

NEWS IN BRIEF

**RAPIDO BIKE TAXI
RIDER HELD FOR
MOLESTING WOMAN
PASSENGER IN
THANE, LOOTING
RS 1,000****Diary Times Desk :**

A Rapido bike taxi rider was arrested in Kalyan in Thane district for allegedly molesting a 26-year-old woman passenger and stealing Rs 1,000 from her, a police official said on Monday. Rider Siddhesh Pardeshi (19), a Class 7 drop out, was arrested on Sunday for the incident which took place on Saturday, Mahatma Phule police station senior inspector

Baliramsingh Pardeshi said. "The accused picked up the victim from the Chickenghar area after she booked a ride till her gym near the Kalyan railway station at 7 pm. Instead of proceeding to the intended destination, Pardeshi, who has been employed with Rapido for the last one-and-half months, diverted the scooter to a deserted, dark stretch near the police colony in the Syndicate area," he said. "When the woman objected, he stopped the scooter, grabbed her hand and behaved in an indecent manner. He also snatched her purse and took Rs 1,000 from it. The woman raised an alarm."

**SUPREME COURT
FROWNS UPON
PRACTICE OF
ALLOWING RICH
PEOPLE TO DO
'SPECIAL PUJAS' IN
TEMPLES****Diary Times Desk :**

The Supreme Court on Monday frowned upon the practice of allowing rich people to do 'special pujas' in temples after paying money, disrupting the resting time of the deity. "What they do is, after closing the temple at 12 noon, they do not allow the deity to rest even for a minute. They exploit the deity the most at this time. All affluent people who can afford to pay hefty amounts are allowed to do special pujas," a Bench led by CJI Surya Kant said while hearing a plea against the darshan timings and temple practices set by the court-constituted committee at Bankey Bihari Ji Temple. "That is not so. Your Lordships may ensure that it is proscribed. It is a very important period of rest for the deity. This is important. The court is raising an extremely important point. The timings are sacrosanct."

PM MODI

PM MODI ARRIVES IN JORDAN ON TWO-DAY VISIT



Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Jordan on Monday on a two-day visit aimed at further strengthening bilateral ties with the Arab nation. He was received at the airport by Jordan's Prime Minister Jafar Hassan.

His visit marks 75 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Jordan. Jordan is the first leg of Modi's four-day, three-nation tour, which will also take him to Ethiopia and Oman.

Later today, Modi will meet King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein for a one-on-one talk, to be followed by delegation-level talks.

On Tuesday, the Prime Minister and the King are expected to address an India-Jordan business event, which will be attended by leading businessmen from both countries.

The Prime Minister will also interact with the Indian community in Jordan and, along with the Crown Prince, is scheduled to visit Petra, the historic city that shares ancient trade linkages with India, subject to weather conditions.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, this is Prime Minister Modi's first full-fledged bilateral visit to Jordan. Modi had transited through Jordan in February 2018, while on his way to Palestine.

"Even though it was a transit visit, exceptional courtesies were accorded to him by His Majesty the King, making it more than just a transit visit... the current full bilateral visit (by an Indian prime minister) is taking place after an interval of 37 years," MEA said at a special briefing in New Delhi last week.

**BILLS FOR NUCLEAR SECTOR FOR PRIVATE PLAYERS, EDUCATION
OVERHAUL INTRODUCED IN LOK SABHA**

Diary Times Desk : The government introduced three new Bills in the Lok Sabha on Monday, including one to open up the tightly controlled civil nuclear sector to private players. The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, also introduced on Monday, seeks to facilitate universities and other higher educational institutions to become independent and self-governing, with a robust and transparent system of accreditation and autonomy.

Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan introduced the Bill. The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill seeks to open the civil nuclear power sector for private participation and overhaul the liability regime.

The SHANTI Bill, introduced by Minister of State in PMO Jitendra Singh, seeks to repeal the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010. "The Bill seeks to provide for a pragmatic civil liability regime for nuclear damage and to confer statutory status to the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board," Jitendra Singh said. The Repealing and Amending Bill, 2025, was introduced by Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal to repeal 71 laws which have outlived their utility in the statute books. Of the 71 laws, 65 are amendments to principal Acts, and six are principal laws. Opposition members Manish Tewari, N K Premachandran, Saugata Roy, and Jothamani opposed the Bill, contending that it was circulated late and they had little opportunity to study the draft legislation.

**PAHALGAM ATTACK: NIA CHARGESHEET NAMES
PAK TERROR GROUPS LET, TRF, AND 6 OTHERS**

Diary Times Desk : The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday filed a comprehensive chargesheet against six persons and two terrorist organisations, Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and its shadow outfit The Resistance Front (TRF), in connection with the Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed the lives of 25 tourists and a local pony operator.

The 1,597-page chargesheet, filed by NIA before a special court, details the deep conspiracy traced back to Pakistan, which the probe agency said has been "unabatedly sponsoring terrorism against India".

NIA has named LeT headed by Hafeez Saeed, who has been designated as a global terrorist by the US as well as India, along with TRF headed by Habibullah Malik alias Sajid Jatt, in the chargesheet for their role in planning, facilitating, and executing the Pahalgam attack that took place in the Baisaran meadows on April 22 this year. "Pakistani handler terrorist Sajid Jatt is also named as an accused in the chargesheet, filed before the NIA special court, Jammu," a statement issued by the anti-terror agency said.

**GOVT UNDER FIRE OVER NEW RURAL
EMPLOYMENT BILL, OPPOSITION ASKS WHY
MAHATMA GANDHI'S NAME DROPPED**

Diary Times Desk : The government came under sharp criticism on Monday over a Bill that seeks to repeal the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and replace it with a new rural employment law, with Opposition MPs asking why the name of the father of the nation is being removed.

The Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Bill, 2025, has been listed in the Lok Sabha in the supplementary list of business issued on Monday. It seeks to repeal the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 and establish a "rural development framework aligned with the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047", by providing a statutory guarantee of 125 days of wage employment in every financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to undertake unskilled manual work.

Congress MP Saptagiri Ulaka, who chairs the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, said the panel made several recommendations, including that for increasing the number of workdays and wages under the MGNREG scheme.

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MANIPUR VIOLENCE

**SUPREME COURT WONDERS
WHY ENTIRE LEAKED CLIPS
NOT SENT FOR FORENSIC TEST**

Diary Times Desk : The Supreme Court on Monday wondered why the entire available leaked audio clips allegedly implicating former Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh in the 2023 ethnic violence were not sent for forensic examination.

A Bench of Justice Sanjay Kumar and Justice Alok Aradhe said it was a "little disturbed" by the November 20 affidavit of the petitioners that said only select clippings were sent to Gujarat's National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) Laboratory.

It sought to know why the entire available leaked audio clip of around 48 minutes was not sent to NFSU for examination.

Audio clips allegedly implicating the former Manipur Chief Minister in the 2023 ethnic violence were tampered with and not scientifically fit for voice comparison, the National Forensic Science Laboratory (NFSL), Gandhinagar had on November 3 told the Supreme Court.

In its report submitted to the top court, the NFSL had virtually given a clean chit to him, saying no opinion on similarity or dissimilarity of the speakers could be offered.

**'THOUGHTFUL ANALYSIS':
THAROOR ON X USER'S THREAD
ON CONTRAST BETWEEN HIM
AND RAHUL**

Diary Times Desk : Amid deteriorating ties with his party, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Monday termed "thoughtful" an analysis by an X user who posted a long thread on the social media platform about the contrast between the veteran leader and Rahul Gandhi.

The X user said the contrast between Tharoor and former Congress chief Gandhi reflects two ideological tendencies that have existed within the party.

"The problem is not their coexistence. The problem is Congress's inability to choose, integrate, or execute either coherently," the X user said in the thread.

The X user goes by the "Civitas Sameer" handle and not much is known about the person. Responding to the X user's remarks, Tharoor said, "Thank you (for) this thoughtful analysis. There has always been more than one tendency in the party; your framing is fair, and reflective of a certain perception of the current reality."



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SUPREME COURT FROWNS UPON PRACTICE OF
ALLOWING RICH PEOPLE TO DO 'SPECIAL
PUJAS' IN TEMPLES

Diary Times Desk : The Supreme Court on Monday frowned upon the practice of allowing rich people to do 'special pujas' in temples after paying money, disrupting the resting time of the deity. "What they do is, after closing the temple at 12 noon, they do not allow the deity to rest even for a minute. They exploit the deity the most at this time. All affluent people who can afford to pay hefty amounts are allowed to do special pujas," a Bench led by CJI Surya Kant said while hearing a plea against the darshan timings and temple practices set by the court-constituted committee at Bankey Bihari Ji Temple.

"That is not so. Your Lordships may ensure that it is proscribed. It is a very important period of rest for the deity. This is important. The court is raising an extremely important point. The timings are sacrosanct and should be maintained," senior advocate Shyam Divan submitted on behalf of temple 'sevayats'.

