

NEWS IN BRIEF

**"IT WAS TORTURE":
DEPORTED
PREGNANT WOMAN
WHO WAS
BROUGHT BACK TO
INDIA FROM
DHAKA**

Diary Times Desk : Six-year old Afreen wouldn't stop giggling even as her mother, Sunali Khatun, was being wheeled inside the Rampurhat Government Medical College and Hospital, amid relentless clicks of media shutterbugs on Saturday afternoon, when the winter chill of Bengal countryside had slowly begun taking effect. Arrested by Delhi Police in June this year on suspicion of being a Bangladeshi national and subsequently pushed to the neighbouring nation, Sunali, a migrant resident of Murari in Birbhum who is in an advanced stage of pregnancy, was repatriated through the Malda border on Friday, alongside her minor son Sabir, following a Supreme Court directive. She was admitted to the Rampurhat hospital in Birbhum on Saturday, where she will remain under observation of doctors till the expected childbirth happens later this month or beginning of the next. "It was a torture living in a solitary cell of the Bangladesh prison," Sunali told PTI from her hospital bed.

**COLD CONDITIONS
PREVAIL IN NORTH
INDIA,
TEMPERATURES
SUB-ZERO IN
SEVERAL PARTS OF
J-K**

Diary Times Desk : Cold conditions prevailed across North India on Sunday, with the Amarnath yatra base camp being the coldest recorded place in Jammu and Kashmir at minus 4.3 degrees Celsius and parts of Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan reporting minimum temperatures between three and seven degrees Celsius. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said cold wave conditions were "very likely" to prevail in isolated pockets over Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha in Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Odisha on Monday and Tuesday. In Delhi, the minimum temperature was recorded at eight degrees, up from 6.8 degrees a day ago and yet 1.6 notches below normal. The maximum temperature was 24.7.

**SONAM
WANGCHUK****SC TO HEAR WIFE'S PLEA CHALLENGING SONAM
WANGCHUK'S DETENTION ON MONDAY**

Diary Times Desk : The Supreme Court will on Monday hear a plea filed by Gitanjali J Angmo, wife of jailed climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, terming his detention under the National Security Act "illegal, and an arbitrary exercise violating his fundamental rights".

A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and N V Anjaria is likely to hear the matter.

On November 24, the top court had deferred the matter after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and the UT of Ladakh, sought time to respond to the rejoinder filed by Angmo. On October 29, the top court sought responses from the Centre and the Ladakh administration on an amended plea of Angmo.

According to the amended plea, "The detention order is founded upon stale FIRs, vague imputations, and speculative assertions, lacks any live or proximate connection to the purported grounds of detention and is thus devoid of any legal or factual justification..."

"Such arbitrary exercise of preventive powers amounts to a gross abuse of authority, striking at the core of constitutional liberties and due process, rendering the detention order liable to be vitiated by this court."

The plea said it is wholly preposterous that after more than three decades of being recognised at the state, national, and international levels for his contributions to grassroots education, innovation, and environmental conservation in Ladakh and across India, "Wangchuk would suddenly be targeted".

**BENGAL TURNS RELIGIOUS 'ADDA': LAKHS CONVERGE
FOR MEGA GITA RECITAL DAY AFTER 'BABRI-STYLE'
MOSQUE EVENT**

Diary Times Desk : Lakhs of devotees, including sadhus and sadhvis from across West Bengal and neighbouring states, took part in a mega Bhagavad Gita recital in Kolkata's iconic Brigade Parade Ground, organisers said.

The monks, clad in saffron robes, read shlokas from copies of the Gita in unison at the venue. Senior BJP leaders, including former state chief Sukanta Majumdar, ex-MP Locket Chatterjee and MLA Agnimitra Paul, and prominent religious figures, including Swami Pradiptananda Maharaj, popularly known as Kartik Maharaj, and Dharendra Shastri, took part in the event.

Christened 'Panch Lakkho Konthe Gita Path' (Gita chanting by five lakh voices), the programme is being organised by the Sanatan Sanskriti Sansad, a collective of monks and spiritual leaders drawn from various monasteries and Hindu religious institutions. Paul said, "The Gita is not for Hindus alone, it is for all 140 crore people of India."

Organisers said the programme seeks to invoke West Bengal's spiritual heritage and promote social harmony through scripture. It is being projected as the largest collective recital of the Gita ever attempted in the state and possibly in the country.

**GOA NIGHTCLUB HAD ONLY 2 GATES, FIRE SPREAD
DUE TO WOODEN FURNITURE: SOURCES**

Diary Times Desk : A devastating fire at a Goa nightclub was intensified by its wooden structure and furniture, leaving many trapped as the club had only two exit gates, police sources said on Sunday. There was no blast, officials clarified, the blaze spread rapidly because of the combustible interiors.

At least 25 people were killed, with investigators confirming that most deaths occurred due to suffocation inside the underground kitchen area. Of the 25 bodies, 23 showed no burn injuries, indicating victims died from a sudden loss of oxygen, while only two bodies were badly charred, officials added. A police source said post-mortem examinations of 17 bodies have been completed, and six bodies have already been handed over to families for final rites. The list of deceased persons has been compiled for identification and handover procedures. Police have so far arrested four people, including the gate manager identified as Thakur. An FIR has been registered against club owners Saurabh Luthra and Gaurav Luthra, and arrest warrants have been issued. A police team has been dispatched to Delhi to track down the owners, who are believed to be absconding.

**125 BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS
WORTH RS 5,000 CRORE DEDICATED TO
NATION**

Diary Times Desk : Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday inaugurated 125 infrastructure projects constructed by Border Roads Organisation (BRO) from Ladakh.

Spread across seven states of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, West Bengal and Mizoram, and two Union Territories, Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir, these projects include 28 roads, 93 bridges and four miscellaneous works, which have been executed at a cost of about Rs 5,000 crore.

These upgraded infrastructure projects will significantly improve last-mile connectivity to remote villages and forward military locations, bringing these areas closer to the national mainstream, a defence spokesperson said. The inauguration event was organised on the Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie Road at the Shyok Tunnel, which is among the key projects inaugurated by the Defence Minister. This is an engineering marvel, built in one of the world's toughest and most challenging terrain, will ensure all-weather, reliable connectivity to this strategic area. This 920-metre 'cut-and-cover' tunnel will significantly enhance security, mobility, and rapid deployment capabilities, especially during harsh winters, as the region is prone to heavy snowfall, avalanches and extreme temperatures. Singh also virtually inaugurated the Galwan War Memorial in Ladakh to honour the bravery, commitment and sacrifice of the Armed Forces personnel. He voiced the government's resolve to develop the border areas.

INDIGO FLIGHTS CANCEL

**INDIGO REFUNDS TICKETS
WORTH RS 610 CRORE, ON-
TIME FLIGHT OPS IMPROVE**

Diary Times Desk : IndiGo is on track to operate over 1,650 flights, up from 1,500 yesterday, the airline said in a status update this evening. It said 137 out of 138 destinations are in operation with on-time performance of 75 per cent, up from 30 per cent yesterday.

The airline iterated it will give full waiver on cancellations and reschedule requests for bookings till December 15. The process of refunds and sorting luggage is going on fast, it said.

"We are working round the clock to resume normal service. Please bear with us," IndiGo said in its latest status update today.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has taken rapid and decisive steps to address the disruption caused by IndiGo's operational crisis and to ensure that passengers do not face continued inconvenience, officials said.

Air travel operations across the country are stabilising at a fast pace as all other domestic airlines are operating smoothly and at full capacity, while IndiGo's performance has shown steady improvement today, with flight schedules moving back towards normal levels, they said. In light of recent cancellations leading to a shift in demand and temporary surge in airfares, the ministry intervened and introduced a cap on airfares with immediate effect.

**10 NAXALS WITH TOTAL BOUNTY
OF RS 2.36 CRORE SURRENDER
IN MADHYA PRADESH'S
BALAGHAT**

Diary Times Desk : Ten hardcore Naxalites with a total bounty of Rs 2.36 crore surrendered in front of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav in Balaghat on Sunday evening, officials said.

"Dindori and Mandla are now completely free from Naxal influence. A complete Naxal eradication campaign will begin in Balaghat from January. Those who return to the mainstream will get a rehabilitation package for 15 years, while strict action will continue against those who do not," Yadav said.

The ten, who laid down arms including AK-47 and INSAS rifles, are part of the 'Bharsadev area committee' of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist), officials added.

"They belonged to new division KB of Maharashtra, MP and Chhattisgarh (MMC) zone comprising Kanha Tiger Reserve in Mandla, MP and Bhora Wildlife Sanctuary of Kawardha district of Chhattisgarh. It was led by ultra Sunder, alias Kabir. MP shares borders with Gondia district of Maharashtra as well as Rajnandgaon, Khairagarh and Kawardha of Chhattisgarh," an official said.

DELHI AIRPORT VIDEO SHOWS LUGGAGE REMAINS A CHALLENGE AS INDIGO CRISIS EASES



Diary Times Desk : The flight crisis appears to ease after nearly a week, with IndiGo operationalising routes between 137 out of 138 destinations, but luggage remains a big challenge for the ground staff. Visuals have emerged of a large pileup of luggage at Delhi airport as passengers complained of not receiving their belongings even 24 hours after reaching their destination. One of the videos showed hundreds of bags kept inside the airport premises, neatly arranged in queues, amid uncertainty over when those would reunite with their owners. Speaking to a news channel, a passenger broke down as she recounted the hassle to get her luggage. "I don't want refund, just return my luggage. It has been over 24 hours," said the passenger bound for Srinagar. "There are important papers in my luggage, it's worth lakhs," she added. A video shared by news agency ANI showed airline staff helping frustrated passengers spot their luggage amid a sea of bags.

GOA CLUB FIRE CAUSED BY INTERNAL FIREWORKS, LIMITED EXITS LED TO CASUALTIES: CM

Diary Times Desk : Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Sunday said the devastating fire in the Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub broke out because of its internal fireworks and noted that the limited number of exits in the club caused the casualties. With this, the Chief Minister dismissed the claim of a cylinder blast, which was earlier thought responsible for the breakout of fire and the deaths caused. Sawant, who faced the wrath of the opposition parties, claimed that a fact-finding panel has been formed, which would probe into the matter and also provide a detailed report within a week. He also announced that the families of the victims will receive Rs 5 lakh financial aid for the incident. "The ex gratia amount of Rs 5 lakh will be provided to the next of kin of the deceased, and Rs 50,000 for the injured will be sanctioned through the SDRF fund. The government shall provide complete assistance for the transportation of the deceased to their homes.

