

NEWS IN BRIEF

INDIA OVERPOWERED BY SAMEER MINHAS' BIG HUNDRED AND PACERS AS PAKISTAN CLINCH U19 ASIA CUP

Diary Times Desk :

India faltered against the big-hitting Sameer Minhas and the extra zip of pacers, suffering a massive 191-run defeat against Pakistan in a one-sided 50-over Under-19 Asia Cup final, here on Sunday. Pakistan lifted their second U19 Asia Cup, and as it is the norm now, there was no formal greetings between the players of two teams. Once Pakistan posted a mammoth 347 for eight, riding on Minhas' 172 (113b, 17x4, 9x6) they needed a lion-hearted chase to clinch a ninth title in the tournament. But the tall Pakistan pace troika — Ali Reza (4/42), Mohammad Sayyam (2/38) and Abdul Subhan (2/29) — hurried their top-order with consistent hard-lengths as India folded for 156 in 26.2 overs. However, India's chase began on an explosive note despite losing Ayush Mhatre early. Vaibhav Suryavanshi hammered Raza for two sixes and a four to take 21 runs in the first over. Aaron George too began brightly, caressing Sayyam for three fours in a row in the fourth over as India raced off the block at 10 runs an over.

110 FLIGHTS CANCELLED, OVER 200 SERVICES DELAYED AT DELHI AIRPORT DUE TO FOG

Diary Times Desk :

A total of 110 flights were cancelled and over 370 services delayed due to low-visibility conditions amid fog at the Delhi airport on Sunday. An official said 59 arrivals and 51 departures were cancelled at the airport. According to latest information available on flight tracking website Flightradar24.com, more than 370 flights were delayed and the average delay time was around 26 minutes for departures at the airport. In a post on X in the evening, Delhi airport operator DIAL said operations are running smoothly. DIAL operates the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), the country's largest airport that generally handles around 1,300 flights daily.

Flight operations have been disrupted for the past many days in Delhi and other airports due to dense fog.

PM MODI

CONGRESS INDULGING IN ANTI-NATIONAL ACTIVITIES, WANTS ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS TO SETTLE IN ASSAM: PM MODI



Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched a scathing attack on the Congress, accusing the party of engaging in "anti-national" activities and helping illegal Bangladeshi immigrants to settle in the state.

Addressing a public rally after unveiling a Rs 10,601-crore fertiliser plant at Namrup in Assam's Dibrugarh, Modi also alleged that the Congress did not make any effort to modernise the old plant here, and find solutions to problems faced by farmers.

"The Congress is indulging in anti-national activities. They want illegal Bangladeshi immigrants to settle in Assam," the PM claimed. The opposition party is not concerned with the identity, existence and pride of Assamese people, which the BJP has been trying to protect, he said.

"The Congress is opposing the revision of voter lists as it only wants to grab power... They oppose whatever good I try to do... The BJP government will always work to protect the identity, land, pride and existence of Assamese people," Modi asserted. The Prime Minister said the BJP government's aim is to make Assam as powerful as it was during the Ahom dynasty centuries ago.

"Industrialisation and connectivity are fulfilling Assam's dreams. The double-engine government of BJP is empowering youths to see new dreams," Modi said. He said the Namrup urea plant will support local farmers and create thousands of jobs for youths of Assam. "The Namrup fertiliser plant in Assam will become the epitome of the country's industrial growth. It is sad that the Congress did not make efforts to modernise the plant and find solutions to problems faced by farmers," the PM said.

VB-G RAM G BILL REPLACES MGNREGA AFTER PRESIDENT MURMU'S ASSENT

Diary Times Desk : The Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Bill formally became law on Saturday after President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent, two days after its passage in Parliament amid strong protests by the Opposition. With the President's assent, the new Act officially replaces the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, marking a major overhaul of India's flagship rural employment programme.

The government has described the legislation as a "significant milestone" in the transformation of rural employment policy. According to the Centre, the Act enhances the statutory wage employment guarantee to 125 days per financial year for rural households, up from the existing 100 days under MGNREGA.

Officials said the new framework aims to promote empowerment, inclusive growth, convergence of development initiatives and saturation-based delivery of welfare schemes, with the stated objective of building a more resilient, self-reliant and prosperous "Rural Bharat".

"The Act strengthens the foundation of rural livelihoods by integrating employment generation with broader development goals," a senior government official said, asserting that the legislation modernises the two-decade-old MGNREGA architecture to align it with contemporary economic and social needs.



MAHARASHTRA LOCAL POLLS: BJP SCORES RECORD VICTORY; OPPOSITION ALLEGES EVM TAMPERING, MONEY POWER



Diary Times Desk : Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday said the BJP has set a record in local body polls with 48 per cent of councillors winning on the party symbol, and its candidates elected as presidents in 129 municipal councils.

He attributed the Mahayuti alliance's success in the municipal council and nagar panchayat elections to the BJP organisation and development agenda of the government.

Counting of votes for elections to the posts of president and members in 286 municipal councils and nagar panchayats — held in two phases — began in the morning.

Fadnavis said the BJP has once again emerged as the single largest party. "48 per cent councillors have been elected on the BJP symbol, which is a record. The BJP has created another record with 3,300 councillors being elected from the party. BJP candidates have been elected as presidents in 129 municipal councils. In 75 per cent of the local bodies, Mahayuti nominees have been elected as municipal presidents," he said.

'MISLEADING PROPAGANDA': INDIA REJECTS DHAKA MEDIA REPORTS ON PROTEST OUTSIDE BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSION



Diary Times Desk : India on Sunday rejected what it called "misleading propaganda" in sections of the Bangladesh media regarding a small demonstration outside the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi, asserting that there was no breach of security and no threat to the mission at any time.

Responding to media queries, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that around 20-25 youths had briefly gathered outside the High Commission on December 20 to protest the killing of Dipu Chandra Das in Bangladesh's Mymensingh district and to demand protection for minorities in the neighbouring country.

He clarified that there was no attempt by the protesters to breach the perimeter or create any security situation.

"The police stationed at the spot dispersed the group after a few minutes. Visual evidence of these events is available publicly for all to see," Jaiswal said.

He underlined that India remained committed to ensuring the safety and security of foreign missions and diplomatic personnel on its soil. "India is committed to ensure the safety of foreign Missions/Posts in its territory in accordance with the Vienna Convention," Jaiswal added.

