

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**MESSI EVENT  
CHAOS: INQUIRY  
PANEL MEMBERS  
INSPECT SALT LAKE  
STADIUM****Diary Times Desk :**

A day after spectators went on a rampage during Argentine football icon Lionel Messi's event at Salt Lake stadium here, members of an inquiry committee visited the venue on Sunday and took stock of the damage, officials said. Chief Secretary Manoj Pant, one of the members of the panel, told reporters the committee was hopeful about submitting the report after 15 days. The three-member team examined broken plastic chairs, twisted metal barricades and littered galleries during their on-ground inspection of the stadium, one of India's largest football arenas, they said. Led by Calcutta High Court retired judge Justice Ashim Kumar Ray, the committee members started their inspection from the point where Messi had entered the stadium, and tried to trace his movement, the officials said. "We are hopeful about submitting the report after 15 days. The incident took place yesterday, and we are here the next day to take stock of the situation. Give us some time," he said.

**GOA NIGHTCLUB  
FIRE PROBE  
COMMITTEE  
QUESTIONS  
LANDOWNER,  
SARPANCH****Diary Times Desk :**

A magisterial inquiry committee has questioned original landowner Pradeep Ghadi Amonkar and Arpora-Nagoa sarpanch Roshan Redkar in connection with the devastating fire at the Birch of Lane nightclub in North Goa. Amonkar was summoned at 3.30 pm on Saturday and questioned till 10.30 pm, his lawyer Prasenjit Dhage said, adding that the panel wanted to know "why this incident happened". "My client had a warrant of appearance before the committee," he said. "It was a very intensive and vigorous inquiry," the lawyer added. The Goa government has constituted a committee headed by district magistrate Ankit Yadav to inquire into the December 6 fire incident which claimed 25 lives. Arpora-Nagoa panchayat sarpanch Roshan Redkar told reporters that he answered.

## CJI NEWS

**TECHNOLOGY SHOULD AMPLIFY HUMAN JUDGMENT,  
NOT REPLACE IT: CHIEF JUSTICE SURYA KANT**

**Diary Times Desk :** Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Sunday said technology should amplify human judgment and not replace it.

He was addressing a symposium on 'Ensuring justice for the common man: strategies for reducing litigation costs and delays' here.

"Pendency of cases in courts clogs every level of the judicial structure, from the trial court to the constitutional court. And when a blockage occurs at the top, the pressure only intensifies below," he said.

He also stressed the need to strengthen judicial infrastructure to reduce pendency. "This is because without sufficient courts, even the most sincere judicial system will collapse under logistical strain," he said. Justice Kant said technology was very useful during the COVID pandemic. He, however, said that one cannot afford to forget that technology comes with its own shadows.

"In an age of deep fakes and digital arrests, courts cannot afford naive optimism... A reform that excludes the poor, elderly, or digitally unfamiliar is not reform at all, it is regression. That is why I have always maintained that technology must remain a servant of justice, not its substitute. It should amplify human judgment, not replace it," the CJI said. He said a system where the executive, legislature and judiciary do not move in harmony resembles a tricycle missing a wheel -- the rule of law cannot balance, let alone move forward.

**OUR FIGHT IS AGAINST RSS-BJP, AGAINST THOSE DOING 'VOTE  
CHORI': CONGRESS STEPS UP ATTACK AT RAMLILA MAIDAN RALLY**

**Diary Times Desk :** Stepping up the campaign on the issue of alleged election irregularities, top Congress leaders on Sunday attacked the BJP and the election commissioners at a rally in the national capital, alleging that "vote chori" is in the ruling party's DNA and its leaders were "gaddar" who were conspiring to take away voting rights of people and should be removed from power.

Addressing a 'Vote chor gaddi chhod' mega rally at the Ramliha ground as the Congress sought to build public support on the issue after its Bihar defeat, Rahul Gandhi vowed to oust the "Narendra Modi-RSS government" by following the path of truth and non-violence as shown by Mahatma Gandhi.

"This fight is between 'satya' and 'asatya' (truth and untruth). We will stand behind 'satya' and will remove Narendra Modi, Amit Shah and RSS government from the country. They have 'satta' (power) and they indulge in 'vote chori'," he said. Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that the BJP leadership was "gaddar" (traitors) as they were indulging in "vote theft" and should be removed to save the Constitution and the country.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra too challenged the BJP to win a fair election with paper ballot voting and asserted that the election commissioners would have to answer to the country on how they "conspired" to take away people's voting rights and made every step of the poll process "suspicious".

**BIHAR MINISTER NITIN NABIN APPOINTED BJP'S  
NATIONAL WORKING PRESIDENT**

**Diary Times Desk :** The BJP parliamentary board, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Sunday appointed Bihar Road Construction Minister Nitin Nabin as the national working president of the party.

Nabin, 45, will function as the national working president until the full election to appoint the BJP national president is held, while J P Nadda continues in the post until a full-term president is formally appointed.

Considered close to both the RSS and the BJP, Nabin is a several-term MLA from Bankipur and was recently inducted into the Bihar cabinet as minister for road construction. He inherited his political legacy from his father, Nabin Kishore Prasad Sinha, who was also an MLA from Bankipur. Nabin has been actively involved in various youth movements during his tenure with the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), including the National Unity Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir and a tribute march from Guwahati to Tawang for the 1965 martyrs.

Nabin has also served as BJP in-charge for Sikkim and co-in-charge for Chhattisgarh, playing a crucial role in the party's electoral victories in the latter state.

**DELHI DYSTOPIA: WITH HIGHEST AQI OF  
SEASON AT 461, AIR QUALITY REMAINS  
'SEVERE'**

**Diary Times Desk :** The national capital recorded the highest AQI of the season on Sunday -- up to 461 from 432 a day earlier -- as the air quality remained in the 'severe' category, according to the Central Pollution Control Board.

As per the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), an Air Quality Index (AQI) between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor' and 401 and 500 'severe'.

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on Saturday invoked the strictest measures (Stage IV) under its air pollution control plan, Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), including a ban on all construction and demolition activities in Delhi-NCR after pollution levels rose sharply amid unfavourable meteorological conditions. The Sub-Committee on GRAP decided to invoke Stage III of the GRAP earlier on Saturday across the entire NCR with immediate effect as air quality continued to worsen.

On the weather front, the minimum temperature settled at 8.2 degrees Celsius on Sunday, 0.4 notch below the season's average, and the maximum temperature recorded at 24 degrees Celsius.

The relative humidity was 87 per cent at 5.30 pm, the India Meteorological Department said.

## 'GOAT INDIA TOUR 2025'

**BESIDES PM MODI, MESSI TO  
MEET CJI AND ARMY CHIEF IN  
DELHI**

**Diary Times Desk :** Argentine football icon Lionel Messi will meet the Chief Justice of India and the Army Chief at a Member of Parliament's house after his visit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's official residence during his Delhi leg of the India tour here Monday.

The final day of the GOAT India Tour will also see Messi exchanging greetings with two members of the Indian cricket team at the Ferozshah Kotla Stadium.

It is understood that the Member of Parliament is Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Praful Patel, who had served as president of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) for three terms.

Messi will arrive in the National Capital at 10.45 am, and after a 50-minute 'Meet and Greet' session at a city hotel, he will head to the PM's residence where he will spend 20 minutes interacting with Modi.

His next stop will be the residence of an MP, where he is also set to meet the Argentina Ambassador to India Mariano Agustín Caucino, besides CJI Justice Surya Kant and Army chief general Upendra Dwivedi. The chief of Enforcement Directorate, Rahul Navin, is also likely to part of the select gathering at the MP's house, which will also comprise fee top government officials.

**PRESIDENT MURMU DIRECTS  
JUSTICE NISHA BANU OF  
MADRAS HC TO ASSUME CHARGE  
AT KERALA HC BEFORE  
DECEMBER 20**

**Diary Times Desk :** President Droupadi Murmu has directed Justice Nisha Banu of the Madras High Court to assume charge at the Kerala High Court on or before December 20, 2025. "The President, after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, is pleased to direct Justice J Nisha Banu, Judge, Madras High Court, to assume charge of her office in the Kerala High Court on or before 20.12.2025," a Department of Justice Notification dated December 12 read. The Centre had notified Justice Banu's transfer from the Madras High Court to the Kerala High Court on October 14, 2025. But she has not assumed charge of her office at the Kerala High Court. The Supreme Court Collegium had on August 27, 2025, recommended the transfer of Justice Banu -- third senior-most judge of the Madras High Court and part of the High Court Collegium -- to the Kerala High Court. As she did not join the Kerala High Court despite the transfer order, some lawyers from Madras High Court wrote to the President, the Vice President, the CJI, Chief Justice of the Madras High Court.

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Considered close to both the RSS and the BJP, Nabin is a several-term MLA from Bankipur and was recently inducted into the Bihar cabinet as minister for road construction. He inherited his political legacy from his father, Nabin Kishore Prasad Sinha, who was also an MLA from Bankipur. Nabin has been actively involved in various youth movements during his tenure with the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), including the National Unity Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir and a tribute march from Guwahati to Tawang for the 1965 martyrs.