ALLIANCE WITH OWAIS: EX-TMC MLA WHO LAID 'BABRI MASJID' STONE MAKES BIG MOVE

Diary Times Desk : Suspended Trinamool Congress MLA Humayun Kabir on Sunday made a significant political statement, declaring that he is in talks with Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM for a potential alliance ahead of the upcoming elections. Kabir said the proposed tie-up aims to stop both the BJP and the TMC in West Bengal.

Kabir's remarks came just hours after he laid the foundation stone for a Babri Masjid-style mosque in Beldanga amid unprecedented security. The ceremony was held to coincide with the anniversary of the Babri Masjid demolition on December 6, 1992. At noon, a Quran recitation marked the beginning of the event, followed by the foundation stone-laying ceremony. Kabir claimed that thousands of people, including two clerics from Saudi Arabia, attended. Slogans of "Nara-e-Takbeer" and "Allahu Akbar" echoed at the venue. Meanwhile, locals continued to bring bricks in groups to the proposed mosque site throughout the day.

INDIGO SAYS IT EXPECTS TO STABILISE OPERATIONS BY DECEMBER 10

Diary Times Desk : IndiGo cancelled 650 flights on Sunday and will operate 1,650 of its total 2,300 daily flights on December 7, the airline said in a statement. IndiGo said it now expects to stabilise the operations by December 10.

The airline cancelled more than 220 flights at Delhi and Mumbai airports on Sunday, as the disruptions entered the sixth day while efforts are on to normalise operations.

The disruptions have resulted in hundreds of flight cancellations and delays in the last few days, causing hardships to thousands of passengers. Sources said at least 112 flights were cancelled at the Mumbai airport and 109 at the Delhi airport. After cancelling approximately 1,600 of its 2,300 daily flights on Friday, the airline saw a reduction in disruptions on Saturday, with cancellations falling to around 800, according to sources. IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers and COO and Accountable Manager Porqueras on Saturday received DGCA notices, seeking explanations within 24 hours on the massive flight disruptions



"IT WAS TORTURE": DEPORTED PREGNANT WOMAN WHO WAS BROUGHT BACK TO INDIA FROM DHAKA

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She was admitted to the Rampurhat hospital in Birbhum on Saturday, where she will remain under observation of doctors till the expected childbirth happens later this month or beginning of the next.

PAKISTANI WOMAN BEGS PM MODI FOR JUSTICE AS HUSBAND PREPARES DELHI WEDDING



Diary Times Desk : A Pakistani woman has accused her husband of abandoning her in Karachi and secretly preparing for a second marriage in Delhi. The woman, identified as Nikita Nagdev, has released a desperate video appeal seeking justice from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sparking outrage among social groups and legal bodies in both countries.

Nikita, a resident of Karachi, alleged that she married Vikram Nagdev, a Pakistani-origin man living in Indore on a long-term visa, on January 26, 2020, in Karachi, according to Hindu customs. A month later, Vikram brought her to India on February 26. But within months, Nikita says her life was turned upside down.

INDIGO PARENT INTERGLOBE AVIATION SETS UP CRISIS MANAGEMENT GROUP TO MONITOR SITUATION

Diary Times Desk : The board of Interglobe Aviation, the parent company of IndiGo, has set up a Crisis Management Group (CMG), which is meeting regularly to monitor the situation, the airline said in a statement on Sunday. The company's Board of Directors is doing everything possible to take care of the challenges faced by its customers and ensure refunds to passengers, it added.

The statement came a day after IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers and COO and Accountable Manager Isidro Porqueras received DCA notices, seeking explanations within 24 hours on the massive flight disruptions.

Authorities will take appropriate action in the matter of the airline's flight disruptions, depending on the inquiry committee's findings, a senior government official said on Saturday. "The Board of Directors of Interglobe Aviation Limited (IndiGo) met on the first day when the problem of cancellations and delayed flights arose.

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INDIGO CRISIS: REFUNDS OF RS 610 CRORE PROCESSED SO FAR, SAYS GOVERNMENT

Diary Times Desk : IndiGo has processed refunds totalling Rs 610 crore so far against cancelled or severely delayed flights, and delivered 3,000 pieces of baggage to passengers across the country as of Saturday, the government said on Sunday.

It also said the aviation network is moving swiftly towards full normalcy, and all corrective measures will remain in place until operations stabilise entirely. On Saturday, the government had directed the airline to complete the ticket refund process for the cancelled flights by Sunday evening, and ensure baggage separated from travellers are delivered in the next two days. Further, the civil aviation ministry said the airline should ensure that baggage separated from passengers due to flight cancellations or delays should be traced and delivered to them in the next 48 hours.



TOURISTS AMONG 25 KILLED IN MIDNIGHT BLAZE AT GOA CLUB

Diary Times Desk : At least 25 people were killed and six injured in a massive fire that erupted at a nightclub in North Goa after midnight on Sunday, police said.

While the police earlier said 23 people died in the fire, they later confirmed two more deaths. The fire at Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub at Arpora in North Goa has claimed 25 lives, a police spokesperson said. The deceased included four tourists and 14 staff members, while the identity of the remaining seven was yet to be established, he said. Six people suffered injuries in the blaze and they are currently undergoing treatment at the Goa Medical College and Hospital, Bambolim, near here, the official said. The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, he said. "The police and fire department are conducting the investigation and legal action is being taken," the official said. As per initial information, the nightclub had not abided by the fire safety norms, CM Pramod Sawant said.

DELHI POLICE TIGHTEN PATROLS, CLUBS TOLD TO RECHECK, BOOST FIRE SAFETY AFTER GOA TRAGEDY

Diary Times Desk : With Christmas and New Year crowds expected to surge in the national capital, the Delhi Police announced on Sunday that patrolling will be intensified across major party zones, and that clubs, bars, restaurants, and event venues have been instructed to review their fire safety compliance.

These directions follow a deadly blaze at a nightclub in Goa that resulted in the deaths of 25 people on Saturday, leading to renewed scrutiny of fire preparedness in entertainment venues across the country. According to the police, establishments in the national capital must ensure that fire extinguishers are functional, exits are unobstructed, and electrical loads are monitored. They emphasised that nights with heavy crowds require strict adherence to emergency protocols. Joy Singh, founder of Raasta and Yeti clubs in the capital, said his outlets are fully aligned with all rules issued by authorities.

MANISH TEWARI INTRODUCES BILL IN LOK SABHA TO FREE MPS FROM 'WHIP TYRANNY'

Diary Times Desk : Congress MP Manish Tewari has introduced a Bill in Lok Sabha that seeks to allow Parliamentarians to take an independent line in voting on Bills and motions other than those affecting the government's stability in a bid to free them from "whip-driven tyranny" and promote "good lawmaking".

Tewari, who introduced the private member's Bill on Friday last to amend the Anti-Defection Law, said his proposed legislation seeks to flag who has primacy in a democracy - the elector who stands in the sun for hours to elect his or her representative or the political party whose whip the representative becomes the helot of. The Bill, introduced by Tewari for the third time in Lok Sabha after 2010 and 2021, seeks to give Parliamentarians the freedom to toe an independent line in voting on Bills and motions other than a confidence motion, no-confidence motion, adjournment motion, money bills and financial matters that could affect the stability of a government.

17-YEAR-OLD PULLED FROM 140-FT BOREWELL AFTER 8-HOUR RESCUE OPERATION, DECLARED DEAD

Diary Times Desk : A 17-year-old labourer who 'fell' into a 140-foot borewell in a village in Bhuj taluka of Gujarat couldn't be saved despite an eight-hour rescue operation, which ended early Sunday, police said, adding that he was declared dead at a hospital.

Police suspect it could be a suicide triggered by an argument between the victim and his father over an expensive mobile phone.

The victim, Rustom Sheikh, originally from Jharkhand, reportedly fell into the 1.5 feet-wide borewell at a farmhouse in Kukma village on Saturday evening.

Deputy Superintendent of Police MJ Christian said police received the information about the incident at 6.30 pm on Saturday and launched a rescue operation with borewell operators and other agencies. "When police arrived at the spot, the victim was screaming from inside the borewell. Oxygen supply was arranged promptly," the DSP said.



**50 DIE AS PARAMILITARY DRONE
HITS KINDERGARTEN IN SUDAN**

Diary Times Desk : At least 50 people, including 33 children, were killed in a drone attack by the Sudanese paramilitary forces on a kindergarten in south-central Sudan, a doctors' group said.

Paramedics on the scene in Kalogi town in South Kordofan state were targeted in "a second unexpected attack," Sudan Doctors' Network said in a statement late on Friday. Emergency Lawyers, a rights group tracking violence against civilians in Sudan, reported in a statement on Saturday that the second strike on paramedics treating survivors in Kalogi and said "a third civilian site near the previous two" was also attacked.

The group condemned the attack, blaming the paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF, for the strikes, calling them "a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, including the protection of civilians, especially children and vital civilian infrastructure."

The death toll is expected to be higher, but communication blackouts in the area have made it difficult to report casualties. Thursday's attack is the latest in the fighting between the RSF and the Sudanese military, who have been at war for over two years. It is now concentrating in the oil-rich Kordofan states. "Killing children in their school is a horrific violation of children's rights," said UNICEF Representative for Sudan Sheldon Yett in a statement on Friday.

"Children should never pay the price of conflict," said Yett. He added that UNICEF urges all parties "to stop these attacks immediately and allow safe and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to reach those in desperate need."

**ARUNDHATI ROY SIGNS "MOTHER MARY COMES TO ME" FOR HER NEPALI
READERS IN KATHMANDU**

Diary Times Desk : Acclaimed Indian writer Arundhati Roy signed copies of her "Mother Mary Comes to Me" for Nepali readers in Kathmandu on Sunday as part of her signing tour.

The signing ceremony, held at EKTA Books in the capital, Kathmandu, featured the Indian writer, who has also been awarded the Booker Prize. Dozens of Nepali readers had a brief interaction with her, clicked pictures and got her to sign the recently released publication which has also been named one of the best books of the year by The New York Times Book Review. "Arundhati Roy is the winner of the Booker Prize. She wrote the 'God of Small Things' and that is how I got introduced to her writing. What I love about her is that she writes soulfully, instinctively, and she writes about emotions that linger in the air and the unsaid. Her writing really captures the essence of the small things," Pushpa Bhandari, a graduate student in English literature, told ANI during the signing ceremony. Roy's first novel has sold over six million copies since its first publication in 1997, the same year she won the Booker Prize.