SANJAY SARAOGI APPOINTED BJP'S NEW
BIHAR UNIT PRESIDENT



Diary Times Desk : The BJP on Monday appointed Sanjay Saraogi as the party's Bihar unit president. Saraogi, a former Cabinet Minister in the Bihar Government, is an MLA from Dharbhanga constituency. He succeeds Dilip Jaiswal. "Bharatiya Janata Party national president Jagat Prakash Nadda has appointed Sanjay Saraogi as the state president of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Bihar with immediate effect," BJP national general secretary Arun Singh said in a notification. The NDA had swept the recent Bihar Assembly polls with the BJP emerging as the single largest party.

SC GRANTS INTERIM BAIL TO GUJARAT JOURNALIST IN MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

Diary Times Desk : The Supreme Court on Monday granted interim bail to Gujarat journalist Mahesh Langa in a money laundering case linked to an alleged financial fraud lodged by the Enforcement Directorate at Ahmedabad. Ordering day-to-day trial in the case by a special court, a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant asked Langa not to seek adjournments in the hearing and not to write any articles in the newspaper about the pending case against him. If there was any violation of the order, it may consider cancellation of the bail, the Bench cautioned him. On behalf of the Enforcement Directorate, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta opposed Langa's bail, saying a journalist extorting money was a serious offence and the accused did not deserve bail. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal submitted on behalf of the journalist that he had not committed a murder and that he was languishing in jail since October last year. The Bench will take up the matter on January 6 when it will peruse the ED's status report on the compliance of the bail conditions by Langa.

SC PROTECTS ACTORS SHREYAS TALPADE, ALOK NATH FROM ARREST IN MARKETING SCAM CASE

Diary Times Desk : The Supreme Court on Monday gave protection from coercive action to actors Shreyas Talpade and Alok Nath till investigation was over in a case of cheating and breach of trust against a society. During the hearing before a bench led by Justice BV Nagarathna, Talpade's counsel said the actor was called as a guest celebrity in the annual event of the company. "I am not supposed to know. I never earned any money," the lawyer submitted. Nath's lawyer submitted that the actor has not attended any function and his photo has been used for 10 years. "If a top actor or a cricketer is giving his advertisement or appearing as a brand ambassador for a corporate company which goes into liquidation or there are criminal cases against the company will it also go against the cricketer or actor?" "We dispose of this writ petition (filed by Talpade) by continuing the interim order of protection from arrest granted by us until the investigation into the offences against the petitioner is complete," the bench said while hearing pleas filed by Talpade and Nath for clubbing of FIRs registered in various states in connection with the case. Thirteen persons, including Talpade and Nath, were booked on the complaint of 37-year-old Sonapat resident Vipul Antil.

THAI AUTHORITIES TO TAKE UP LUTHRA BROTHERS' CASE; WEIGH LEGAL, HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECTS: SOURCES



Diary Times Desk : Thailand authorities are set to take up the case involving Gaurav Luthra and Saurabh Luthra, the co-owners of the Goa nightclub where 25 people were killed in a fire on December 6, with a Bangkok court likely to decide the next course of action, sources here said. The Luthras, co-owners of 'Birch by Romeo Lane' nightclub located in Arpora in North Goa, left for Phuket, Thailand, shortly after the fire incident. An Interpol Blue Corner Notice has been issued against them. The Luthra brothers were detained by Thai authorities in Phuket on December 11 following an intervention by the Indian mission, which is in close touch with the Thai government in the case. According to the sources in the Indian Embassy here, all relevant documents related to the two brothers have been transferred through official legal channels. Legal developments suggest the case is likely to be argued before a Bangkok court, they said.

SUPREME COURT REFUSES TO ENTERTAIN PIL ON INDIGO CRISIS; SAYS DELHI HC ALREADY HEARING IT

Diary Times Desk : The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a PIL seeking judicial intervention into the crisis created by cancellation of hundreds of Indigo flights, saying that the Delhi High Court was already hearing the issue. "We appreciate the issue but instead of parallel proceedings, you go to the (Delhi) high court," a three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, said, giving liberty to petitioner Narendra Mishra to intervene in the petition pending before the high court. "It (Delhi High Court) is also a constitutional court. If your grievances are not redressed then you can come here," the CJI told the petitioner who sought directions to the Centre to provide support and refunds to passengers affected by the cancellation of a large number of IndiGo flights. He also demanded a court-monitored probe into the Indigo flight cancellation crisis.

MESSI EVENT CHAOS: BENGAL POLICE SUMMON 6 EVENT MANAGERS, ARREST 5 FOR VANDALISM

Diary Times Desk : The West Bengal Police on Monday sent summons to officials of six companies, which were also involved in organising the Lionel Messi event at the Salt Lake stadium, where spectators resorted to large-scale chaos and vandalism two days ago, alleging "gross mismanagement", an officer said. Acting on an FIR on the spectator rampage that led to an estimated loss of over Rs 2 crore of stadium properties, police have also arrested five people so far on charges of vandalism and assault on police personnel. Among the notices which were served to the event organisers included those to Laitu Das, manager of Satadru Datta – the now arrested prime organiser of the event, police said. Summons were also dispatched by the Bidhannagar Police Commissionerate to Mandali Bhattacharya, an event manager, Supriya Dasgupta, Sambaran Karmakar, Aditya Das and Amit Kumar, a senior official of a food delivery aggregator.

GOA NIGHTCLUB FIRE: HC CONVERTS CIVIL SUIT INTO PIL; SAYS 'SOMEONE HAS TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE'

Diary Times Desk : The Goa Bench of Bombay High Court on Monday converted a civil suit against 'Birch by Romeo Lane' at Arpora, where a devastating fire on December 6 killed 25 persons, into a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) observing "someone has to be held accountable in such kind of cases". The HC also asked the state government to file a reply on permissions granted to the ill-fated nightclub. The petition was filed by Pradeep Ghadi Amonkar and Sunil Divkar, owners of the land on which the nightclub stood. Converting it into a PIL, the Division Bench of Justices Sarang Kotwal and Ashish Chavan said "someone has to be held accountable in such kind of cases". It observed that the local panchayat had failed to take suo motu cognisance of the club and had taken no action despite complaints. Commercial operations were going in the structure despite it being served a demolition order, the HC bench pointed out.

RIJIJU SEEKS APOLOGY FROM RAHUL, KHARGE IN PARLIAMENT FOR CONGRESS WORKERS' 'THREAT' TO PM MODI

Diary Times Desk : Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday sought an apology from Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi for their party workers' alleged threat to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's life. At a hurriedly called press conference here, Rijiju alleged that at Sunday's Congress rally in the national capital, some party workers had threatened to dig the grave of the Prime Minister, which was the "most unfortunate and tragic" thing to happen in Indian democracy. "Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi should tender an apology for the Congress workers' threat to the life of the Prime Minister. They should tender the apology on the floor of both Houses of Parliament. It is most unfortunate and tragic that Congress workers openly declared to dig the grave of Prime Minister Modi," he said. The parliamentary affairs minister said the workers and leaders of the Congress and the BJP are political rivals, not enemies. "We propagate different ideologies but work together for a developed India," he said.



**FORMER HONG KONG PRO-
DEMOCRACY MEDIA MOGUL JIMMY LAI
CONVICTED IN NATIONAL SECURITY
TRIAL**

Diary Times Desk : Jimmy Lai, the pro-democracy former Hong Kong media mogul and outspoken critic of Beijing, was convicted in a landmark national security trial in the city's court on Monday, which could send him to prison for the rest of his life. Three government-vetted judges found Lai, 78, guilty of conspiring with others to collude with foreign forces to endanger national security and conspiracy to publish seditious articles. He pleaded not guilty to all charges. Lai, 78, was arrested in August 2020 under a Beijing-imposed national security law that was implemented following massive anti-government protests in 2019. During his five years in custody, Lai has been sentenced for several lesser offences, and appears to have grown more frail and thinner. Among the attendees were Lai's wife and son, and Hong Kong's Roman Catholic Cardinal Joseph Zen. Lai pressed his lips and nodded to his family before being escorted out of the courtroom by guards. Lai's trial, conducted without a jury, has been closely monitored by the US, Britain, the European Union and political observers as a barometer of media freedom and judicial independence in the former British colony, which returned to Chinese rule in 1997. His verdict is also a test for Beijing's diplomatic ties. US President Donald Trump said he has raised the case with China, and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer has said his government has made it a priority to secure the release of Lai, who is a British citizen. The founder of the now-defunct pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily was convicted on two counts of conspiracy to commit collusion with foreign forces to endanger national security, in addition to one count of conspiracy to distribute seditious publications.

**AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER ALBANESE PROPOSES TOUGHER NATIONAL
GUN LAWS AFTER MASS SHOOTING IN SYDNEY**

Diary Times Desk : Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Monday proposed tougher national gun laws after a mass shooting targeted a Hanukkah celebration on Sydney's Bondi Beach, leaving at least 15 people dead. Albanese said he would propose new restrictions, including limiting the number of guns a licensed owner can obtain. His proposals were announced after the authorities revealed that the older of the two gunmen — who were a father and son — had amassed his six guns legally. "The government is prepared to take whatever action is necessary. Included in that is the need for tougher gun laws," Albanese told reporters. "People's circumstances can change. People can be radicalised over a period of time. Licences should not be in perpetuity," he added. At least 38 people were being treated in hospitals after the massacre on Sunday, when the two shooters fired indiscriminately on the beachfront festivities. Those killed included a 10-year-old girl, a rabbi and a Holocaust survivor. The horror at Australia's most popular beach was the deadliest shooting in almost three decades in a country with strict gun control laws primarily aimed at removing rapid-fire rifles from circulation.

**PAKISTANI-ORIGIN DUO NAMED AS SYDNEY
SHOOTERS; FATHER ARRIVED ON STUDENT
VISA IN 1998, SON BORN IN AUSTRALIA**

Diary Times Desk : New South Wales Police say they have identified the two gunmen responsible for a deadly shooting at a Hanukkah event near Sydney's Bondi Beach as a father and son, confirming that no other attackers were involved. The father, a 50-year-old, was killed at the scene, taking the number of dead to 16, while his 24-year-old son was in a critical condition in hospital, police said at a press conference on Monday. The father and son were identified as Sajid Akram and Naveed Akram, respectively, by state broadcaster ABC and other local media outlets. Officials have described Sunday's shooting as a targeted antisemitic attack. Forty people remain in hospital following the attack, including two police officers who are in a serious but stable condition, police said. The victims were aged between 10 and 87. Witnesses said the attack at the famed beach, which was packed on a hot evening, lasted about 10 minutes, sending hundreds of people scattering along the sand and into nearby streets.

**IRAN'S RIAL CURRENCY PLUMMETS TO NEW
LOW, SPARKING FEARS OF HIGHER FOOD
PRICES**

Diary Times Desk : Iran's rial slid further to a new record low of more than 1.3 million to the US dollar on Monday, deepening the currency's collapse less than two weeks after it first breached the 1.2-million mark amid sanctions pressure and regional tensions. Currency traders in Tehran quoted the dollar above 1.3 million rials, underscoring the speed of the decline since December 3, when the rial hit what was then a historic low. The rapid depreciation is compounding inflationary pressures, pushing up prices for food and other daily necessities and further straining household budgets, a trend that could be intensified by a gasoline price change introduced in recent days. The fall comes as efforts to revive negotiations between Washington and Tehran over Iran's nuclear programme appear stalled, while uncertainty persists over the risk of renewed conflict following June's 12-day war involving Iran and Israel.

**FLASH FLOODS KILL AT LEAST 37
PEOPLE IN MOROCCO'S SAFI
PROVINCE**

Diary Times Desk : At least 37 people were killed in flash floods triggered by torrential rains in Morocco's Atlantic coastal province of Safi, Moroccan authorities said on Monday. According to an official statement, 14 people remain hospitalised, including two in intensive care, following the disaster. Heavy rainfall on Sunday inundated homes and shops in the old town of the port city of Safi, swept away vehicles, and cut off several roads in and around the city, located about 300 km south of the Moroccan capital, Rabat. As residents assessed the damage and began cleaning flood-hit areas, schools in Safi were suspended on Monday, authorities said. Videos shared by local media showed flooded streets, submerged vehicles, and rescue teams using boats to evacuate residents from affected neighbourhoods. One video posted by local news website safigoud.com showed a woman being pulled to safety after being trapped in muddy floodwaters near an ancient gate in Safi's old town. Authorities confirmed that at least 70 homes and shops were flooded in the incident. Morocco is currently witnessing heavy rainfall and snowfall in the Atlas Mountains after seven consecutive years of drought, which had significantly depleted major water reservoirs across the country.

**MERRIAM-WEBSTER'S 2025
WORD OF THE YEAR IS 'SLOP'**

Diary Times Desk : Creepy, zany and demonstrably fake content is often called "slop". The word's proliferation online, in part thanks to the widespread availability of generative artificial intelligence, landed it Merriam-Webster's 2025 word of the year. "It's such an illustrative word," said Greg Barlow, Merriam-Webster's president, in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press ahead of Monday's announcement. "It's part of a transformative technology, AI, and it's something that people have found fascinating, annoying and a little bit ridiculous." "Slop" was first used in the 1700s to mean soft mud, but it evolved more generally to mean something of little value. The definition has since expanded to mean "digital content of low quality that is produced usually in quantity by means of artificial intelligence". In other words, "you know, absurd videos, weird advertising images, cheesy propaganda, fake news that looks real, junky AI-written digital books," Barlow said. AI video generators like Sora have wowed with their ability to quickly create realistic clips based merely on text prompts. But a flood of these images on social media, including clips depicting celebrities and deceased public figures.



NEPAL WAIVES BAN ON HIGH-DENOMINATION INDIAN NOTES AFTER NEARLY A DECADE

Diary Times Desk : Nepal's Council of Ministers has decided to lift the ban on high-denomination Indian currency notes of Rs 200 and Rs 500, a government spokesperson confirmed to ANI. Minister for Information Technology and Communication Jagdish Kharel, who is also the government spokesperson, said the Cabinet meeting held on Monday decided to allow the import and export of Rs 200 and Rs 500 denomination Indian notes. "But the cap remains up to Rs 25,000 to be carried between India and Nepal," Kharel told ANI over the phone. Further elaborating, Kharel said, "The provision has been made for Nepalese or Indian citizens to bring Rs 25,000 per person from India to Nepal and take the same amount from Nepal to India. With the government lifting the ban on high-denomination Indian notes, those notes issued after November 9, 2016, can be brought into circulation." India had demonetised high-denomination currency notes in 2016, following which the import and export of such notes from Nepal was banned. Earlier, India's central bank, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), had made arrangements to allow the import and export of high-denomination Indian notes to Nepal. After India eased restrictions, the Nepal government also lifted its ban. The RBI had amended the Foreign Exchange Management Regulations, 2015, to permit the import and export of high-denomination Indian notes between Nepal and India. Following India's demonetisation move in 2016, large-denomination Indian currency notes were not exchanged in Nepal. As a result, Nepal also imposed restrictions on the circulation of Indian currency notes of denominations higher than Rs 100.



PM MODI RECEIVES CEREMONIAL WELCOME UPON ARRIVAL IN AMMAN

Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi received a ceremonial welcome on his arrival in Amman on Monday, marking the start of his official visit to Jordan. Jordan's Prime Minister Jafar Hassan received Prime Minister Modi at the airport, formally welcoming him as he began the Jordan leg of his overseas tour. PM Modi is in Jordan from December 15 to 16 at the invitation of King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein. During the visit, he is scheduled to hold talks aimed at reviewing the entire spectrum of India-Jordan relations and exchanging views on regional developments. The Prime Minister will also interact with members of the Indian diaspora in the country. Emphasising the importance of the visit ahead of his departure from Delhi, PM Modi said, "First, I will be visiting Jordan, on the invitation of His Majesty King.

PM MODI ARRIVES IN AMMAN ON FIRST LEG OF THREE-NATION TOUR

Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Amman on Monday for a two-day visit to Jordan, marking the beginning of his three-nation tour. He was welcomed on arrival by Jordan's Prime Minister Jafar Hassan. The visit to Jordan is taking place at the invitation of King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein and is focused on advancing bilateral relations between India and Jordan. Prime Minister Modi departed from New Delhi earlier on Monday to commence the multi-country engagement. During his stay from December 15 to 16, the Prime Minister is scheduled to hold discussions with King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein to review the entire range of India-Jordan ties and to exchange views on key regional developments. The visit gains added importance as it coincides with the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India.

CULTURAL RHYTHMS SET THE STAGE FOR PM MODI'S VISIT TO JORDAN

Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi witnessed a cultural performance on his arrival at a hotel in Amman, marking the beginning of the Jordan leg of his official overseas tour. The cultural reception reflected the warmth extended to the Prime Minister at the start of his visit and set the tone for his engagements during the bilateral trip, with members of the Indian community coming together to welcome him. Sudeshna, a member of the Indian diaspora in Jordan, expressed pride and gratitude after performing a classical dance during the Prime Minister's visit. Sharing her experience, she said, "I performed a classical dance. It's about Lord Shiva. I am thankful to the Indian Embassy for this opportunity to perform before our Prime Minister. I will cherish this moment forever. I'm from Kerala..." Members of the Indian community participated in cultural performances as part of the welcome, reflecting enthusiasm and a strong emotional connection with India during the Prime Minister's visit. Prior to arriving at the hotel, Prime Minister Modi was accorded a ceremonial welcome in the Jordanian capital. Jordan's Prime Minister Jafar Hassan received him at the airport, formally welcoming the Indian leader as he commenced his official engagements in the country. PM Modi is visiting Jordan from December 15 to 16 at the invitation of King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein.



