

NEWS IN BRIEF

RAPE ACCUSED AAP MLA HARMEET PATHANMAJRA DECLARED PO BY PATIALA COURT, PROPERTY DETAILS SOUGHT

Diary Times Desk : A court in Patiala today declared AAP MLA Harmeet Singh Pathanmajra a fugitive (proclaimed offender) after he failed to appear in a rape case, and has sought details of his movable and immovable property as part of the legal process. A senior police official said they will abide by the court's orders and submit details of his properties, and make all efforts to apprehend him. "As of now, he continues to remain on the run and we are looking for him. The court has declared him a proclaimed offender and proceedings will now be initiated accordingly as per law," said DSP City1 Satnam Singh. The developments come more than a month after a local court in Patiala initiated proclaimed offender proceedings against absconding MLA, after he failed to appear before police in connection with a rape case registered against him on September 1. The district police have already issued a lookout notice against the MLA.

FOG ENVELOPES NORTHERN STATES; WET WEATHER WITH SNOW FORECAST FOR PARTS OF J-K, HIMACHAL PRADESH

Diary Times Desk : As the year draws to a close, mercury hovered around its wintry lows and normal life was affected across northern states due to foggy conditions, with red alert warning issued in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday. The national capital was in the grip of a cold wave, with the sun largely obscured by clouds and pollutants lingering in the atmosphere, leading to reduced visibility. At least 129 flights were cancelled at the Delhi airport on Saturday due to dense fog, according to an official. The hilly state and UT of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir are set to witness a spell of wet weather, with predictions of rain and snow at several places, according to the weather departments. A day ahead of the onset of 'Chillai-Kalan' — the 40-day harsh winter period in Kashmir.

PM MODI

WILL END 'MAHA JUNGLE RAJ' IN BENGAL; TMC MAKING PEOPLE SUFFER TO OPPOSE BJP: PM IN VIRTUAL ADDRESS



Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday lashed out at the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, calling the state's prevailing situation "maha jungle raj" and alleging that "corruption, nepotism and appeasement of the ruling dispensation" have prevented development in the state.

Addressing a massive gathering at Taherpur in Nadia district over the phone from Kolkata, Modi urged the people to provide a chance to the BJP in the 2026 assembly polls to form a "double engine government" in the state. The term "double engine" is used by BJP leaders to refer to the party being in power at the Centre as well as in a state.

Dense fog at the venue prevented the Prime Minister's helicopter from landing at the makeshift helipad in Taherpur and forced him to return to the Kolkata airport. "Let the TMC oppose me and BJP as much as it wants, but the ruling party cannot hold people to ransom, make them suffer and stop Bengal's progress," Modi said at the Parivartan Sankalpa Sabha, the fourth such meeting in Bengal this year. The PM also claimed, "We will end TMC's maha jungle raj in Bengal where corruption, nepotism and appeasement politics are ruling the roost."

The Prime Minister alleged that the culture of "cut money and commission" has stalled development in the state despite there being "no dearth of goodwill, schemes and money" in store for the region. "I want to exert my full force in bringing about development in Bengal. Give the BJP a chance and bring double-engine government here," Modi said, sounding his party's poll bugle for the next year's state elections.

MODI GOVT BULLDOZED MGNREGA, SAYS SONIA GANDHI, VOWS FIGHT AGAINST NEW 'BLACK LAW'

Diary Times Desk : Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Saturday accused the Modi government of bulldozing MGNREGA, and asserted that the "black law" that seeks to repeal it will be defied by the lakhs of party workers across the country.

In a video message, she said that by weakening MGNREGA, the Modi government had attacked the interests of crores of farmers, labourers, and landless across the country. She alleged that over the past 11 years, the Centre had ignored the interests of the rural poor. Addressing the rural population, Gandhi said she vividly remembers the day 20 years ago, when Manmohan Singh was prime minister, and the MGNREGA Act was passed in Parliament by consensus. The former party president said it was "such a revolutionary step", and became a means of livelihood for the deprived, the exploited, and the poorest of the poor. She said, due to MGNREGA, migration in search of work came to a halt, a legal right to employment was provided, and gram panchayats were empowered.

"Through MGNREGA, a concrete step was taken towards realising the dream of an India based on Mahatma Gandhi's vision of Gram Swaraj," she said. "But it is a matter of great regret that just recently, the government ran a bulldozer over MGNREGA. Not only was Mahatma Gandhi's name removed, but the form and structure of MGNREGA was changed arbitrarily without any deliberation, without consulting anyone, without taking the opposition into confidence," the Congress leader alleged.



INDIA SQUAD FOR T20 WORLD CUP 2026: SHUBMAN GILL DROPPED, AXAR PATEL NAMED SURYAKUMAR'S DEPUTY



Diary Times Desk : Taking a bold call with an eye to maximise impact over reputation, the Indian selectors on Saturday dropped Shubman Gill from the T20 World Cup squad and brought back wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan along with Rinku Singh.

Gill's omission is the most interesting decision of the selection meeting in Mumbai although given his form, it wasn't very surprising. In his place, Axar Patel is the new vice-captain of the side.

Despite being one of India's most consistent batters across Tests and ODIs, Gill has struggled to nail down a fixed role in T20Is, particularly as an opener, where India are now prioritising high-impact starts over accumulation.

His strike-rate concerns in powerplays and the emergence of more explosive options appear to have weighed against him. He only scored 4, 0 and 28 in three games against South Africa.

"Shubman Gill is short of runs at the moment and missed last World Cup too," chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar said at the press conference.

INDIAN CYBER AGENCY FLAGS WHATSAPP 'HIJACK' WITH DEVICE-LINKING FEATURE



Diary Times Desk : Indian cyber security agency CERT-In has flagged a vulnerability in the WhatsApp "device-linking" feature that enables attackers to take "complete" control of an account, including access to real-time messages, photos, and videos on the web version.

The agency named the issue "GhostPairing" on Friday in an advisory. "It has been reported that malicious actors are exploiting WhatsApp's device-linking feature to hijack accounts using pairing codes without authentication requirement.

"This newly identified cyber campaign called GhostPairing enable cyber criminals to take complete control of WhatsApp accounts without needing password or SIM swaps," the advisory said. A response from WhatsApp to the revelation is awaited. The Indian computer emergency response team (CERT-In) is the national technology arm to combat cyber attacks and guarding of the Indian Internet space. The advisory said that the "high" severity attack campaign usually begins with the victim receiving a message like "Hi, check this photo" from a "trusted" contact. The message contains a link with a Facebook-style preview. The link leads to a "fake" Facebook viewer that prompts users to "verify" to see the content. Here, the attackers exploit WhatsApp's "link device via phone number" feature by tricking unsuspecting users into entering their phone numbers, the advisory said.

RAJDHANI EXPRESS

SAIRANG-NEW DELHI RAJDHANI EXPRESS MOWS DOWN 7 ELEPHANTS IN ASSAM, 5 COACHES DERAILED



Diary Times Desk : At least seven elephants were killed, and one was injured after a herd of jumbos was hit by the Sairang-New Delhi Rajdhani Express in Assam's Hojai district early Saturday, officials said.

Five coaches and the train's engine were also derailed, they said. Initially, all eight elephants were reported to have been killed, though later it was said that one of them was found injured.

No passengers were injured in the accident, which occurred at 2.17 am, the officials said. Nagaon divisional forest officer Suhash Kadam told PTI that the accident in Changjurai village is suspected to have occurred due to heavy fog in the area.

"Autopsy of the seven dead jumbos is underway, and treatment is on for the injured one by local veterinary doctors. Cremation will be done near the accident site. Legal formalities are being followed," he said. NFR chief spokesperson Kapinjal Kishore Sharma said the accident took place in the Jamunamukh- Kampur section under the Lumding division. The area is about 126 km from Guwahati. He claimed that the accident took place at a location which is not a designated elephant corridor. "The train driver, on observing the herd of elephants, applied emergency brakes.

MESSI WAS 'UNHAPPY' WITH BEING TOUCHED AT KOLKATA EVENT, ARRESTED MAIN ORGANISER TELLS SIT



Diary Times Desk : Satadru Dutta, the arrested main organiser of Lionel Messi event here on December 13, has told investigators that the football icon was "unhappy with being touched or hugged" during his appearance at the Salt Lake Stadium and left before staying there full-time as scheduled, a source in the SIT said on Saturday.

During prolonged questioning by officers of the Special Investigation Team (SIT), Dutta said Messi "did not like being touched on the back or being hugged" and that the concern had been conveyed in advance by the foreign security officials responsible for the footballer's protection, he said.

"Despite repeated public announcements to restrain the crowd, there was no impact. The manner in which Messi was surrounded and embraced was completely unacceptable to the World Cup-winning footballer," Dutta told investigators during his grilling on Friday, the source said.



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She alleged that over the past 11 years, the Centre had ignored the interests of the rural poor. Addressing the rural population, Gandhi said she vividly remembers the day 20 years ago, when Manmohan Singh was prime minister, and the MGNREGA Act was passed in Parliament by consensus. The former party president said it was "such a revolutionary step", and became a means of livelihood for the deprived, the exploited, and the poorest of the poor. She said, due to MGNREGA, migration in search of work came to a halt, a legal right to employment was provided, and gram panchayats were empowered.