**MASSIVE RUSSIAN MISSILE, DRONE
ATTACK DAMAGES POWER INFRA
ACROSS UKRAINE**

Diary Times Desk : Russia unleashed a major missile and drone barrage on Ukraine overnight into Saturday, after US and Ukrainian officials said they will meet on Saturday for a third day of talks aimed at ending the nearly four-year-old war. At least eight people were wounded in the attacks, Ukrainian Minister of Internal Affairs Ihor Klymenko said. Among these, at least three people were wounded in the Kyiv region, according to local officials. Russia used 653 drones and 51 missiles in the wide-reaching overnight attack on Ukraine, which triggered air raid alerts across the country and came as Ukraine marked Armed Forces Day, the country's air force said Saturday morning. Ukrainian forces shot down and neutralised 585 drones and 30 missiles, the air force said, adding that 29 locations were struck. Following talks that made progress on a security framework for postwar Ukraine, the two sides also offered the sober assessment.

**INDIAN ENVOY MEETS SL MINISTER,
PROMISES HELP TO REBUILD NATION**

Diary Times Desk : Indian envoy on Saturday met Sri Lankan Minister of Foreign Affairs Vijitha Herath and discussed cooperation in the reconstruction and rehabilitation process in the aftermath of cyclone Ditwah that wreaked havoc in the Island nation.

At least 618 people have died, and 209 are missing as of Saturday evening 8 pm, due to the catastrophic floods and landslides caused by extreme weather conditions since November 16, according to Sri Lanka's Disaster Management Centre (DMC).

India was the first country to respond to Sri Lanka's international appeal for assistance under its Operation Sagar Bandhu. High Commissioner Santosh Jha met Vijitha Herath and discussed the "ongoing Indian assistance to Sri Lanka under #OperationSagarBandhu" High Commission of India in Colombo posted on social media on Friday. He also discussed "avenues of cooperation during the reconstruction and rehabilitation phases in the aftermath of #CycloneDitwah," it added.

Jha also briefed Sri Lankan corporate leaders about New Delhi's "response and continued commitment" to the cyclone-hit island nation in its resurgence from the disaster that has claimed over 600 lives so far. Till Saturday noon, as many as 611 people had died because of the disaster, which also left several districts isolated and acutely strained the country's disaster-response capacity.

**TIMELINE OF DEADLY FIRES AT
NIGHTCLUBS AROUND THE
WORLD IN PAST DECADE**

Diary Times Desk : A devastating fire at Birch By Romeo Lane, a nightclub at Arpora in North Goa, which killed at least 25 people early Sunday brought back horrific memories of the deadly blaze that claimed 62 lives at a nightclub in North Macedonia in March this year.

Here's a look at some other nightclub fires that claimed significant human lives in the past decade:

* October 2015: Colectiv nightclub fire in Bucharest, Romania, killed 64 people. Pyrotechnics during a performance by the metalcore band Goodbye to Gravity ignited the club's flammable polyurethane acoustic foam. The fire spread rapidly.

* December 2016: 'Ghost Ship' warehouse fire in Oakland, California, claimed 36 lives. The deadliest blaze in the history of Oakland was triggered during an electronic music and dance party.

* January 2022: Fire at nightclub in Yaounde, Cameroon, killed 16 people. Blaze occurred due to fireworks lit while champagne was being served in the club.

**KEY ROADS, ROUTES NOW
ACCESSIBLE: INDIAN HIGH
COMMISSION IN SRI LANKA
WELCOMES INDIAN TOURISTS
AFTER CYCLONE DITWAH**

Diary Times Desk : The Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka said on Sunday that after the Cyclone Ditwah havoc, Sri Lanka is rising stronger and looks forward to welcoming Indian tourists.

The High Commission said that key routes are now accessible. In a post on X, it said, "Sri Lanka is rising stronger and looks forward to welcoming Indian tourists, who make up the largest number of visitors to the island. Key roads and routes are now accessible, making travel across the island easier for visitors." As India's rescue and relief efforts continue in full swing in Sri Lanka, the Indian Army shared that its field hospital has treated over 1250 people, conducted major emergency surgeries and inducted three Bailey Bridges to accelerate relief efforts and support restoration of critical connectivity in the wake of the destruction caused by Cyclone Ditwah. In a post on X, the ADGPI said, "Update on Indian Army's Humanitarian Assistance to Sri Lanka- The Indian Army's Field Hospital has treated over 1,250 people so far, including five major emergency surgeries; three Bailey Bridges have been inducted into Sri Lanka."

NEPAL'S ANTI-GRAFT BODY FILES CORRUPTION CASE ON CHINESE COMPANY OVER CONSTRUCTION OF POKHARA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



Diary Times Desk : Nepal's anti-graft body, the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), has filed a corruption case against 55 defendants, including the Chinese company, over the construction of Pokhara International Airport.

Filing the case in the Special Court, the graft body has named China CAMC Engineering, the construction division of state-owned conglomerate Sinomach and 54 others as the defendants. "Since the construction of Pokhara Regional International Airport has been approved by the authorised authorities and bodies for 145 million US dollars, the procurement process should be started in accordance with the prevailing laws, including the Public Procurement Act, 2063 and the Public Procurement Regulations, 2064. It is seen that the contractor, China CAMC Engineering Co Ltd, acted with bad intentions, increased the cost estimate unnaturally without reasonable cause, and forced the other involved defendants to compete in accordance with the aforementioned laws to gain illegal benefits. Before entering into further work related to the procurement process, it was seen that it had written to civil servants of public institutions with bad intentions to increase the cost estimate by setting an unnatural price and increasing the cost estimate to 286.526 million US dollars," information officer of CIAA stated in a release following the filing of the case in the Special court.

WHY IS WEST RATTLED BY INDIA-RUSSIA 'DOSTI'? EX-DIPLOMAT TALMIZ AHMAD ADVOCATES FOR 'STRATEGIC AUTONOMY'

Diary Times Desk : Days after Russian President Vladimir Putin's state visit, former Ambassador of India to Saudi Arabia, Oman and the UAE, Talmiz Ahmad, on Sunday said the West must understand that India retains the right to shape and structure its ties with other countries.

He also advocated for the use of "strategic autonomy" for India amid social media criticism by Americans for hosting Putin, who is heavily criticised by the Republicans and Democrats alike for waging a war against Ukraine.

SRI LANKA ISSUES FRESH ALERTS AS CYCLONE DITWAH TOLL CLIMBS TO 627

Diary Times Desk : Sri Lankan authorities issued fresh landslide warnings on Sunday as relentless rains continued to pound regions already devastated by Cyclone Ditwah, pushing the nationwide death toll to 627, Al Jazeera reported. Other parts of Asia are also grappling with the scale of destruction, with combined casualties across the region now exceeding 1,800. The Disaster Management Centre (DMC) cautioned that ongoing monsoon storms were making hillsides increasingly unstable, particularly in the central highlands and the northwestern midlands. Officials said the extreme weather has compounded the suffering of more than two million people -- nearly 10 per cent of Sri Lanka's population.

UK: COPS PROBE PEPPER SPRAY 'ASSAULT' AT HEATHROW AIRPORT

Diary Times Desk : Police are investigating after a "number of people" were believed to have been attacked with pepper spray by a group of men who then fled, Sky News reported on Sunday.

Officers were called at 8.11am to a multi-storey car park at Terminal 3 following reports of multiple people being assaulted, said the Metropolitan Police.

In a statement posted on X, the Heathrow Airport said, "Our teams are currently responding to an incident involving the emergency services in the Terminal 3 multi-storey car park. Passengers are advised to allow extra time when travelling to the airport and to check with their airline for any queries." A statement by the force said: "A number of people were sprayed with what is believed to be a form of pepper spray by a group of men who then left the scene."

Armed police attended and one man was arrested on suspicion of assault. He remains in custody and enquiries continue to trace further suspects, as per Sky News. Police are not treating the Heathrow incident as terrorism.



CHINA'S ONLINE CENSORSHIP FACES GROWING PUBLIC PUSHBACK

Diary Times Desk : China's extensive digital surveillance and censorship system has begun to show signs of collapse, according to Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC).

In its latest Quarterly Report on the Situation in China, the council said that China's "digital authoritarian model" has reached a breaking point and is now caught in a self-perpetuating loop of suppression and speculation, as reported by The Taipei Times.

According to The Taipei Times, the MAC cited the suspicious death of Chinese actor Alan Yu in Beijing on September 11 as a striking example of the growing cracks in China's online control regime. Authorities swiftly labelled Yu's death as an "accidental fall after drinking," but the explanation was widely doubted by the public. Circulating videos, audio clips, and online rumours connecting Yu to senior Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leader Cai Qi only deepened public suspicion. In response, Chinese censors moved quickly, removing posts, deleting discussions, and forbidding further inquiries.

WB GOVERNOR ANANDA BOSE UNVEILS NEW BOOK AT DELHI'S 5TH KRISTU MAHOTSAV

Diary Times Desk : The Chavara Cultural Centre marked the fifth edition of Kristu Mahotsav 2025 in Delhi, reinforcing its message of cultural harmony, inclusion and interfaith dialogue through a gathering that brought together religious leaders, diplomats, artists, educators and families from diverse backgrounds.

Over the years, the festival has evolved into a platform celebrating compassion and human dignity. This year's edition was attended by West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose, Archbishop Anil Joseph Thomas Couto, Bishop Stephen Fernandes, and ambassadors from Portugal, Malta, Timor-Leste, Peru and Guatemala along with a large community of well-wishers.

Welcoming the gathering, Roby Kannanchira CMI, Director of the Chavara Cultural Centre, described the event as a movement of compassion. He said the specially-abled and underprivileged children were at the heart of the celebration and spoke of creating a space where no child is forgotten and every individual is treated with dignity and love. Governor Bose reflected on the deeper meaning of Christmas and the message of unity that the festival sought to convey. He said the presence of specially-abled children served as a reminder of the strength of shared humanity and emphasised that in a diverse world.

TIBETAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION MARKS 30 YEARS OF SILENT PROTEST

Diary Times Desk : The Tibetan Women's Association (TWA) observed the 30th anniversary of the historic 'Silent Protest' staged during the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, a symbolic act remembered as the first protest by Tibetan exiles against Chinese rule on Chinese territory, as reported by Phayul.

According to Phayul, the commemoration, held at the Tibetan Settlement Hall in Dharamshala, honoured the courage of nine Tibetan exile women: Gyalthong Tsering Dolma, Kherol Seldup, Tenzin Dolker Jinpa, Chime Dhonden, Youdon Dhonden, Phuntsok Dolma, Kalsang Wangmo, Dorje Dolma Kherol, and Tsomo Namgyal. These women had silently stood in the rain with scarves tied across their mouths, representing China's systematic silencing of Tibetan voices.