INDIAN DIASPORA IN JORDAN EXPRESSES PRIDE AFTER MEETING PM MODI IN AMMAN

Diary Times Desk : Members of the Indian diaspora in Jordan expressed pride and happiness after interacting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Amman, describing the experience as memorable and deeply emotional. A member of the Indian community who has been residing in Jordan for the past two years said meeting the Prime Minister personally for the first time was a special moment. "I have been in Jordan for the past two years. I am very happy to meet Modi ji face-to-face for the first time," he said. Another diaspora member, Pradeep Agarwal, recalled meeting Prime Minister Modi for the second time and reflected on his earlier interaction during a previous visit. "I got the opportunity to meet Modi ji for the second time. I met him the last time when he came to Jordan, and it was a wonderful experience. When he arrived, I was speechless. We are so proud of him," Agarwal said. The reactions came as Prime Minister Modi was accorded a warm and enthusiastic reception by members of the Indian community on his arrival at a hotel in Amman during his two-day visit to Jordan. The gathering reflected strong emotions and a sense of connection with the Prime Minister.

PM MODI RECEIVES WARM WELCOME FROM INDIAN DIASPORA IN AMMAN

Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi was warmly received by members of the Indian diaspora upon his arrival at a hotel in Amman, marking the start of the Jordan leg of his three-nation tour. Members of the Indian community gathered to greet the Prime Minister, underscoring the strong people-to-people ties and the sense of enthusiasm surrounding his visit to the country. Prime Minister Modi departed on Monday for a three-nation visit to Jordan, Ethiopia and Oman, during which he will hold engagements with the top leadership of the three countries as part of efforts to further strengthen India's bilateral relations. The Jordan visit marks the first leg of the four-day tour. During his stay, the Prime Minister is scheduled to meet King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein and Prime Minister Jafar Hassan. The visit coincides with the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Jordan and is expected to add fresh momentum to bilateral engagement. While in Jordan, PM Modi will also interact with members of the Indian diaspora, whom he has said have "made significant contributions to India-Jordan relations". After concluding engagements in Amman, the Prime Minister will travel to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

TIBETAN PARLIAMENT-IN-EXILE PUSHES BACK AGAINST CHINA IN NEW DELHI ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

Diary Times Desk : In a move against the Chinese government's long-standing occupation of Tibet, members of the Standing Committee of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, led by Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, have launched a series of advocacy initiatives in New Delhi during the ongoing winter session of the Indian Parliament, according to a press release by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). Highlighting Beijing's exploitative policies and oppressive rule in Tibet, the CTA stated that the delegation's efforts are aimed at garnering international and Indian support to challenge China's authoritarian control over the region. To maximise their outreach, the Standing Committee members were divided into three groups. The first group included Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Tenpa Yarphel and Geshe Ngawa Gangri. The second group comprised Juchen Kunchok Chodon, Geshe Lharampa Atuk Tseten and Geshe Athong Rinchen Gyaltsen. The third group consisted of Serta Tsultrim, Lopon Thupten Gyaltsen, Tsaneytsang Dhondup Tashi and Tsering Yangchen. According to the CTA press release, the first group met with key Indian dignitaries, including Khagen Murmu, Member of Lok Sabha from West Bengal.



LUTHRA BROTHERS DEPORTATION: FINAL COURT PROCEDURE AWAITED, SAY SOURCES

Diary Times Desk : The much-anticipated deportation of Luthra brothers, Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra, from Thailand to India is now in its final stage, with top sources indicating they are likely to be sent back to India soon. The brothers are expected to land in Delhi following the deportation. Indian authorities have furnished all required documentation to the Thai side, including the necessary Emergency Certificates (ECs) issued after the brothers' passports were cancelled. Sources confirm that procedural bottlenecks have been largely resolved. Thai immigration authorities are coordinating closely with Indian officials and are preparing to present the case before a local Bangkok court. This court appearance is understood to be the final, mandatory legal requirement under Thai law before a formal deportation order can be executed. Sources close to the matter says,"Relevant documentation is submitted. The matter now moves for its last legal review by a local Bangkok court."

URBAN, RURAL AREAS OF ISLAMABAD AND KARACHI GRAPPLE WITH GARBAGE CRISIS

Diary Times Desk : Waste management in Pakistan's major cities is reportedly in crisis, as both Islamabad and Karachi struggle to maintain cleanliness, Dawn reported. Streets, roads, and open spaces across urban and rural areas are littered with garbage, leaving residents exposed to foul odours, dust, and toxic air. In Islamabad, Dawn reported, rural areas have been particularly neglected. With no formal system in place, residents dispose of garbage in nullahs and open grounds. "Secondary collection by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) is irregular, and rural waste management contracts that expired a year ago have not been renewed, leaving services inconsistent. Urban areas receive temporary coverage through CDA staff, ex-contractor workers, and machinery, but repeated efforts to outsource waste management across the city were cancelled several times this year," Dawn said.

TRUMP PAYS TRIBUTE TO VICTIMS OF US CAMPUS SHOOTING AND AUSTRALIA'S BONDI BEACH TERROR ATTACK



Diary Times Desk : US President Donald Trump on Sunday paid tribute to victims of multiple deadly attacks in the United States and abroad, including a campus shooting at Brown University and a deadly antisemitic terror attack at Sydney's Bondi Beach, during remarks at a Christmas reception. "I want just to pay my respects to the people. Unfortunately, two are no longer with us. Brown University, nine injured. And two are looking down on us right now from heaven," Trump said. Referring to the attack in Australia, he added, "Likewise, in Australia, as you know, that was a terrible attack. Eleven dead, 29 badly wounded. And that was an anti-Semitic attack, obviously. And it's -- I just want to pay my respects to everybody." The US President also mentioned violence in the Middle East, saying, "In Syria also, we had an attack, and we had three great patriots terminated by bad people... It was ISIS. The Syrian government fought by our side. The new president fought by our side. But I just want to pay my respects to the families." The shooting at Brown University unfolded on Saturday when a suspect armed with a firearm entered a campus building where students were taking examinations and opened fire. According to police, nine people were injured, seven of them critically. The incident triggered a massive manhunt involving more than 400 law enforcement personnel, including agents from the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, while the university was placed under lockdown.

SINGAPORE ISSUES ADVISORY TO ITS NATIONALS IN DELHI AS AIR QUALITY TURNS 'SEVERE PLUS', GRAP STAGE 4 CURBS ENFORCED

Diary Times Desk : The High Commission of Singapore in New Delhi on Monday issued an advisory urging Singapore nationals in the Delhi National Capital Region to take precautions after Indian authorities enforced the strictest pollution curbs under Stage 4 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). The advisory came after the Commission for Air Quality Management invoked GRAP Stage 4 on December 13 as air quality in Delhi and surrounding areas deteriorated sharply. At this stage, construction and industrial activities are heavily restricted, while schools and offices are advised to shift to hybrid or online modes. Residents have also been urged to stay indoors, particularly children, the elderly, and those suffering from respiratory or cardiac conditions, and to wear masks when stepping out. Sharing the advisory on X, Singapore's Ambassador to India, Simon Wong, said Singapore nationals in Delhi NCR should pay close attention to local health advisories and pollution-related restrictions.

BALUCHISTAN: HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS DEMAND IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF MISSING WOMAN

Diary Times Desk : The alleged enforced disappearance of Farzana Zehri, a resident of Zehri in Balochistan's Khuzdar district, has drawn sharp condemnation from Baloch rights groups and activists, who say her case reflects a troubling pattern of targeting Baloch women. According to Paank, the human rights wing of the Baloch National Movement (BNM), Farzana, daughter of Muhammad Bakhsh Zehri, was forcibly taken by Pakistani forces on the night of 1 December 2025 while returning home from a hospital in Khuzdar. "Her whereabouts remain unknown, and authorities have neither acknowledged her detention nor provided any legal justification," the group said in a statement. Paank described the incident as "a clear case of enforced disappearance" and a "grave violation of fundamental human rights and international law." The group further noted that the disappearance occurred shortly after Farzana's family had migrated from Zehri to Khuzdar due to security concerns, suggesting a continued pattern of targeting Baloch civilians even after displacement. Paank held the state and its security institutions fully responsible for her safety and demanded her immediate production before a court.

AUSTRALIAN PM PUSHES FOR TOUGHER GUN LAWS AFTER ANTISEMITIC TERROR ATTACK AT SYDNEY'S BONDI BEACH



Diary Times Desk : Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Monday said tougher gun laws would be taken up at a National Cabinet meeting, signalling a possible tightening of Australia's already strict firearms rules after the deadly antisemitic terror attack at Sydney's Bondi Beach. Speaking to the media ahead of the meeting scheduled for 4:00 pm local time, Albanese said stricter gun controls, including limits on the number of firearms licensed to individuals and periodic reviews of licences, would be placed on the agenda. "This afternoon, at four o'clock, I will put on the agenda of the national cabinet tougher gun laws, including limits on the number of guns that can be used or licensed by individuals, a review of licences over a period of time," he said. Stressing the need for continuous oversight, the prime minister added, "People's circumstances change. People can be radicalised over a period of time. Licences should not be in perpetuity." Albanese said the federal government would present a proposal aimed at strengthening monitoring mechanisms. "The Australian government will take to national Cabinet this afternoon a proposal to empower agencies to examine what can be done in this area," he said.