AGUSTAWESTLAND CHOPPER SCAM: COURT ORDERS CHRISTIAN MICHEL'S RELEASE FROM CUSTODY IN ED CASE

Diary Times Desk : A Delhi court on Saturday ordered the release of Christian James Michel from custody in a money laundering case filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) related to the alleged AgustaWestland VVIP chopper scam. However, he will remain in jail as he is also accused in a separate corruption case filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the matter. Special CBI judge Sanjay Jindal, who was hearing the plea filed by Michel seeking release from custody in the case filed by ED, noted that he has been accused of the offence under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act that is punishable up to seven years of imprisonment and that he has already been in custody for the last seven years.

"In view of the mandatory provisions of the second proviso to Section 436A CrPC, the said accused is entitled to be released accordingly and he cannot be detained in this case beyond December 21, 2025," the court said.

JHARKHAND MINISTER OFFERS JOB, FLAT TO BIHAR DOCTOR AFTER 'NAQAB' ROW

Diary Times Desk : Jharkhand Health Minister Irfan Ansari on Saturday said he has offered a job with Rs 3 lakh monthly salary, a government flat and desired posting to a woman doctor from Bihar following the 'naqab' controversy during distribution of appointment letters. Ansari alleged that Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar tried to demean 'naqab' and the Muslim community by removing the veil of a woman. "I have invited the woman doctor to Jharkhand and offered her a job with Rs 3 lakh monthly salary, a flat, desired posting and full security," he told reporters in Jamtara. "The way a doctor, and a woman, was humiliated and treated with indecency by pulling her 'naqab' is not merely an attack on one individual but a direct assault on human dignity, honour and the Constitution itself," he said. The incident, a video clip of which has been circulated widely and sparked a major political row, took place on Monday at the Chief Minister's secretariat in Patna when AYUSH doctors had gathered to receive their letters of appointment. When the woman came up for her letter, Kumar saw her 'naqab', said "what is this?", and then removed the veil. Reacting to Ansari's offer, former BJP legislator Bhanu Pratap Sahi termed it "politics of appeasement". In a video post on X, the former Bhawanathpur MLA asked Ansari under which employment policy would he give a job to a doctor from Bihar.

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DELHI AIRPORT SEES 129 FLIGHT CANCELLATIONS ON SATURDAY

Diary Times Desk : At least 129 flights were cancelled at the Delhi airport on Saturday due to dense fog, according to an official. Flight operations have been disrupted for the past several days at Delhi and other airports due to dense fog, resulting in low visibility conditions. The official said at least 66 arrivals and 63 departures have been cancelled. "Low Visibility Procedures are currently in progress at Delhi Airport. All flight operations are functioning normally," Delhi airport operator DIAL said in a post on X in the afternoon. Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) operates the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), the country's largest airport, which generally handles around 1,300 flights daily.

UTTARAKHAND HC TAKES STRICT VIEW OF FELLING OF 4,400 TREES FOR RISHIKESH-BHANIYAWALA 4-LANE ROAD



Diary Times Desk : Taking a strict view of the felling of nearly 4,400 trees for the construction of the Rishikesh-Bhaniyawala four-lane road, the Uttarakhand High Court directed the state government, the Centre and the NHAI to hold a meeting and place their suggestions before the court. During the hearing, the petitioner informed the court that, in accordance with the earlier directions issued by it, neither the trees have been transplanted, nor are the underpasses being constructed as per prescribed rules. After hearing the matter, the division bench of Chief Justice G Narendar and Justice Subhash Upadhyay directed the state and central governments and the NHAI to hold a meeting on the matter and to resolve the issue, and place their suggestions before the court. The court has fixed December 30 as the next date of hearing. Dehradun resident Reenu Pal filed a PIL before the High Court, stating that more than 3,000 trees have been identified for felling for the widening of the road between Rishikesh and Bhaniyawala, which falls within the elephant corridor. Due to this, the elephant corridor and other wild animals may be adversely affected, and their daily movement and routine could be disturbed, she said.

'DISAPPOINTED' TO WITNESS 'NAQAB' ROW, SAYS BIHAR GOVERNOR ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN



Diary Times Desk : Bihar Governor Arif Mohammad Khan on Saturday said he was "disappointed" to witness the row after the 'naqab' (veil) of a doctor was removed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. Khan was referring to a video clip which sparked a major political row, which took place on Monday at the Chief Minister's secretariat in Patna when AYUSH doctors had gathered to receive their letters of appointment. When the woman came up for her letter, Kumar saw her 'naqab', said 'what is this' and then removed the veil. "It pains me to hear the word 'dispute' in this case. Can there be any row between a father and a daughter?" Khan asked. Talking to reporters, the Governor said, "What have you people made out of it? This man considers female students as his daughters." Meanwhile, Principal of Government Tibbi College and Hospital, Mahfoozur Rahman said, "Nusrat's family said that they want to escape media coverage, and that the female doctor will rethink whether to join or not."

MUMBAI WILL REJECT BJP'S 'RELIGIOUS POLITICS', SAYS VARSHA GAIKWAD AS CONGRESS GEARS UP FOR SOLO FIGHT

Diary Times Desk : Mumbai Congress president Varsha GaiKWad on Saturday said the BJP's "religious politics and double standards" would be rejected by the voters of the metropolis who will focus on core civic issues. Polls to 29 municipal corporations, including Mumbai, will take place on January 15, while votes will be counted on the next day. "Whenever elections come, the BJP starts playing religious politics," GaiKWad said in a statement. She said while BJP's Mumbai unit chief Ameet Satam claims NCP's Nawab Malik is unacceptable, the Ajit Pawar-led party's state president Sunil Tatkare holds discussions with senior BJP leader Ashish Shelar. "The BJP says Nawab Malik is unwanted, yet his (MLA) daughter Sana Malik votes in favour of the BJP government. This clearly exposes the party's double standards," she said. GaiKWad said the BJP's approach of seeking to remain in power, enjoying its benefits, and resorting to religious politics during elections.

DAWOOD IBRAHIM, GANG WARS AND MORE: MUMBAI UNDERWORLD INSIDER REVEALS SECRETS IN NEW BOOK

Diary Times Desk : Shyam Kishore Garikapati, a former associate of Dawood Ibrahim who once moved through the darkest corridors of Mumbai's organised crime, has broken his silence in a new book that promises to challenge long-held narratives about the city's underworld. "Black Scorpion: To Hell and Back", written and self-published by journalists Vijay Shekhar, Raju Santhanam and Calvin Joshua, is a true-crime narrative based on the life and testimony of Garikapati, known within the underworld as "Black Scorpion". Set against the backdrop of Mumbai in the 1980s and 1990s, the book revisits an era marked by gang wars, shifting loyalties and brutal killings involving some of the most notorious names in organised crime, including Dawood Ibrahim, Chhota Rajan, Karim Lala, Varadarajan Mudaliar and Arun Gawli. The book offers a first-person insider's view, drawn from Garikapati's lived experience, court records.

COURT ORDERS FRAMING OF CHARGES AGAINST CONGRESS LEADER ALKA LAMBA IN POLICE ASSAULT CASE

Diary Times Desk : A Delhi court has ordered framing of charges against Congress leader Alka Lamba in a case related to an assault on police personnel during a protest at the Jantar Mantar in 2024, saying there was a "prima facie" case against her. Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Ashwani Panwar was hearing the matter in which the Congress leader was accused of obstructing police and blocking a public road while holding a protest in support of women's reservation at the Jantar Mantar on July 29, 2024. The court has posted the matter for the formal framing of charges on January 5. According to the prosecution, Lamba, along with other protesters, pushed police officers, jumped the barricades, while some of them blocked the road. In an order dated December 19, the court ordered framing of charges, saying, "There exists a prima facie case against the accused, namely, Alka Lamba, for the commission of offences punishable under Sections 132 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 221 (obstruction of public official), 223(a) (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), and 285 (danger or obstruction in public way or line of navigation) of the BNS."



CALLED 'ANPADH' AND 'ASSAULTED' BY PILOT, PASSENGER WITH BABY TAKES TO X TO NARRATE TRAUMA AT DELHI AIRPORT

Diary Times Desk : A passenger was allegedly assaulted by an off-duty Air India Express pilot at Delhi airport on Friday. The passenger, Ankit Dewan, wrote in a post on X that he and his family were guided to use the security check that the staff uses (also the PRM check) as they had a four-month-old baby in a stroller. He added that the staff was cutting the queue ahead of him. "On calling them out, Capt. Virender, who himself was doing the same thing, asked me if I was anpadh (uneducated), and couldn't read the signs that said this entry was for staff." Dewan added in his post that a verbal scuffle broke out. "Not able to exercise restraint, the AIX pilot proceeded to physically assault me, leaving me bloody," he alleged. He said the incident had left his seven-year-old daughter, who witnessed the "assault", traumatised. Besides, he said his holiday had been ruined. He questioned Air India how it could allow pilots, who couldn't keep their cool, fly its planes.