OP SAGAR BANDHU: INDIAN ARMY'S FIELD HOSPITAL TREATS OVER 1250 PEOPLE IN SRI LANKA

Diary Times Desk : As India's rescue and relief efforts continue in full swing in Sri Lanka, the Indian Army shared that its field hospital has treated over 1250 people, conducted major emergency surgeries and inducted three Bailey Bridges to accelerate relief efforts and support restoration of critical connectivity in the wake of the destruction caused by cyclone Ditwah. In a post on X, the ADGPI said, "Update on Indian Army's Humanitarian Assistance to Sri Lanka- The Indian Army's Field Hospital has treated over 1,250 people so far, including five major emergency surgeries; three Bailey Bridges have been inducted into Sri Lanka. In coordination with the Sri Lankan administration, suitable locations have been identified for their construction to accelerate relief efforts and support restoration of critical connectivity and Lieutenant General Lasantha Rodrigo, Commander of the Sri Lanka Army, visited the Field Hospital.

DEATH TOLL RISES TO 627, SEVERAL HUNDRED MISSING AFTER CYCLONE DITWAH'S FURY IN SRI LANKA

Diary Times Desk : As Sri Lanka reels under the impact of Cyclone Ditwah, the death toll has soared to 627, with several hundred people still missing, Daily Mirror reported on Sunday, citing the country's Disaster Management Centre (DMC).

Cyclone Ditwah has resulted in relentless rain, flash floods and landslides across the island, causing river levels to rise to historic highs, submerging entire towns and causing loss in critical infrastructure. According to Daily Mirror, 190 individuals remain missing as rescue and search efforts continue. Furthermore, the adversarial weather has affected all 25 districts, impacting 2,179,138 people from 611,530 families. Sri Lanka's Ministry of Housing, Construction, and Water Supply said that the assessment of damage to houses caused by Cyclone Ditwah will begin tomorrow and the process will be carried out.

EAM TALKS OF DEEPER COOPERATION IN OPENING SESSION OF INDIA-JAPAN FORUM



Diary Times Desk : External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday participated in the opening session of the India-Japan Forum in New Delhi.

In a post on X, he said, "Pleased to participate in the opening session of India Japan Forum in New Delhi. Discussed the evolving world order and the imperative of deeper India-Japan cooperation." The India-Japan Forum provides a platform for Indian and Japanese leaders to shape the future of bilateral and strategic partnerships through deliberation and collaboration. The forum was convened by the Ananta Centre and the Ministry of External Affairs. The forum aims to bolster cooperation, leverage opportunities, exchange ideas, build mutual trust and develop a joint agenda for future cooperation. It is a closed-door gathering of 70-80 high-level participants from Japan and India by invitation only. The discussions will be held under Chatham House rules. Earlier on December 6, 2024, at the India-Japan Forum Inaugural Session Conversation, EAM S Jaishankar highlighted deeper ties, especially in semiconductor collaboration, defence, and strengthening economic/tech cooperation, aiming to boost resilient supply chains, and grow people-to-people connections, with discussions focusing on digital governance and the Quad's role.

RUSSIA INTERCEPTS 8 UKRAINIAN DRONES IN 4 HOURS

Diary Times Desk : Russian air defences intercepted or destroyed eight Ukrainian drones in a span of four hours on Saturday evening, Tass reported, citing Russia's Defence Ministry.

Between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Moscow time (1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. GMT) on December 6, alert air defense capabilities intercepted or destroyed eight Ukrainian fixed-wing unmanned aerial vehicles, including three UAVs each over the Kursk and Belgorod regions and two UAVs over the Bryansk Region," the ministry specified.

Earlier on Saturday, the Russian Defence Ministry reported downing 11 Ukrainian drones over the same three regions in a span of five hours.

Meanwhile on Saturday, Russian military personnel destroyed around 1,450 Ukrainian militants in the area of the special military operation in the past 24 hours, Tass reported, citing the Russian Defence Ministry. The Russian military launched a massive strike using the Kinzhal missile systems against Ukrainian military-industrial complex enterprises and energy facilities in response to attacks, as per Tass.

PAKISTAN'S COTTON INDUSTRY CRUMBLES AMID GOVERNMENT APATHY, CRUSHING ECONOMIC PRESSURES

Diary Times Desk : Pakistan's spinning and cotton textile sector is on the brink of collapse, with industry leaders warning that the country is facing its gravest industrial crisis to date.

The crisis has been driven by an unprecedented combination of excessive taxation, soaring electricity tariffs, and a flood of under-invoiced yarn and fabric imports, particularly from China and other regional markets, as reported by Dawn.

According to Dawn, Cotton Ginners Forum Chairman Ihsanul Haq stated that over 100 spinning mills and 400 ginning factories have already ceased operations, resulting in a severe reduction in raw cotton purchases. The collapse, he said, is devastating Pakistan's agricultural economy, shrinking cotton output, and forcing the country to rely increasingly on imports of edible oil and textile goods, further depleting foreign reserves. Haq emphasised that the unchecked inflow of under-invoiced yarn has crippled the local industry. "Instead of supporting cotton.

"ALIENS NEED TO BE A LOT SMARTER TO REACH OUT TO US..." EX-NASA
ASTRONAUT MIKE MASSIMINO



Diary Times Desk : Former NASA astronaut Mike Massimino, known for his work on the Hubble Space Telescope and who flew on two space missions, has weighed in on one of humanity's biggest questions: Are we alone in the universe? The veteran astronaut--who flew on two space missions, conducted four spacewalks, and spent an astonishing 30 hours and 44 minutes working outside the spacecraft--shared that while we have no proof of alien contact, the possibility of life beyond Earth remains strong. Speaking to ANI in an exclusive interview, Massimino said that despite popular speculation, "We have no proof that we haven't been contacted or visited. There's no evidence of that." But he emphasised that the sheer scale of the universe makes extraterrestrial life plausible. "There are billions of galaxies with billions of stars in each," he explained, noting that most of those stars have multiple planets of their own. "We have seen some of the building blocks of life as we know it, even within our own solar system. We haven't discovered any life or any life form yet, but there's certainly possibilities out there somewhere."

RULERS OF EMIRATES CONDOLE WITH
SAUDI KING OVER PASSING OF ABDULLAH
BIN FAHD

Diary Times Desk : The Supreme Council Members and Rulers of the Emirates have sent separate messages of condolences to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia, on the death of Prince Abdullah bin Fahd bin Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Musa'ed bin Jalawi Al Saud.

The messages were sent by Their Highnesses the Rulers, Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi of Sharjah, Sheikh Humaid bin Rashid Al Nuaimi of Ajman, Sheikh Hamad bin Mohammed Al Sharqi of Fujairah, Sheikh Saud bin Rashid Al Mu'alla of Umm Al Qaiwain, and Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi of Ras Al Khaimah.

Their Crown Princes and Deputy Rulers sent similar messages of condolences to King Salman.

CROWN PRINCE OF DUBAI ISSUES
RESOLUTION FORMING BOARD OF
DIRECTORS OF ERADA CENTRE FOR
TREATMENT & REHAB

Diary Times Desk : Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, in his capacity as Chairman of The Executive Council of Dubai, issued Executive Council Resolution No. (88) of 2025 forming the Board of Directors of the Erada Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation in Dubai. The Board will be chaired by Mohammed Abdulla Falaknaz. According to the Resolution, the Director of the General Department of Drug Control at Dubai Police will serve as Vice Chairman of the Board. The Board also includes Abdullah Dhaen Obaid Al Ketbi, Samira Mohammed Al Rais, and representatives from Dubai Health Authority, the Community Development Authority in Dubai, the Dubai Public Prosecution, and the Dubai Academic Health Corporation.

UAE RESHAPES GLOBAL MEDIA
FUTURE AT BRIDGE SUMMIT

Diary Times Desk : The BRIDGE Summit is set to begin tomorrow, in the UAE capital, Abu Dhabi, with a focus on enhancing innovation and developing new tools that advance content creation.

The event is one of the initiatives of BRIDGE Alliance, a pioneering international organisation created to drive greater inclusivity, diversity and impact across the media, content and entertainment sectors.

Headquartered in the UAE, BRIDGE Alliance serves as a first-of-its-kind global body that brings together an influential board comprising former heads of state, global leaders, policymakers and CEOs from the media, communication, technology, finance and creative sectors, united by the mission to shape a more collaborative and future-ready content ecosystem.

It aims to deliver positive global impact as an independent, purpose-driven organisation committed to building a more interconnected, resilient and ethically grounded global framework for the media, content and entertainment industries, reflecting principles of cooperation and responsibility. The summit comes as the UAE continues to advance the modernisation of its media sector to strengthen competitiveness.

KARACHI OFFICIALS BLAMED
FOR NEGLIGENCE AFTER
CHILD'S DEATH

Diary Times Desk : In a scathing response to administrative negligence, the City Council's Water and Sewerage Committee dismissed all inquiry reports submitted by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC), and Transkarachi concerning the tragic death of three-year-old Ibrahim, who lost his life after falling into an uncovered manhole near NIPA earlier this week, as reported by Dawn. According to Dawn, the committee, led by Leader of the Opposition Advocate Saifuddin, sharply criticised what it described as a recurring pattern of "irresponsibility and indifference" among senior municipal authorities. The meeting, which aimed to assess departmental accountability, was attended by representatives from Transkarachi and the KWSC. However, the municipal commissioner, despite being officially summoned, neither attended the session nor sent a representative, drawing widespread condemnation from the committee.

US TOP DIPLOMAT TO VISIT DELHI, BENGALURU FROM DEC 7-11

Diary Times Desk : United States' Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs of the United States Allison Hooker will visit New Delhi and Bengaluru from December 7 to 11, a statement by the US Embassy said. Under Secretary Hooker's visit will focus on advancing the US-India strategic partnership, deepening economic and commercial ties, including increasing American exports, and fostering collaboration in emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and space exploration. While in New Delhi, Under Secretary Hooker will meet with senior Indian officials to discuss regional security, economic cooperation, and shared priorities in the Indo-Pacific, including through the Foreign Office Consultations with Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri. In Bengaluru, she will visit the Indian Space Research Organisation and meet leaders from India's dynamic space, energy, and technology sectors to promote innovation in US-India research partnerships and to explore opportunities for expanded cooperation, as per the statement. Under Secretary Hooker's visit marks another step forward in advancing US President Donald Trump's priorities for a strong US-India partnership and a free and open Indo-Pacific, as per the statement. Meanwhile, on December 6, India and the United States have unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross-border terrorism.