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QUESTIONS LANDOWNER, SARPANCH

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OUR FIGHT IS AGAINST RSS-BJP, AGAINST THOSE DOING  
'VOTE CHORI': MALLIKARJUN KHARGE AT RAMLILA MAIDAN  
RALLY

**Diary Times Desk :** Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday launched a scathing attack on the BJP, saying those indulging in "vote chori" are "gaddars" and need to be removed from power to save voting rights and the Constitution. Addressing the party's 'Vote Chor Gaddi Chhod' rally at the Ramlila Maidan here, Kharge said the ideology of Mohan Bhagwat, MS Golwalkar and Manusmriti will destroy the country, and only the ideology of Congress can save it. "The BJP-RSS people are engaged in efforts to finish off the Constitution. In the name of Hindutva, these people want to enslave the poor again. But we must remember that the Congress got Independence for the country, Modi-Shah were not even born at that time. "These people talk against Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi and BR Ambedkar; they sow a rift of ideas between Patel and Nehru, but we will not allow it," he said. "On the other hand, there is vote chori. These people are 'gaddars', you will have to remove these gaddars. If you want to protect yourself, remove these gaddars. For that purpose, Rahul Gandhi walked throughout the country BJP people are 'dramebaaz', they only believe in their own propaganda," Kharge said.



SCIENTISTS UNVEIL SECRETS OF HIMALAYAN  
AIR MOVEMENTS THAT CAN IMPROVE  
MONSOON PREDICTION

**Diary Times Desk :** A team of Indian scientists has uncovered the dynamics of how vertical air movements over the Himalayas have shaped the Indian summer monsoon that has been the lifeline of South Asia for centuries, which could enhance the accuracy of rainfall forecasts and also help in better assessment of air quality over the sub-continent. Scientists are constantly looking towards ways to improve the prediction of the Indian monsoon for agriculture, water management and disaster preparedness across South Asia, where millions of people rely on rainfall for their livelihoods. However, limited studies on the vertical air movement in this region so far have relied on indirect balloon or satellite-based measurements, which cannot capture the long-term fine-scale variability of vertical air motion in the complex Himalayan terrain.

BANGLADESH FOREIGN MINISTRY  
SUMMONS INDIAN ENVOY OVER EX-PM  
HASINA'S STATEMENTS

**Diary Times Desk :** Bangladesh's Foreign Ministry on Sunday summoned Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma to express its "serious concern" over the "incendiary statements" made by deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who is currently in India. Hasina, 78, fled to India in August last year following a violent student-led street protest and continues to stay there.

She was sentenced to death by a special tribunal last month after being convicted on charges of crimes against humanity. Bangladesh has been demanding her extradition.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the Indian High Commissioner today to convey the Government of Bangladesh's serious concern to the Government of India for allowing fugitive Sheikh Hasina to continue to make incendiary statements calling upon her supporters to engage in terrorist activities in Bangladesh, aiming to thwart the upcoming parliamentary elections," a foreign office statement said.

Bangladesh reiterates its call for her "expeditious extradition" alongside former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to face death sentences handed down by the special tribunal last month, it added.



‘STRENGTHENING PARTY KEY FOCUS,’ SAYS UP BJP PRESIDENT PANKAJ CHAUDHARY

**Diary Times Desk :** Newly elected Uttar Pradesh BJP president Pankaj Chaudhary on Sunday said strengthening the party would be his core focus and asked cadres to give top priority to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls underway in the state.

Chaudhary urged party cadres to prioritise booth-level duties related to the SIR to ensure that the names of eligible voters were not deleted from the voter list.

“I would like to request you all to leave important work aside and focus on the SIR in the coming days. We need to go to the booth to ensure that the name of our voters is not cut,” he said. Speaking to reporters earlier, Chaudhary said action against infiltrators was necessary. “No one could accept infiltrators.” Addressing a function after being declared the state BJP chief here, Chaudhary said the responsibility entrusted to him was the most serious and challenging assignment of his political career.

KARNATAKA EX-MLA DOCTOR SAVES US WOMAN ON GOA-NEW DELHI FLIGHT

**Diary Times Desk :** A Karnataka ex-MLA, Anjali Nimbalkar, a doctor by profession, has saved the life of an American woman passenger, who suffered a medical emergency mid-air during a Goa-New Delhi flight, official sources said on Sunday. The incident happened when Nimbalkar, AICC secretary co-in-charge of Goa, Daman and Diu, Dadra Nagar Haveli, was travelling to Delhi to attend the ‘Vote Chori’ rally organised by Congress at Ramleela Maidan on Sunday, they added. Nimbalkar performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and revived the co-passenger, who complained of uneasiness and shivering, fainted and lost her pulse, they said.

Nimbalkar reportedly remained by the patient’s side for the entire duration of the flight, constantly paying attention to her medical needs and comforting her. Soon after landing at Delhi, the unwell foreign passenger was shifted to a hospital by an ambulance, sources said, adding that Nimbalkar’s timely action received praise from passengers and crew members. Lauding Nimbalkar, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, in a post on X said, “Deeply moved and incredibly proud to hear about the remarkable presence of mind and compassion shown by former Khanapur MLA Dr Anjali Nimbalkar during a Goa-New Delhi flight. When an American woman suffered.

BESIDES PM MODI, MESSI TO MEET CJI AND ARMY CHIEF IN DELHI



**Diary Times Desk :** Argentine football icon Lionel Messi will meet the Chief Justice of India and the Army Chief at a Member of Parliament’s house after his visit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s official residence during his Delhi leg of the India tour here Monday. The final day of the GOAT India Tour will also see Messi exchanging greetings with two members of the Indian cricket team at the Ferozshah Kotla Stadium. It is understood that the Member of Parliament is Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Praful Patel, who had served as president of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) for three terms. Messi will arrive in the National Capital at 10.45 am, and after a 50-minute ‘Meet and Greet’ session at a city hotel, he will head to the PM’s residence where he will spend 20 minutes interacting with Modi. His next stop will be the residence of an MP, where he is also set to meet the Argentina Ambassador to India Mariano Agustin Caucino, besides CJI Justice Surya Kant and Army chief general Upendra Dwivedi.

INDIA COULD GET NEW PM SOON, CLAIMS PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN; SAYS COMMENTS LINKED TO EPSTEIN FILES RELEASE

**Diary Times Desk :** Senior Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan, citing the release of the controversial Jeffrey Epstein files in the United States on December 19, has claimed India could soon have a new Prime Minister. He also said the country’s new PM could be from Maharashtra. After a recent social media post in which he hinted that a “Marathi manoos” could become India’s PM within a month, Chavan, speaking at an event in Pimpri Chinchwad here on Saturday, said several persons had contacted him seeking a clarification on the remark. “A lot of developments are taking place at the global level. When I made that post, many asked me to explain what I meant. My statement was based on a hypothetical political possibility. If someone from Maharashtra were to become prime minister, the present prime minister would have to step down. I only underlined the possibility of a change,” Chavan explained.

UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE PANKAJ CHAUDHARY NAMED NEW UP BJP CHIEF

**Diary Times Desk :** Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary was on Sunday named the new president of the BJP’s Uttar Pradesh unit, with his election being formally announced by Union Minister Piyush Goyal here. The announcement was made in the presence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak.

Chaudhary filed his nomination for the post on Saturday and was the sole candidate in the fray. He submitted the papers to former Union minister and BJP state election officer Mahendra Nath Pandey and central election observer Vinod Tawde. Adityanath, his two deputies, and Jal Shakti Minister Swatantra Dev Singh were present during the filing of the nomination. Following the announcement of Pankaj Chaudhary’s election to the post, outgoing state BJP chief Bhupendra Chaudhary handed over the party flag to his successor.

CONGRESS STANDS WITH ‘SATYA’; WILL REMOVE ‘MODI-RSS GOVERNMENT’: RAHUL GANDHI

**Diary Times Desk :** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said his party stands with “satya” (truth) and vowed to remove the “Narendra Modi-RSS government”. Addressing the party’s ‘Vote chor gaddi chhod’ rally at the Ramliia Maidan here, he launched a scathing attack on the Election Commission and mentioned the names of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, and Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi to allege that they were working for the BJP. “We will stand with ‘satya’ (truth) and will remove the Narendra Modi-RSS government from power. They have ‘satta’ (power), and they indulge in ‘vote chori,’” the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said. Gandhi claimed that the BJP transferred Rs 10,000 during elections, but the poll panel did not take any action against them. “In this fight between truth and untruth, the Election Commission is working with the BJP government,” he said. “Prime Minister Narendra Modi brought a new law to give immunity to EC; we will change this law retroactively and act against election commissioners,” Gandhi said.



MESSI, TENDULKAR COME TOGETHER AS WANKHEDE ADDS ANOTHER GLORIOUS CHAPTER

**Diary Times Desk :** The hallowed turf of the iconic Wankhede Stadium added another glorious chapter in Indian sporting history on Sunday

When two of the greatest-ever sportspersons, Lionel Messi and Sachin Tendulkar, shared the center stage in a grand event here.

On his third stop during his four-city GOAT India tour, Messi spent exactly one hour at the Wankhede, engaging with young football players, cricket icon Tendulkar, Indian football legend Sunil Chhetri as well as celebrities from the entertainment world.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis also announced the launch of ‘Project Mahadeva’, which aims to identify and develop young football players across the state.

All through the programme, the packed house at the stadium kept changing “Messi... Messi”.