CHINA LAUNCHES "COUNTERMEASURES" AGAINST FORMER JAPAN DEFENCE OFFICIAL

Diary Times Desk : China on Monday announced that it has imposed sanctions on Shigeru Iwasaki, former chief of the Joint Staff of the Japan Self-Defence Forces, saying he had "colluded with separatist forces" in Taiwan. Beijing had, in March this year, lodged a protest over the appointment of Iwasaki as an honorary adviser to the Executive Yuan, the Taiwanese government's highest administrative body. According to a statement by the Chinese foreign ministry, the "countermeasures" on Iwasaki include "freezing his movable and immovable assets and other types of property" within China, the state-run Global Times reported. It also prohibits organizations and individuals within China from conducting any transactions, cooperation or other such activities with him; refuse to issue visas to him and deny his entry into the country (including the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions).

JAISHANKAR TO VISIT ISRAEL FOLLOWING INDIA-UAE STRATEGIC DIALOGUE IN ABU DHABI

Diary Times Desk : External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will visit Israel later on Monday after holding high-level meetings with the leadership of the United Arab Emirates, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. In a statement, the MEA said, "Following his participation in Sir Bani Yas Forum, EAM will co-chair the 16th Joint Commission and 5th Strategic Dialogue with H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the UAE, in Abu Dhabi today. He will thereafter pay a visit to Israel and hold bilateral consultations with his counterpart, Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar." Jaishankar's visit to Israel follows his participation in the 16th Sir Bani Yas Forum, held from December 12 to 14 in the Western Region of Abu Dhabi. The annual forum serves as a high-level platform bringing together senior leaders, policymakers and global experts to discuss major regional and international issues.

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

Diary Times Desk : The Baloch 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 Baloch community in both Iran and Pakistan, as stated in BASC's press release. The event gathered renowned international specialists, scholars, and advocates for Baloch 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 Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC); Abdollah Aref, Lead Researcher on Iran at BASC; Mohsen Burhanzehi, 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.



POJK ASSEMBLY A 'HOAX', REAL POWER LIES WITH PAKISTAN: ACTIVIST AMJAD AYUB MIRZA

Diary Times Desk : Political activist from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK), Amjad Ayub Mirza, has strongly criticised the governance structure in the region, calling it a "fraud" designed to mislead the international community. In an exclusive interview with ANI, Mirza said that while PoJK appears to have all the trappings of a democratic setup, including a Legislative Assembly, a Prime Minister, a President, a Supreme Court and an Inspector General of Police, none of these institutions hold real authority. "You see, Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir has a Legislative Assembly, it has a Prime Minister, it has a President, it has a Supreme Court, it has an IG police. However, they are all spineless," Mirza said, adding that the Assembly cannot pass a single law, nor can it appoint or transfer officials. He explained that all decision-making powers lie with Pakistan's Prime Minister and military establishment, rendering PoJK's institutions purely symbolic. According to him, this setup is deliberately maintained to project an illusion of self-governance.

WUC RAISES ALARM OVER IMMINENT DEPORTATION OF CHINESE WHISTLEBLOWER GUAN HENG IN US

Diary Times Desk : The World Uyghur Congress (WUC) has expressed grave concern over the imminent deportation of Guan Heng, a Chinese national whose secret recordings of internment camps in East Turkistan were instrumental in revealing widespread abuses against Uyghurs and other Turkic communities. In its press release, WUC stated, "In 2020, Guan Heng secretly documented large-scale detention compounds in East Turkistan, producing rare visual evidence that corroborated survivor testimonies and investigative reporting on the Chinese government's mass repression campaign. His footage was later shared with journalists and researchers and contributed to the growing public record of mass detention, including reporting by BuzzFeed News' Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative team." The press release added that after escaping China, Guan undertook a perilous journey through several countries before arriving in the United States in 2021 in search of protection. Since then, he has lived openly, secured a valid US work permit, and pursued asylum through the US immigration system. WUC highlighted that despite these circumstances.

ED QUESTIONS YES BANK'S RANA KAPOOR IN RELIANCE ANIL AMBANI GROUP CASE

Diary Times Desk : The Enforcement Directorate on Monday questioned Yes Bank co-founder Rana Kapoor as part of a money laundering investigation against Reliance Anil Ambani group companies, officials said. His statement was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said. Kapoor, 68, was arrested and questioned by the ED earlier in separate money laundering cases linked to the alleged illegal disbursement of loans by the lender (Yes Bank) he helmed. ED officials said they suspect a quid pro quo between Kapoor and Ambani in this case. There was no immediate comment from Kapoor or his lawyers on the ED questioning and related charges. Yes Bank, according to the officials, had an exposure of about Rs 6,000 crore to Reliance Anil Ambani Group (ADAG Group) as on March 31, 2017, and this figure doubled to Rs 13,000 crore within a year (as on March 31, 2018). The companies under probe are Reliance Home Finance Limited (RHFL) and Reliance Commercial Finance Limited (RCFL).

RUPEE FALLS TO ALL-TIME LOW OF 90.58 AGAINST US DOLLAR IN EARLY TRADE

Diary Times Desk : Rupee depreciated 9 paise to an all-time low of 90.58 against US dollar in early trade on Monday, weighed down by uncertainty over an India-US trade deal and persistent foreign fund outflows. Forex traders said rupee is trading with a negative bias as investors are in wait and watch mode and awaiting cues from the India-US trade deal front. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 90.53 against the US dollar, then fell further to an all-time intraday low of 90.58 against the greenback, registering a fall of 9 paise over its previous close. On Friday, the rupee had slipped 17 paise to close at an all-time low of 90.49 against the American currency. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.05 per cent lower at 98.35. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading higher by 0.52 per cent at USD 61.44 per barrel in futures trade. On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share benchmark index Sensex was trading 298.86 points lower at 84,968.80.

GOLD SURGES RS 4,000 TO FRESH LIFETIME HIGH OF RS 1.37 LAKH/10 GM IN DELHI MARKETS

Diary Times Desk : Gold prices surged by Rs 4,000 to touch an all-time high of Rs 1,37,600 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday, tracking firm global cues, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,33,600 per 10 grams on Friday. "Gold prices scaled even higher as international spot gold surged towards the USD 4,350 zone, triggering a strong rally in the domestic market," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst, Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said. He added that the yellow metal reflected the global strength with a sharp gain, touching a fresh lifetime high. Gold prices had earlier appreciated by Rs 3,200 to touch an all-time high of Rs 1,34,800 per 10 grams on October 17. "The move was driven by renewed safe-haven demand and expectations around upcoming US economic data, including non-farm payrolls and the Core PCE Price Index scheduled this week, focus has firmly shifted to US macro cues, which are expected to keep volatility elevated," Trivedi added. During the current calendar year, gold prices have surged Rs 58,650, or 74.3 per cent, from Rs 78,950 per 10 grams on December 31, 2024.



STOCK MARKETS CLOSE marginally LOWER ON FOREIGN FUND OUTFLOWS, WEAK RUPEE; SENSEX SLIPS 54 POINTS

Diary Times Desk : Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty pared most of early losses to close marginally down on Monday amid persistent foreign fund outflows and weak global trends. The 30-share BSE Sensex closed lower by 54.30 points, or 0.06 per cent, at 85,213.36. The benchmark opened lower and declined further by 427.34 points, or 0.50 per cent, to hit a low of 84,840.32, but value buying in FMCG and IT shares in the second half helped cut losses. The 50-share NSE Nifty edged lower by 19.65 points, or 0.08 per cent, to 26,027.30. The broader index hit a low of 25,904.75 but pared losses later. The rupee hitting fresh record low against the US dollar and uncertainty over an India-US trade deal weighed on investor sentiment, analysts said. The rupee hit an all-time low of 90.80 against the US dollar on Monday. Among Sensex firms, Mahindra & Mahindra fell the most by 1.94 per cent. Bajaj Finserv fell by 0.79 per cent and Maruti Suzuki by 0.71 per cent. Adani Ports, Bharti Airtel, Titan, Power Grid and HDFC Bank were also among the laggards. However, Hindustan Unilever surged the most by 1.42 per cent. Trent, HCL Tech, Asian Paints, and Tata Steel were among the gainers. "Indian equity markets ended today's session on a muted, consolidative note, recovering from early weakness but lacking meaningful follow-through buying." "Persistent FI selling, rupee depreciation, weakness in Asian equities and India-US trade-related uncertainty kept risk appetite cautious.