RAHUL GANDHI

INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE BEING TAKEN OVER INSTITUTIONALLY BY RSS: RAHUL



Diary Times Desk : Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged on Sunday that the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) is "gradually being taken over institutionally" by the RSS, while asserting that institutions will be run by knowledge and science, not by any ideology.

The leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha posted a video on his WhatsApp channel of his recent interaction with ISI students at his office in the Parliament House complex during the Winter Session of Parliament.

"I met with students from the Indian Statistical Institute at the 'Jan Sansad'. They reiterated the same serious concerns that students and teachers from other educational institutions across the country have been consistently raising. The students explained that the ISI is gradually being taken over institutionally by the RSS," Gandhi said in his post along with the video. During Parliament sessions, Gandhi holds interactions from a cross-section of people and calls it the "Jan Sansad".

"The ISI is not just any ordinary institution — it conducts high-level research in Statistics, Mathematics, Economics, Data Science, Computer Science and policy-making, and has produced world-class experts for the country," the former Congress chief said.

NO MINING ALLOWED IN DELHI; 90% OF ARAVALLI RANGE PROTECTED: ENVIRONMENT MINISTER BHUPENDER YADAV



Diary Times Desk : The Environment Ministry recently came under intense heat owing to ongoing protests from civil society and Opposition against the new uniform definition of Aravalli hills — which was accepted by the Supreme Court last month. Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav on Sunday said out of the total area of 1.44 lakh square km of the Aravalli spread in four states, mining can only be carried in 0.19 per cent of the area. The minister also said 90 per cent of the Aravallis will be protected and that no permissions for mining will be granted in Delhi. "In the total area of 1.44 lakh square kilometres of the Aravalli, mining eligibility can only be in 0.19 per cent of the area. The rest of the Aravalli is preserved and protected," he said. In November 2025, the Supreme Court accepted a uniform definition of the Aravalli hills, as recommended by an expert committee appointed by the Centre. According to this definition, only landforms exhibiting a minimum relative relief of 100 m above the surrounding terrain qualify as 'Aravalli hills'.



'MISLEADING PROPAGANDA': INDIA REJECTS DHAKA MEDIA REPORTS ON PROTEST OUTSIDE BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSION



Diary Times Desk : India on Sunday rejected what it called "misleading propaganda" in sections of the Bangladesh media regarding a small demonstration outside the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi, asserting that there was no breach of security and no threat to the mission at any time. Responding to media queries, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that around 20-25 youths had briefly gathered outside the High Commission on December 20 to protest the killing of Dipu Chandra Das in Bangladesh's Mymensingh district and to demand protection for minorities in the neighbouring country.

He clarified that there was no attempt by the protesters to breach the perimeter or create any security situation. "The police stationed at the spot dispersed the group after a few minutes. Visual evidence of these events is available publicly for all to see," Jaiswal said. He underlined that India remained committed to ensuring the safety and security of foreign missions and diplomatic personnel on its soil.

MAHARASHTRA LOCAL POLLS: BJP SCORES RECORD VICTORY; OPPOSITION ALLEGES EVM TAMPERING, MONEY POWER

Diary Times Desk : Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday said the BJP has set a record in local body polls with 48 per cent of councillors winning on the party symbol, and its candidates elected as presidents in 129 municipal councils. He attributed the Mahayuti alliance's success in the municipal council and nagar panchayat elections to the BJP organisation and development agenda of the government. Counting of votes for elections to the posts of president and members in 286 municipal councils and nagar panchayats — held in two phases — began in the morning. Fadnavis said the BJP has once again emerged as the single largest party. "48 per cent councillors have been elected on the BJP symbol, which is a record. The BJP has created another record with 3,300 councillors being elected from the party. BJP candidates have been elected as presidents in 129 municipal councils. In 75 per cent of the local bodies.

'ASTRONAUT NOW RECOGNISED PROFESSION IN INDIA': SAYS 'GAGANYATRI' SHUKLA; ASKS YOUTH TO AIM FOR MOON

Diary Times Desk : 'Gaganyatri' Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla on Sunday said 'astronaut' is now a recognised profession in India, offering endless opportunities for young minds. Speaking at the Pune Literature Festival, organised on the sidelines of National Book Trust's Pune Book Festival, he called upon students to aim to land on the moon, adding that "when you come, I will be there to compete with you". Hailing the giant strides the country was taking in the field of space exploration, he said, "A lot of people may wonder why India is investing so much in space exploration. India is working on its own human spaceflight mission, Gaganyaan, of which we are a part. The mission aims to send an Indian astronaut to space and bring him back safely." "Beyond this, we are also planning to set up our own Bharatiya Space Station. By 2040, India aims to land on the Moon. Maybe someone sitting here today, a girl or a boy, will one day set foot on the lunar surface. When you come, I will be there to compete with you," Shukla said. Recounting his journey, Shukla said he was not even born when Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma travelled to space in 1984. "I was born in 1985. I grew up listening to those stories. But the thought of becoming an astronaut never occurred to me because India did not have a programme then.

CONGRESS INDULGING IN ANTI-NATIONAL ACTIVITIES, WANTS ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS TO SETTLE IN ASSAM: PM MODI

Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched a scathing attack on the Congress, accusing the party of engaging in "anti-national" activities and helping illegal Bangladeshi immigrants to settle in the state. Addressing a public rally after unveiling a Rs 10,601-crore fertiliser plant at Namrup in Assam's Dibrugarh, Modi also alleged that the Congress did not make any effort to modernise the old plant here, and find solutions to problems faced by farmers. "The Congress is indulging in anti-national activities. They want illegal Bangladeshi immigrants to settle in Assam," the PM claimed. The opposition party is not concerned with the identity, existence and pride of Assamese people, which the BJP has been trying to protect, he said. "The Congress is opposing the revision of voter lists as it only wants to grab power... They oppose whatever good I try to do... The BJP government will always work to protect the identity, land, pride and existence of Assamese people," Modi asserted.