INDIA PLANS TO CUT POWER BILLS WITH WIDER AI USE IN DISTRIBUTION NETWORKS: POWER MINISTRY OFFICIAL

Diary Times Desk : India aims to lower consumer power bills and improve energy utilisation through wider adoption of artificial intelligence across distribution networks, said Shashank Misra, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Power. Speaking to ANI, on the sidelines of the National Conference on the Use of AI/ML in the Power Distribution Sector in the national capital, Misra said that the government is pushing AI tools to help distributors detect theft-prone zones more accurately and respond faster. "The aim is to reduce the bill of consumers and better utilise the energy," he said, highlighting the daily usage and earth leakages inside the house. Misra said AI-driven analytics will enable discoms to identify abnormal consumption patterns, target field inspections, and minimise technical and commercial losses, which remain a major cost burden for utilities and consumers.

He added that the ministry is exploring the use of large language models, including GPT-based systems, to support decision-making, automate workflows and strengthen real-time monitoring across the distribution sector.

UAE EMERGES AS PRIME DESTINATION FOR INDIA'S TECH EXPANSION AMID PROPTech BOOM

Diary Times Desk : As India's tech-solution providers push beyond traditional markets in a bid to diversify their global footprint, the Gulf--especially the UAE--has rapidly emerged as their newest frontier. Drawn by the region's pro-business ecosystem, soaring digital adoption, and its growing appetite for advanced technology, Indian tech firms are increasingly anchoring themselves in Dubai and beyond. This momentum is now gaining fresh pace as Indian tech companies enter the UAE's booming proptech sector, signalling a broader shift: Indian enterprises are no longer just exporting technology--they are reshaping the Gulf's digital economy. Proptech, or property technology, is the use of digital solutions and technology to innovate and improve the real estate industry across its entire lifecycle, from design and construction to management and transactions.

MCAP OF FIVE OF TOP-10 MOST-VALUED FIRMS SURGES RS 72,285 CRORE; TCS, INFOSYS BIGGEST WINNERS

Diary Times Desk : The combined market valuation of five of the top-10 most valued firms surged by Rs 72,284.74 crore last week, with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys emerging as the biggest winners.

While Bharti Airtel, TCS, ICICI Bank, Infosys and Bajaj Finance were the gainers, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, State Bank of India, Larsen & Toubro, and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) faced erosion from their valuation. Last week, the BSE benchmark eked out a marginal gain of 5.7 points, while the NSE Nifty dipped 16.5 points.

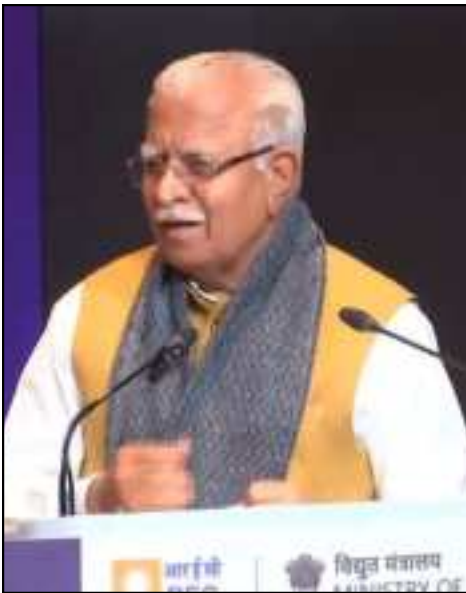
TCS added Rs 35,909.52 crore, taking its market valuation to Rs 11,71,862.37 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Infosys jumped Rs 23,404.55 crore to Rs 6,71,366.53 crore. The valuation of Bajaj Finance climbed Rs 6,720.28 crore to Rs 6,52,396.39 crore and that of Bharti Airtel edged higher by Rs 3,791.9 crore to Rs 12,01,832.74 crore. The mcap of ICICI Bank went up Rs 2,458.49 crore to Rs 9,95,184.46 crore.



POWER MINISTER URGES DISCOMS TO FAST-TRACK SHIFT TO SMART, CONSUMER-CENTRIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

Diary Times Desk : Manohar Lal, Minister of Power, on Sunday urged all DISCOMs to work closely with ecosystem stakeholders to transition towards smart, reliable, and consumer-focused distribution systems. The Minister was addressing the participants of the Two-day National Conference focusing on the use of AI/ML technologies in the power distribution sector, at Bharat Mandapam in the national capital today.

He noted that there was also a need to actively engage consumers. It is important to remove misinformation that sometimes surrounds new technologies and to win the valuable support of consumers for technology adoption in the sector, the Minister added. Lal lauded the active participation of industry, states, innovators, academia, and technology partners at the National Conference. He appreciated the AI/ML solutions presented by Distribution Companies (DISCOMs), Advanced Metering Infrastructure Service Providers (AMISPs), Technology Solution Providers (TSPs) and Home Automation Solution Providers (HASPs). He noted that the AI/ML based solutions, smart meter analytics, digital twins, predictive maintenance, theft detection intelligence, appliance-level consumer insights.



MNRE REFUTES REPORTS OF ADVISING LENDERS TO PAUSE FUNDING FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

Diary Times Desk : The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) on Sunday clarified that it has not issued any advisory to financial institutions to stop lending to renewable energy projects or renewable energy equipment manufacturers.

The clarification came after reports claimed that the ministry had asked lenders to pause new financing for renewable projects due to concerns about overcapacity.

"MNRE calls for calibrated, well-informed financing across the solar manufacturing ecosystem to drive sustainable industry growth. MNRE reaffirms commitment to strengthening India's position in the global solar value chain. No advisory has been issued to pause or halt new RE financing," the Ministry added in a release.

India has already achieved 50 per cent of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources, five years ahead of the target set under its Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement. As of October 31, the installed capacity from non-fossil sources stands at about 259 GW, with 31.2 GW added in the current financial year up to October 2025.



PIYUSH GOYAL HOLDS KEY MEETINGS TO STRENGTHEN TIES IN SEMICONDUCTORS, CARBON CAPTURE AND MEDTECH

Diary Times Desk : Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal met global industry leaders to explore ways of boosting India's role in advanced manufacturing, semiconductors, and clean technology. The discussions focused on building partnerships that can help India move closer to its vision of becoming a self-reliant, developed nation by 2047. According to information shared by Piyush Goyal's Office on X, the Minister held a meeting with Sanjiv Lamba, CEO of Linde plc, on Saturday. During the discussion, Goyal underlined the importance of developing a resilient industrial ecosystem capable of meeting future global challenges. "Minister @PiyushGoyal held a meeting with Mr. Sanjiv Lamba, CEO of Linde plc. They discussed opportunities to strengthen collaboration in advanced manufacturing, semiconductors, decarbonisation & carbon capture technologies. The Minister highlighted the need for process-driven engagement to support India's Aatmanirbhar Bharat vision & build a resilient industrial ecosystem," the post said.

NEARLY 24 LAKH HOUSEHOLDS HAVE ADOPTED ROOFTOP SOLAR AS OF DECEMBER 2025 UNDER PM SURYA GHAR

Diary Times Desk : India's solar momentum is shaping a major shift in the country's energy journey, marking one of its strongest moves toward clean power. According to a government release, the PM Surya Ghar scheme, approved in February 2024, aims to bring rooftop solar to one crore homes. As of December 2025, around 23.9 lakh households have already installed these systems, generating 7 GW of clean power. The National Solar Mission has also supported large solar parks, rooftop systems, and hybrid projects, taking India closer to its long-term energy goals. Over the past decade, India has seen a sharp rise in solar installations, helping double the country's total electricity capacity. Solar power now stands at 129 GW.

INDIA'S FOREX RESERVES SLIP USD 1.88 BN TO USD 686.227 BN WITH FCA DOWN, GOLD RESERVES UP

Diary Times Desk : India's foreign exchange reserves declined by USD 1.877 billion in the week that ended November 28 to USD 686.227 billion, according to the latest weekly data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). In the last reporting week (November 21), forex reserves declined by USD 4.472 billion to USD 688.104 billion, driven by a slump in both foreign currency assets and gold reserves. Over the past many weeks, the forex kitty has been largely in a downtrend. RBI's 'Weekly Statistical Supplement' data showed that India's foreign currency assets (FCA), the largest component of foreign exchange reserves, stood at USD 557.031 billion, down USD 3.569 billion. Interestingly, gold reserves increased by 1.613 billion to USD 105.795 billion during the current reporting week. The price of the safe-haven asset gold has been on a sharp uptrend over recent months, perhaps amid heightened global uncertainties and robust investment demand. The data showed that the Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) increased by USD 63 million to USD 18.628 billion. The country's reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) increased by USD 16 million to USD 4.772 billion, as per the data. Foreign exchange reserves, or FX reserves, are assets held by a nation's central bank or monetary authority, primarily in reserve currencies such as the US dollar, with smaller portions in the Euro, Japanese Yen, and Pound Sterling.



SIX-LANE RAIPUR-VISAKHAPATNAM ECONOMIC CORRIDOR TO CUT TRAVEL TIME AND BOOST REGIONAL GROWTH



Diary Times Desk : The upcoming Raipur-Visakhapatnam Economic Corridor is set to change the way people and goods move across central and eastern India.

Developed by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, the 465-kilometre, six-lane Greenfield highway will link Raipur in Chhattisgarh with Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, cutting travel time by almost half. Once complete in December 2026, the corridor will shorten the current 597-kilometre route with the existing NH-26 to 465 km, saving 132 kilometres and reducing the 12-hour journey to just five hours.

According to the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways release, the Rs 16,482 crore project, part of the PM Gati Shakti vision, aims to create seamless logistics and faster access between key industrial and port cities. By directly connecting industries in Chhattisgarh and Odisha to the Visakhapatnam Port and the Chennai-Kolkata National Highway, it is expected to boost exports, trade, and supply chain efficiency. As per the ministry, this shorter and faster route will also result in major fuel savings and reduced costs for both public and freight transporters. The corridor passes through the forests of Chhattisgarh, the mineral-rich lands of Odisha, and the hilly terrains of Andhra Pradesh, connecting regions such as Dhamtari, Keshkal, Kanker, Borigumma, Nabarangpur, and Araku. For these tribal and remote districts, the new road means quicker access to markets, jobs, and essential services. Designed for speeds up to 100 km per hour, it will also reduce congestion on the old NH-26 and make travel safer and smoother. For transporters, the difference will be felt every day. A lorry owner who often sends goods between Raipur and Visakhapatnam says, "Earlier, the journey took one-and-a-half days. Now, I can start during the day and reach the destination by night." He adds that lower fuel use and less wear on trucks will provide much-needed financial relief for drivers and small operators. The corridor's effect is not limited to the transport sector. It is also reshaping the lives of farmers and local residents. A farmer from the project area says, "Our land was valued at around ₹15 lakh per acre earlier. Now it is close to ₹1.5 crore. Farmers here are genuinely happy."