**POLICE SEARCH BROWN UNIVERSITY  
AFTER SHOOTER KILLS 2 AND WOUNDS 8  
ON CAMPUS**

**Diary Times Desk :** A shooter dressed in black killed at least two people and wounded eight others at Brown University on Sunday during final exams on the Ivy League campus, authorities said, and police were searching for the suspect.

Officers scattered across the campus and into an affluent neighbourhood filled with historic and stately brick homes, searching academic buildings, backyards and porches for hours after the shooting erupted.

The suspect was a male in dark clothing who was last seen leaving the engineering building where the attack happened, said Timothy O'Hara, Deputy Chief of Police.

Authorities believe the shooter used a handgun, according to a law enforcement official who was not authorised to discuss an ongoing investigation and spoke on condition of anonymity. Rhode Island has some of the strictest gun laws in the US. Last spring, the Democratic-controlled Legislature passed an assault weapon ban that will prohibit the sale and manufacturing of certain high-powered firearms, but not their possession, starting next July. "The unthinkable has happened," Democratic Rhode Island Gov Dan McKee said. Providence Mayor Brett Smiley said a shelter-in-place was in effect and encouraged people living near the campus to stay inside and not to return home until it is lifted. "We have all available resources" to find the suspect, Smiley said. Emma Ferraro, a chemical engineering student, was in the engineering building's lobby working on a final project when she heard loud pops coming from the east side.

**"ANTISEMITISM HAS NO PLACE": RUBIO CONDEMNS BONDI BEACH TERROR  
ATTACK IN AUSTRALIA**

**Diary Times Desk :** United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio condemned the terrorist attack in Australia that targeted a Jewish celebration, expressing solidarity with the victims, the Jewish community and the Australian people. In a post on X, Rubio said, "The United States strongly condemns the terrorist attack in Australia targeting a Jewish celebration." He underlined that "Antisemitism has no place in this world," and added, "Our prayers are with the victims of this horrific attack, the Jewish community, and the people of Australia." Rubio's remarks came as details emerged about a deadly shooting at Australia's Bondi Beach, which police said was a targeted attack against the country's Jewish community, CNN reported. At least 11 people were killed and 29 others injured in the attack, police said during a press conference, adding that details about the victims have not yet been released. Police said two suspects were involved in the shooting. One suspect is in custody in critical condition, while the other was shot dead at the scene. Authorities said the identities of the alleged attackers have not been disclosed.

**"NO PLACE FOR HATE, VIOLENCE AND  
TERRORISM," SAYS AUSTRALIAN PM  
ANTHONY ALBANESE AFTER BONDI BEACH  
SHOOTING INCIDENT**

**Diary Times Desk :** Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese addressed the nation following the mass shooting at Sydney's Bondi Beach, describing the incident as a "devastating terror attack" and expressing solidarity with Australia's Jewish community. In his address, Albanese said the incident was "a targeted attack on Jewish Australians on the first day of Hanukkah, which should be a day of joy, a celebration of faith, an act of evil, antisemitism, terrorism that has struck the heart of our nation." He added, "There is no place for this hate, violence and terrorism in our nation." The Prime Minister said authorities were working to identify all those involved and stressed accountability. "Let me be clear, we will eradicate it amidst this vile act of violence and hate, and there will emerge a moment of national unity where Australians across the board will embrace their fellow Australians of Jewish faith," he stated.

**HAMAS SAYS ISRAELI STRIKE KILLED SENIOR  
COMMANDER RAED SAAD AMID CEASEFIRE**

**Diary Times Desk :** Hamas has confirmed that senior commander Raed Saad was killed in an Israeli strike in Gaza, marking the most high-profile assassination of a Hamas leader since the ceasefire that came into effect in October, Al Jazeera reported. The Israeli military said it carried out the attack on Saturday near Gaza City, claiming Saad was the target. At least 25 people were reported wounded in the strike. Hamas acknowledged his death on Sunday through a video statement by its Gaza chief, Khalil al-Hayya, who accused Israel of violating the ceasefire agreement. "In the wake of Israel's continued violations, including the latest assassination of a Hamas commander just yesterday, we call on the mediators and especially the US administration and US President Donald Trump as the main guarantor of the agreement, to force the occupation [Israel] to respect the ceasefire deal and to implement it," he said.

**INDIAN-ORIGIN MAN AMONG 4  
KILLED IN TEMPLE COLLAPSE IN  
SOUTH AFRICA**

**Diary Times Desk :** A 52-year-old Indian-origin man is among four people killed as a four-storey Hindu temple under construction collapsed in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province, officials have said.

The New Ahobilam Temple of Protection, situated on a steep hill in Redcliffe in north of eThekweni (formerly Durban), was being expanded when a section of the building gave way on Friday while workers were on site.

The exact number of workers and temple officials believed to be trapped beneath tonnes of rubble is unknown.

While two people, a construction worker and a devotee, were confirmed dead on Friday, the death toll rose to four on Saturday after rescue teams recovered more bodies. Of the four deceased, one has been identified as Vicky Jairaj Panday, an executive member of the temple trust and manager of the construction project, local media reported, quoting officials.

**TIBETAN YOUTH CONGRESS  
CONDEMNS CHINA-APPOINTED  
PANCHEN LAMA'S REMARKS ON  
REINCARNATION**

**Diary Times Desk :** The Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC), the largest independence advocacy group within the Tibetan diaspora, publicly denounced the recent statements made by the China-appointed Panchen Lama, Gyaltsen (Gyaincain) Norbu, on Friday, describing them as a political tactic intended to strengthen Beijing's influence over Tibetan religious matters, as reported by Phayul. During a state-sponsored symposium in Shigatse on December 8, Gyaltsen Norbu claimed that the reincarnation of 'living Buddhas' must "comply with Chinese law," receive formal endorsement from the Chinese government, and occur "without any interference from organisations or individuals outside the country," seemingly referring to the succession of the Dalai Lama. Additionally, he commended Beijing's involvement in his own selection as being a "legalised and standardised" process, according to the Phayul report. In an issued press release, the TYC expressed "deep concern" regarding the remarks made by the Chinese-appointed monk, which the organisation viewed as politically charged and disrespectful to Tibet's long-standing religious practices. "The statements from Gyaltsen Norbu, appointed by China.



PM MODI CONDEMNS "GHOSTLY" TERROR ATTACK AT BONDI BEACH IN AUSTRALIA

**Diary Times Desk :** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday strongly condemned the terrorist attack at Bondi Beach in Australia that targeted people celebrating the first day of the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, expressing condolences to the victims' families and solidarity with the Australian people. In a post on X, Prime Minister Modi said, "Strongly condemn the ghostly terrorist attack carried out today at Bondi Beach, Australia, targeting people celebrating the first day of the Jewish festival of Hanukkah." Extending condolences on behalf of India, he added, "On behalf of the people of India, I extend my sincere condolences to the families who lost their loved ones." Reiterating India's support for Australia, the Prime Minister said, "We stand in solidarity with the people of Australia in this hour of grief." He also underlined India's position on terrorism, stating, "India has zero tolerance towards terrorism and supports the fight against all forms and manifestations of terrorism." External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar also condemned the attack, expressing solidarity with the victims and their families. In a post on X, Jaishankar said, "Condemn in the strongest terms the terror attack on Hanukkah celebrations in Bondi beach, Australia. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families." The reactions from Indian leaders came as details emerged about the scale of the attack at Sydney's Bondi Beach, where more than 1,000 people had gathered to celebrate Hanukkah when the shooting occurred. Authorities later declared the incident a terrorist attack, CNN reported.



EAM JAISHANKAR CONDEMNS TERROR ATTACK ON HANUKKAH CELEBRATIONS AT BONDI BEACH

**Diary Times Desk :** External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday strongly condemned the terror attack targeting Hanukkah celebrations at Bondi Beach in Australia, expressing solidarity with the victims and their families. In a post on X, Jaishankar said, "Condemn in the strongest terms the terror attack on Hanukkah celebrations in Bondi beach, Australia. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families." His remarks came as details emerged about the scale and impact of the attack at Sydney's Bondi Beach, where more than 1,000 people had gathered to celebrate Hanukkah when the shooting erupted. Authorities later declared the incident a terrorist attack, CNN reported.

CLOSED SESSION OF OLI'S UML STARTS IN KATHMANDU TO SELECT PARTY'S NEW LEADERSHIP

**Diary Times Desk :** A closed session of the 11th General Convention of the CPN-UML (Communist Party of Nepal- Unified Marxist Leninist) has started in Kathmandu to select the party's new leadership. The session began at 3 PM (Local Time) in Kathmandu, following the inauguration ceremony in Bhaktapur on Sunday, which continues today and tomorrow. Former Nepali Prime Minister and Party Chair KP Sharma Oli is facing a leadership challenge from Senior Vice-Chair Ishwor Pokharel. However, neither party has announced its panel. Pokharel, who has declared his candidacy for the chairmanship, is reportedly supported by former President and former party vice-chair Bidhya Devi Bhandari's faction, raising speculation about a potential "Ishwor-Bidhya" panel.