INDIAN VISA APPLICATIONS SUSPENDED INDEFINITELY IN BANGLADESH'S CHITTAGONG

Diary Times Desk : India on Sunday suspended visa operations at the Indian Visa Application Centre in the Bangladesh's second-largest city Chittagong until further notice in the wake of heightened tensions following the death of prominent youth leader Sharif Osman Hadi, local media reported. Hadi, a prominent leader of the student-led protests last year that led to the ouster of the prime minister Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government, was a candidate for the scheduled February 12 general elections. He was shot in the head on December 12 by masked gunmen at an election campaign in central Dhaka's Bijoynagar area. He died while undergoing treatment in Singapore on Thursday. His death triggered attacks and vandalism across Bangladesh, including stone-hurling at the Assistant Indian High Commissioner's residence in Chattogram on Thursday. Indian visa applications in Chittagong have been suspended indefinitely, the Indian Visa Application Centre (IVAC) was quoted as saying by The Dhaka Tribune newspaper on Sunday

BARCODE ON BROKEN BEER BOTTLE BECOMES KEY CLUE IN ATTEMPT TO MURDER CASE; 3 ARRESTED

Diary Times Desk : A man was allegedly struck on the head with a broken beer bottle after a scuffle with three people escalated in Delhi's Karol Bagh area, police said on Sunday. It was the barcode on the beer bottles that helped police nab the three men who were allegedly drunk and misbehaving with the victim at a park on Monday, before they hit him with force on the head, they said. The victim was rushed to a nearby hospital in Karol Bagh for treatment and survived the attack. Police registered an FIR under various Sections of the BNS, including attempt to murder, based on the complaint. The incident happened when the victim was shooting reels with a friend at Ajmal Khan Park on December 15. Three men unknown to them were allegedly drinking nearby and soon started misbehaving with them. "When the complainant objected to their conduct, a heated argument began, which soon escalated into violence. One of the accused broke a beer bottle and hit the complainant on the head with sharp glass, causing grievous injuries," a senior police officer said. "Considering the seriousness of the offence and rising incidents of violent assaults in public places, a special police team was constituted. During a detailed inspection of the crime scene at Ajmal Khan Park, police recovered a broken piece of a beer bottle allegedly used in the attack.

OVER HALF A DOZEN PASSENGER TRAINS CANCELLED FOR THREE DAYS DUE TO ELEPHANT MOVEMENTS

Diary Times Desk : Over half a dozen passenger trains will remain cancelled for three days from December 22 under the Chakradharpur division of South Eastern Railway due to the movement of elephants, a railway statement said on Sunday. The Memu train services will remain cancelled between December 22 to 24, a South Eastern Railway statement said. Movement of a herd of elephants has been noticed near rail tracks between Chakradharpur (Jharkhand's Singhbhum)-Jharsuguda (Odisha) section of the division, especially Bandamuna during night, said Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Chakradharpur division of S E Railway, Aditya Choudhary. The train services are being slowed down, causing traffic congestion and subsequently delaying train movements, he said.

PM MODI INTERACTS WITH STUDENTS ABOARD CRUISE SHIP ON BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER IN ASSAM

Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday morning set sail on the Brahmaputra river on a cruise ship, as he began his interaction with students during a 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' programme on the second day of his Assam visit. A total of 25 students from various schools of Assam are taking part in the event. Modi is scheduled to interact with the students for around 45 minutes aboard the three-deck 'M V Charaidew 2', officials said. He arrived at the Guwahati Gateway Terminal of the Inland Water Transport (IWT), inaugurated recently by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and moved to the ship along the floating bridge. Security has been heightened along the entire area with the River Police, NDRF and SDRF personnel patrolling the river since early morning, the officials said. Ferry services on the Brahmaputra have been suspended for two days since Saturday in the wake of Modi's visit. The students participating in the programme have been selected from schools in Kamrup Metropolitan, Morigaon, Dibrugarh, Cachar, Sribhumi, Baksa, Dima Hasao, Kokrajhar, Golaghat, Karbi Anglong and Nalbari districts.

They represent government, residential and private schools, including the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, PM Shri schools, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Assam Jatiya Bidyalays, Don Bosco institutions, and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, the officials said.

CENTRE SEEKS REPORT ON DEATH OF ELEPHANTS ON RAILWAY TRACKS IN ASSAM'S HOJAI



Diary Times Desk : Union Minister Bhupender Yadav on Sunday said the Centre has sought a report on the death of elephants in a collision between a train and a herd of tuskers in Assam's Hojai district a day ago. Speaking to reporters after a meeting on Project Elephant and the National Tiger Conservation Authority in the Sundarbans of West Bengal, Yadav also asserted that "no relaxation has been granted" with regard to the protection of the Aravalli region. "In the total area of 1.44 lakh square kilometres of the Aravalli, mining eligibility can only be in 0.19 per cent of the area. The rest of the entire Aravalli is preserved and protected," Yadav, the environment, forest and climate change minister, said. The minister said the Centre would implement the Supreme Court guidelines with immediate effect. The Supreme Court, on November 20, 2025, accepted the recommendations of a committee under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change on the definition of Aravalli Hills and Ranges.

VICTORY OF TEAM BJP; FOUGHT LOCAL BODY POLLS ON DEVELOPMENT PLANK: FADNAVIS

Diary Times Desk : Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday said the Mahayuti's "success" in the municipal council and nagar panchayat polls was a team effort of the BJP organisation and the government. "It is a team effort—organisation and government. We fought the polls on the development plank. I led the campaign on a positive development agenda, and never did I even once criticise any political leader or party," he said. CM Fadnavis said he sought votes on the development agenda, their work so far and their blueprint for the future. Fadnavis said that the BJP has once again emerged as the "single-largest" party in an election. Counting of votes for the elections to the posts of president and members in 286 municipal councils and nagar panchayats across Maharashtra began at 10 am on Sunday. Initial trends showed the Mahayuti, comprising the BJP, Ajit Pawar's NCP and Shinde's Shiv Sena, ahead comfortably.

WOMAN COP SHOOTS, INJURES RAPE ACCUSED TRYING TO FLEE DURING CRIME RECONSTRUCTION IN GUJARAT

Diary Times Desk : A man held for allegedly raping a 4-year-old girl sustained a leg injury after a woman police inspector shot at him when he tried to flee during the crime reconstruction process in Gandhinagar in Gujarat, an official said on Sunday. Ram Yadav (40) is in hospital and is out of danger, Section 21 police station inspector Lata Desai, who opened fire, said. "On the night of December 15, Yadav allegedly abducted a 4-year-old girl who was sleeping with her mother, a construction labourer, in a makeshift hut. He raped her at an isolated spot in Sector 24. After she confided in her mother, a case was registered and Yadav was held from a spot in Sector 25," Desai said. "When we took him to the spot of the incident for panchnama and crime reconstruction on Saturday evening, Yadav pushed police personnel and began to run from the area. I issued a warning and then fired three rounds when Yadav was about 30 feet away. One round hit his leg," Desai said.