IMRAN KHAN, WIFE BUSHRA BIBI SENTENCED TO 17 YEARS IN JAIL IN CORRUPTION CASE



Diary Times Desk : Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi were sentenced to 17 years in jail each by a court on Saturday in the Toshakhana 2 corruption case. Khan, 73, who has been in jail since August 2023, faces multiple cases launched against him since his ouster from power in April 2022. The Toshakhana 2 case involves alleged fraud in state gifts that the former first couple received from the Saudi government in 2021.

Special court judge Shahrukh Arjumand announced the judgment in the case at Rawalpindi's high-security Adiala Jail, where the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder is currently being held.

Khan and Bushra were awarded 10 years' rigorous imprisonment under Section 409 (criminal breach of trust) of the Pakistan Penal Code and seven years under different sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act. The court also imposed a fine of PKR 16.4 million on each of them. "This court, while passing sentences, has considered the old age of Imran Ahmed Khan Niazi, as well as the fact that Bushra Imran Khan is a female. It is in consideration of both said factors that a lenient view has been taken in awarding lesser punishment," according to the judgment. It added that the benefit of Section 382-B (period of detention to be considered while awarding sentence of imprisonment) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) was "hereby given to the convicts".

US EPSTEIN FILES RELEASE HIGHLIGHTS CLINTON, MAKES SCANT REFERENCE TO TRUMP

Diary Times Desk : The US Justice Department released thousands of heavily redacted documents related to the late financier and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein on Friday that made scant reference to President Donald Trump but extensively featured Democratic former President Bill Clinton. The absence of references to Trump was notable given that pictures and documents related to him have trickled out of previous Epstein releases for years. Trump's name appeared in flight manifests listing passengers on Epstein's private plane that were part of a first batch of Epstein material the Justice Department released in February, for instance. The partial release was intended to comply with a law overwhelmingly passed by Congress in November that mandated the disclosure of all Epstein files, despite the Republican president's months-long effort to keep them sealed. The scandal surrounding Epstein has become a self-inflicted political wound for Trump, who for years had promoted conspiracy theories about Epstein to his supporters. It was not immediately clear how substantive the new materials were, given that many Epstein-related documents have previously been made public since his 2019 death in jail.



US CARRIES OUT LARGE-SCALE RETALIATORY STRIKES AGAINST ISIS IN SYRIA



Diary Times Desk : The US military launched large-scale strikes against dozens of Islamic State targets in Syria on Friday in retaliation for an attack on American personnel, US officials said. A US-led coalition has been carrying out airstrikes and ground operations in Syria targeting Islamic State suspects in recent months, often with the involvement of Syria's security forces. President Donald Trump had vowed to retaliate after a suspected ISIS attack killed US personnel last weekend in Syria. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said the strikes targeted "ISIS fighters, infrastructure, and weapons sites" and that the operation was "OPERATION HAWKEYE STRIKE." "This is not the beginning of a war — it is a declaration of vengeance," Hegseth said. "Today, we hunted and we killed our enemies. Lots of them. And we will continue," he added. Trump said on social media that the Syrian government fully supported the strikes and that the US was inflicting "very serious retaliation."

YOUTH LEADER'S FUNERAL PRAYERS HELD IN BANGLADESH CAPITAL AMID TIGHTENED SECURITY

Diary Times Desk : Bangladesh held the funeral of prominent youth leader Sharif Osman Hadi on Saturday drawing a large number of people in the capital amid extra-tight security after his death triggered unrest across the country. Interim government Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus along with his advisory council members and Army chief General Waker-uz-Zaman attended the funeral for the 32-year-old spokesperson of the 'Inqilab Mancha' held at the South Plaza of Parliament complex at Manik Mia Avenue. Yunus spoke briefly ahead of the janaza (funeral prayers) as politicians representing former prime minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Jamaat-e-Islami and student-led National Citizen Party (NCP) joined the prayers. The country is also observing a day of state mourning following the death of Hadi, who was one of the prominent leaders of the student-led protests last year, which led to the ouster of the prime minister.

PAKISTAN HOCKEY TEAM MANAGER OFFLOADED IN BRAZIL FOR SMOKING ON PLANE

Diary Times Desk : Well-known hockey olympian Anjum Saeed, who accompanied the senior Pakistan team to the FIH Pro League in Argentina as manager, landed himself in trouble after being offloaded in Brazil for smoking on the airplane while it was refuelling at the Rio de Janeiro airport. Anjum, along with a Pakistan player, was not allowed to board the plane to Dubai after he was found smoking when the flight stopped in Brazil for refuelling.

Anjum, a defender and midfielder who played in the Olympics semifinal in 1992 and was in the squad that won the World Cup and Champions Trophy in 1994, was sent as manager to Argentina but after returning home this week, he is now claiming he didn't come back with the team because of some personnel work in Dubai. But an official in the Pakistan Sports Board said they had asked the Pakistan Hockey Federation to hold an independent inquiry into the incident as the incident doesn't reflect well on Pakistan sports.

The official said they had gathered their own information but wanted to see what the PHF would do now as it was a serious matter.

GOOGLE WARNS STAFF WITH US VISAS AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL DUE TO EMBASSY DELAYS TO EMBASSY DELAYS

Diary Times Desk : Google has advised some employees on US visas to avoid international travel due to delays at embassies, Business Insider reported on Friday, citing an internal email. The email, sent by the company's outside counsel BAL Immigration Law on Thursday, warned staff who need a visa stamp to re-enter the United States not to leave the country because visa processing times had lengthened, the report said.

Google did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment. Some US embassies and consulates face visa appointment delays of up to 12 months, the memo said, warning that international travel would "risk an extended stay outside the US", according to the report.

The Trump administration this month announced increased vetting of applicants for H-1B visas for highly skilled workers, including the screening of social media accounts. The H-1B visa program, widely used by the U.S. technology sector to hire skilled workers from India and China, has been under the spotlight after the Trump administration imposed a \$100,000 fee for new applications this year.

'SEEN US ENGAGED' IN INDIA-PAKISTAN CONFLICT: RUBIO SAYS TRUMP MADE PEACEMAKING A PRIORITY

Diary Times Desk : US Secretary of State Marco Rubio emphasised the country's role as a peacemaker, highlighting its engagement in various global conflicts, including India-Pakistan, Russia-Ukraine, and Sudan.

Rubio credited President Donald Trump for stopping the India-Pakistan conflict, a claim previously made by Trump. In a press conference, Marco Rubio highlighted the US's efforts to promote peace globally, citing Trump's involvement in resolving conflicts like India-Pakistan and Russia-Ukraine.

"We remain engaged around the world, including in conflicts that perhaps are not central to everyday life in America. But the President has made it a priority to be a peacemaker. And so you've seen us engaged, whether it's Russia, Ukraine, or India and Pakistan, or Thailand and Cambodia, which is an ongoing challenge, or the tragedy we see now in Sudan, or the potential for further strife in South Sudan, and that's falling apart.

"We are always looking for opportunities, if possible, to serve as mediators that help prevent war or end conflicts. And obviously, in many of these cases, you can get people to the table and agree, and then there's the implementation process," he said. Rubio defended the Trump administration's strict immigration policies, stating it's a sovereign decision to ensure the country's safety and security.



BALUCHISTAN: UNIDENTIFIED BODIES RECOVERED IN WASHUK AMID RISING HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS

Diary Times Desk : Reports have emerged of alleged enforced disappearances and the recovery of two unidentified bodies in Balochistan's Khuzdar and Washuk districts, according to the Balochistan Post. The Balochistan Post reported that Pakistani forces allegedly detained a man from the Naal area of Khuzdar district and transferred him to an undisclosed location. The individual has been identified as Naveed, son of Ramzan Qambrani, who was reportedly taken into custody on December 13. Family members, as reported by The Balochistan Post, stated that no information has been provided about Naveed Qambrani's whereabouts since his arrest. They have expressed serious concern for his safety and have demanded clarity.

EARTHQUAKE OF MAGNITUDE 2.9 STRIKES NEPAL

Diary Times Desk : An earthquake of magnitude 2.9 struck Nepal on Saturday afternoon, the National Center for Seismology (NCS) said on Saturday. In a post on X, NCS said that the earthquake occurred at a depth of 5 km. "EQ of M: 2.9, On: 20/12/2025 14:10:10 IST, Lat: 27.79 N, Long: 87.33 E, Depth: 5 Km, Location: Nepal", NCS wrote on X. On December 7, an earthquake of magnitude 4.1 struck Nepal. Earlier on November 30, an earthquake of magnitude 4.2 struck Nepal. Shallow earthquakes are more dangerous than deeper ones because their greater energy release near the Earth's surface produces firmer ground shaking and greater structural damage and casualties. In contrast, deeper earthquakes lose energy as they travel toward the surface. Nepal is highly seismically active due to its location along a convergent boundary.

WHEN YOU LOOK AT FOREIGN POLICY, YOU MUST HAVE CLARITY, MAKE CHOICES, HAVE A GAME PLAN: EAM JAISHANKAR

Diary Times Desk : External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar on Saturday emphasised the need for strategic clarity and a well-defined game plan for India's foreign policy, stating that the country must operate with a well-defined game plan to navigate an increasingly complex global environment. Addressing an event at the Pune Book Festival, Jaishankar said that foreign policy cannot be driven by ambiguity or hesitation, underlining the importance of aligning India's interests with long-term strategic thinking.