WHOLESALE PRICE INFLATION RISES TO (-) 0.32 PC IN NOVEMBER

Diary Times Desk : Wholesale price inflation (WPI) came in at (-) 0.32 per cent in November, driven by an uptick in prices of food articles like pulses and vegetables on a month-on-month basis, government data showed on Monday. WPI-based inflation was (-) 1.21 per cent in October and 2.16 per cent in November last year. "Negative rate of inflation in November 2025 is primarily due to a decrease in prices of food articles, mineral oils, crude petroleum & natural gas, manufacture of basic metals and electricity, etc," the industry ministry said in a statement. According to WPI data, deflation in food articles was 4.16 per cent in November, compared to 8.31 per cent in October. In vegetables, deflation was 20.23 per cent in November, as against 34.97 per cent in October. In pulses, deflation was at 15.21 per cent in November, while in potato and onion it was 36.14 per cent and 64.70 per cent, respectively. In the case of manufactured products, inflation eased to 1.33 per cent in November, against 1.54 per cent in October. Fuel and power witnessed a negative inflation or deflation of 2.27 per cent, as against 2.55 per cent in October. Data released last week showed CPI inched up to 0.71 per cent in November, from a record low of 0.25 per cent, driven by rising food prices.



GST RATIONALISATION, FESTIVE DEMAND LIFT RETAIL CREDIT GROWTH IN Q3 FY25: REPORT

Diary Times Desk : The retail credit demand in India strengthened during the July-September 2025 quarter, supported by Goods and Services Tax (GST) rationalisation and improved consumer sentiment ahead of the festive season, according to TransUnion CIBIL's latest Credit Market Report. The Credit Market Indicator (CMI), a composite measure of credit market health, rose to 99 in the September 2025 quarter from 98 in the preceding quarter, reflecting improved demand, supply conditions and stable asset quality. The uptick followed the GST rationalisation introduced in September 2025, commonly referred to as GST 2.0, which enhanced affordability across key consumer segments. Vehicle finance, particularly two-wheeler and auto loans, along with consumer durable loans, recorded strong year-on-year growth in the pre-festive period. The CMI for credit demand increased to 95 in the quarter ended September 2025, up from 93 a year earlier.

GROSS NPAS IN OUTSTANDING EDUCATION LOANS OF PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS REDUCED TO 2%: MOS FINANCE

Diary Times Desk : Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary, in a written reply to the Lok Sabha on Monday, said that in terms of outstanding education loans, the Gross Non-Performing Assets (NPA) of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) reduced from 7% in FY 2020-21 to 2% in FY 2024-25, thereby showing the significant improvement in asset quality of education loans over the years. "Credit-related matters of regulated entities (REs) are largely deregulated and the same are governed by the Board approved loan policies of the REs framed under the ambit of relevant regulatory and statutory requirements and terms and conditions of the loan agreement between the borrower and the RE. RBI has advised the banks to put in place a Board approved loan policy and they shall take credit related decisions as per the said policy, subject to the guiding principles of regulations," Chaudhary said in his reply. He stated that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has taken several initiatives to improve recovery.

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE ROSE TO 55.8% IN NOVEMBER, 7-MONTH HIGH SINCE APRIL

Diary Times Desk : Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) increased to 55.8 per cent in November 2025, the highest level recorded since April 2025, showing a steady improvement in the labour market, according to the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation. The rise in participation came mainly from rural areas. The overall LFPR for persons aged 15 years and above reached a seven-month high in November. Rural LFPR moved up to 58.6 per cent, compared to 58.0 per cent in April and 57.8 per cent in October. Urban LFPR showed a marginal dip to 50.4 per cent from 50.5 per cent in the previous month, indicating stable but slower movement in cities. Female participation continued its upward path during the period. Overall, female LFPR rose from 32.0 per cent in June 2025 to 35.1 per cent in November. The increase also came mainly from rural areas, where female LFPR climbed steadily from 35.2 per cent in June to 39.7 per cent in November. Urban female LFPR remained broadly stable at around 25.5 per cent, showing limited change over the months. Employment levels also showed improvement. The Worker Population Ratio for persons aged 15 years and above increased to 53.2 per cent in November, up from 52.5 per cent in October. Rural areas drove this rise, with WPR improving from 55.4 per cent in April to 56.3 per cent in November. Urban WPR remains largely unchanged during the same period.



EUTELSAT, AIRTEL AID INDIAN ARMY WITH LOW EARTH ORBIT CONNECTIVITY FOR RELIEF EFFORTS IN SRI LANKA



Diary Times Desk : Eutelsat, a satellite communications provider, and Airtel are providing Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite connectivity to support the Indian Army's relief efforts in flood-hit parts of Sri Lanka, where conventional communication lines have been disrupted. The Indian Army continues to assist with rescue and relief operations in Sri Lanka following Cyclone Ditwah late last month.

According to a Eutelsat press release, its OneWeb LEO services are providing the Army with a reliable way to communicate in areas where roads, phone lines, and other ground systems are not functioning. This connectivity is helping teams share updates quickly and carry out tasks without delays. It is also allowing 24/7 telemedicine support, linking soldiers in the field with specialist doctors who guide emergency treatment for people affected by the floods.

The satellite link has become critical for the Indian Army as it seeks to reach isolated communities. With steady communication, teams are able to check on villages, report medical needs and coordinate rescue movements in real time. The release says that this work shows why strong satellite systems matter during disasters, when other networks fail.

Neha Idnani, Regional Vice President for APAC at Eutelsat, said the company is working closely with Airtel and the Indian Army to keep these lines open. "Eutelsat is deeply committed to supporting the Indian Army's relief efforts with OneWeb LEO connectivity, delivered in partnership with Airtel. The ability to maintain high-quality communications in crisis situations is vital, and we remain committed to equipping organisations on the ground with secure, resilient connectivity required to safeguard lives and enable essential services," she said.

7 HIMACHAL PLAYERS LISTED FOR IPL AUCTION IN ABU DHABI

Diary Times Desk : Seven players from the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) have been listed for the 2026 Indian Premier League (IPL) players' auction scheduled to be held on December 16 in Abu Dhabi. Their names have figured on the list of registered players released on the IPL's official website. According to details, the HPCA players who will go under the hammer include all-rounder Mayank Dagar, right-arm fast-medium bowler Arpit Guleria, left-handed batsman Pukhraj Mann, right-arm fast bowler Divesh Sharma, right-arm fast bowler Rajat Verma, all-rounder Aryaman Singh Dhaliwal and all-rounder Midul Saroch. The base price for all seven players has been fixed at Rs 30 lakh. Among them, Dagar remains the most prominent name, having already featured in multiple IPL seasons. He made his IPL debut with Sunrisers Hyderabad in 2023. In 2024, Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) traded all-rounder Shahbaz Ahmed to acquire Dagar for Rs 1.8 crore. He has also previously been associated with Punjab Kings, making him one of the most experienced domestic all-rounders of HPCA in this year's auction pool.

HIMACHAL: LACK OF BASIC AMENITIES IN RURAL AREAS CAUSE OF MIGRATION TO CITIES, TOWNS

Diary Times Desk : The large-scale migration of people from the rural areas of Himachal Pradesh to nearest cities is a matter of concern. One can see hundreds of abandoned houses in villages from where people have shifted to towns and cities. This is happening because even after 79 years of Independence, successive governments in the state have failed to provide amenities like roads, drinking water supply and health services. In Palampur alone, over 300 families have shifted from the lower areas of the city and are either residing in rented houses or have constructed new houses. Information gathered by The Tribune reveals that poor infrastructure and road network, frequent power failures in the rural areas, lack of medical and education facilities and various other factors have led to large-scale migration of people from the hilly areas. Successive governments turned a blind eye to problems faced by the people and made no efforts.

CONGRESS, BJP IN A WAR OF WORDS OVER CENTRAL AID TO HIMACHAL

Diary Times Desk : A war of words has broken out between the Congress and the BJP following BJP national president JP Nadda's felicitation function in Shimla, where he claimed that the Centre had given Rs 3,789 crore as disaster relief to the state along with funds for other developmental work. Himachal Pradesh Congress Committee (HPCC) president Vinay Kumar has outrightly rejected the claim, saying that the Centre has not provided any special assistance to the state to cope with disaster. "What Nadda said is devoid of truth and was aimed at misleading people. Nadda should clarify how much money was given and under which scheme and head," said Kumar. Responding to Kumar's contention, senior BJP leader Satpal Satti said the Congress had been rattled by Nadda's clear and factual statements and was resorting to lies and propaganda. "To say that the Centre did not provide any help to the state as disaster relief is a complete lie. The HPCC president is trying to mislead the people through such baseless statements," said Satti. As for the Rs 1,500 crore relief package announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi a few months back, Satti said the relief package was being processed.



HIMACHAL CM SUKHVINDER SUKHU BRINGS CRICKET DREAMS ALIVE FOR 160 CHILDREN

Diary Times Desk : In a touching example of compassionate and people-centric leadership, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu transformed a long-cherished dream into a lifelong memory for underprivileged children from Dharamsala. As many as 160 students of Tong Len School, located in the Sarah area and catering largely to children from slum settlements and economically weaker families, were given the rare opportunity to watch the India-South Africa T20 International match live at the stadium. The initiative stemmed from a personal assurance made by the Chief Minister during his recent visit to Dharamsala when the Assembly was in session. Staying true to his commitment, Sukhu ensured that these children, many of whom had never stepped inside a stadium, could experience the thrill, energy and magic of international cricket firsthand. For the young students, the outing was nothing short of extraordinary. Watching their sporting idols in action, surrounded by roaring crowds and electrifying cheers, filled them with unfiltered joy and awe. Their beaming faces, applause and excitement spoke volumes about the emotional impact of the experience, one that extended far beyond a single match.