MACRON DENOUNCES "ANTISEMITIC" TERROR ATTACK ON HANUKKAH GATHERING IN SYDNEY

**Diary Times Desk :** French President Emmanuel Macron condemned the attack in Sydney that targeted people gathered to celebrate Hanukkah, describing it as an "antisemitic" terrorist act and expressing solidarity with those affected. In a post on X, Macron said, "In Sydney, an antisemitic terrorist attack struck families gathered to celebrate Hanukkah." Extending France's support, he added, "France extends its thoughts to the victims, the injured and their loved ones." Emphasising shared grief, the French President said, "We share the pain of the Australian people," and reaffirmed France's resolve to confront hatred, stating that the country would "continue to fight relentlessly against antisemitic hatred, which hurts us all, wherever it strikes." Macron's remarks came as leaders across the world reacted to the deadly shooting at Australia's Bondi Beach, expressing shock and conveying condolences to the families of those affected. New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon underscored the close ties between the two countries, saying New Zealand and Australia are "family." In a post on X, he said he was "shocked by the distressing scenes at Bondi" and extended his thoughts to those impacted by the attack. United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer described the developments as "deeply distressing."



INDIA "REJECTS" BANGLADESH CLAIMS, REAFFIRMS SUPPORT FOR FREE, FAIR ELECTIONS

**Diary Times Desk :** India on Sunday "categorically rejected" the assertions made by the interim Government of Bangladesh, responding to Dhaka's recent press note and clarifying its position amid heightened diplomatic exchanges between the two neighbours. In a press release issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), it stated, "India categorically rejects the assertions made by the interim Government of Bangladesh in its press note dated 14 December 2025." The statement came minutes after the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the Indian High Commissioner to lodge Dhaka's strong concerns over statements made by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, accusing her of inciting violence from abroad. Reiterating its consistent stance, India underlined its support for the democratic process in Bangladesh. "We have consistently reiterated our position in favour of free, fair, inclusive and credible elections being held in Bangladesh in a peaceful atmosphere," the MEA said. Addressing allegations that Indian territory was being used for activities against Bangladesh's interests, the MEA firmly rejected the charge. "India has never allowed its territory to be used for activities inimical to the interests of the friendly people of Bangladesh," the statement said.

TAIWAN CONDEMNS CHINA POLICY PAPER, REJECTS CLAIM OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER ISLAND

**Diary Times Desk :** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) accused China of misrepresenting the facts after Beijing, in a policy document, stated that "Taiwan is an inseparable part of China's territory" and expressed opposition to "Taiwan independence in any form", as reported by the Taipei Times. Earlier this week, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a press conference to unveil its document titled China's Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean, in which it asserted that the "one China" principle is the fundamental basis for China in building diplomatic ties with other nations. "The Chinese government recognizes that the majority of Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries support the one China principle, acknowledge that there is only one China globally, consider Taiwan an inseparable part of China's territory, and view the government of the People's Republic of China [PRC] as the sole legitimate government representing all of China, while opposing 'Taiwan independence' in any form," the document stated, according to the Taipei Times report. The ministry insisted that Beijing's erroneous assertion that "Taiwan is an inseparable part of China's territory" and its claim to oppose.

UK PM KEIR STARMER EXPRESSES CONDOLENCES AFTER DEADLY BONDI BEACH SHOOTING

**Diary Times Desk :** UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer expressed condolences following the deadly shooting at Australia's Bondi Beach, calling the incident deeply distressing and extending solidarity to those affected. In a post on X, Starmer said, "Deeply distressing news from Australia. The United Kingdom sends our thoughts and condolences to everyone affected by the appalling attack in Bondi beach. I'm being kept updated on the developing situation." His remarks came as world leaders strongly condemned the attack and urged authorities to take stronger steps to counter antisemitism and ensure the safety of Jewish communities. At least 10 people were killed and 12 others injured, including two police officers, after multiple gunmen opened fire on a crowded beach, the Sydney Morning Herald reported. The shooting took place on the first evening of Hanukkah, as Jewish Sydneysiders had gathered near the Chanukah by the Sea festival to mark the holiday, according to the Sydney Morning Herald. Israeli President Isaac Herzog denounced the incident as a targeted assault on Jews. "Our sisters and brothers in Sydney, Australia, have been attacked by vile terrorists in a very cruel attack on Jews who went to light the first candle of Hanukkah," Herzog said.



MASS SHOOTING AT SYDNEY'S BONDI BEACH LEAVES TEN DEAD, INCLUDING GUNMAN

**Diary Times Desk :** At least nine people were killed in a shooting attack at Sydney's Bondi Beach, New South Wales Police told CNN. One gunman was also killed in the incident. Reacting to the attack, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese described the scenes at the popular beach as "shocking and distressing." He said, "Police and emergency responders are on the ground working to save lives." Authorities confirmed that the police operation remains ongoing, with security forces deployed across the area. New South Wales Police advised "anyone at the scene" to take shelter in a post on social media, urging the public to avoid the beach and surrounding areas. Multiple people were reported injured in the shooting, according to the Sydney Morning Herald. A local witness told the newspaper, "I saw at least 10 people on the ground and blood everywhere." Separately, Alex Ryvchin, co-chief executive of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, told Sky News that the shooting occurred during an event at the beach celebrating the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, which began at sundown.

SEVERAL PEOPLE FEARED DEAD AFTER GUNFIRE ERUPTS AT BONDI BEACH DURING HANUKKAH GATHERING

**Diary Times Desk :** Several people are feared dead following a shooting incident at Bondi Beach, where dozens of rounds were fired into a large crowd on Sunday evening, triggering panic and a police warning for the public to take shelter, according to The Sydney Morning Herald. As reported by The Sydney Morning Herald, the incident occurred shortly after 6.40 pm, coinciding with the first night of Hanukkah. Residents in the area described police vehicles rushing towards Bondi as large numbers of people fled the beach amid scenes of chaos. Police later confirmed that two people were taken into custody at Bondi Beach, the report said, while at least one of the suspected gunmen is believed to have been killed during the incident. Herald journalists at the scene reported multiple fatalities, with injured victims being transported by ambulance to Prince of Wales Hospital in Randwick. Separate police sources cited by the outlet said a NSW Police officer was among those shot, though the officer's condition was not immediately known. Eyewitness accounts described the intensity of the attack, with people in Bondi saying.

'VILE': ISRAELI LEADERS CONDEMN DEADLY SYDNEY CHANUKAH ATTACK

**Diary Times Desk :** Israeli leaders strongly condemned a terrorist attack on a Chanukah celebration in Sydney, Australia, on Sunday, which left multiple people dead and wounded at the Bondi Beach event. According to Australian reports, two gunmen opened fire on a menorah-lighting celebration at Sydney's popular Bondi Beach, attended by around 2,000 people. Numerous people were killed or injured. Speaking at a ceremony honoring immigrant contributions to Israel, President Isaac Herzog called the attack "vile" and expressed solidarity with the victims. "At these very moments, our sisters and brothers in Sydney, Australia, have been attacked by vile terrorists in a very cruel attack on Jews who went to light the first candle of Chanukah on Bondi Beach," Herzog said. "Our hearts go out to them. The heart of the entire nation of Israel misses a beat at this very moment. As we pray for the recovery of the wounded, we pray for them and we pray for those who lost their lives."

LACK OF BASIC SERVICES, WEAK LAW ENFORCEMENT WORSEN CRISIS IN TIRAH VALLEY

**Diary Times Desk :** The worsening conditions in Tirah Valley have exposed significant failures in Pakistani governance, with security officials citing the lack of basic services, ineffective administration, and insufficient law enforcement as major issues in this remote area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as reported by The Express Tribune (TET). Frontier Corps officials indicated that the void caused by inadequate governance has been taken advantage of by extremist and criminal organisations, including Fitna-al-Khawarij, which they claim fosters instability and finances their actions through drug trafficking and extortion. The Inspector General of the Frontier Corps Khyber Pakhtunkhwa North mentioned that the province has a 1,224-kilometre-long border with Afghanistan, with around 717 kilometres under the supervision of the FC. He explained that the difficult landscape includes snow-laden.

ISRAEL'S HIGH COURT OVERTURNS GOVERNMENT'S ATTEMPT TO REMOVE ATTORNEY GENERAL



**Diary Times Desk :** Israel's Supreme Court on Sunday overturned the government's decision to dismiss Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara, ruling that she will continue to serve in her position. The decision also criticized the government for procedural flaws and a lack of legal foundation in its attempt to remove the country's top legal advisor. "The Attorney General continues to serve in her position lawfully; the dismissal decision is void; and any unilateral action that could change her status, powers, or working methods is inconsistent with this ruling," the court said. The expanded panel of seven justices stressed that the rule of law applies to all, including state authorities, and highlighted the "great discomfort" caused by the government's conduct. The controversy centers on the government's dismissal of Baharav-Miara in August. According to the Supreme Court, the procedural changes were applied retrospectively and lacked consultation, alternatives, or a proper factual and legal foundation. "This decision was made in a lightning-fast process, without organized staff work and in sharp deviation from the Shamgar Committee's recommendations," the court said, referring to a previous advisory body that had established guidelines to ensure the Attorney General's independence from political pressure.