"When you look at foreign policy, you must have clarity; you have to make the choices. As I said, you must have a game plan. You have to pick all the positive points that will work for you and make them work," he said. Reflecting on intellectual influences, the EAM expressed frustration with Western-dominated textbook narratives, noting that India has never had a tradition of strategy and statecraft.

Jaishankar stressed that India has its own civilisational beliefs, culture and strategic traditions, which need to be articulated in India's own terms and communicated to the world.



UAE HEALTH SECTOR STRENGTHENS LEADERSHIP WITH QUALITATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2025

Diary Times Desk : The UAE's health sector recorded a series of landmark achievements in 2025, reinforcing the country's position as a global hub for medical innovation and enhancing the readiness of its healthcare system across diagnostic, therapeutic, and research domains.

These accomplishments stemmed from a national vision focused on investing in healthcare infrastructure, empowering talent, forging advanced international partnerships, and developing preventive legislation and policies to enhance quality of life and safeguard community health. The UAE Cabinet approved the National Policy for Combating Health Risks, alongside the reconstitution of the UAE Health Council and the National Public Health Committee. The UAE Government issued a Federal Decree-Law amending certain provisions of the Federal Decree-Law on Donation and Transplantation of Organs and Tissues as part of efforts to advance the country's healthcare legislative framework.

UAE APPROVES GENE REPLACEMENT THERAPY FOR NEW AGE GROUP IN SPINAL MUSCULAR ATROPHY PATIENTS

Diary Times Desk : The Emirates Drug Establishment (EDE) has announced the approval of Itvisma (onasemnogene abeparvovec), a gene therapy that uses an adeno-associated viral vector to treat spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) in eligible adults and children aged two years and above.

With this decision, the UAE becomes the second country globally to grant approval for this treatment, reinforcing its leadership in accelerating patient access to advanced medical innovations across the region.

Itvisma targets the genetic cause of spinal muscular atrophy by replacing the defective gene responsible for the disease, helping to improve patients' motor functions and reduce their reliance on long-term treatments. This regulatory authorisation is part of EDE's ongoing commitment to enabling access to high-value, advanced therapies and accelerating the delivery of breakthrough medicines to UAE patients, in line with the UAE's vision for a world-class, efficient, innovative, and sustainable healthcare ecosystem. Dr. Fatima Al Kaabi, Director-General of the Emirates Drug Establishment, stated, "Granting the regulatory approval for Itvisma is a significant step demonstrating the UAE's commitment to providing patients with the latest advanced genetic therapies, particularly those with rare genetic.

TRUMP, PUTIN AND PM MODI URGED TO BACK PEACEFUL THAILAND-CAMBODIA SETTLEMENT: ICJ PRESIDENT ADISH AGGARWALA

Diary Times Desk : Eminent jurists, judges, writers and intellectuals from several countries on Saturday adopted a Resolution for World Peace at the International Conference of Jurists & Writers for World Peace held in Bangkok, expressing grave concern over escalating regional tensions and the mounting loss of innocent civilian lives. The resolution respectfully appealed to US President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to use their good offices and global influence to promote dialogue and facilitate a peaceful settlement of the dispute between Thailand and Cambodia, with the paramount objective of safeguarding innocent civilians and ensuring regional stability. The participants underscored that the protection of civilians and the preservation of regional stability must remain the paramount objective of all diplomatic efforts. Earlier in the day, conference participants held a brief and peaceful assembly near the venue, displaying placards carrying messages of peace, non-violence, justice and global harmony.



ISRAEL'S NATIONAL DRONE INITIATIVE IS ADVANCING

Diary Times Desk : Israel's Ministry of Transportation's National Drone Initiative is advancing by integrating technological experiments for the continuous operation of commercial and public services.

Future drone service models will soon be tested in the fields of healthcare, logistics and municipal services, including the transfer of medical equipment and blood between hospitals, retail deliveries and the transfer of equipment to gas rigs and ships.

The project, operated by the Ayalon Routes Company, in collaboration with the Innovation Authority and government ministries, regulators, local authorities, and technology companies, is now progressing from a combination of flight tests and spot demonstrations to a practical examination of the continuous operation of drones for commercial and public use.

UN CONDEMNS ARBITRARY DETENTION OF ADDITIONAL STAFF BY HOUTHIS

Diary Times Desk : United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres strongly condemned the arbitrary detention carried out by the Houthi group on 18th December against 10 additional United Nations staff members, bringing the total number of detained UN personnel to 69. In a statement, Stephane Dujarric, Spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General, said these detentions have rendered the delivery of United Nations humanitarian assistance in areas under Houthi control unsustainable. He noted that this directly affects millions of people in need and restricts their access to life-saving aid. He added that the Secretary-General called for the immediate and unconditional release of all arbitrarily detained personnel from the United Nations, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations and diplomatic missions. He also urged the Houthis to revoke the referral of UN staff for prosecution and stressed the need to respect.

SOUTH KOREAN CORPORATE EARNINGS UP 20.6% IN 2024 ON AI-LED CHIP EXPORTS



Diary Times Desk : South Korean companies' earnings recorded a 20 per cent on-year gain in 2024 on increased exports of semiconductors, government data showed Tuesday. The combined before-tax net profit of South Korean companies reached 181.9 trillion won (US\$123.9 billion) last year, up 20.6 per cent from 150.8 trillion won tallied in 2023, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Data and Statistics.

In line with such a trend, South Korean companies increased their spending on research and development (R&D), with related expenditures rising 21.4 per cent on-year to 97 trillion won.

The surveyed firms' combined sales reached 3,371.1 trillion won this year, up 5.2 per cent from the previous year. The data, meanwhile, showed that 40.3 per cent of the polled firms, or 6,009 out of 14,922, held subsidiaries at home and abroad.

By country, China accounted for the largest share of 21.9 per cent, followed by the United States with 16.4 per cent and Vietnam with 11.8 per cent.

A total of 401 companies expanded into new business areas in 2024, with 54.9 per cent of them in the manufacturing sector.

NASA LOSES CONTACT WITH MARS PROBE 'MAVEN'

Diary Times Desk : The US space agency NASA has lost contact with the Mars probe "Maven". Work is underway to re-establish contact, a NASA spokeswoman told the German news agency DPA.

No regular data had been received for around two weeks. A "short fragment" indicates that the probe may have "rotated in an unexpected way".

Launched at the end of 2013, "Maven" has been orbiting Mars for around ten years and provides important research data, particularly on the planet's atmosphere.

NASA also has the probes "Mars Odyssey" and "Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter" in operation, as well as the rovers "Curiosity" and "Perseverance" on the surface of our neighbouring planet.

OSMAN HADI'S FUNERAL CONCLUDES IN DHAKA, DAY OF RELATIVE PEACE REPORTED IN BANGLADESH

Diary Times Desk : The funeral prayer service for Sharif Osman Hadi recently concluded in Bangladesh. The prayer service drew a large crowd to pray for the Inqilab Moncho convenor. In accordance with the family's wishes, Hadi was buried beside the grave of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.

From early morning, mourners arrived in groups at Manik Mia Avenue and soon the thoroughfare in front of Parliament was filled with people. Some in the crowd draped themselves in the national flag while others chanted slogans demanding justice for Hadi's killing.

Saturday is being observed as a day of state mourning following Hadi's death, with national flags flown at half-mast and special prayers held at places of worship. It was also a day of relative calm in the capital after two days of protests by supporters of the Inqilab Moncho.

Ahead of his funeral prayers, the Bangladesh Guard Border and police had been deployed at the Parliament building and other key locations across Dhaka, as reported by BDNews24. As per the instructions of the Inqilab Moncho only the national flag of Bangladesh was displayed at the funeral prayer service. Hadi, had announced plans to run as an independent for the Dhaka-8 seat in the upcoming election, was shot at close range on Dec 12 while travelling by rickshaw.

UN MARKS SECOND WORLD MEDITATION DAY WITH FOCUS ON INNER PEACE, GLOBAL HARMONY



Diary Times Desk : The Permanent Mission of India, along with several partner countries, marked the second World Meditation Day at the United Nations Headquarters on Friday with a high-level event focused on inner peace and global harmony as per press statement. The programme was organised by the Permanent Mission of India in collaboration with the missions of Andorra, Mexico, Nepal and Sri Lanka, which together form the core group behind the World Meditation Day initiative. The event took place at the Trusteeship Council Chamber at the UN and saw participation from diplomats, experts, spiritual leaders and members of civil society. Renowned spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar delivered the keynote address at the event and led the audience through a guided meditation session. Several other speakers spoke about the importance of meditation in daily life and its growing relevance in today's fast-changing world. Yogmata Keiko Aikawa and Sister BK Gayatri from the Brahma Kumaris organisation shared their experiences of practising meditation and promoting it globally. LP Bhanu Sharma, co-founder of Nepal's Jeevan Vigyan Foundation, spoke about efforts to provide practical education in yoga and meditation.