OLIVE RETIRES, NEW SNIFFER DOG NIMA TAKES CHARGE OF DALAI LAMA'S SECURITY IN MCLEODGANJ

Diary Times Desk : A newly trained sniffer dog, Nima, has been added to the security apparatus of the 14th Dalai Lama at the Tsuglakhang Monastery in McLeodganj. The canine, trained by the Border Security Force (BSF), replaces Olive, an eight-year-old dog who has completed seven years of distinguished service and has now been formally retired. Police sources describe Olive as one of the most dependable sniffer dogs ever deployed for the Dalai Lama's protection. Born in 2017, Olive specialised in detecting explosives and consistently led advance security checks at the Dalai Lama's official residence, public venues, and event sites. He played a crucial role in reconnaissance operations before every public appearance by the Tibetan spiritual leader. With Olive stepping down, Nima has assumed full operational duties. Officials say Nima has shown strong discipline and reliability, and is expected to integrate seamlessly into the multi-layered Z-Plus security framework that protects the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama's security involves paramilitary forces supported by the Himachal Pradesh Police. The monastery and surrounding areas undergo stringent daily inspections.

YOUR HOROSCOPE
16-12-2025

Aries

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

Taurus

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

Gemini

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

Cancer

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

Leo

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

Virgo

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

Sagittarius

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

Capricorn

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

Agurius

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.

TEACHER COUPLE DIES IN
MOGA ROAD ACCIDENT
WHILE ON ELECTION DUTY,
STATEWIDE PROTEST
ANNOUNCED

Diary Times Desk : A tragic road accident claimed the lives of a government school teacher couple, Jaskaran Singh Bhullar (47) and Kamaljit Kaur (46), while they were travelling for election duty in Moga. The incident has sparked widespread outrage among teachers, prompting unions to announce a statewide protest outside DC offices on Tuesday at 3 pm. The couple was headed to Sangatpura village when their car plunged into an open drain near Madi Mustafa village, reportedly due to dense fog and lack of safety railings. ASHA workers witnessed the accident and alerted villagers, who launched a rescue effort. Despite their efforts, Jaskaran Singh died instantly, and Kamaljit Kaur succumbed to her injuries at the Baghapurana government hospital. The postmortem examination was conducted at Moga Civil Hospital, and the bodies were handed over to the family, leaving two children orphaned. Teacher organisations have strongly condemned the Election Commission (EC) and district administration, alleging administrative apathy and unsafe deployment practices.

RAJASTHAN REVIVES
ARAVALLI GRASSLANDS TO
BOOST HERBIVORES, SUPPORT
BIG CATS

Diary Times Desk : In a move that could offer key lessons for neighbouring Haryana, which is planning an ambitious Aravalli Safari project, Rajasthan's Forest Department has begun reviving and developing herbivore-friendly grasslands in the Aravalli range to strengthen the region's wildlife ecosystem. The initiative is aimed not only at conserving large herbivore populations but also at supporting apex predators such as leopards and tigers, whose survival depends on a healthy prey base. The Aravallis in Rajasthan are currently home to over 150 tigers, with a significant number inhabiting wildlife reserves and safari zones. The Sariska Tiger Reserve, which has around 50 tigers, has been selected as the pilot site for the grassland restoration project. Reserve authorities have established four grass nurseries at Andheri, Dolada, Umri and Tehla range camps to produce native grass seeds for regenerating barren patches within the forest.

RAJA WARRING MOVES PUNJAB HC FOR VIDEOGRAPHY OF VOTE COUNTING IN
ZILA PARISHAD, BLOCK SAMITI POLLS

Diary Times Desk : Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) president and Lok Sabha MP Amarinder Singh Raja Warring on Monday moved the Punjab and Haryana High Court seeking compulsory videography of the entire vote-counting process for the Zila Parishad and Panchayat Block Samiti elections scheduled to be held across Punjab on December 17. In a public interest litigation, Warring, through counsel Nikhil Ghai, submitted that the public interest litigation was filed "in the interest of safeguarding the purity, transparency, and credibility of the electoral process in elections to Zila Parishads in the State of Punjab". Ghai added on the petitioner's behalf that the counting of votes was an integral and decisive stage of the election process, continuing until result declarations. Despite this being the settled legal position, the counting of votes in Zila Parishad elections was conducted without mandatory videography, "leaving no objective or verifiable record of the most sensitive phase of elections". The petitioner contended that the absence of videography rendered the process opaque and vulnerable to arbitrariness and allegations of manipulation, thereby eroding public confidence in democratic institutions.



ON-LEAVE HARYANA DGP SHATRUJEET
KAPUR SHIFTED, OP SINGH TO OFFICIATE



Diary Times Desk : Two months after Director General of Police Shatruijeet Singh Kapur, a 1990-batch IPS officer, was "sent on leave", and a day before he was due to rejoin, the Haryana Government on Sunday issued his transfer orders, replacing him with 1992-batch IPS officer OP Singh, who has been posted as the "officiating" DGP, Haryana Police, until further orders. Kapur, who was asked to proceed on leave following the suicide of 2001-batch IPS officer Y Puran Kumar, was scheduled to rejoin on Monday. However, late on Sunday evening, the government issued two transfer and posting orders appointing Singh as officiating DGP until further orders. Singh will continue to hold additional charge as Director General of the Haryana State Narcotics Control Bureau (HSNCB).

PRELIMINARY DELIMITATION
NOTIFICATION ISSUED, AMBALA MC POLL
ON HORIZON

Diary Times Desk : Earlier in March this year, BJP's Shailja Sachdeva secured victory in the Ambala Municipal Corporation mayoral by-election, defeating Congress candidate Amisha Chawla by a margin of 20,487 votes. With just 10 months of the house's tenure left then, the election saw a low voter turnout of 31.9%. Commissioner of Ambala Municipal Corporation Virender Lather informed that the government has issued the preliminary notification and people can submit their objections and suggestions by December 18 at the Deputy Commissioner's Office or the Municipal Corporation Ambala. Objections and suggestions after the deadline will not be registered. BJP leader and Deputy Mayor Rajesh Mehta said there are 20 wards in the Municipal Corporation and the wards have been divided equally. However, if some objections are received, they will be considered. The tenure of the house will complete in January next year. The wards will be reserved in the coming days and interested aspirants will start their preparations accordingly. While the BJP leaders claimed that the delimitation was done in a fair.

CLOCK TICKS FOR AMRITPAL AS PAROLE PLEA PUT OFF AGAIN, PARLIAMENT
SESSION ENDS ON DEC 19



Diary Times Desk : Time is fast running out for Lok Sabha member Amritpal Singh to secure parole to attend the winter session of Parliament, with his plea remaining unheard on Monday as lawyers abstained from work. With the session scheduled to conclude on December 19, the matter is now listed for hearing on Tuesday, leaving a narrowing window of barely three working days even if relief is granted. Amritpal Singh has approached the Punjab and Haryana High Court seeking temporary release to attend Parliament, where he represents the Khadoor Sahib constituency. The case could not be taken up on Monday due to the lawyers' decision, pushing the hearing to December 16 and intensifying the uncertainty around his ability to "meaningfully participate" in the ongoing session. Punjab has already mounted a strong opposition to the parole plea, asserting that once a detained MP enters Parliament, neither the executive nor the judiciary can regulate, restrict or pre-condition what he might say on the floor of the House. Appearing for Punjab, senior advocate Anupam Gupta had told the Bench that any undertaking offered by Amritpal Singh regarding the subject of his speech would be legally unenforceable once he entered Parliament. Anchoring his submissions in Article 105 of the Constitution.

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.



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.

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.

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.

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.



"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?"

"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

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. 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.



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.

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 VERY RARE, NEWLY DISCOVERED MICHELANGELO STUDY FOR THE SISTINE CHAPEL CEILING

Diary Times Desk : Michelangelo Buonarroti was born in 1475 in Caprese, southeast of Florence, to an impoverished Florentine family of minor nobility. In the sixteenth century, when longevity was exceptional, he lived to eighty-eight, dying in Rome in 1564 as an extremely famous and wealthy man.

Throughout his life, Michelangelo drew constantly. It was through drawing that he planned and prepared his projects, developed his inventions, and refined his ideas.

Unfortunately, the surviving sheets by his hand, numbering roughly six hundred, total only a fraction of the thousands of drawings he must have produced.

Very rarely new drawings have been rediscovered and added to Michelangelo's graphic corpus over the decades. Almost all of Michelangelo's known studies, excluding architectural drawings and the sketches of marble blocks Michelangelo used to send to his quarry masters, are now in public collections. Only about ten sheets, including this newly discovered drawing, are in private hands. Furthermore, no recorded study for the Sistine Chapel has ever come to auction – until now.