110 FLIGHTS CANCELLED, OVER 200 SERVICES DELAYED AT DELHI AIRPORT DUE TO FOG

Diary Times Desk : A total of 110 flights were cancelled and over 370 services delayed due to low-visibility conditions amid fog at the Delhi airport on Sunday. An official said 59 arrivals and 51 departures were cancelled at the airport. According to latest information available on flight tracking website Flightradar24.com, more than 370 flights were delayed and the average delay time was around 26 minutes for departures at the airport. In a post on X in the evening, Delhi airport operator DIAL said operations are running smoothly. DIAL operates the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), the country's largest airport that generally handles around 1,300 flights daily.

PM UNVEILS RS 10,601-CR FERTILISER PLANT IN ASSAM, UNIT TO BE COMMISSIONED BY 2030

Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday laid the foundation stone of a Rs 10,601-crore brownfield ammonia-urea plant in Dibrugarh district of Assam, and asserted that it would usher in a new chapter of industrial progress in the region. The facility – Assam Valley Fertiliser and Chemical Company Ltd (AVFCCCL) – will have an annual urea production capacity of 12.7 lakh metric tonnes and the project is scheduled for commissioning in 2030. The PM, on the last day of his two-day Assam visit, laid the foundation stone of the plant here, located within the existing premises of the Brahmaputra Valley Fertiliser Corp Ltd (BVFCL). After unveiling the project, Modi addressed a public rally, where he criticised the Congress for allegedly not modernising technology at fertiliser plants, and not doing enough to protect the interests of the farmer community. Noting that it is a historic day for Assam and the entire northeast, he said the long-awaited dream of Namrup and Dibrugarh has been fulfilled, as a new chapter of industrial progress begins in the region. "Around Rs 11,000 crore will be invested in the fertiliser project, which will produce more than 12 lakh metric tonnes of fertiliser annually."



SWISS INTERIOR MINISTER OPEN TO SOCIAL MEDIA BAN FOR CHILDREN



Diary Times Desk : Switzerland must do more to shield children from social media risks, Interior Minister Elisabeth Baume-Schneider was quoted as saying on Sunday, signalling she was open to a potential ban on the platforms for youngsters.

Following Australia's recent ban on social media for under-16s, Baume-Schneider told SonntagsBlick newspaper that Switzerland should examine similar measures. "The debate in Australia and the EU is important. It must also be conducted in Switzerland. I am open to a social media ban," said the minister, a member of the centre-left Social Democrats. "We must better protect our children." She said authorities needed to look at what should be restricted, listing options such as banning social media use by children, curbing harmful content, and addressing algorithms that prey on young people's vulnerabilities. Detailed discussions will begin in the new year, supported by a report on the issue, Baume-Schneider said, adding: "We mustn't forget social media platforms themselves: they must take responsibility for what children and young people consume." Australia's ban has won praise from many parents and groups advocating for the welfare of children, and drawn criticism from major technology companies and defenders of free speech. Earlier this month, the parliament of the Swiss canton of Fribourg voted to prohibit children from using mobile phones at school until they are about 15, the latest step taken at a local level in Switzerland to curb their use in schools.

9 KILLED AS 12 GUNMEN OPEN FIRE AT SOUTH AFRICAN PUB IN BEKKERSDAL



Diary Times Desk : Nine people have died, and at least 10 others were wounded after a group of gunmen carried out a shooting at a South African pub during the early hours of Sunday, authorities said. The incident occurred just before 1 am in the township of Bekkersdal, which is located 46 kilometres (28 miles) west of Johannesburg. It is the second mass shooting to happen in South Africa in three weeks. About 12 unknown suspects in a white mini-bus and a silver sedan opened fire at pub patrons at KwaNokolo tavern, in the Tambo section of Bekkersdal and continued to shoot randomly as they fled the scene, according to police. "Some victims were randomly shot in the streets by unknown gunmen," the police said of the incident that left nine people dead and 10 hospitalised. Provincial police commissioner Maj. Gen. Fred Kekana told SABC television that one of the deceased was a driver from an online car-hailing service who had been outside the pub.

AUSTRALIA HONOURS BONDI BEACH ATTACK VICTIMS AS PM ORDERS SAFETY REVIEW

Diary Times Desk : Australia on Sunday was honouring victims of a gun attack a week earlier on a seaside Hanukkah celebration, as the Prime Minister announced a review of the country's law enforcement and intelligence agencies. The nation was marking a day of reflection to honour the 15 people killed and the dozens wounded in the attack by two gunmen at Sydney's Bondi Beach. With security tight and flags at half-staff on government buildings, a minute of silence was to be held at 6:47 pm (0747 GMT), the time the attack began. Authorities invited Australians to light a candle on Sunday evening, the start of the eighth and final day of the Jewish festival of lights, "as a quiet act of remembrance with family, friends or loved ones" of the victims of the attack, allegedly carried out by a father and son. An evening memorial event at Bondi Beach will take place under a heavy police presence, including officers carrying long-arm firearms, police said in a statement.

PRINCE WILLIAM BRINGS HIS SON TO SAME HOMELESS SHELTER HE FIRST VISITED WITH PRINCESS DIANA

Diary Times Desk : Prince William and his eldest son, Prince George, put on aprons to help make Christmas lunch at a homeless shelter, a charity that the Prince of Wales first visited as a child with his mother, the late Princess Diana. The royal father and son were seen decorating a Christmas tree and helping with meal preparations in the kitchen at The Passage in central London, in a video posted to William's YouTube account on Saturday.

"Proud to join volunteers and staff at The Passage in preparing Christmas lunch – this year with another pair of helping hands," read a post on the social media account of William and his wife, Princess Catherine.

William is the royal patron of The Passage, which he first visited when he was 11 with his mother, Diana. The heir to the throne has visited the charity in recent years, but this was the first time George, 12, joined him.

The young royal signed his name in a book on the same page that Diana and William had written their names 32 years ago, in December 1993.