INDIA DISTRIBUTES DRY RATION PACKETS TO OVER 80 CYCLONE DITWAH AFFECTED FAMILIES IN SL

Diary Times Desk : Assistant High Commission of India in Kandy, Sri Lanka under Operation Sagar Bandhu distributed dry ration packets to 86 Cyclone Ditwah affected families. The Assistant High Commission undertook the activity as India continued to support Sri Lanka. In a post on X, the AHC said, "As part of India's continued assistance to Sri Lanka under Operation Sagar Bandhu, AHC Saranya VS, distributed dry ration packets to 86 Cyclone Ditwah affected families of Dickwella estate of Badulla District in the presence of Hon. Member of Parliament, Mr. Kitnan Selvaraj, Hon. Member of Parliament, Ms. Ambika Samuel, along with local officials and estate management. India continues to support Sri Lanka and its people as they rebuild and move forward." The disaster relief medical assistance provided by the Indian Army's 60 Parachute Field Hospital in the wake of the devastating Ditwah Cyclone was formally commended on 14 December.

TIBETANS IN-EXILE CONDEMN CHINA'S GOLD MINING PROJECT, HOLD VIGIL IN SOLIDARITY WITH PROTESTERS IN TIBET

Diary Times Desk : Five major Tibetan NGOs condemned China's Gold Mining Project in Kashi Village, Kham region of Eastern Tibet and stood in solidarity with the Tibetan Protesters. On November 5, the Chinese Communist Government launched a gold mining project in Kashi Village, Zachukha, Kham without the consent of the local Tibetan population. When Tibetans attempted to peacefully halt the project and submitted appeals to the authorities, they arrested more than 80 Tibetans out of which seven are still missing. Many Tibetans in-exile and supporters gathered in North Indian hill town Dharamshala to participate in the candle light vigil and show their solidarity with the victims of gold mining protest. They demand China to release all Tibetan protesters and respect human rights. On November 5, scores of people in a Tibetan autonomous area in the western Chinese province of Sichuan protested.

PUTIN SAYS EUROPE COUNTING ON US MIDTERMS TO PRESSURE TRUMP

Diary Times Desk : Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday said that European elites are counting on the upcoming midterm elections in the United States, hoping for a political shift that could bring Washington's traditional allies back to power and increase pressure on US President Donald Trump, Russia Today reported.

Putin made the remarks during his annual "Direct Line" end-of-year press conference held in Moscow, a four-and-a-half-hour question-and-answer session with citizens and journalists.

The next midterm elections in the United States are scheduled for November 3, 2026, and will take place during President Trump's second term. Voters will elect all 435 members of the US House of Representatives and 35 of the 100 members of the US Senate, shaping the composition of the 120th US Congress.

Historically, US midterm elections have tended to work against the sitting president. The party holding the White House usually loses seats in Congress, often by a significant margin, as voters use the polls to express dissatisfaction with the administration. During the event, Putin addressed a wide range of international issues, including the European Union's attempts to use Russia's frozen central bank assets, NATO's eastward expansion, and security arrangements linked to potential elections in Ukraine as part of peace efforts.



TAIWAN DETECTS 6 CHINESE AIRCRAFT, 11 VESSELS, 1 SHIP

Diary Times Desk : Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense detected the presence of six sorties of Chinese military aircraft, 11 naval vessels and an official ship operating around its territorial waters as of 6 am (local time) on Saturday.

The Taiwanese Armed Forces said they responded accordingly. In a post on X, the MND said, "6 sorties of PLA aircraft, 11 PLAN vessels and 1 official ship operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. ROC Armed Forces have monitored the situation and responded." Earlier on Friday, Taiwan detected seven sorties of Chinese military aircraft and 11 naval vessels operating around itself. In a post on X, the MND said, "7 sorties of PLA aircraft and 11 PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. ROC Armed Forces have monitored the situation and responded." Meanwhile, China has assigned two to four individuals specialising in Taiwan issues to its embassies in various democratic nations to observe and intimidate Taiwanese, actions that the host countries are unlikely to accept, National Security Bureau (NSB) Director-General Tsai Ming-yen stated, according to the Taipei Times.

"VIOLATION OF FEDERAL LAW": US DEMOCRATS ON EPSTEIN FILES REDACTIONS

Diary Times Desk : US Congressmen Robert Garcia and Jamie Raskin, leading Democrats on the House Oversight and Judiciary Committees, have criticised the Department of Justice for heavily redacting Jeffrey Epstein's files, calling it a violation of federal law.

They argue the Trump administration is covering up evidence related to Epstein's sex trafficking ring and failing to comply with the Epstein Files Transparency Act, which mandated the release of unclassified documents within 30 days.

Democrat representative Ro Khanna said that he was "disappointed" with the materials produced on Friday and that he will be exploring "all options" about what to do next. In a post on X, he said, "The DOJ's document dump of hundreds of thousands of pages failed to comply with the law authored by Thomas Massie and me. One document, 119 pages of Grand Jury testimony, was completely redacted. I explain what is missing and what the survivors and their lawyers are still expecting to be released."

GOVERNMENT SANCTIONS 38 RAILWAY PROJECTS WORTH RS 89,780 CRORE IN MAHARASHTRA

Diary Times Desk : The government has sanctioned 38 projects for new lines, gauge conversion, and doubling of tracks covering 5,098 kilometres at a total cost of Rs 89,780 crore in Maharashtra.

According to the Ministry of Railways, these projects focus on expanding the rail network and increasing the number of trains the state can handle. The total plan includes 11 new railway lines, two gauge conversions, and 25 doubling or multi-tracking projects to improve travel across the region.

According to the Ministry, the funds allocated to these projects have grown significantly over the years. Between 2009 and 2014, the average spending was Rs 1,171 crore per year. For the 2025-26 period, the budget allocation reaches Rs 23,778 crore, which is "more than 20 times" the previous amount. This increase in funding allows the railway department to complete tracks at a much faster rate. The average speed of finishing new tracks rises from 58.4 kilometres per year to 208.36 kilometres per year. The Mumbai suburban area receives specific upgrades to manage the 3,200 suburban trains and 120 express trains that run every day. The Ministry of Railways sanctions the Mumbai Urban Transport Project phases II, III, and IIIA to improve capacity and safety.

SEBI PLANS MEASURES TO EASE COMMODITIES MARKET, BOOST PARTICIPATION

Diary Times Desk : The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) is working on measures for developing the commodities market, including steps to increase institutional participation, reviewing norms on margins and position limits, and resolving GST-related issues, Sebi Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Saturday. Speaking at the 11th Convention of the Commodity Participants Association of India (CPAI) in New Delhi, the Sebi chief said that working groups have been set up to suggest measures to deepen the agri-commodity derivatives ecosystem. "These expert groups, among other things, are reviewing whether the regulatory framework pertaining to margins, position limits, and delivery and settlement mechanism.

CENTRE RELEASES RS 94 CRORE FOR UTTARAKHAND RURAL LOCAL BODIES

Diary Times Desk : The Union Government has released Rs 94.236 crores as XV Finance Commission (XV FC) grants during the Financial Year 2025-26 for Rural Local Bodies / Panchayati Raj Institutions in Uttarakhand, an official release of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj said.

The release includes the second instalment of Untied Grants for the Financial Year 2024-25 amounting to Rs 9,410.03 lakhs for all eligible 13 District Panchayats, 95 Block Panchayats and 7,784 Gram Panchayats in the State. As per the release, in addition, Rs 13.60 lakhs towards the withheld portion of the first instalment of Untied Grants for FY 2024-25 has been released to 15 additionally eligible Gram Panchayats.

The process of giving out this money involves different parts of the government working together. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Ministry of Jal Shakti, which oversees drinking water and sanitation, first assess local needs. They then suggest how much money should be given. Following their recommendation, the Ministry of Finance disburses the funds. Usually, this occurs in two separate phases throughout the year, ensuring the local offices have a steady flow of funds to do their work.



CENTRE RELEASES OVER RS 127 CRORE TO SUPPORT RURAL LOCAL BODIES IN TAMIL NADU

Diary Times Desk : The Union Government has released Rs 127.586 crores to Rural Local Bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions in Tamil Nadu during the financial year 2025-26, an official release from the Ministry of Panchayati Raj said on Saturday. According to the release, the amount represents the second instalment of untied grants under the XV Finance Commission for 2025-26. These grants have been released for 9 District Panchayats, 74 Block Panchayats and 2,901 Gram Panchayats that have duly elected bodies and fulfil the prescribed eligibility conditions.

All these local groups have bodies elected by the people. They also meet the necessary conditions to receive these funds. According to the release, the process of sending this money involves multiple government agencies working together. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Ministry of Jal Shakti, which oversees drinking water and sanitation, assess the state's needs. They then tell the Ministry of Finance that the money should be sent. The Ministry of Finance is the office that finally releases the funds to the states.



'HINDU RATE OF GROWTH' WAS CONGRESS-ERA LEGACY OF LOW EXPECTATIONS: PIYUSH GOYAL

Diary Times Desk : Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday hit out at those who he alleged had their "perception" that India's destiny is mere 4-4.5 per cent economic growth, and it could not or did not have the potential to grow at a pace higher than that.