In the two decades between 1500 and 1520 Michelangelo was in his physical and artistic prime. At that time, he lived and worked between Florence and Rome, undertaking several of the most prestigious and monumental projects of his career, including a commission from Rome by Pope Julius II della Rovere to paint the enormous vault of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican.

The enterprise was ambitious, as the surface of the vault measures about 530 square meters (5,700 square feet), yet Michelangelo conceived an elaborate decorative program for it.

He designed a painted illusionistic architectural framework simulating white marble with, at the center of the vault, nine compartments with episodes from the Book of Genesis.

Flanking the biblical scenes are twenty ignudi (athletic nude youths) seated on illusionistic plinths next to fictive bronze medallions with episodes from the Book of Maccabees. Below these figures, seven monumental Prophets alternate with five Sibyls, each seated on a throne around the ceiling.

**COUTURE FAVOURITES FROM A CONNOISSEUR OF COSTUME JEWELLERY: INSIDE THE FABULOUS COLLECTION OF SUSIE HOIMES****Diary Times Desk :**

Susie Hoimes has always been a collector at heart. Born in Kenya to British parents, she remembers gathering shells on the beaches of Mombasa, inspired by her father, a doctor who amassed various collections in the house over the years. In her early travels to Iran, East Africa, England, and later the United States, she scoured flea markets for antiques and anything exciting. 'When you travel, it exposes you to all kinds of cultures,' she tells Christie's. 'And over time you develop an eye and an appreciation for how all these influences have shaped style around the world.' Today Hoimes is one of the fashion industry's preeminent experts on couture costume jewellery. Recommended by Vogue and frequented by celebrities, her San Francisco shop, MDVII, which operated from 1990 to 2021, became a global destination for collectors of vintage and archival pieces by important designers like Chanel, Dior, Pierre Cardin and Yves Saint Laurent. From 26 November to 11 December, an impressive selection of her favourite pieces spanning nearly every decade since the 1920s comes to Christie's. The Susie Hoimes Collection: The Art of Costume Jewellery will be sold in Handbags Online: The New York Edit.

'Susie's knowledge and experience guided every selection in this truly exceptional grouping of fashion jewels, which Christie's is proud to bring to market,' says Max Brownawell, Head of Handbags and Accessories at Christie's New York. From rare 1930s Chanel haute couture works to a geometric bib necklace from Karl Lagerfeld's last collection for Chanel in 2019, every piece in the collection is offered without reserve. Costume jewellery, typically characterised by bold designs made with non-precious metals and stones, emerged in the 1700s when glass and later rhinestones were used in place of gems. In the 1920s, the trend reached new heights when fashion couturiers began producing their own designs that elevated the art form. Coco Chanel paved the way when she introduced trousers for women and chose to pair them with bold strands of imitation pearls. Coco Chanel frequently collaborated with Suzanne Grippoix of Maison Grippoix, famed for their poured glass jewellery. A highlight of the upcoming sale is a 1930s blue and green Grippoix glass, Strass crystal and faux pearl statement necklace by Chanel, which Hoimes acquired from her friend, the collector Susan Kelner Freeman. Hoimes knew this rare piece would sell in the shop immediately but chose to keep it for her personal collection. 'People are always coming up to me to ask about it,' she says. Another gem from this period is a 1935 red Grippoix glass and Venetian bead Mughal necklace by Chanel – a similar piece resides in the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.



REAL MADRID ANGERED OVER LA LIGA, RFEF’S PASSIVE STANCE DURING LAPORTA TESTIMONY IN NEGREIRA CASE



Diary Times Desk : Last week saw FC Barcelona president Joan Laporta testify in court over the Negreira case, with the hearing in the matter still continuing. The Barça chief gave his testimony, following which he was grilled by the lawyers from Real Madrid, who have appeared as private prosecutors in the case. And, now, according to AS, the conduct of the lawyers representing La Liga and the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) during Laporta’s testimony as a witness before the judge investigating the Negreira Case has been the final straw for Real Madrid.

The Spanish capital club have been left outraged by the silence maintained by the two governing bodies during the Barcelona chief’s testimony. “Their passivity reflects the lack of interest they have in getting to the bottom of the matter,” sources from Real Madrid state. Both the RFEF and La Liga sent their legal representatives to the Ciutat de la Justicia in Barcelona.

REAL MADRID PRESIDENT LAUNCHES FRESH ATTACK ON BARCELONA OVER NEGREIRA CASE: ‘MOST SERIOUS CASE IN FOOTBALL TODAY’

Diary Times Desk : Last month, Real Madrid president Florentino Perez launched a scathing attack on Barcelona, notably calling out the Negreira case.

It looked as if the gloves were finally coming off between Barcelona and Real Madrid, which was further confirmed by Joan Laporta’s response later. Now, Perez has once again fired shots at Barcelona, during a Christmas address in front of the Spanish press, where he extensively talked about the Negreira case.

Perez tried to paint the Negreira case as the most serious issue in Spanish football, accusing of Spanish footballing authority of leaving Real Madrid alone in the fight.

“As you well know, the extremely serious situation that occurred with the ‘Negreira case’ for almost two decades deserves justice. It is completely incomprehensible that the institutions have left Real Madrid alone in this fight,” he said (h/t Diario AS).

He went on to call the Negreira case the biggest scandal in football, in what was a direct attack on Barcelona, considering that the Catalans have been declared faultless in the controversy.

“How is it possible that the president of the referees asks us to forget it? How can we forget the biggest scandal in the history of football? How can the RFEF and LaLiga behave this way? They have a duty to ensure integrity,” he said.

GUADALAJARA COACH EXCITED TO FACE LAMINE YAMAL AND BARCELONA – ‘A DREAM COME TRUE’

Diary Times Desk : As Barcelona prepare for their upcoming Copa del Rey encounter against CD Guadalajara, the build-up has taken on an emotional and deeply human tone thanks to the words of Guadalajara head coach Pere Marti.

The former Villarreal midfielder, now tasked with leading an underdog side against one of world football’s biggest institutions, offered a refreshingly honest and heartfelt perspective during an interview with MARCA.

Marti began by reflecting on the moment the draw was made, especially given the difficult situation he inherited when he first arrived at the club.

HANSI FLICK BEING EXTRA CAUTIOUS WITH BARCELONA PRODIGY’S MINUTES AFTER LENGTHY ABSENCE

Diary Times Desk : Barcelona manager Hansi Flick has made it clear that changes are coming when his side faces Guadalajara in the Copa del Rey opener.

With fixture congestion and recovery management at the forefront of his thinking, rotation is expected across the pitch. While much of the attention has understandably focused on the goalkeeping situation and Marc-Andre ter Stegen’s role, there is another name quietly generating intrigue behind the scenes – Marc Bernal.

According to SPORT, the young midfielder remains one of the most carefully managed players in Flick’s squad, and his potential involvement against Guadalajara is far from straightforward.

Bernal has not featured in Barcelona’s last two matches and his absence is not linked to form or tactical dissatisfaction, but rather to a cautious approach being taken by the coaching staff. What makes the situation particularly interesting is that Bernal’s most recent appearance was arguably his most impressive of the season.

FLICK TALKS JOAN GARCIA, TER STEGEN, SZCZESNY, LEWANDOWSKI, REAL MADRID AHEAD OF GUADALAJARA VS BARCELONA

Diary Times Desk : Barcelona manager Hansi Flick faced the media ahead of the Copa del Rey clash against CD Guadalajara, using the press conference to clarify his thinking on several matters related to the match.

With Barcelona entering a decisive phase of the season, Flick struck a calm but demanding tone throughout.

Speaking first about the challenge posed by Guadalajara, Flick made it clear that he does not believe the competition or setting should change Barcelona’s mentality.

“It’s the same. We have to play as we do in La Liga, we’re the favourite,s and that’s what I want to see from the team, I want to see quality,” he began saying. Uncertainty remains around the starting lineup, particularly in goal. When asked directly about the goalkeeper for the match, Flick refused to be drawn into early decisions, explaining, “We haven’t decided yet. We don’t know the starting eleven. We’ll have 24 more hours to recover and we’ll decide tomorrow.”

KEY BARCELONA STAR SET FOR REST IN COPA DEL REY CLASH; VETERAN ACE TO REPLACE HIM

Diary Times Desk : FC Barcelona will take on CD Guadalajara in the Round of 32 of the 2025/26 Copa del Rey on Tuesday night, hoping to continue their winning momentum.

However, given the packed fixture schedule, Barcelona manager Hansi Flick is expected to make some major rotations for the game and rest some of his key players for the cup tie.

As such, Javi Miguel of AS reports that key Barcelona star and first-choice goalkeeper Joan Garcia will be rested by the manager against Guadalajara.

The 24-year-old summer arrival will either be left on the bench or might not even travel with the rest of the squad for the Copa del Rey encounter.

So far, Garcia has played 14 matches in all competitions in his debut season for Barcelona, proving to be an excellent piece of business with his crucial saves. And after a run of games since his return from injury, the Spaniard will get a rest on Tuesday. Now, the main question is who the German coach will choose to start in goal for the Copa opener, with Garcia in line for a rest.