SECURITY TIGHTENED AT INDIAN ASSISTANT HIGH COMMISSION OFFICE, VISA CENTRE IN BANGLADESH AMID PROTESTS

Diary Times Desk : Security has been strengthened at the Indian Assistant High Commission office and the visa application centre in Bangladesh's Sylhet city in the wake of heightened tensions following the death of prominent youth leader Sharif Osman Hadi, officials said.

The enhanced security measures were put in place to ensure that "no third party can exploit the situation", Additional Deputy Commissioner (Media) of the Sylhet Metropolitan Police Saiful Islam was quoted as saying by The Dhaka Tribune on Saturday.

According to police, security was reinforced from Friday morning at the Assistant High Commission office located in Upashahar area, the residence of the Assistant High Commissioner in the same locality, and the visa application centre in the Shobhanighat area. Members of the security forces also remained deployed throughout the night. Following the death of Inqilab Mancha spokesperson Hadi on Thursday, Gano Odhikar Parishad had announced a programme to besiege the Assistant High Commission office.

16 EPSTEIN FILES, INCLUDING DONALD TRUMP'S PHOTO, DISAPPEAR FROM US GOVERNMENT WEBSITE

Diary Times Desk : At least 16 files disappeared from the Justice Department's public webpage for documents related to Jeffrey Epstein – including a photograph showing President Donald Trump – less than a day after they were posted, with no explanation from the government and no notice to the public. The missing files, which were available on Friday and no longer accessible by Saturday, included images of paintings depicting nude women, and one showing a series of photographs along a credenza and in drawers. In that image, inside a drawer among other photos, was a photograph of Trump, alongside Epstein, Melania Trump and Epstein's longtime associate Ghislaine Maxwell. The Justice Department did not say why the files were removed or whether their disappearance was intentional. A spokesperson for the department did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Online, the unexplained missing files fuelled speculation about what was taken down and why the public was not notified, compounding long-standing intrigue about Epstein and the powerful figures who surrounded him. Democrats on the House Oversight Committee pointed to the missing image featuring a Trump photo.



SNOW, TRASH, REPEAT: MOUNT EVEREST'S GROWING WASTE CRISIS

Diary Times Desk : Mount Everest, the world's 8,849-metre giant on the Nepal-China border, is being strangled by its own success. A 2024 video resurfaced by Everest Today shows Camp IV, the death-zone hub where supplemental oxygen is a lifeline, littered with plastic bags, food wrappers, torn clothing, abandoned tents and empty oxygen cylinder.

The footage, still circulating in December 2025, has triggered a wave of anger and sorrow across social media. Viewers describe the images as "heartbreaking", especially those who have trekked to Base Camp. Commentators are demanding mandatory clean-up clauses in expedition contracts, urging fees that fund local Sherpa workers, and even questioning whether climbing should be paused until waste can be controlled. Everest Today's post framed the problem starkly: while climbers depend on oxygen to survive, the mountain itself is "suffocating" under layers of trash. Their call for stricter regulations, responsible climbing practices and effective waste management has amplified the debate.

Nepal has indeed introduced measures – a \$4,000 refundable deposit for climbers who bring back at least 8 kg of garbage, "Carry Me Back" initiatives where trekkers haul a 1 kg bag of waste down to Namche Bazaar, and periodic clean-up campaigns by the Nepal Army and the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC). Yet enforcement is inconsistent; peak-season crowds overwhelm the system, and many expeditions slip through the cracks.



AUSTRALIANS HONOUR VICTIMS OF BONDI BEACH TERROR ATTACK AT JEWISH FESTIVAL

Diary Times Desk : Australia is observing a National Day of Reflection, honouring the victims of a devastating anti-semitic terror attack during a Jewish festival at Sydney's Bondi Beach last week, in which 15 people were killed and dozens wounded. The commemorations come as Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced a comprehensive review into the nation's law enforcement and intelligence agencies, Al Jazeera reported. The day of mourning began Sunday morning at the waterfront Bondi Pavilion. Indigenous leaders led a traditional smoking ceremony at the site, which has been transformed by an impromptu memorial for the 15 people killed. The victims were targeted while celebrating the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, as per Al Jazeera.

TWO MORE ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH MOB LYNCHING OF HINDU YOUTH IN BANGLADESH, TAKING TOTAL TO 12

Diary Times Desk : The Law Enforcement agencies in Bangladesh on Sunday stated they have arrested two more individuals in connection with the mob lynching of the Hindu youth, Dipu Chandra Das, in the Mymensingh district, taking the total number of arrests to 12. According to the Daily Star, citing sources from the Bangladesh police and Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), the latest arrests were made early today. Mymensingh's Additional Superintendent of Police, Abdullah Al Mamun, stated that the two individuals were identified as Ashik aged 25 and Kaium aged 25, The Daily Star reported. All 12 detainees had been handed over to the Bhaluka Police Station in Mymensingh. It was noted that Dipu Chandra Das, who was a worker in a garment factory.

RUSSIA DOES NOT EVEN HAVE CAPABILITY TO OCCUPY UKRAINE LET ALONE INVADE EUROPE: TULSI GABBARD

Diary Times Desk : Russia "does not have the capability to conquer and occupy Ukraine," let alone invade Europe, US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard has said, accusing "deep state warmongers" and sections of the Western media of pushing alarmist narratives to derail peace efforts. In a post on X, Gabbard said, "The truth is that US intelligence assesses that Russia does not even have the capability to conquer and occupy Ukraine, let alone invade and occupy Europe." She alleged that claims suggesting otherwise were being used to justify "pro-war policies". Gabbard accused what she described as "deep state warmongers and their propaganda media" of trying to undermine efforts by US President Donald Trump to bring peace to Ukraine and Europe. She said these groups were falsely claiming that the US intelligence community supports the EU and NATO view that Russia aims to invade and conquer Europe. "Deep State warmongers and their propaganda media are again trying to undermine President Trump's efforts to bring peace to Ukraine, and indeed Europe, by falsely claiming that the 'US intelligence community' agrees with the EU/NATO view that Russia's aim is to invade and conquer Europe," she wrote.



THOUSANDS CHEER AS SUN RISES ON WINTER SOLSTICE AT STONEHENGE

Diary Times Desk : Thousands of people cheered and danced around Stonehenge as the sun rose over the prehistoric stone circle on Sunday, the winter solstice. The crowds, many in costume, had gathered before dawn, waiting patiently in the dark and cold field in southwest England. Some sang and beat drums, while others took time to reflect among the huge stone pillars.