GUNFIRE AT LUDHIANA TOLL PLAZA: 'VIP' CAR OCCUPANTS FIRE AT STAFF WHEN ASKED FOR IDS

Diary Times Desk : Himachal Pradesh is set toHigh drama unfolded at the Ladhowal toll plaza in Ludhiana last night when some car-borne miscreants opened fire at the staff. The incident occurred after the accused insisted on going through the VIP lane. One of the car occupants allegedly claimed to be the chairman of a department but when the staff asked them to show their IDs, the group got enraged and opened fire at the employees.

The workers managed to dodge the bullets and even tried to nab the accused but they managed to flee. The incident was captured in CCTV cameras and the footage has since gone viral on social media. On getting information, the police reached the site and began investigations. Toll plaza worker Kuljit Singh said that the car had come from Ludhiana side and was heading towards Phillaur. He said there were seven-eight persons in the car who opened five rounds of fire on the toll staff. When they tried to catch the miscreants, they fled in their car towards the South City bridge, he added.

AMRITSAR YOUTH DIES IN POLICE CUSTODY; FAMILY BLOCKS HIGHWAY, ALLEGES TORTURE

Diary Times Desk : Mystery shrouds the death of a youth in the custody of Jandiala Guru police here today. The incident has triggered a strong protest by the family members, who alleged that he died due to police torture. The deceased, Harman Singh, was reportedly picked up by the Jandiala police on Saturday evening. He died this morning while in custody. Police officials claimed that his condition deteriorated suddenly, following which he was rushed to a hospital where he passed away. However, the family rejected the police version, alleging that Harman was perfectly fine until he was taken away from his residence. Accusing the police of torture and foul play, they blocked traffic on the main GT Road and raised slogans against the Punjab Police. Balwinder Kaur, mother of the deceased, said Harman had been detained for questioning after a quarrel in the village. She added that his paternal uncle had met him.

SNOW, RAIN LIKELY IN HIMACHAL'S MIDDLE, HIGHER REACHES ON MONDAY

Diary Times Desk : The middle hills and higher reaches of the state are likely to witness snowfall as well as light rainfall on Monday. According to the state meteorological department, isolated places in Kullu, Kinnaur, Chamba and Lahaul-Spiti may receive light snowfall and rain on December 8, while the weather will remain dry in the rest of the state. Dry conditions are expected to prevail across the state until December 13.

A yellow warning for dense fog has been issued for parts of the Balh valley in Mandi and the reservoir area near the Bhakra dam in Bilaspur during early morning hours on December 8 and 9. Minimum temperatures are likely to fall by 2°C to 3°C over the next three to four days, though maximum temperatures are expected to remain normal. Weather remained mostly dry across the state during the past 24 hours. Minimum temperatures were normal at most places, but stayed 2°C to 3°C above normal in several locations, ranging from -6°C to 10°C.



FRAGILE DHAULADHAR SLOPES FACE THREAT OF UNCHECKED CONSTRUCTION

Diary Times Desk : The state government, so far, has failed to regulate the large-scale construction activities under way in the eco-fragile zone of the Dhauladhar hills in the Kangra valley. It may be recalled that over a dozen power projects have come up on four major rivers – the Neugal, Binwa, Baner and Gajj – originating from the Dhauladhar hills in the past fifteen years. The Supreme Court has also expressed concern over unregulated growth in the hill state, yet the state government has initiated no efforts to streamline construction activities. Power companies have virtually wreaked havoc on nature and disturbed the eco-fragile system of the Dhauladhar ranges, indulging in reckless hill-cutting, rock blasting, tunnel execution and the dumping of muck and debris into local rivers. A recent study conducted by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Ropar has cautioned the state government that 45 per cent of Himachal Pradesh is prone to landslides, floods and avalanches. The detailed analyses and testing were part of efforts by researchers and scientists from multiple IITs to assess multi-hazard vulnerability across the Himalayan states.

NO MORE 'CHARGESHEETS': BJP RALLY SIGNALS END OF AN ERA

Diary Times Desk : The ritual of the Opposition preparing a chargesheet highlighting the acts of omission and commission by the state government, an annual feature in Himachal politics for decades, has now become a thing of the past. In a deviation from the past, the BJP this time chose to hold protest rally at Dharamsala on December 4, during the winter session of the Vidhan Sabha. The Congress government will complete three years on December 11, which will be observed in the form of the Jan Sankalp Sammelan at Mandi. "This time, we did not prepare a chargesheet but registered the protest of the common man against the anti-people policies of the Sukhu regime by holding a massive rally at Dharamsala," said Rajeev Bindal, state BJP president. He added that the huge turnout at the rally was a clear indication of the mounting resentment against the Congress rule which has been marked by mafia raj, be it liquor, mining, land or forest. This marked shift in the stance of the BJP has virtually put an end to the customary practice of preparing a chargesheet. It was during the tenures of former Chief Ministers Virbhadra Singh and Prem Kumar Dhumal between 1998 to 2017 that the chargesheets preparation.

YOUR HOROSCOPE
08-12-2025

Aries

Today, you will meet old friends, which will refresh old memories. Employed people may be fired from the job due to heavy arguments with colleagues in the workplace. People doing business should thank God for getting financial benefits from the advice of their spouse. Due to irritation in the eyes, you should consult an ophthalmologist.

Taurus

Today you will get success as your long pending legal proceedings will come in your favor. There will be an atmosphere of happiness in the family as employed people will get progress in their workplace. People doing business should make a budget and spend the money in order to get financial benefits. Housewives should change their food according to health and season.

Gemini

Today you should include yoga and meditation in your daily routine. For employed people, your responsibilities may increase due to promotion in the workplace. People doing business may suffer financial loss from any unknown person today. There may be difficulty in walking due to nerve pain problems.

Cancer

Today you will get relief from all your problems due to sudden financial gain. Employed people may have to get scolded by their boss due to being hasty in the workplace. People doing business may face increased difficulties in business due to arguments with business partners. As the problem of foot pain increases, you must consult a specialist doctor.

Leo

Today, you should offer water to Lord Shiva to avoid difficulties. A heated argument with HR in the workplace will spoil your whole day. Businessmen have to exercise patience, there are chances of improvement in business. Today, you may face stomach and pancreas problems due to eating too much fried food.

Virgo

Today you should take special control over your speech and behavior. People in employment will get success in the workplace with the help of friends. People doing business will get financial gain due to some special offer, your financial condition will be strengthened. Old diseases of elders in the house may emerge.

Sagittarius

Today you should take all important decisions of your career thoughtfully. Employed people may have to face some problems due to the start of a new job in the workplace. Due to financial gain for business people, you can invest in a new business. Problems like leg pain and headache may bother you.

Capricorn

Today you can invest especially in land and buildings. Employed people may have to travel long distances due to office work, due to which your health may deteriorate. People doing business may face difficulties in repaying business loans due to loss of money. High BP and cholesterol problems will increase the problems of your spouse.

Aquarius

Aquarius
Today you may have to face huge arguments in your family over small matters. Employees will be suspended due to indiscipline in the workplace. People doing business should solve all the problems of their customers in time. Due to worsening weather, problems related to cold and cough may increase in the family.

Pisces

Today your interest in creative work will especially increase. Employed people may be given an important project by their boss to handle important projects in the workplace. People doing business should control their speech and behavior with their customers. You should walk carefully on the road, problems may arise due to injury.

INDIGO CRISIS: PUNJAB
GOVT SETS UP 24X7
CONTROL ROOM AT
SHAHEED BHAGAT SINGH
AIRPORT

Diary Times Desk : Amid the ongoing IndiGo crisis, the Punjab government has set up a 24X7 control room to facilitate passengers at Shaheed Bhagat Singh International Airport. "The state government has taken this initiative to minimise inconvenience to the passengers," said Secretary Civil Aviation, Punjab, Sonali Giri. She said that as directed by CM Bhagwant Mann, the control room has been started immediately to facilitate passengers affected by IndiGo flight delays/cancellations. It has been set up at the Duty Terminal Manager's office for real-time information and assistance pertaining to refunds and rescheduling, baggage delivery and flight updates. She added that teams are continuously monitoring flight operations, delays, cancellations, and baggage issues to ensure timely assistance and updates.

SAD LEADER ARSHDEEP KLER
APPEARS BEFORE POLICE IN
'POLL CONSPIRACY' AUDIO
CLIP MATTER

Diary Times Desk : SAD leader Arshdeep Singh Kler appeared on Sunday before the Punjab Police to record his statement following the circulation of an audio clip, allegedly of a conversation between the Patiala SSP and other officers about blocking Opposition candidates from reaching nomination centres.

Kler appeared before Additional Director-General of Police (Law and Order) S P S Parmar. The conversation in the clip apparently refers to the nomination-filing process ahead of the December 14 Zila Parishad and Panchayat Samiti polls.

Speaking to reporters after the appearance here, Kler said the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) wants the matter to be investigated so that the truth can come out. Earlier, SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal accused several Patiala police senior officers of conspiring to stop the candidates, allegedly at the behest of the ruling AAP. On December 4, Badal shared the audio clip on his X account, which purportedly played a conversation between SSP Varun Sharma and other officers discussing the purported plan

RS 500 CRORE NEEDED TO BECOME PUNJAB CM: NAVJOT KAUR SIDHU

Diary Times Desk : Navjot Kaur Sidhu, wife of cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu, has stirred up a political storm in Punjab by alleging that "a suitcase full of Rs 500 crore" has to be given to become the Chief Minister in Punjab — which her husband cannot pay. The former MLA was talking to media persons on Saturday evening after meeting Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria here on issues, including "deteriorating" law and order in the state. Though she did not name any party when making the comment, she specifically said that Sidhu would return to active politics only if he is made the Congress CM face. Noting that there was much infighting in the party, she said, "there are already five chief ministers (faces of the Congress) who are busy making the party lose. If they (high command) understand this, then it is a different matter." She added that they do not have any money to give to any party, but can transform Punjab into a "golden state". Replying to a question, she said her husband is "strongly attached" to the Congress and leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. While PPCC chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring, when asked, refused to be drawn into the controversy — saying it was for the party high command to comment — former Deputy CM and Gurdaspur MP Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa said the Sidhu family should be shown the door.



HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF PANCHAYAT
SAMITI & ZILA PARISHAD POLLS IN
PUNJAB

Diary Times Desk : Myriad images of party workers fighting on the streets are being constantly flashed on various media platforms during the ongoing campaign for the upcoming panchayat samiti and zila parishad polls in Punjab, scheduled for December 14. Also repeatedly appearing on television and mobile phone screens are images showing candidates' nomination papers being snatched and torn. Enjoying a brute majority of 92 in the 117-member Vidhan Sabha, the incumbent AAP government is locked in a tough electoral battle with the Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal) (SAD), which seems to be witnessing a resurgence in rural politics. The visible activity of Congress and the BJP cannot be discounted either. With the state Vidhan Sabha polls slated for 2027, no party is leaving any stone unturned to show its presence on the ground. The Leader of the Opposition, Partap Singh Bajwa, and SAD president Sukhbir Badal have approached the Punjab and Haryana High Court, alleging government high-handedness in not allowing clean and peaceful polls. Meanwhile, the police have been cornered into lodging cases over alleged poll malpractices.

SUNIL JAKHAR SLAMS AAP GOVT,
SAYS ONLY BJP CAN RESTORE LAW &
ORDER, REIN IN 'UNIFORMED
EXTORTIONISTS' IN PUNJAB

Diary Times Desk : BJP state president Sunil Jakhar expressed concern over the continuously worsening law and order situation in Punjab and questioned the excesses of the police administration. He asserted that only the BJP has the strong will and capability to rein in the "black sheep" within the police. If given the opportunity, such uniformed extortionists would be strictly dealt with and peace would be restored in the state. Addressing a press conference today, he recalled that on November 7 in Tarn Taran, Arvind Kejriwal had warned gangsters to leave Punjab within seven days or face consequences. Instead of leaving, these criminals have reportedly accepted his challenge and continue to commit crimes daily — while Kejriwal himself has not been seen in Punjab since then. Raising questions, he said all this is happening despite Punjab having 17 DGP-rank and 13 ADGP-rank officers. By comparison, Haryana has just one DGP.

DELHI CM, CABINET TO VISIT GOLDEN TEMPLE ON MONDAY



Diary Times Desk : Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, along with her Cabinet, will visit the Golden Temple on Monday to offer "shukrana" (thanksgiving) for the successful three-day "Gurmat Samagam" held at the Red Fort to mark the 350th martyrdom anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

The CM said the blessings of Golden Temple made the large-scale religious event possible, with nearly six lakh devotees — a record turnout — participating over the three days to seek the Guru's blessings. "Despite an atmosphere of fear caused by a recent terror incident, more than six lakh devotees attended without disruption, clear evidence that the power of Guru Tegh Bahadur's sacrifice continues to unite society even today," she said. Rekha Gupta added that her visit with the entire Cabinet was not merely a formal gesture, but a symbol of deep faith and gratitude towards the Guru tradition. "In Sikh history, Harmandir Sahib is a sacred place where devotees from around the world come not only for darshan, but also to find spiritual peace, courage and the spirit of service. Offering 'shukrana' at the holy shrine reflects the Delhi Government's respect for the Sikh community and honours Delhi's shared heritage, reaffirming that even in difficult times, the Guru's light continues to guide and bind everyone together," she said.

Drones have already revolutionized warfare.
They're about to do it again

"Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist in creating out of void, but out of chaos." Mary Shelley, "Frankenstein," 1818.

"War is chaos. It always has been. But technology makes it worse. It changes the fear." Pierce Brown, "Golden Son," 2015.

Drones – and artificial intelligence – have reshaped the modern battlefield and are about to do so again. Nowhere is that more evident than in Ukraine.

Invaded by Russia in 2022, outmanned and outgunned by one of the world's strongest militaries, Kyiv quickly proved that drones – in the air, on the ground, and at sea – could hold off a Russian victory that many expected within weeks, if not days.



Cheaper and easier to build than manned vehicles, and in some cases more effective, drones are a military planner's dream – and greatly reduce the risk of a pilot or operator being killed in action.

Much like the Kalashnikov rifle in the previous century, mass adoption of drones became an asymmetric weapon of choice for forces facing long odds in global warfare, such as the Hamas militant group in Gaza; anti-junta rebels in Myanmar's civil war; and the militaries of poorer nations, including many in Africa.

But the Goliaths have caught up, while – according to one report – drug cartels the world over are innovating, improving and adapting drones to fight the narco-wars of the future. "It's like gunpowder. That's how insanely it's changed the war," Patrick Shepherd, a former US Army officer, said of the advent of cheap aerial drones.

It's invention from chaos, as myriad regional conflagrations coincide with an era of unparalleled technological advance. It's probably just the beginning.

The evolution of drones
Drones aren't a recent invention. Britain and the United States experimented with radio-controlled unmanned aircraft during World War I, according to the Imperial War Museum in London.

"We were flying hundreds of drones over North Vietnam during the war," said Russ Lee, a curator in the aeronautics department at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington. During that Southeast Asian conflict in 1960s and early '70s, US forces began using drones for many of the same missions we see today – reconnaissance or carrying munitions, or for use as decoys and psy-ops platforms, according to the Imperial War Museum.

The US began widespread use of drones during Operation Desert Storm, the response to Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The Tomahawk land-attack missile – a cruise missile but also an unmanned aerial vehicle as it can change course and target in-flight – saw its first combat in 1991.



Australia's About To Find Out

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU KICK MILLIONS OF TEENS OFF SOCIAL MEDIA?

It's August, and a show of hands in an auditorium filled with 300 students at All Saints Anglican School in Australia shows that few of the Grade 9 and 10 students sitting in plush red seats had heard of the country's impending ban on social media, much less how to prepare for it.



Hilary Whiteman

Yoti advises social media platforms including Meta about their age verification options. The group now has 12 methods, including phone, email, and ID checks, and the list is growing. Age-restricted sites give users a choice about which method they'd prefer.

"It's very important to save photos," Kirra Pendergast, founder of cyber safety organization Ctrl+Shift, lectures from the stage. "You need to prepare."

An alarmed murmur spreads around the room as the students realize what's about to be lost. "Can you get your account back when you turn 16?" one girl asks. "What if I lie about my age?" asks another.

Less than two weeks before the ban, we have more answers.

From December 10, sites



"People have basically thought, what is it we do offline? Do we let young people into strip clubs, into bars, buying alcohol, buying cigarettes? What are the norms that we have and what are the norms that we want to have online?"

that meet the Australian government's definition of an "age-restricted social media platform" will need to show that they're doing enough to eject or block children under 16 or face fines of up to 49.5 million Australian dollars (\$32 million).

The list includes Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, Kick, Reddit, Threads, TikTok, Twitch, X, and YouTube. The government says it's protecting children from potentially harmful content; the sites say they're already building safer systems.

Meta says it'll start deactivating accounts and blocking new Facebook, Instagram and Threads accounts from December 4. Under-16s are being encouraged to download their content.

Snap says users can deactivate their accounts for up to three years, or until they turn 16. Snap streaks – the daily swapping of photos of ordinary life, vacations, walls, foreheads, anything to signal an online presence – will end.

There's another sting in the ban, too, coming at the end of the Australian school year before the summer break in the southern hemisphere. For eight weeks, there'll be no school, no teachers – and no scrolling.

For millions of children, it could be the first school break they spend in years without the company of time-killing social media algorithms, or an easy way to contact their friends. Even for parents who support the ban, it could be a very long summer.

Other countries around the world are taking notes as Australia explores new territory that some say mirrors safety evolutions of years past – the dawning realization that maybe cars need safety belts, and that perhaps cigarettes should come with some kind of health warning.

As with any seismic step in social policy, there are cheer squads, naysayers and those who don't care what Australia – a country known to love rules – is doing to (and for) its children.

INFA

A Blue Schoolbag In A Mass Grave

SRI LANKA'S BLOODY PAST IS RE-EMERGING FROM THE SOIL

Two human skeletons lie entangled on the rough earth – the arms of one wrapped around the other's head, as though protecting them from danger. Simply known as numbers 177 and 178, their identities remain a mystery.



Tamils, who have lived in the north and east of Sri Lanka for thousands of years, are primarily followers of Hinduism, with a significant Christian minority population, but the commission determined that the fact the bodies were buried naked rules out customary Hindu burials. "There is a reasonable likelihood that the burials were unlawful and pursuant to extrajudicial killings," it said.

They are among 240 human skeletal remains, including children and babies, uncovered at this mass gravesite in Chemmani in Sri Lanka's northern Jaffna district.

"This place is a crime scene no entry," reads a sign at the entrance.

Numbered white cards placed alongside the bones mark how many skeletons have been found since digging began in May of this year, reviving decades-old allegations of wartime atrocities and cover-ups.

In the heartland of the country's ethnic Tamil minority, a bloody and brutal history is re-emerging from the soil. But it is difficult to bury the past entirely.

From 1983 to 2009, the South Asian island nation of 21 million endured a brutal civil war between the Sri Lankan army and the separatist militant group the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). More commonly known as the Tamil Tigers, the group was listed as a terrorist organization by many countries including the United States.

The war was fought along ethnic lines, pitting the majority Buddhist Sinhalese state against the predominantly Hindu ethnic minority rebels fighting for a separate Tamil homeland in the north and east after years of anti-Tamil violence. The Tigers were ultimately defeated.

Atrocities were committed by both sides, according to the United Nations, which estimates up to 100,000 people were killed in the conflict, with thousands of others forcibly disappeared.

Sixteen years after the war ended, families of the victims and missing are still fighting for justice and accountability.

"One day the truth will come," said V S Niranjan, a lawyer representing relatives of people who went missing in Jaffna.

A blue school bag

Just a stone's throw from a main road, the Chemmani gravesite is one of more than 20 mass graves identified in Sri Lanka. Many of the gravesites that pockmark the north and east of the country are believed to contain the victims of atrocities committed during the civil war. Caught between warring rebel fighters and the Sri Lankan army, the Tamil community in these regions bore the brunt of the violence.

The military occupied Jaffna from 1995 until the end of the war. Chemmani first gained international attention in 1998 when Sri Lankan soldier former Lance Cpl. Somaratne Rajapakse, who was on trial for the rape and murder of schoolgirl Krishanthi Kumaraswamy, confessed that hundreds of Tamils had been buried there after the Sri Lankan army retook Jaffna.