"RUSSIA IS DRAGGING OUT THE WAR," SAYS ZELENSKYY AS RUSSIAN STRIKES LEAVE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS WITHOUT POWER



**Diary Times Desk :** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday said Russia continues to target Ukraine's energy infrastructure, leaving hundreds of thousands of families without electricity, heating and water, even as Kyiv prepares for crucial diplomatic engagements with the United States and European partners aimed at ending the war. In a series of posts on social media, Zelenskyy said Ukrainian emergency and utility services have been working continuously since Friday to restore basic services after fresh Russian strikes. "The situation remains difficult - hundreds of thousands of families are still without electricity in Mykolaiv, Odesa, Kherson, Chernihiv, Donetsk, Sumy, and Dnipro regions," he said, thanking workers involved in repair efforts. Zelenskyy added that Russian attacks continued overnight, leaving civilians wounded. "Russia is dragging out the war and seeks to inflict as much harm as possible on our people," he said. According to the Ukrainian president, Russia carried out an intense wave of attacks over the past week alone. "In total, the Russians launched more than 1,500 attack drones, nearly 900 guided aerial bombs, and 46 missiles of various types against Ukraine this week.

INDIAN COAST GUARD RESCUES UKRAINIAN NATIONAL AFTER HEART ATTACK OFF GOA

**Diary Times Desk :** The Indian Coast Guard on Saturday carried out a swift medical evacuation of a 62-year-old Ukrainian national who suffered a heart attack while onboard a merchant vessel off the coast of Goa, the Indian Coast Guard said. According to the Indian Coast Guard, Coast Guard Ship C-420 conducted the emergency medevac of the crew member from the Malta-flagged merchant vessel MV Interasia Amplify. The rescue operation was carried out promptly after the distress call was received, ensuring the patient was safely evacuated for urgent medical treatment. The ICG described the operation as a reflection of its "resolute commitment to safeguard lives at sea," highlighting the force's readiness to respond to maritime emergencies at any hour. In a separate maritime security operation earlier this week, the Indian Coast Guard apprehended 11 Pakistani fishermen after their fishing boat was found inside Indian waters.

BALUCH AMERICAN CONGRESS PRESIDENT URGES BOLLYWOOD TO EXPOSE 'FORCED OCCUPATION' OF BALUCHISTAN

**Diary Times Desk :** Indian High Commissioner to Tara Chand, President of the Baluch American Congress, has strongly appealed to Bollywood actors and the Indian film industry to produce a powerful film highlighting what he described as Pakistan's forced and undemocratic occupation of Baluchistan. In a post on X, Chand asserted that Baluchistan had attained independence before being forcibly occupied by Pakistan in March 1948. He claimed that since the occupation, the Pakistani army has invaded and maintained control over Baluchistan and its regions, leading to decades of conflict and repression. Chand alleged that for decades, Baluchistan's vast natural resources, worth billions of dollars, have been systematically looted. According to him, natural gas, minerals, gold, silver, coal, as well as coastal and ocean resources have been exploited.

BASC WEBINAR HIGHLIGHTS WIDESPREAD HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AGAINST BALUCH IN IRAN AND PAKISTAN

**Diary Times Desk :** The Baluch Advocacy and Studies Centre (BASC) held a webinar on Saturday, 13 December 2025, to discuss the severe and ongoing human rights abuses experienced by the Baluch community in both Iran and Pakistan, as stated in BASC's press release. The event gathered renowned international specialists, scholars, and advocates for Baluch human rights to illuminate issues such as enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, structural discrimination, and the distinct impact of state repression on different genders. Participants included Mohammed Al-Obaidi from the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID); Raha Bahreini, an Iran researcher at Amnesty International; Dr. Sabiha Baloch, leader of the Baluch Yakjehti Committee (BYC); Abdollah Aref, Lead Researcher on Iran at BASC; Mohsen Burhanzei, Director of Media and Communications at BASC; and Aisha Baloch, Research Associate at BASC. The session was moderated by Qambar Malik Baloch, BASC's General Secretary.



US LAWMAKER RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY CONDEMNS ANTI-SEMITIC AND ANTI-INDIAN GRAFFITI AT NYU LIBRARY

**Diary Times Desk :** US Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi on Saturday strongly condemned reports of antisemitic, anti-Indian and racist graffiti found inside a library at New York University. In a statement, Krishnamoorthi reacted to reports of hateful graffiti, including swastikas and slurs, discovered at the Bern Dibner Library in Brooklyn, part of New York University. "The hateful graffiti discovered at NYU's Bern Dibner Library, including antisemitic symbols and slurs targeting Indian students and other communities, is deeply disturbing and wholly unacceptable," he said. The Indian-American lawmaker said acts of hatred and intimidation have no place on college campuses or in society at large. "Acts of hatred and intimidation have no place on our campuses or anywhere in our society," Krishnamoorthi said, adding that the incident must be thoroughly investigated.

CURFEW IMPOSED IN THAILAND'S TRAT PROVINCE AS BORDER CLASHES WITH CAMBODIA CONTINUE

**Diary Times Desk :** Thailand's military on Sunday imposed a curfew in parts of Trat Province, citing the ongoing security situation along the border areas, Xinhua reported.

In an official order, the military said a curfew has been enforced with immediate effect in five districts of Trat Province--Khlung Yai, Bo Rai, Laem Ngop, Khao Saming and Mueang Trat. Residents in these areas have been instructed not to leave their homes between 7:00 PM and 05:00 AM the next day.

Thai media reports said the decision followed an incident late Saturday night in which three M79 grenades were fired at the headquarters of the Marine Corps Task Force in Trat Province. The grenades are believed to have been launched from within Thai territory. No casualties were reported as the explosives landed in an uninhabited area.

This is the second Thai province to impose a curfew since the latest round of clashes along the Thailand-Cambodia border began. Earlier, the Thai military had imposed similar restrictions in four border districts of Sa Kaeo Province on Wednesday.

The curfew announcement comes amid continuing hostilities and heightened tensions between Thailand and Cambodia.

## CED GUJARAT SIGNS MOU WITH BOSCH TO SET UP HVAC SKILL DEVELOPMENT CENTRES

**Diary Times Desk :** Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED), Government of Gujarat, has signed an MoU with Bosch Home Comfort India Limited to establish Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Skill Development Centres in Northern Gujarat. According to a release, the collaboration will establish HVAC Skill Development Centres across Northern Gujarat, with the nodal centre to open at Ganpat University in Mehsana. This partnership aims to deliver specialised technical training, enhance employability, and foster entrepreneurship in the HVAC sector, while aligning with Gujarat's vision for industrial excellence and workforce development. The initiative supports the state's broader economic objectives by creating a pipeline of skilled professionals equipped to meet current and future industry demands, the release added. The centre aims to train over 2,000 students and technicians across residential and commercial HVAC segments, making a substantial contribution to building a pipeline of skilled professionals ready to serve the evolving needs of the industry.

## INDIA POISED FOR NEXT PHASE OF MULTI-TRILLION-DOLLAR WEALTH CREATION: MOSL

**Diary Times Desk :** India is entering a decisive phase of economic expansion that could redefine wealth creation over the next two decades, according to the 30th Wealth Creation Study by Motilal Oswal Financial Services. Drawing inspiration from the past 17 years, during which India's economy expanded fourfold from USD 1 trillion in 2008 to USD 4 trillion in 2025, the study envisions a similar quadrupling of GDP to USD 16 trillion over the next 17 years, from 2025 to 2042. The study highlights a sharp acceleration in absolute wealth creation. While the previous 17-year period added USD 3 trillion to India's GDP, the upcoming phase is expected to add USD 12 trillion, representing a fourfold increase in absolute value creation. This scale of expansion is expected to generate a powerful "wealth effect," significantly boosting consumption, investment, and corporate profitability across sectors. A key beneficiary of this transformation is expected.

## MCAP OF 8 MOST VALUED FIRMS ERODES BY RS 79,129 CRORE; BAJAJ FINANCE, ICICI BANK HIT HARD

**Diary Times Desk :** The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued domestic firms eroded by Rs 79,129.21 crore last week, with Bajaj Finance and ICICI Bank taking the biggest hit, amid a largely bearish trend in equities. Last week, the BSE benchmark index declined by 444.71 points or 0.51 per cent. From the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries and Larsen & Toubro were the only gainers, while HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, Bajaj Finance and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) faced erosion from their valuation. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Bajaj Finance dropped by Rs 19,289.7 crore to Rs 6,33,106.69 crore. ICICI Bank's valuation tumbled Rs 18,516.31 crore to Rs 9,76,668.15 crore. The mcap of Bharti Airtel tanked Rs 13,884.63 crore to Rs 11,87,948.11 crore and that of State Bank of India diminished by Rs 7,846.02 crore to Rs 8,88,816.17 crore. Infosys lost Rs 7,145.95 crore from its market valuation which stood at Rs 6,64,220.58 crore. The mcap of TCS declined by Rs 6,783.92 crore to Rs 11,65,078.45 crore and that of HDFC Bank dipped by Rs 4,460.93 crore to Rs 15,38,558.71 crore.



## 50% OF INDIAN FAMILY BUSINESSES REPORT REVENUES BETWEEN \$1-30 BILLION ANNUALLY: DELOITTE

**Diary Times Desk :** Nearly half of Indian family businesses report annual revenues ranging from USD 1 billion to USD 30 billion, with 36 per cent falling within the USD 1-5 billion range, according to a latest report by Deloitte. Deloitte Private's Family Business Insights Series: Defining the family business landscape, 2025, reveals that family-owned businesses are evolving to fuel long-term growth. The report surveyed 1,587 family businesses across 36 countries, including 50 in India, and conducted in-depth interviews with 30 senior executives. Observing the trends, K R Sekar, Partner and Leader - Deloitte Private, Deloitte India, said, "The growth of India's family businesses is no accident. It is driven by multiple interlinked factors, including greater access to capital, generational shifts, the formation of family offices and the robustness of India's public markets, along with leading transformation through technology and inclusion." According to the report, family-owned businesses worldwide are on a strong growth trajectory, with the number of businesses generating at least US\$100 million in revenue expected to rise by 22 per cent by 2030. In India, family businesses are showing exceptional resilience and optimism, with over 63 per cent achieving double-digit revenue growth in 2024. Projections for 2025-2026 are equally robust, with 75 per cent of Indian family enterprises targeting growth rates above 15 per cent.