Many make the pilgrimage to the stone circle every summer and winter and consider it a spiritual experience. The ancient monument, erected between 5,000 and 3,500 years ago, was built to align with the movement of the sun on the solstices – key dates in the calendar for ancient farmers.

Sunday is the shortest day of the year north of the equator, where the solstice marks the start of astronomical winter. It's the opposite in the Southern Hemisphere, where it is the longest day of the year and summer will start.

CHINESE MAN DEMANDS MONEY BACK FROM FIANCÉE FOR 'EATING TOO MUCH', INTERNET LOSES IT

Diary Times Desk : A private quarrel between an engaged couple from Heilongjiang's same village spiraled into a national talking point after a man surnamed 'He' sued his fiancée Wang for "eating too much".

The case, first reported by Zhonglan News on December 9 and picked up by the South China Morning Post, demanded Wang return a ¥20,000 bride-price and ¥30,000 He claimed to have spent on her.

He told Heilongjiang TV that Wang only did menial chores and devoured the restaurant's malatang daily, insisting the food for sale was never enough for her hunger. To back his claim, he presented a detailed list of purchases in court. Wang, however, denied all accusations, calling He "overly calculating" and reminding the court she was his girlfriend.

The court ultimately dismissed the ¥30,000 refund request, noting the expenses were personal gifts with sentimental value for both parties. Yet it ordered Wang to refund half of the ¥20,000 bride-price. Both parties accepted the decision and said they were satisfied with the outcome.

The verdict sparked a torrent of memes on Chinese social media. Some users called He "petty" and suggested he needed a nanny instead of a wife, while others congratulated Wang for escaping a "calculating" man.

"BANGLADESH DESCENDING INTO CHAOS, ANARCHY WHERE GOVERNMENT IS NOT ABLE TO STOP VIOLENCE": KP FABIAN

Diary Times Desk : Former Diplomat KP Fabian on Sunday expressed his views on the developments taking place after Inqilab Moncho convenor Osman Hadi was killed in Bangladesh. In an interview to ANI on the widespread violence erupting in Bangladesh over the death of Osman Hadi, former diplomat KP Fabian said, "The allegation or suspicion that India was officially involved in it has no evidence so far... It is true that Hadi was a very influential leader... It is possible that Hadi was killed because his opponent in that constituency wanted to get rid of him... But the big picture is that Bangladesh is descending into chaos, violence, and anarchy, where the government is not able to stop violence..."

He further added, "But another thing, which we are not able to understand, is that Pakistan and China, perhaps in collusion, are working overtime against India to spoil relations between India and Bangladesh and to transform Bangladesh into the old East Pakistan with Jamaat-e-Islami and other forces..."



GENOCIDE WATCH WARNS OF CULTURAL ERASURE AND FORCED DETENTION OF UYGHURS

Diary Times Desk : Washington-based non-governmental organisation Genocide Watch recently published an article on its website titled "Genocide Emergency: Xinjiang, China 2025". The report highlighted the ongoing persecution of Uyghur Muslims in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), where approximately twelve million Uyghurs live. According to Genocide Watch, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is pursuing a systematic campaign to assimilate Uyghurs, replacing their culture, language, and religious traditions with Han Chinese culture and communist ideology. Uyghur social and political institutions are being dismantled and replaced with CCP-controlled structures, eroding the community's identity and autonomy. The article said that since the 1990s, millions of Han Chinese have been resettled in Xinjiang under the "Big Development of the Northwest Plan," intensifying demographic and cultural pressures on the Uyghur population.

ISRAELI AUTHORITIES ARREST THREE GAZANS LINKED TO OCTOBER 7 ATTACK IN BEDOUIN CITY

Diary Times Desk : Israeli security officials said three Gaza men recently detained in the southern city of Rahat were not involved in Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack, contradicting an earlier announcement by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir. See updated story. Three Gazans who entered Israel during the October 7 attack and are suspected of involvement in terrorism were arrested this week in the southern Bedouin city of Rahat, Israeli authorities announced. The arrests were carried out during a police operation at a compound in the city. Officers from a canine unit conducted a search of the site, where they located equipment and ammunition, raising concerns of weapons manufacturing activity. An iron lathe was found in the compound and is believed to have been used to produce or modify weapons. Police also seized approximately 50 rounds of 9mm ammunition.

UAE SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH UNHCR TO SUPPORT HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY CONFLICT IN SUDAN



Diary Times Desk : The UAE Aid Agency has signed a cooperation agreement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to support the delivery of urgent humanitarian and relief aid to the Sudanese people impacted by the repercussions of the ongoing conflict in the country.

According to the agreement the Agency will provide a total of US\$15 million for the implementation of the project "Protection and Assistance for People Affected by the Conflict in Sudan", which is scheduled to begin on 1st January 2026 and continue until the end of the year.

The project is aimed at strengthening humanitarian response efforts for displaced people and those impacted by the conflict in Sudan, by providing life-saving measures, including protection, shelter, healthcare, and education. Rashid Al Shamsi, Executive Director of Logistics Support at the UAE Aid Agency, and Dr. Khaled Khalifa, UNHCR Senior Advisor and Representative to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, signed the agreement, in the presence of Dr. Tareq Al Ameri, Chairman of the UAE Aid Agency. Dr. Al Ameri affirmed that this agreement is part of the UAE's continuous efforts to alleviate the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Sudan since the outbreak of the conflict.

VENEZUELA ACCUSES US OF 'INTERNATIONAL PIRACY' AFTER NEW OIL TANKER SEIZURE

Diary Times Desk : Tensions between Caracas and Washington reached a boiling point this weekend as Venezuela condemned the seizure of another oil tanker off its shores, Russia Today reported.

The Venezuelan government has labelled the move an "act of piracy" and a direct attempt by the United States to seize the country's energy resources and topple its leadership.

In a scathing official statement, the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry denounced the "theft and hijacking" of a private vessel that was transporting Venezuelan oil through international waters.

Caracas went further, accusing US military personnel of the "forced disappearance" of the ship's crew, as per Russia Today. The Venezuelan government argued that this latest interception is not an isolated incident. Instead, they described it as a "colonialist model" being orchestrated by Washington to strip Venezuela of its sovereignty and natural wealth.