Speaking at the World Hindu Economic Forum 2025, he recalled the days of the past when many termed India's slow rate of economic growth as 'Hindu rate of growth'.

The term 'Hindu rate of growth', coined by economist Raj Krishna in the late 1970s, referred to India's average annual GDP growth of around 3-4 per cent during the decades following Independence, particularly from the 1950s to around 1980.

Targetting the governments of the past, Congress or Congress-led UPA, Piyush Goyal said a perception had developed that India would grow at 4-4.5 per cent no matter what and who is in the government. "India's potential was underestimated at 4-4.5 per cent growth. People had come to believe that we had no dominance on the international stage...The government interfered in everything. The government stood by its chosen friends and didn't care about anyone else...," he trained his guns on the then Congress and the Congress-led UPA governments.



OPENAI ADDS NEW TEEN SAFETY RULES TO CHATGPT AS LAWMAKERS WEIGH AI STANDARDS FOR MINORS

Diary Times Desk : In its latest effort to address growing concerns about AI's impact on young people, OpenAI on Thursday updated its guidelines for how its AI models should behave with users under 18, and published new AI literacy resources for teens and parents. Still, questions remain about how consistently such policies will translate into practice.

The updates come as the AI industry generally, and OpenAI in particular, faces increased scrutiny from policymakers, educators, and child-safety advocates after several teenagers allegedly died by suicide after prolonged conversations with AI chatbots.

Gen Z, which includes those born between 1997 and 2012, are the most active users of OpenAI's chatbot. And following OpenAI's recent deal with Disney, more young people may flock to the platform, which lets you do everything from ask for help with homework to generate images and videos on thousands of topics.

DECATHLON INDIA'S GROWTH SLOWS DOWN; INSIDE THE WORKINGS OF SAWARIYA GROUP

Diary Times Desk : Decathlon India has hit a wall in its high-growth trajectory, swinging to a Rs 65 crore loss in FY25, as the 'revenge fitness' wave receded. The retailer saw revenue growth fall to just 3.11%—a fraction of the dizzying 41% surge seen post-pandemic—forcing a reality check on its ambitious target of Rs 8,000 crore by 2030. The yogamat-to-cycle retailer clocked Rs 4,133 crore in revenue in FY25, compared with Rs 4,008 crore in the previous year, according to filings sourced from Tofler. The Indian arm of the French sports retailer witnessed explosive post-pandemic momentum, its revenue surging 41.4% to Rs 2,897.8 crore in FY22. This further rallied in FY23 with a robust 35.3% jump to Rs 3,920.3 crore. In FY24, the retailer successfully expanded its net margin to a five-year high of 4.8%. However, that efficiency evaporated in FY25 when margins dropped into the negative territory at -1.6%, with the company's bottomline taking a massive hit. Decathlon India plans to build up Indian manufacturing.

INDIA EMERGES AS KEY DRIVER OF GLOBAL OIL DEMAND AS PEAK SHIFTS BEYOND 2030

Diary Times Desk : After years of forecasts predicting an imminent peak in oil demand, 2025 saw a reassessment of the global energy outlook, with oil and gas retaining a central role and India emerging as the primary driver of future consumption growth.

Energy outlooks released this year by major global agencies and consultancies pushed expectations of peak oil demand into the 2030s and revised long-term demand projections higher. A common conclusion across these assessments was that India will account for the largest share of global oil demand growth in the coming decade, outpacing China and Southeast Asia combined. The shift followed a year marked by slower-than-expected renewable energy deployment, infrastructure constraints and persistent geopolitical tensions. The prolonged Russia-Ukraine war continued to disrupt energy markets, prompting European countries to rely more heavily on fossil fuels amid supply shortages and high prices. In the US, policy support for oil and gas production reinforced the sector's resilience.



MUSK WINS APPEAL AND RESTORES 2018 TESLA PAY DEAL WORTH \$56 BILLION



Diary Times Desk : Elon Musk's 2018 pay package from Tesla, once worth \$56 billion, was restored by the Delaware Supreme Court on Friday, two years after a lower court struck down the compensation deal as "unfathomable."

The ruling overturns a decision that had prompted a furious backlash from Musk and damaged Delaware's business-friendly reputation. The pay package was by far the largest ever until Tesla shareholders approved a new, even larger pay plan in November. The ruling means that Musk can finally get paid for his work since 2018, when he transformed Tesla from a struggling startup to one of the world's most valuable companies.

The 2018 pay deal provided Musk options to acquire about 304 million Tesla shares at a deeply discounted price if the company hit various milestones, which it did. Tesla estimated in 2018 that the plan was potentially worth \$56 billion, although given the rise in the stock price, the value ballooned to around \$120 billion by early November. The options represent around 9% of Tesla's outstanding stock. Musk never collected his stock options because soon after shareholders approved the 2018 compensation, the board was sued by Richard Tornetta, an investor with just nine Tesla shares.

In 2024, after a five-day trial, Delaware Judge Kathaleen McCormick concluded that Tesla's directors were conflicted and key facts were hidden from shareholders when they voted to approve the plan. She ordered that the 2018 plan be rescinded.

'CHITTA-FREE HIMACHAL' EMERGES A MASS MOVEMENT, SAYS CM SUKHU

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said the state government's flagship campaign 'Chitta-free Himachal' had transformed into a people's movement, with widespread public participation strengthening the fight against drug abuse in the state.

Addressing the closing ceremony of the two-day Indora Festival at Indora in Kangra district, the Chief Minister said properties worth around Rs 50 crore, amassed through drug trafficking, had already been seized. He asserted that the government was committed to confiscating the remaining illicit assets of the drug mafia within the next six months. Calling upon citizens and gram panchayats to actively support the campaign, Sukhu said community participation was vital to protect the younger generation from falling prey to drugs. He urged people to remain vigilant in their areas and share credible information with law-enforcement agencies through the emergency helpline 112. Informants, he assured, would be provided complete confidentiality along with rewards ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 10 lakh, depending on the input.

AIR TURNS 'TOXIC' IN BADDI AS AQI HITS HAZARDOUS LEVELS

Diary Times Desk : Close on the heels of Delhi grappling with severe air pollution for over a fortnight, Himachal Pradesh's industrial hub of Baddi has witnessed a sharp deterioration in air quality, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) touching a perilous 345 on Thursday evening. The spike places Baddi firmly in "hazardous" category, raising serious public health concerns. An AQI value above 200 is considered unhealthy, particularly for children, the elderly and those with respiratory or cardiac ailments. In Baddi, the alarming readings were driven primarily by a steep rise in particulate matter, especially PM2.5, a pollutant known for its ability to penetrate deep into the lungs and bloodstream. Though the AQI showed marginal improvement during the day, sliding to 302 by 2:05 pm and further to 280 by 4 pm, it continued to remain well above safe limits. Data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) indicated abnormally high concentrations of PM2.5, identified as the dominant.

FOG ENVELOPES NORTHERN STATES; WET WEATHER WITH SNOW FORECAST FOR PARTS OF J-K, HIMACHAL PRADESH

Diary Times Desk : As the year draws to a close, mercury hovered around its wintry lows and normal life was affected across northern states due to foggy conditions, with red alert warning issued in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday. The national capital was in the grip of a cold wave, with the sun largely obscured by clouds and pollutants lingering in the atmosphere, leading to reduced visibility. At least 129 flights were cancelled at the Delhi airport on Saturday due to dense fog, according to an official. The hilly state and UT of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir are set to witness a spell of wet weather, with predictions of rain and snow at several places, according to the weather departments. A day ahead of the onset of 'Chillai-Kalan' — the 40-day harsh winter period in Kashmir — the local meteorological department on Saturday forecast moderate to heavy snowfall in the higher reaches.



DELHI POLICE CRACKS CHARAS RACKET WITH ROOTS IN HIMACHAL, NABS 4

Diary Times Desk : The Delhi Police have dismantled a narcotics supply chain operating between Himachal Pradesh and the Delhi-NCR, arresting four and seizing nearly 1.7 kg of charas, an officer said on Saturday.

One of the four, Kundan Lal, 40, a resident of Kullu district, was nabbed from a hotel in Paharganj on December 12, with 1,136 grams of charas in his possession, the officer said.

Kundan was booked under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and was found to have been arrested in a similar case in Himachal Pradesh's Bilaspur district in 2024.

Kundan revealed that the charas was meant for distribution in the Delhi-NCR, and also the involvement of Gaurav Verma and Piyush Kumar alias Elu, both residents of East Delhi, as alleged receivers of the contraband. The two were arrested on December 13 in raids.

They led police to Manish Kumar alias Manish Thakur, another resident of Kullu district, and an active member of the supply network, the officer said.

SAMPLES OF 47 MEDICINES MADE IN HIMACHAL FAIL QUALITY TESTS; COMPANIES ASKED TO RECALL STOCK

Diary Times Desk : Notices have been issued to companies whose medicine samples failed quality tests, and they have been instructed to recall their stock from the market, according to Himachal Pradesh State Drug Controller Manish Kapoor.