## INDIA LEADS GLOBAL GENAI LEARNING WITH 3.6 MN ENROLLMENTS, HIGHEST WORLDWIDE: REPORT

**Diary Times Desk :** India has emerged as the global leader in learning about Generative AI (GenAI), recording an impressive 3.6 million enrollments in 2025, the highest worldwide, according to a report by online learning platform Coursera. This surge is a significant reflection of India's rapid transition toward a digital, AI-ready workforce, according to Coursera's 2025 Learner Trends report. Prepared by surveying 32.8 million learners, the report added that GenAI continued to dominate India's learning patterns in 2025. The report further added that Indian learners are enrolling in both introductory and advanced GenAI programs at an accelerating pace, with the country now recording three GenAI enrollments every minute--up from one per minute last year. Popular courses such as Google AI Essentials, Generative AI for Everyone, and Generative AI: Introduction and Applications have driven this massive growth in AI education, the report stated. Beyond AI, learners continued building strong foundations in data, cybersecurity, digital marketing, project execution and finance, reflecting a workforce preparing for increasingly specialised, digital-first roles. This surge in skills development is also translating into tangible outcomes.





**REC LTD COMPLETES VERIFICATION OF \$500 MN AND Y=61BN GREEN BOND USAGE**

**Diary Times Desk :** REC Limited, a government-owned power sector company, has finished an independent check to confirm that the money it raised through its green bonds was used properly for environmentally friendly projects. These bonds include USD 500 million raised in September 2024 and about JPY 61 billion raised in January 2024, both issued under its green funding guidelines. The PSU said in a release that the independent verification, conducted in accordance with the International Capital Market Association (ICMA)'s Green Bond Principles confirmed that the entire net proceeds from both the issuances have been fully allocated to eligible projects consistent with REC's Green Finance Framework. REC's inaugural Green Bond Impact Report (FY 2025) reflects a maturing green-finance ecosystem where accountability is as important as ambition.

**ADB APPROVES USD 108 MN LOAN TO MIZORAM TO STRENGTHEN PUBLIC HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

**Diary Times Desk :** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a USD 108 million results-based loan to support the Government of Mizoram in strengthening its public health care system and achieving universal health coverage. The Supporting Public Health Care System Strengthening to Achieve Universal Health Care for Mizoram Programme aims to improve equitable access to affordable, high-quality health services for the state's 1.38 million residents, particularly women, older people, and persons with disabilities, the ADB added in a release. "This programme will help the state roll out its new Mizoram Universal Health Care Scheme (MUHCS), which brings all citizens under one health insurance umbrella consisting of subsidised and contributory mechanisms," said ADB Country Director for India Mio Oka. "By leveraging and augmenting existing Central (Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana) and state government (Mizoram State Health Care Scheme) programmes under a single, seamless, cashless, and paperless platform, the state ensures poor and vulnerable people get free coverage.

**CENTRE IMPLEMENTS QUALITY CONTROL ORDERS WITH RELAXATIONS FOR MSMEs TO PROTECT DOMESTIC PRODUCTION**

**Diary Times Desk :** The Central Government has implemented Quality Control Orders (QCOs) in a manner with exemptions and relaxations for the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to ensure no disruption to the domestic production, said Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje in a written reply in Lok Sabha. Minister of State for MSMEs Karandlaje highlighted key relaxations and exemptions for MSMEs, according to a release by the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises. As part of the relaxations, an additional six-month extension will be provided to the micro enterprises and a three-month extension for small enterprises to ensure the QCOs. Exemption for imports will also be provided to the domestic manufacturers for producing export-oriented products. An exemption for the import of up to 200 units for research & development purposes is also made. The provision for clearance of legacy stock (manufactured or imported before implementation) within six months from the effective date has also been made. She added that based on the feedback on certification processes, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has implemented some financial and technical relaxations for the MSME sector. "To support MSMEs, financial incentives are provided by BIS in annual minimum marking fee with concession of 80% (for Micro Enterprises), 50% (Small enterprises) and 20% (Medium Enterprises).



**ADB APPROVES \$240 MILLION LOAN FOR CHENNAI METRO EXPANSION IN INDIA**



**Diary Times Desk :** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a USD 240 million loan--the second tranche of the Chennai Metro Rail Investment Project--to support the expansion of the metro rail network and provide cleaner, safer, and more reliable urban transport across the Chennai Metropolitan Area, India.

This tranche is part of ADB's USD 780 million multitranche financing facility for the project, approved in 2022, and follows the initial USD 350 million loan under the first tranche, a release by the ADB added.

The new financing will support key sections of metro lines 3, 4, and 5, covering 20 kilometers of elevated and underground corridors and 18 new stations with universal access features and disaster-resilient infrastructure to keep passengers and services safe during extreme weather events.

"This project will deliver safer, faster, and more reliable daily travel in Chennai while advancing the city's low-carbon development goals," said ADB Country Director for India Mio Oka. "We look forward to continued collaboration to expand metro connectivity and further enhance the capacity of Chennai's metro and suburban rail systems to meet the city's growing mobility needs."

Under tranche 2, ADB will fund civil and system works for metro line 3's elevated section (Sholinganallur-SIPCOT-2), line 4's underground section (Lighthouse-Kodambakkam), and key system components for line 5, including power, traction, and telecommunications. The tranche will also support upgrades to multimodal interchange areas to ensure smoother transfers between metro, buses, bicycles, and other last-mile transport options.

STATE-LEVEL MEN'S BOXING  
COMPETITION BEGINS, 150  
PUGILISTS TO TAKE PART

**Diary Times Desk :** The HP State Elite Men's Boxing Championship-2025 started at Paras Public School, Bhawarna, 15 km from here today. Gopal Nag, Mayor of the Palampur Municipal Corporation, lit the ceremonial lamp before an idol of Goddess Saraswati to inaugurates the championship. Around 150 players in the 20 to 40 years age group, including state and national-level players, would demonstrate their skills in the competition. The Mayor congratulated Paras Public School for hosting the national-level event. He said that sports contributed to the overall development of a person. He assured the Himachal Pradesh Boxing Association that he would soon hold a meeting to discuss starting a boxing training facility in Palampur. He announced a contribution of Rs 11,000 for the successful organisation of the competition. Olympian Ashish Chaudhary, national-level star player Avinash Jamwal (silver medalist) along with many renowned boxers would enter the ring to make the matches exciting.

FOG, COLD WAVE AFFECT  
POLLING DURING EARLY  
HOURS IN ABOHAR

**Diary Times Desk :** Poor visibility due to fog and a cold wave affected polling for the zila parishad and panchayat samiti in most of the villages in the Abohar and Balluana constituencies. These areas are part of Fazilka district, which was among the most affected by recent floods. The minimum temperature was recorded at 12.9 °C in the morning hours. Officials confirmed that average polling in Fazilka district was 22.71 per cent by 12 noon. Polling further increased to 36.2 per cent by 2 pm. MLA Sandeep Jakhar was in the first batch to cast vote in Panjkosi village. He said, "I have performed my (constitutional) duty and wish all the candidates a success."

There are two polling stations in Ruherianwali village, about 13km from Abohar. Despite fog, some voters turned up during early hours at Government High Smart School to cast their votes.

The total population of Ruherianwali village is around 3,649, including approximately 1,909 males and 1,740 females, with a sex ratio of 911 females per 1,000 males.

NADDA: CENTRE PUMPED IN RS 3,789 CRORE AS DISASTER AID, CONG  
SQUANDERED IT

**Diary Times Desk :** Claiming that the Centre has given Rs 3,789 crore as disaster relief to Himachal Pradesh since 2023, BJP national president and Union Minister JP Nadda accused the state government of misusing the funds and misguiding the people of the state.n Addressing a large gathering at a function organised by the state BJP here today to felicitate him on the stupendous victory in the Bihar Assembly elections, Nadda urged the people to amend the mistake they made in 2022 elections by bringing the BJP back to power in 2027. "The BJP's double engine government will put the state back on the path of development. The Congress government has derailed the state from the path of development. This government is steeped in corruption and needs to go and I am sure you will change it," Nadda said amidst applause and sloganeering from the gathering. The event was attended by the party's top state leadership including Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur, state BJP president Rajiv Bindal, MP Anurag Thakur, state in-charge Shrikant Sharma and others.