For decades, the mass grave remained hidden until construction workers clearing land in the grounds of a Hindu cemetery in February unearthed human skeletal remains.

Their discovery prompted a court-ordered forensic excavation of the site in May and June, which initially uncovered 19 skeletons. Since then, the bones of hundreds more people have been found.

A baby's milk bottle, a blue schoolbag, bangles and cloth fragments have been uncovered alongside the bones.

More than 90% of the remains had no form of clothing. The bodies were buried in a disordered way, heaped together in shallow graves of 1.5-2 feet, according to the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, an independent national body that investigates violations of fundamental rights.



COLLECTING GUIDE: JEAN DUNAND

Diary Times Desk :

Much like his talent, Jean Dunand's fame knows no bounds. Works by Dunand, who is widely considered one of the Art Deco era's preeminent artists and designers, graced the homes of top aesthetes during his day, and his vases, screens, and other designs remain popular fixtures in esteemed collections today. Given his extraordinary eye and hand, Dunand was also selected for numerous public commissions, including world's fairs.

'What makes Dunand so special is the refinement of his technique. His iconography is very much in line with the 1920s — it's geometric and graphic but with very modern and pure lines,' says Daphné Riou, Head of Christie's Design Department in New York, on what makes the Swiss-born French artists' creations so timeless. 'The shapes are so simple, yet so chic, so they go really well with contemporary art and give a sophisticated touch to any interior.'

Below, discover the many materials Dunand mastered throughout his career, the synergies between his work and Asian art, as well as the artistic movements of his time.

As the son of a goldsmith who was later trained as a sculptor, Dunand worked across categories while constantly elevating his skill set. From dresses and belt buckles to tables and armoires, the pieces he produced were all exquisitely crafted, but it was his vases and screens that were his most sought after then and now. On several occasions, Dunand was commissioned to design entire rooms full of his panels for both private residences and commercial spaces. In 1925-26, at the height of his career, for example, he created a music room for Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Guggenheim.

Early on, Dunand developed a fascination with metals, and prior to the First World War, he became the most brilliant dinandier, or worker in non-precious metals, of his era. The unique finish of his metal vessels resulted from extensive research into and experimentation with patination. Dinanderie was a technique of creating a structure by applying single sheets of metal and then delicately hammering other metals atop for further decoration. Dunand, and Claudius Linossier a decade later, were considered the masters of this technique. Born in Johoji, Japan and trained as a lacquerer, Seizo Sugawara came to Paris to curate the lacquerware displayed in the Japanese exhibition at the 1900 Exposition Universelle. He decided to remain in Paris and hoped to make a living teaching the skills of his profession. Around 1908, Eileen Gray became Sugawara's first prominent student, and she introduced her instructor to Dunand. In 1912, the two men came to an agreement: Sugawara would teach Dunand the secrets of lacquering metal, and Dunand would give Sugawara classes in dinanderie.



ART AND OBJECTS COLLECTED BY GENERATIONS OF THE STERN FAMILY: 'THIS COLLECTION HAS REMAINED UNKNOWN — ITS APPEARANCE ON THE MARKET NOW IS INCREDIBLY EXCITING'

Diary Times Desk :

A family of distinguished bankers and entrepreneurs since the 17th century, the Sterns are also renowned collectors, patrons and philanthropists. For generations, they have collected art at the very highest level, served on the boards of cultural, educational and scientific institutions across Europe, and donated important works to prestigious museums, including the Louvre.

'The Stern family has now chosen to write a new chapter in its history by offering at auction the works assembled by three generations of passionate collectors before them,' writes the French journalist Pierre Assouline in the introduction to the sale catalogue.

Assembled over the course of more than a century, the collection offered for sale reflects the connoisseurship and eclectic interests of Edgard Salomon Stern (1854-1937), head of the French branch of the family, his daughter-in-law Alice Stern (1906-2008), and their descendants.

On 11 December 2025, Christie's in Paris will present Les Stern: une famille de collectionneurs, alongside an online sale until 12 December, offering more than 350 lots ranging from Old Master paintings to furniture, sculpture and works of decorative art, including enamels, silver, bronzes and glass.

The sales include works by some of the most celebrated European artists and makers of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, from Boucher, Fragonard, Robert and Tissot to the ébéniste Roger Vandercruse called Lacroix and glass designer Emile Gallé. Many pieces also boast prestigious provenances. There are works once owned by the renowned Parisian couturier Jacques Doucet, Sir Richard Wallace, David David-Weill, the Dukes of Hamilton in Scotland and the Comte d'Artois.

'The dazzling and varied works of art demonstrate the enthusiasms and personal tastes of the different collectors within the family,' says Charles Cator, deputy chairman of Christie's International. 'What is even more remarkable about this collection, though, is that it has remained unknown, so its appearance on the market now is incredibly exciting.'



THREE TAKEAWAYS FROM REAL BETIS 3-5 BARCELONA | LA LIGA MD15



Diary Times Desk : While the final scoreline may depict a relatively close game between Barcelona and Real Betis last night, the reality could not be further off. Up until the 84th minute, the Catalans led over the hosts by a 5-1 margin, and it was only a late goal and a penalty in the 89th minute that brought the scoreline to a competitive 5-3. For Barcelona, the night at Estadi de La Cartuja was terrific as Ferran Torres scored a hat-trick, Roony Bardghji scored his first goal for the team in La Liga, and Lamine Yamal converted an ice-cool penalty to secure all three points. The win takes Barcelona to 40 points after 16 games, four points ahead of Real Madrid who have a game in hand that will be played later today. Barça Universal brings you three takeaways from Real Betis 3-5 Barcelona. Hansi Flick's starting lineup against Real Betis caught several eyes across the globe as an unconventional one, for the manager handed both Yamal and Bardghji a start together on the night.

HANSI FLICK MAKES BARCELONA HISTORY WITH YOUNGEST PLAYING XI IN 95 YEARS

Diary Times Desk : Barcelona's thrilling 5-3 victory over Real Betis was memorable not only for the eight-goal spectacle but also for a historic decision made by Hansi Flick before a ball was even kicked. According to Mundo Deportivo, the German coach selected the youngest starting XI in Barcelona's La Liga history over the last 95 years.

The average age of Barça's starting lineup for the matchday was just 23.34 years, a figure that had not been recorded in competitive league football at the club since December 28, 1930, when Barcelona faced Racing Santander. On that distant occasion, the average age stood at 23.09 years. For nearly a century, Barça had never again entrusted such a youthful group with the responsibility of leading a La Liga fixture at this level. What made Flick's decision even more striking was the statistical breakdown of the team, as nine of the eleven starters were aged 25 or younger. Only Jules Kounde, aged 27, and Marcus Rashford, aged 28, were over that threshold, with the English forward standing as the oldest player in the lineup despite still being under 30.

INJURY FEARS EASED AS BARCELONA SUMMER SIGNING FIT FOR FRANKFURT CLASH AFTER BETIS SCARE

Diary Times Desk : In a recent report from Mundo Deportivo, it has come to light that Joan Garcia's presence in Barcelona's crucial Champions League clash against Eintracht Frankfurt is not in doubt.

It must be noted that there were worrying scenes that followed the 5-3 victory over Real Betis at La Cartuja.

The summer signing suffered a knock during the match, prompting brief concern among the Barça staff and supporters, but all signs now point to him being fully available for Tuesday night's European fixture at the Sportify Camp Nou.

The Catalan shot-stopper was seen limping slightly as he boarded the team bus en route to Seville airport, and again while getting on the plane with the rest of the squad. The images naturally triggered speculation over his physical condition. However, sources inside the Barcelona dressing room have moved quickly to calm any fears, confirming that unless unforeseen complications arise, Garcia will start against Eintracht Frankfurt.

INJURED BARCELONA MIDFIELDER COULD BE BACK IN ACTION FOR ESPANYOL CLASH ON JANUARY 3

Diary Times Desk : Barcelona could receive a major boost in early January, with Dani Olmo edging closer to a much-awaited return from injury.

According to a report from SPORT, the Spanish international is likely to return in the Catalan derby against Espanyol on January 3, a fixture that could mark a crucial turning point in his season.

Olmo has been sidelined since suffering a painful dislocation to his left shoulder during Barcelona's clash with Atletico Madrid. The incident came in dramatic fashion. The midfielder landed awkwardly after taking a shot and, while he briefly smiled upon seeing the ball hit the net, the pain quickly became overwhelming.

He was unable to get back to his feet, and his teammates immediately requested medical assistance as it became clear the injury was severe. The timing could hardly have been worse for both player and club. Olmo had just begun to hit top form under Hansi Flick, starting against Alaves and Atletico and scoring three goals in those two matches.



'MOST IMPORTANT TACTICAL DISCOVERY' - FANS GO WILD OVER LAMINE YAMAL'S MASTERCLASS IN NEW ROLE

Diary Times Desk : It may still be too early to draw firm conclusions, but Hansi Flick's decision to deploy Lamine Yamal as an attacking midfielder against Real Betis could prove to be one of the most defining tactical moments of Barcelona's season.

Whether this was a one-off tactical adjustment or the first sign of a long-term positional evolution remains to be seen.

What is clear, however, is that Flick is already daring to reshape the role of Barça's most exciting young star. Until now, Lamine Yamal has built his reputation as a devastating left-footed winger on the right flank, stretching defences with pace, flair, and one-on-one ability far beyond his years.

At just 18, he has already become a reference point in Barcelona's attack. Moving him into more central areas represents a significant shift, not only tactically, but also in how the club envisions his long-term development. Crucially, Flick has not fully removed Yamal from the wing. Instead, he has begun easing him into central zones, placing him closer to the goal while reducing some of his defensive responsibilities.

BARCELONA CAPTAIN TRAINS NORMALLY AHEAD OF CRUCIAL EINTRACHT FRANKFURT CLASH

Diary Times Desk : Barcelona forward Raphinha has trained without issues ahead of their vital UEFA Champions League match against Eintracht Frankfurt, according to a recent report from SPORT.

The Brazilian's return to full training will come as a relief to Hansi Flick, who opted to rest him in the club's last La Liga fixture against Real Betis.

After securing a thrilling 5-3 victory against Betis, Barcelona returned to Catalonia with three points in the bag.

On Sunday morning, the team completed their usual post-match recovery session at the Ciutat Esportiva Joan Gamper, with Raphinha participating fully for the first time since being rested.

His absence against Betis had sparked curiosity, but it was always understood to be a precautionary measure.

The Brazilian was managing a slight muscle overload, and Flick decided it was best to preserve him for the European encounter.