Out of 200 medicine samples tested nationwide, 47 were manufactured in the state. These include medications for fever, heart attacks, and diabetes. The failed samples originated from various districts: 28 from Solan, 18 from Sirmaur, and one from Una. Notices have been issued to the respective companies, officials said on Saturday. In November 2025, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) collected 65 samples, while the State Drug Controller collected 135 samples. Of these, 47 samples were identified as substandard. "Notices have been issued to the companies whose medicine samples failed the quality tests. They have also been asked to recall the stock from the market," Kapoor said. Explanations have been sought, and actions will be taken against the companies in accordance with regulations, he informed media personnel in Solan.

YOUR HOROSCOPE

21-12-2025

<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Libra Today is going to be a busy day for you. Employed people will get a chance to work with senior officers due to advancement in their professional field. People doing business should avoid exchanging money with any unknown person today. Pregnant women may have to face problems due to changing weather.</p>	<p>Scorpio Today you may have to face huge arguments in your family over small matters. Employed people may have to face mental problems due to extra workload in the workplace. People doing business may have to travel abroad in connection with business expansion. Diabetic patients should get themselves checked by a doctor in case of any problem today.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Aquarius Today you may have to face huge arguments in your family over small matters. Employees will be suspended due to indiscipline in the workplace. People doing business should solve all the problems of their customers in time. Due to worsening weather, problems related to cold and cough may increase in the family.</p>	<p>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.</p>

**FRIEND OF PRIME ACCUSED
ARRESTED IN GURWINDER
MURDER CASE IN FARIDKOT**

Diary Times Desk : The Punjab Police arrested Veer Inder Kaur, a close friend of Rupinder Kaur, in connection with the murder of Gurwinder Singh in Faridkot district. Veer Inder, a school-time friend of Rupinder, allegedly knew about the murder plot but didn't inform police.

DSP Tarlochan Singh said Veer Inder Kaur, a Faridkot resident and a school-time friend of Rupinder Kaur, had prior knowledge of the conspiracy to kill Gurwinder Singh. She is currently pursuing an OT course in Moga district. According to the police, after Rupinder returned from Canada, her association with Veer Inder Kaur grew stronger and the two shared all personal matters, including details of the murder plan.

The murder took place on the intervening night of November 28 and 29. Initially, Rupinder Kaur attempted to mislead investigators by claiming that thieves had broken into the house, looted valuables and killed her husband. However, during interrogation, she confessed to plotting the murder with her alleged lover Harkanwalpreet Singh and accomplice Vishavjeet Singh. Police said Gurwinder was first administered a suspected poisonous substance and later assaulted, resulting in multiple injuries and possible strangulation. The exact cause of death will be confirmed after the postmortem report.

**PUNJAB, HARYANA REEL
UNDER INTENSE COLD**

Diary Times Desk : Punjab and Haryana are reeling under intense cold as a thick blanket of fog enveloped several areas in both states.

Faridkot in Punjab was the coldest place with a low of 4.9° C on Saturday, the weather office said.

According to the local meteorological department, Amritsar recorded a low of 9.9° C, five degrees above normal.

Ludhiana and Patiala recorded their minimum temperatures of 9.6 and 9.2° C, up to three notches above normal.

Pathankot logged 9° C while Bathinda saw a low of 5.4° C. Gurdaspur's minimum temperature was 7.5° C.

**SGPC HALTS HERITAGE STREET PROJECT IN ANANDPUR SAHIB OVER VIEW
CONCERNS**

Diary Times Desk : The Sikh Gurudwara Prabandak Committee (SGPC) has halted work on the Heritage Street project in Anandpur Sahib, initiated by the Punjab Government's Tourism Department. Contractors were stopped from digging foundations for the street's gate, citing concerns over obstructing the view of Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib, a significant Sikh heritage site. Akal Takht Jathedar Kuldeep Singh Gargaj stated that the project wasn't discussed with SGPC or Sikh High Priests, emphasising that changes around Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib require Sikh Panth consent. SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhama didn't respond to inquiries. The project aimed to beautify Anandpur Sahib, mirroring Amritsar's Heritage Street, and coincide with Guru Tegh Bahadur's 350th martyrdom anniversary. The street would feature redesigned shopfronts, architecture reflecting Sikh cultural legacy, and enhanced spiritual appeal. Most of the shopkeepers running businesses along the Keshgarh Sahib road have agreed to the project. Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains said, "Anandpur Sahib is the soul of Sikh history."

**HIGH COURT INITIATES SUO MOTU PROCEEDINGS
TO MONITOR POLICIES FOR PREMATURE RELEASE
OF CONVICTS**

Diary Times Desk : The Punjab and Haryana High Court has initiated suo motu proceedings to monitor and supervise the implementation of policies concerning the remission and premature release of convicts.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Sanjiv Berry issued notices to Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh for filing detailed affidavits of the steps they have taken so far on the issue.

In the order, the High Court said, "In terms of the order passed by the Apex Court in the case of Suo Motu writ petition (Cr.I) No.4 of 2021 "Re: Policy Strategy for Grant of bail" and SLP titled as "Sonadhar Vs. The State of Chhattisgarh" dated April 11, 2022, this Court registered Suo Motu writ petition for raising the causes as enumerated in this regard and issued notices to the states of Punjab, Haryana and UT Chandigarh." The High Court has initiated the suo motu petition pursuant to recent directions issued by the Supreme Court in "Re Policy Strategy For Grant Of Bail". The Supreme Court had passed the directions after expressing displeasure over the failure to implement remission and premature release policies by some states.

**RUCKUS, SCUFFLES MARK DEBATE ON 150
YEARS OF VANDE MATARAM IN HARYANA
ASSEMBLY**

Diary Times Desk : Chaos and din marked the second day of the winter session of the Haryana Assembly as the debate on 150 years of the national song — Vande Mataram — turned ugly, triggering sharp political exchanges, leading to sloganeering, naming of Congress MLAs and physical scuffles between MLAs and marshals. The trigger was Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini's remarks that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was "responsible" for a truncated Vande Mataram at the instance of the Muslim League and its leader Mohammad Ali Jinnah which ultimately led to the country's Partition.

Taking strong exception to the CM's remarks, Congress members, led by Leader of the Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda, marched into the well of the House demanding that the CM's remarks on Nehru should be expunged from the debate. Din prevailed in the House as the ruling BJP and the opposition Congress members indulged in sloganeering, accusing each other of insulting the national song and lowering the dignity of the House.

**CONGRESS' NO-TRUST MOTION FALLS, HARYANA CM SAINI QUOTES TAGORE TO
EXPLAIN VISION**

Diary Times Desk : The Congress' no-confidence motion against the Saini government fell on Friday in the Legislative Assembly through a voice vote. The Congress walked out of the House, so it fell by a unanimous vote.

Taking on the Opposition, CM Nayab Singh Saini said, "The Opposition's allegations against us arose from their disappointment, desperation, and political grudges." He said the motion was drafted in haste.

Responding to the Congress' allegations that due to the government's tunnel vision, the state was hurtling towards an abyss, Saini started counting road infrastructure projects executed by the Modi government across the nation over the past 11 years. He said, "They have mentioned that we have a tunnel vision. I want to tell them, our vision is like Arjun's eye on the target. Our vision is to realise Viksit Bharat by 2047. Our vision is 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas; Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas.'"

Quoting Rabindranath Tagore, he said in his imagination, 'Viksit Haryana' was "where the mind is without fear, and the head is held high, where knowledge is free..."

EDITORIAL

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.

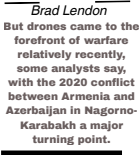
Invaded by Russia in 2022, outmanned and outgunned by one of the world's strongest militaries, Kyiv quickly proved that drones – in the air, on the ground, and at sea – could hold off a Russian victory that many expected within weeks, if not days.



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.

Its 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. "This place is a crime scene no entry," reads a sign at the entrance. Numbered white cards placed alongside the bones mark how many skeletons have been found since digging began in May of this year, reviving decades-old allegations of wartime atrocities and cover-ups. In the heartland of the country's ethnic Tamil minority, a bloody and brutal history is re-emerging from the soil. But it is difficult to bury the past entirely. From 1983 to 2009, the South Asian island nation of 21 million endured a brutal civil war between the Sri Lankan army and the separatist militant group the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). More commonly known as The Tamil Tigers, the group was listed as a terrorist organization by many countries including the United States.



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.



THE HISTORIC CELLAR OF JÜRGEN SCHWARZ

Diary Times Desk : Jürgen Schwarz remembers the moment he discovered exceptionally old wine like it was yesterday. 'In 1974 I was helping my friend bottle wines in the cool cellar of his parents' house on Lake Constance. Down there was a dusty shelf of about sixty bottles, which he called his "treasures." One day he opened a Sauternes Château Coutet from the 1940s. The taste revealed a new world to me – a world where history lived inside a glass. I was hooked.'

By the end of the decade Schwarz and his girlfriend Barbara – now his wife – were frequently driving from their university in Frankfurt to Zurich for wine auctions, sampling up to 50 bottles at each sale. 'This was my classroom,' he explains. By the time he purchased a bottle of Château Latour from 1858 at Christie's in 1987, this inquisitiveness had turned into an obsession.