PUNJAB LOCAL BODY POLLS: STATE ELECTION  
COMMISSION ORDERS RE POLL AT 4 BOOTHS AMID  
COMPLAINTS OF BOOTH CAPTURING

**Diary Times Desk :** A voter turnout of over 30 per cent was recorded till 2 pm in the Zila Parishad and Panchayat Samiti elections in Punjab on Sunday, officials said. The polling began at 8 am and continued till at 4 pm. The counting of votes will take place on December 17. Elections were held to elect members of 347 zones of 22 Zila Parishads and 2,838 zones of 153 Panchayat Samitis. Over 9,000 candidates were in the fray, and a total of 1.36 crore voters were eligible to cast their ballots. According to official estimates, polling in Ropar district remained at around 50.20 per cent. The lowest turnout was in Nangal block at just 45.8 per cent, followed by Nurpur Bedi at 46 per cent, Morinda 50.95 per cent, Ropar 52.6 per cent, Chamkaur Sahib 52.9 per cent and Anandpur Sahib 53 per cent. The turnout was particularly low during the early hours, with only about eight per cent of voters casting their ballots till 10 am. The State Election Commission (SEC) has ordered repoll at four polling booths – Chahiyan in Gurdaspur, Babania and Madhir in Muktsar, and Chananwal in Barnala – following complaints that presiding officers allegedly absconded with ballot papers and cases of booth capturing were reported.

BJP CANDIDATE'S BROTHER INJURED IN  
ATTACK IN FARIDKOT

**Diary Times Desk :** BJP block samiti candidate Amar Singh's brother, Lakhwinder Singh, was seriously injured in a violent attack in Ghugiana village of Faridkot district on Sunday evening. The incident took place outside the victim's house, where assailants allegedly used sharp-edged weapons and also vandalised the candidate's car. The entire incident was captured on CCTV cameras installed at the house. Singh was rushed to Guru Gobind Singh Medical College and Hospital, Faridkot, where he is undergoing treatment. BJP leaders Sandeep Singh Sunny Brar and district president Gaurav Kakkar visited the hospital to inquire about his condition. BJP leaders alleged that Congress and Aam Aadmi Party supporters carried out the attack, claiming it was a result of frustration over the BJP's growing influence in villages and the anticipated victory of their candidate. They also demanded strict action against the culprits. Faridkot SP(H) Maninder Bir Singh said the incident was not related to the ongoing zila parishad and block samiti elections. He stated that the clash occurred several metres away from the polling booth and appeared to be the result of a personal dispute. Police have initiated an investigation and assured appropriate legal action based on the findings.

### YOUR HOROSCOPE

15-12-2025

**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.

**Libra**  
Today is going to be a busy day for you. Employed people will get a chance to work with senior officers due to advancement in their professional field. People doing business should avoid exchanging money with any unknown person today. Pregnant women may have to face problems due to changing weather.

**Scorpio**  
Today you may have to face huge arguments in your family over small matters. Employed people may have to face mental problems due to extra workload in the workplace. People doing business may have to travel abroad in connection with business expansion. Diabetic patients should get themselves checked by a doctor in case of any problem today.

**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**  
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.



3 BUSES COLLIDE IN JHAJJAR  
DUE TO LOW VISIBILITY

**Diary Times Desk :** Three buses collided at Kulana Chowk in Jhajjar, Haryana, due to low visibility caused by dense fog on Sunday morning.

According to the SHO of the Machrauli area, the first bus from Khatusham suffered significant damage compared to the second bus. The accident occurred when a truck was standing in the middle of the road.

"We saw that there were 3 buses, the first one with the most damage was coming from Khatusham. And behind that, there were two local buses. The driver of the first bus stated that a truck was blocking the middle of the road... there was a lot of fog, so this is the reason for the collision," SHO told ANI. The SHO further stated that the driver sustained a significant leg injury and has been referred to the PGI, Rohtak, for treatment.

OPERATION HOTSPOT  
DOMINATION: OVER 2,000  
ACCUSED ARRESTED IN 12  
DAYS

**Diary Times Desk :** Under Haryana's state-wide campaign "Operation Hotspot Domination" the police teams simultaneously raided 805 identified drug and gambling hotspots on December 12.

During this action, 210 individuals were arrested and 69 new cases registered. Over the past 12 days, the police have registered 1,117 FIRs and arrested 2,006 offenders, including 430 involved in violent crimes and 139 charged with illegal possession of arms. During this period, 99 fresh cases related to illegal weapons were also registered. Additionally, the Haryana Police strengthened inter-state coordination by sharing 606 intelligence reports with other states to ensure that criminals do not evade the law by crossing borders. During the campaign, Rs 21.20 lakh in cash, 60.9 kg of ganja, 1.6 kg of heroin, 92 kg of opium husk, 3.8 kg of charas, and 282 kg of poppy husk were recovered. The police also seized 12 cars and 51 two-wheelers. On December 12 alone, recoveries included 183.3 grams of heroin, 15 kg of opium husk, 1 kg of charas, and 29.9 kg of ganja. Besides, the police seized more than 10,000 narcotic tablets, 29,574 bottles of English liquor, 8,884 bottles of country-made liquor, and 1,801 litre of illicit alcohol.

BALLOT PAPER 'POSTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA' BEFORE POLLING; SAD COMPLAINS TO  
STATE ELECTION COMMISSION

**Diary Times Desk :** The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) has submitted a complaint with the State Election Commission (SEC) citing violation of model code of conduct in the ongoing zila parishad and block samiti polls in the state. Citing an incident, SAD's chief spokesperson Daljit Cheema claimed that an AAP candidate from Fatehgarh Sahib had posted ballot papers on social media approximately 10 hours before the commencement of polling. The photographs show the ballot papers bearing the printed serial numbers, "This incident is clearly in contrast to the free, fair and transparent election process and it calls for urgent intervention by the SEC," he said. The SAD demanded the SEC to order immediately a thorough inquiry into how a candidate could gain access to the ballot papers prior to the polling. "We demand an immediate inquiry, fixing the responsibility of the officials involved." SAD's legal cell head Arshdeep Kler said a written complaint has been submitted with the SEC as the incident was a serious breach of election law. He said the silence or inaction in the matter would seriously damage public faith in the democratic process. "It was like undermining the integrity of the polling process by flashing the ballot paper publicly in advance."



HARYANA MINISTER ANIL VIJ ESCAPES  
UNHURT IN ACCIDENT IN AMBALA  
CANTONMENT



**Diary Times Desk :** Haryana Cabinet Minister Anil Vij narrowly escaped injuries after his car was involved in a minor accident under the jurisdiction of Parao Police Station in Ambala Cantonment late last night. As per information, around 10 pm, the minister was on his way in his car when another car driven by a Sub-inspector of the Special Task Force (STF) of Haryana Police, hit the minister's car. The security personnel caught the driver on the spot. The minister escaped unhurt in the accident. SHO Parao police station Dharambir said that last night near the Maharaja Dhaba, a car driven by an SI of STF hit the minister's car. A case was registered and the medical examination was conducted. Further investigation in the matter is underway.

BHUPINDER HOODA BACKS RAHUL  
GANDHI'S EVM CHARGE, SAYS ELECTION  
COMMISSION HAS LOST NEUTRALITY

**Diary Times Desk :** Senior Congress leader and former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Sunday endorsed Rahul Gandhi's allegation that the Election Commission is no longer neutral, claiming that recent elections had exposed deep flaws in the electoral process.

Addressing the party's "Vote chor, gaddi chhod" rally at Ramlila ground in the national capital, Hooda said the elections held recently, including those in Maharashtra, Haryana and Karnataka, had now "proved" what Rahul Gandhi has been alleging for months, that the constitutional authority tasked with safeguarding free and fair polls had failed in its duty. "The Constitution gave every citizen the right to vote after Independence. Today, that very right is being manipulated," Hooda said, alleging large-scale interference in the voting process. Referring to growing public distrust in electronic voting machines, Hooda said citizens were openly demanding a return to a transparent voting system. "Even the common man says, get rid of EVMs," he said.

DENSE FOG TRIGGERS MASSIVE VEHICLE PILE-UP IN ROHTAK; 2 DEAD, 24 INJURED



**Diary Times Desk :** Low visibility caused by the season's first dense fog led to a massive pile-up of over 30 vehicles on National Highway-152 D near Kharkara village under Meham sub-division on Sunday morning, causing chaos on the route.

Vehicular traffic remained disrupted for over two hours following the accident. Residents of Kharkhara village and the Meham police rushed to the scene, calling Dial 112 vehicles to transport the injured to government hospitals in Meham and PGIMS, Rohtak.

The villagers helped rescue several people trapped in the damaged vehicles, transporting them to hospitals in their private vehicles. "The mishap occurred around 8 am. We immediately informed the police and the toll plaza staff. Since no ambulance was available at that time, the injured were taken to the hospital in police jeeps and private vehicles," said a local resident. Two of the injured, Ashish (30) of Charkhi Dadri and Sohan Lal (35) of Jind, succumbed to their injuries while 24 other injured, including women and children, are undergoing treatment at PGIMS-Rohtak and other hospitals.

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.



Brad Lendon But drones came to the forefront of warfare relatively recently, some analysts say, with the 2020 conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh a major turning point.

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.



Helen Regan

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.





A SPRINKLING OF CLASSIC WEEK HIGHLIGHTS: A 10TH-CENTURY GOSPEL BOOK, A TURNER SKETCH MADE AS A GIFT, A 2ND-CENTURY GREEK SCULPTURE...

**Diary Times Desk :** At the turn of the 20th century, Nicolaas van der Waay was one of Amsterdam’s leading artists, and a professor at the city’s prestigious Rijksakademie, says Alastair Plumb, director, senior specialist, European Art. ‘Among his best-known works are his depictions of the Dutch capital’s orphan girls, instantly recognisable by their red and black uniforms.’