ISRAELI SECURITY OFFICIALS: GAZA MEN DETAINED IN RAHAT NOT LINKED TO OCT. 7 ATTACK

Diary Times Desk : Israeli security officials said three Gaza men recently detained in the southern city of Rahat were not involved in Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack, contradicting an earlier announcement by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir. According to the officials, there is no evidence that the men crossed into Israel during the assault. Instead, they entered Israel legally before the war under valid work permits and stayed after hostilities began, even after Israeli authorities revoked all entry permits for Gazan labourers. Prior to the outbreak of fighting with Hamas, approximately 17,000 Gazans were authorised to work inside Israel. The three detainees are believed to have been among those already present in the country when the permits were cancelled. The arrests were part of a broader enforcement campaign launched about a month ago targeting violent crime and weapons offences in the Bedouin sector. The operation involved multiple specialised police units and included dozens of raids on compounds linked to rival clans. Over the course of the campaign, more than 250 suspects were detained on suspicion of illegal possession, use, or theft of weapons, as well as involvement in violent disputes.

EARTHQUAKE OF MAGNITUDE 4.8 STRIKES TAJIKISTAN



Diary Times Desk : An earthquake of magnitude 4.8 struck Tajikistan on Sunday, as reported by the National Centre for Seismology (NCS). Sharing the details in a post on X, NCS said, "EQ of M: 4.8, On: 21/12/2025 10:45:08 IST, Lat: 39.61 N, Long: 71.44 E, Depth: 10 Km, Location: Tajikistan." Tajikistan is a mountainous country with diverse topography and is especially vulnerable to climate hazards. It is prone to earthquakes, floods, drought, avalanches, landslides and mudslides. The most susceptible areas are the glacier-dependent river basins supplying hydropower and water resources for irrigation, fragile mountain ecosystems and isolated forests with mountainous and riverine terrain, which makes it prone to landslides and land degradation. As per the World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal, climate change is exacerbating Tajikistan's vulnerabilities, given that 30 per cent of glaciers are predicted to disappear by 2050. Tajikistan also remains one of the most isolated countries in the world – a situation made worse by landslides, debris flows and floods that can render bridges unsafe and roads impassable and, through time, weaken the flood defences which protect its most exposed communities.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL RAISES ALARM OVER DETENTION OF ISLAMABAD-BASED JOURNALIST

Diary Times Desk : Amnesty International's South Asia Regional Office has raised concerns over the detention of journalist Sohrab Barkat, who was reportedly targeted by Pakistani authorities for alleged criticism of state institutions online. Taking to social media platform X, the organisation stated, "Sohrab Barkat, a journalist, was detained by Pakistani authorities last month for alleged criticism of state institutions online. Since then, he has been implicated in three separate cases under Pakistan's cybercrime law" The group further stated, "Two cases were filed against him in August 2024 and 2025; he was never informed about them. Months later, on 26 November 2025, while trying to travel abroad, he was detained. After receiving bail in one of the cases, he was arrested in relation to a third case" According to information provided by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Barkat, an Islamabad-based correspondent for the Pakistani news outlet.

UAE EDUCATION SECTOR WITNESSES EXTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT MEASURES, INITIATIVES IN 2025

Diary Times Desk : The UAE's education sector witnessed a wide-ranging set of development measures throughout 2025, including curriculum updates, a strong focus on future technologies, and major enhancements to higher education and scholarship systems. The year 2025 was marked by the launch of initiatives aimed at nurturing talent and stimulating scientific research, most notably the Zayed Education Foundation, which seeks to support 100,000 young talents by 2035 and prepare them to lead global economic, social and environmental progress. The year also saw the introduction of artificial intelligence as a compulsory subject from kindergarten through Grade 12, positioning the UAE among the first countries worldwide to integrate AI into school curricula. The Ministry of Education announced updated educational streams for Cycle 3 students in public and private schools.

TAIWAN BOOSTS PUBLIC SECURITY AFTER DEADLY KNIFE ATTACK IN TAIPEI

Diary Times Desk : Following a violent knife attack that left three dead and 11 injured in Taipei, President William Lai announced on Saturday that the government will deploy additional police and rapid response units to crowded public areas, Taipei Times reported. The move aims to ensure a swift reaction to any future threats. The President's remarks followed a briefing by the National Police Agency on the ongoing investigation. He emphasised that the tragedy underscores the critical need for cooperation between central and local governments regarding public security.

The attack unfolded early Friday evening near two major transit hubs. The suspect, identified as 27-year-old Chang Wen, threw smoke grenades and randomly attacked people with a knife near Taipei Main Station's M7 exit and later near the Taipei MRT's Zhongshan Station. After killing three people, the suspect apparently jumped from a building to his death, as per Taipei Times.

To protect the public, President Lai stated that police rapid-response units will increase counterterrorism training and maintain a presence at large events and crowded spaces. He noted that response times across all levels of law enforcement must be enhanced to facilitate rapid reactions to disturbances.



POJK UNIVERSITY REPORTS RECORD DEFICIT OF 1.3 BLN, DEMANDS IMMEDIATE GOVT SUPPORT

Diary Times Desk : The University of Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir is facing an unprecedented financial crisis, with its budget for the current fiscal year showing a deficit of over 1.3 billion Pakistani currency (PKR), Dawn reported. The institution has described the shortfall as unmanageable without urgent government support.

Established in Muzaffarabad in 1980 as the region's first public-sector university, the institution later opened three constituent colleges in Mirpur, Rawalakot, and Kotli, which were subsequently upgraded to independent universities. While the parent university's assets were distributed among the new institutions, Dawn reported that the University of PoJK retained pension and other long-term liabilities, which significantly increased its financial burden. Rising pension obligations, inflation, and stagnant government grants have since widened the deficit, placing the university's financial sustainability under severe strain. "The financial position of our institution has become critically unsustainable," University spokesperson Mubashar Naqvi told Dawn.

BNM SEMINAR HIGHLIGHTS KARIMA BALOCH'S ROLE IN BALOCH FREEDOM MOVEMENT

Diary Times Desk : Fahmeeda Khushik, Deputy Organiser of the World Sindhi Congress for the UK and Europe, highlighted the enduring legacy of Karima Baloch, a prominent leader in the Baloch freedom movement, at a seminar organised by the Baloch National Movement (BNM) in London on Saturday.

