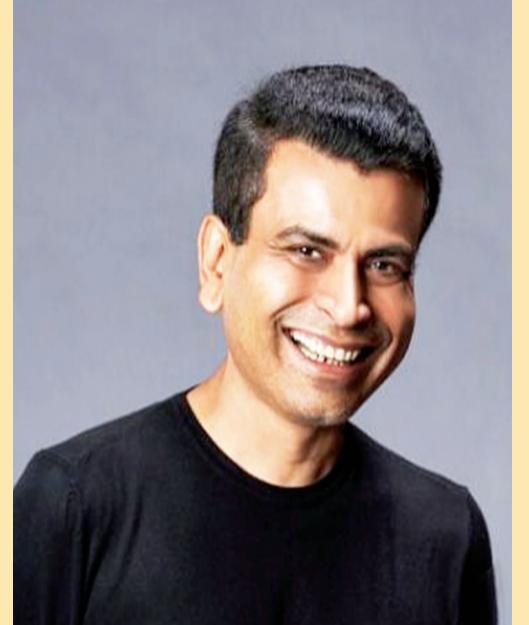
people are showering you with a lot of

love and support."

According to Rahu Ketu producer Suraj Singh, fantasy works only when it feels emotionally true

Producer Suraj Singh of BeLive Productions, who is steadily carving a distinct identity in Indian cinema, supports stories that challenge conventional thinking while also forging a strong emotional connection with audiences. His upcoming film Rahu Ketu is a powerful example of this vision. Despite being a high-concept fantasy drama, the film balances a grand imaginative world with deeply human emotions.

Rather than relying on traditional mythological formulas, Suraj Singh is focused on creating a cinematic universe that feels fresh and entirely story-driven. This is precisely why, through Rahu Ketu, he aims to offer audiences a sense of grandeur that not only entertains but also connects with them on an emotional level.



Sharing his creative philosophy, Suraj Singh says that for him, high-concept cinema does not merely mean complexity. He explains, "Fantasy works only when it feels emotionally true, even if the world itself is not real." According to him, while audiences may come to theatres for visual spectacle, they stay connected to a film because of its emotions. He believes that high-concept storytelling must allow viewers to experience familiar emotions such as fear, love, hope, or struggle, regardless of the fictional setting in which the story is placed. It is this balance that makes films memorable and keeps them in audiences' hearts well beyond the opening weekend.

Produced by BeLive Productions, Rahu Ketu is set to release in cinemas on January 16. Suraj Singh is the driving force behind BeLive Productions and also heads the TV, Films, and International Business divisions at Balaji Telefilms. Under his leadership, BeLive Productions has produced the critically acclaimed film Salaam Venky, starring Kajol, Vishal Jethwa, Rajeev Khandelwal, and Aamir Khan, and directed by Revathi.