The orphan girls were housed in the Burgerweeshuis, which was founded in 1520. Van der Waay wasn’t granted permission to sketch inside the orphanage, but the institution did let him have a uniform, which he used to stage scenes with models in his studio and around the city.

The prayer books in this scene indicate that the girls are on their way to church. Behind them, the glazed panorama of the city gently reflects the outlines of their bonnets. The image evokes civic pride, in both the city and its treatment of the less fortunate, but it says little about the harsh realities of life in the orphanage.

Van der Waay’s ledgers reveal that he completed at least three paintings of this scene. One is in Poland’s National Museum in Poznań, while another is in the Amsterdam Museum, which since 1975 has occupied the former site of the orphanage that didn’t allow Van der Waay within its walls.

These recently unearthed Gospels, containing the four books of the New Testament — Matthew, Mark, Luke and John — were made more than a millennium ago. They are written in Carolingian minuscule, a script established by the Emperor Charlemagne, and nail holes indicate that they may originally have been enclosed in a covering of precious metal and jewels, known as a ‘treasure binding’. Inside, one tantalising line of script reads ‘for the veiling of handmaidens of God’, suggesting that the manuscript was produced for women. A probable candidate for its origin is Essen Abbey, an Ottonian imperial abbey founded in the western region of modern-day Germany around 845 by Altfrid, a Saxon noble who was later canonised. Established as a community for women of nobility, it was presided over by an abbess, who performed the duties of a bishop and was answerable only to the Pope. The canonesses, meanwhile, could carry out a life of prayer and devotion without committing to the poverty or celibacy of nuns, living in their own homes and maintaining courtly staff.



A COLLECTOR’S GUIDE TO METEORITES

**Diary Times Desk :**

Meteorites are small rocks from space that impact the Earth. They are exceedingly rare: the collective weight of every meteorite known to exist is less than the world’s annual output of gold.

The vast majority originate from the asteroid belt and hail from 100 to 150 different asteroids. Asteroid meteorites are the oldest rocks around — a few hundred million years older than the oldest existing Earth rocks, and approximately 60 million years older than the Moon itself. A few hundred meteorites come from the Moon and Mars; they were ejected by collisions into interplanetary space where they eventually assumed Earth-crossing orbits.

Although there are more than 60,000 meteorites in the world’s collections, about two-thirds will never be available to the general public. And the resource is barely growing: each year, hunters recover only about eight to 10 fresh falls and a few hundred weathered non-Antarctic ‘finds’ (most of which weigh less than 200 grams).

For scientists to classify a meteorite into its proper category, the rock must be broken or cut; only then can well-characterised samples be offered for sale. Meteorite hunters, researchers and dealers work together in a worldwide enterprise to discover new specimens, uncover details about the origin of the solar system, and make samples available to the discerning collector.

Meteorites have been pelting the Earth throughout geological history. Sixty-six million years ago, an asteroid (essentially a giant meteorite) slammed into the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico, causing a mass extinction that wiped out the dinosaurs. Had that meteorite missed, there would be no cows, cats, pigs or people on this planet right now.

Some stone meteorites contain hundreds of organic compounds, including amino acids, the building blocks of proteins. Many scientists propose that the Earth provided a suitable environment for life to commence after meteorites and comets brought water and organic material to the planet’s surface. Had it not been for these extraterrestrial wanderers, there may have been no life on Earth at all.



BARCELONA YOUNGSTER AVAILABLE FOR COPA DEL REY MATCH AFTER BEING RELEASED BY NATIONAL TEAM



**Diary Times Desk :** Barcelona are set to begin their Copa del Rey campaign this midweek with a trip to face CD Guadalajara in the Round of 32.

The match presents a perfect opportunity for Hansi Flick to rotate his squad, resting key starters in defence like Alejandro Balde and Gerard Martin, who have accumulated significant minutes in recent weeks.

With rotations expected, the spotlight has fallen on the club's younger talents, particularly Jofre Torrents. The young left-back, who is currently with Barça Atlètic but works within the first-team dynamics, was a clear candidate to start or at least feature significantly against Guadalajara. However, his availability was initially in doubt due to a call-up from the Spanish U19 national team for the SBS International Cup in Japan, which would have kept him away from December 15 to 21.

BARCELONA CUSTODIAN RETURNS TO NORMAL TRAINING AFTER HEALTH SETBACK

**Diary Times Desk :** Barcelona goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny was not part of Barcelona's squad to face Osasuna last night after it came to light that he had suffered a medical setback.

The club soon confirmed that it was a bout of gastroenteritis that had struck the Polish international, and no clear deadline was given on his potential return.

Now, however, Mundo Deportivo reports that Szczesny has recovered from his illness and even trained normally with the team earlier today. Hansi Flick's plans were not significantly altered by the veteran's absence, given that Joan Garcia is fit and the first-choice goalkeeper by some distance.

Szczesny, meanwhile, is expected to return to the squad to face Guadalajara midweek in the Copa del Rey, although it remains to be seen if he features on the night.

With Marc-Andre Ter Stegen injured, Szczesny has been Barcelona's first-choice backup goalkeeper and even did a fabulous job replacing Garcia when the new signing was forced to undergo surgery earlier this year.

BARCELONA MIDFIELDER EXPECTED TO PLAY IN COPA DEL REY ROUND OF 32 TIE

**Diary Times Desk :** There has been a significant shift in Barcelona's team dynamics in midfield and defence lately, particularly revolving around Eric Garcia.

The former Man City starlet has performed masterfully in midfield alongside Pedri, as evidenced by his recent performance against CA Osasuna. Garcia's role in midfield once again came at the expense of Frenkie de Jong, who has struggled with health, family reasons, as well as performances. It is evident that Garcia's performances in midfield are putting pressure on Frenkie de Jong.

But the Dutchman will have a chance to prove himself when Barcelona take on CD Guadalajara in the Copa Del Rey's Round of 32 tie, reports Mundo Deportivo.

It will be a welcome start for the Dutchman, who hasn't started a single match for Barcelona since the end of November. He hasn't started for Barcelona in the month of December at all. Therefore, the midfielder will face a litmus test against CD Guadalajara, although coach Hansi Flick will be mindful of the fact that Guadalajara are a lower-tier opponent.

BARCELONA FRONTMAN EQUALS RECORD WITH JOHAN CRUYFF IN THE CLUB'S ALL-TIME GOALSCORERS' LIST

**Diary Times Desk :** Raphinha was one of Barcelona's top performers as they secured a comfortable 2-0 win over CA Osasuna this weekend.

It was a special game for the Brazilian international, whose return to full fitness has served as a boon for Barcelona, immediately improving their results.

Now, Raphinha has etched his name in Barcelona record books by equalling the record held by none other than Johan Cruyff. Indeed, Raphinha has officially caught up with Johan Cruyff in the list of top scorers in Barça history, reaching 43rd place in the all-time rankings.

Both Raphinha and the Dutch legend now sit on 60 goals in a Blaugrana shirt. However, the Brazilian's efficiency is notably superior. While Cruyff required 180 games to reach this milestone, the current Barcelona number 11 has achieved it in just 157 matches. Raphinha has already netted 6 goals this season. If he manages to replicate his stunning form from last season, where he scored 34 goals, he is projected to make a massive leap in the historical standings.

BARCELONA VETERAN 'DOUBTFUL' AHEAD OF COPA DEL REY CLASH AGAINST CD GUADALAJARA

**Diary Times Desk :** Following a win over CA Osasuna this weekend, Barcelona have returned to training as they prepare for midweek's Copa Del Rey encounter against CD Guadalajara.

It should be a routine affair for the Catalans, who are expected to win against a side competing in the lower tier of the Spanish footballing pyramid. Heading into this game, Wojciech Szczesny returned to normal training after facing a health setback earlier in the week.

However, there are concerns around Szczesny's compatriot, Robert Lewandowski. According to Mundo Deportivo, Robert Lewandowski was one of the players who couldn't train with the team and remained in the gym as a precaution.

The precaution was taken as part of Barcelona's plans to give all key starters a breather as the club brace themselves for a busy schedule ahead. The report adds that Lewandowski, who did some participate at all during the Osasuna game, did some warm-up exercises in the second half.

OSASUNA MANAGER CRITICAL OF HIS TEAM'S DISALLOWED GOAL VS BARCELONA: 'I DON'T UNDERSTAND'

**Diary Times Desk :** Barcelona's win over Osasuna last night was anything but straightforward, especially given how the Catalans were made to suffer until Raphinha scored the opener in the 70th minute.

There was, however, some controversy from the rivals' camp after the game over a disallowed equaliser for their team that came in a frenzy in the second half. Coming off a long-range free-kick, Osasuna converted well to level matters up but the goal was disallowed for Alejandro Catena who fell into Joan Garcia's path and took the goalkeeper down just before his teammate scored.

While it was quite clearly unintentional, the feeling from the Osasuna bench was that Catena himself fell only because of a foul on him and that their side should have merited a penalty at least. Osasuna's manager Alessio Lisici spoke about the incident in his post-match press conference where he was asked to detail his views on the disallowed goal. "I would love to see it from other angles, because the TV didn't show it much," he began, indicating his unhappiness with the outcome.