'Jürgen Schwarz's cellar is one of the most broad, deep and captivating collections of wine I've ever seen,' says Edwin Vos, Senior International Director, Head of Collections, Christie's Wine. On 5 and 6 December 2025, more than 3500 bottles from Schwarz's collection are being offered in a single-owner sale at Christie's in New York. A further selection of bottles will be offered on 3 February 2026 in Hong Kong.

The extraordinary wine collection belonging to Jürgen Schwarz starts with French legends of Burgundy, Bordeaux and the Rhône, like Domaine Leroy, Henri Jaye, Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, Haut-Brion, Mouton Rothschild, Chave, and La Chapelle. Then it delves into lesser known but no less impressive domaines, such as Troplong Mondot, and the biodynamic Ausone.

From there, it traces his curiosity across the continent. Spain is represented by Rioja from Marqués de Murrieta, Vega Sicilia showcases the Ribera del Duero, whilst Álvaro Palacios put Catalonia's Priorat region on the map following his stint at Pétrus.

In Italy, Sassicaia, Ornellaia, Tignanello and Masseto celebrate the powerful wines coming out of Tuscany. Bruno Giacosa and Roberto Voerzio are towering figures of Barbaresco and Barolo in Piedmont. In nearby Veneto, Giuseppe Quintarelli produces some of the country's most complex wine. And across the border into Germany, Schlossgut Diel, a vineyard passed through seven generations of one family, marks the future of Riesling.



COLLECTING GUIDE: 10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT TIFFANY LAMPS

Diary Times Desk :

not to be confused with his father Charles Tiffany, who founded the renowned jewellery house Tiffany & Company – was an artist, decorator and designer. 'After successful careers as a painter and interior decorator, Louis decided to shift focus onto the design and production of stained-glass windows,' Christie's Design specialists explain. 'His leaded glass lamps were a natural offshoot.' His factory, located in Queens, New York, produced these and a wide variety of other decorative objects for almost 40 years.

Many of the leaded glass lamps produced by Tiffany Studios are truly iconic. First introduced at the beginning of the 20th century, they have had a strong international appeal ever since. The 'Pond Lily' lamp below, sold for \$3,372,500 at Christie's in New York in December 2018. Made by Tiffany Studios in the early 1900s, it was one of the costliest and rarest creations produced by the company, and retailed at \$400. The lamp is one of only 14 thought to exist – five of which are in museum collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Tiffany hired some of the finest artisans in the United States to realise his aesthetic vision in leaded glass. Lampshade construction was a laborious process, with each small section of glass carefully selected from the thousands of sheets available to the men and women in the cutting departments. 'The finest lampshades exhibit a wonderful harmony of diverse colours, with subtle tones in an intricate pattern.'

The base can be as important as the shade – if not more so. Most were made of bronze from Tiffany's foundry in Queens, while some were enamelled or mosaic. Bases can be interchanged with various shades, though specialists advise that hybrids should never compromise the design. Many designs demand a certain base: the 'Wisteria', for instance, always goes on the 'Tree' base; but most 'Dragonfly' shades can generally be placed on a variety of bases.

Rewiring is perfectly acceptable and does not affect the value if done sensitively. It's important to ensure the lamp can be used safely, but collectors should be wary of scratching the original patina on the base, or of using new sockets that can lower the value of the piece.



SERIE A HEAVYWEIGHT NOT IN CONTACT WITH ANY TEAM AMID BARCELONA LINKS, HAPPY AT CLUB – ROMANO



Diary Times Desk : At this point, it has become well-established that FC Barcelona intend to sign a new centre-back in the summer transfer window of 2026.

The Blaugrana's priority is to bring in a left-footed centre-back and multiple sources have reported that Inter Milan heavyweight Alessandro Bastoni is the main target.

In fact, reports even suggested that a meeting had taken place between Barcelona director Deco and Bastoni's agent when the former was in Milan recently. However, as per the latest update from Fabrizio Romano (h/t Carpetas FCB), Bastoni has not held any conversations with any club about a possible transfer.

The Italian international feels happy and settled at Inter Milan, and as such, the possibility of a transfer is not being considered by either party at this point.

BARCELONA CONCERNED MIDFIELDER'S FITNESS ISSUE COULD BE MORE SERIOUS THAN INITIALLY THOUGHT

Diary Times Desk : Barcelona completed their final training session this afternoon ahead of tomorrow's match against Villarreal at the Estadio de La Ceramica.

There was one major absence in the training today, as Pedri did not take part once again, with Hansi Flick confirming that the midfielder would not be available for the game through discomfort.

The discomfort appeared during the minutes he played in the Copa del Rey match against CD Guadalajara earlier this week. Within the club, the indication so far has been that Pedri's issue is minor and that the Spanish international could be ready to return for the Catalan derby on 3 January, after the mid-season break.

However, according to SPORT's Carlos Monfort, there is now concern at Barcelona that the fitness problem could be more serious than initially anticipated.

There is also a growing feeling that the 23-year-old superstar's issue could be related to the hamstring injury he had sustained back in October, which sidelined him for a month.

BARCELONA'S IMPRESSIVE RECORD AT LA CERAMICA IN FOCUS AHEAD OF A POTENTIAL GOALFEST VS VILLARREAL

Diary Times Desk : Hansi Flick's Barcelona will look to extend their dominance in La Liga this Sunday as they travel to face Villarreal.

This will be the final game of the year for Barcelona, who have recovered their season brilliantly after a difficult start to the campaign.

While the Estadio de La Ceramica is notoriously one of the most difficult away grounds in Spain, history suggests it is actually a happy hunting ground for the Blaugrana, reports SPORT.

Barcelona's recent record at La Ceramica has been nothing short of extraordinary. The Catalans have effectively made it a Barça territory, winning their last six consecutive visits.

History suggests this fixture is synonymous with spectacle as well. In their last seven visits to Villarreal, Barcelona have scored a staggering 23 goals while conceding 11. It is a happy hunting ground for Barcelona's star player, Lamine Yamal, as well.

BARCELONA RISING SUPERSTAR BEATS LIONEL MESSI IN JERSEY SALES IN 2025

Diary Times Desk : As we move closer to 2026, Score90 has come up with a list of the best-selling player jerseys from 2025.

Quite unsurprisingly, a couple of Barcelona players have found themselves in the top spots, in the form of Robert Lewandowski and Lamine Yamal.

Indeed, the two Barcelona attackers are both on the podium. While Lewandowski occupies third place, Lamine Yamal is the player with the most sold jerseys in 2025. As reported by Mundo Deportivo, jerseys with Yamal's name on the back have sold the most in 2025, with a total sale of 1.32 million units. This is considerably higher than any other footballer in 2025, higher than Lionel Messi, who occupies the second spot on the table. Messi's jerseys have sold 1.28 million times, which falls short of Yamal's 1.32 million. Lewandowski completes the podium with 1.1 million sales. This comes on the back of news that Messi and Yamal will take each other on March 27 next year, in the highly-anticipated Finalissima. Kylian Mbappe occupies the fourth position with 1.02 million shirt sales, just ahead of his Real Madrid teammate Vinicius Jr, who is sixth with less than a million sales.

ASTON VILLA, GIRONA INTERESTED IN SIGNING OUT-OF-FAVOUR BARCELONA CAPTAIN – REPORT

Diary Times Desk : Marc-Andre ter Stegen's situation at Barcelona is becoming one of the most closely watched subplots of the season.

This is because a recent update from Fernando Pollo in Mundo Deportivo has revealed that the likes of Girona and Aston Villa are actively monitoring the German goalkeeper's status.

On paper, Ter Stegen's future should be settled. He remains under contract with Barcelona until 2028 and is one of the most experienced figures in the squad.

However, reality paints a more complex picture, as Joan Garcia is currently the first choice.

This change in hierarchy has major implications for Ter Stegen, especially at the international level.

The German goalkeeper needs regular minutes if he wants to convince Julian Nagelsmann to hand him the starting role for the Germany national football team at the next World Cup. Sitting on the bench for long periods would seriously weaken his case.

NIKE PUSH BOUNDARIES WITH DARING BARCELONA JERSEY FOR 2026/27

Diary Times Desk : Barcelona's future kits are already generating huge attention, and a new report from Mundo Deportivo suggests that Nike are preparing one of the most daring designs the club has ever seen for the 2026/27 season. Weeks after the first leaked images of Barcelona's home shirt surfaced, new visuals have now emerged showing a completely different jersey concept that could mark a major shift in style.

These latest images, published on Saturday, reveal a design that breaks away from traditional football aesthetics. Rather than following familiar patterns, Nike appear to be deliberately pushing into the world of fashion, creating a shirt that feels as much like a lifestyle piece as a match kit. The jersey features a striking retro look, split into two contrasting sections. One half is grey, the other black, with both parts separated by a bold zigzag line that immediately catches the eye. The material also plays a key role in the concept, with a texture designed to resemble the thick cotton jerseys worn decades ago, rather than the ultra-modern fabrics seen today.