According to a BNM Post on X, Khushik stated, "Karima Baloch played a central role in mobilising Baloch youth around political awareness, self-determination, and resistance to enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings." She noted that Baloch had served as chairperson of the Baloch Students Organisation-Azad and consistently stood at the forefront during times of systemic militarisation, resource exploitation, and cultural suppression in Balochistan. Khushik remarked, "Karima Baloch spoke out against illegal occupation, demographic changes, and the denial of basic political and human rights." She further explained that Baloch later became a global advocate for the Baloch cause.

INDIA'S RETAIL BOOM TO ATTRACT USD 3.5 BILLION IN NEXT 3 YEARS, US SHOPPING MALLS CRUMBLE: ANAROCK

Diary Times Desk : As malls in western countries brace for an existential crisis, global capital is pivoting toward a market that seems to defy every global retail trend - India, according to real estate consultancy firm Anarock. While the US has witnessed a net closure of nearly 1,200 mall stores since 2020, with rising vacancies forcing almost 40 per cent of empty malls to undergo rezoning or repurposing, India is experiencing a retail resurgence driven by strong consumer demand and growing institutional investor confidence, Anarock said this week. According to Anuj Kejriwal, CEO, Retail Leasing and Industrial and Logistics, Anarock Group, Indian malls are set to see over USD 3.5 billion in capital inflows over the next 3 years. "88+ foreign brands have entered the Indian retail market and are seeking to expand aggressively. Several more global brands are in the pipeline, seeking space in the severely restricted Grade-A assets currently available," Anuj Kejriwal added. As a sharp counterpoint to Western countries' markets, India's massive unmet demand from a young consumer base and limited organised retail competition, backed by supportive FDI policies, are precisely what foreign brands and investors now seek.

GEM EMPOWERS SMALL BUSINESSES, OVER 11.25 LAKH SELLERS SECURE RS 7.44 LAKH CRORE IN GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Diary Times Desk : The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) has emerged as a powerful catalyst for inclusive public procurement, with more than 11.25 lakh Micro and Small Enterprise (MSE) sellers securing government orders worth Rs 7.44 lakh crore, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. As of November 2025, MSEs accounted for 44.8 per cent of the total order value transacted on the GeM platform--significantly exceeding the mandated 25 per cent procurement target for small enterprises. The milestone highlights the growing role of smaller businesses in India's government purchasing ecosystem and reflects the platform's success in democratising access to large-scale procurement.

MCAP OF 6 OF TOP-10 MOST-VALUED FIRMS CLIMBS RS 75,257 CRORE; TCS, INFOSYS BIGGEST WINNERS

Diary Times Desk : The combined market valuation of six of the top-10 most-valued firms climbed Rs 75,256.97 crore last week, with Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys emerging as the biggest winners.

Last week, the BSE benchmark declined 338.3 points, or 0.39 per cent. While Reliance Industries, Bharti Airtel, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), State Bank of India, Infosys, and Larsen & Toubro were the gainers, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finance, and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) faced erosion from their valuation. The market valuation of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) jumped Rs 22,594.96 crore to Rs 11,87,673.41 crore. Infosys added Rs 16,971.64 crore taking its valuation to Rs 6,81,192.22 crore. The valuation of State Bank of India climbed Rs 15,922.81 crore to Rs 9,04,738.98 crore and that of Reliance Industries edged higher by Rs 12,314.55 crore to Rs 21,17,967.29 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Bharti Airtel advanced Rs 7,384.23 crore to Rs 11,95,332.34 crore and that of Larsen & Toubro went up Rs 68.78 crore to Rs 5,60,439.16 crore. However, the mcap of HDFC Bank tumbled Rs 21,920.08 crore to Rs 15,16,638.63 crore. The valuation of LIC eroded by Rs 9,614 crore to Rs 5,39,206.05 crore.

SHARP FALL, THEN PARTIAL RECOVERY, 85% OF INDIA'S EXPORTS TO US SHOW DIFFERENT PATTERN AS TARIFFS RISE

Diary Times Desk : India's exports to the US between May and November 2025 followed a clear two-phase pattern, first a sharp fall until September, followed by a partial recovery by November, according to an analysis by trade-focused think-tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI). India's exports to the U.S. fell 20.7% from \$8.8 billion in May to \$7.0 billion in November. The decline was much sharper earlier in the year: exports dropped 37.7% from May to September, hitting a low of \$5.5 billion. From that trough, exports partly recovered by 27.3% between September and November, indicating a rebound after a steep mid-year fall. According to the GTRI, nearly 85% of November exports came from sectors that first declined and then rebounded. For example, Gems and Jewellery exports plunged from \$500.2 million in May to \$202.8 million in September, then rebounding to \$406.2 million in November. According to GTRI, same pattern is visible across electronics (smartphones), machinery, vehicles and auto components, pharmaceuticals, textiles and garments, carpets, mineral fuels, organic chemicals, plastics, rubber articles, fish, dairy products, and edible fruits and nuts.



MPC LIKELY TO REMAIN ON EXTENDED PAUSE; FURTHER RATE CUTS HINGE ON INFLATION TREND: REPORT

Diary Times Desk : The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is likely to remain on an extended policy pause after its recent rate cut, with any further monetary easing contingent on inflation consistently undershooting its current trajectory, ICICI Bank's Economic Research Group has asserted, after analysing the minutes of the December monetary policy.

We expect MPC to be on an extended pause. Any additional easing is possible only if inflation prints are consistently below current trajectory. In February, MPC would like to assess the impact of the new GDP and CPI series on the headline numbers," the ICICI Bank report read. The minutes of the December MPC meeting, released on Friday, indicated that inflation has turned increasingly benign. Further rate cuts from here are possible only if inflation continues to remain well below estimates going forward. In terms of the timing, the MPC is expected to keep status quo in February, as it would like to assess the impact of the new series of GDP and CPI on the headline numbers. In the meantime, the RBI would continue to provide adequate liquidity (OMO purchase/FX swaps) to ensure transmission onto lending rates," the ICICI Bank report read. MPC members noted that further easing would be considered only if inflation prints remain persistently below projections.



INDIA-OMAN CEPA TO BOOST
TRADE, MSME EXPORTS, ENERGY
SECURITY: BANK OF BARODA
ECONOMIST

Diary Times Desk : India has taken another significant step towards deepening its integration with global supply chains by signing a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with Oman, a move expected to expand bilateral trade, strengthen MSME-led exports and enhance India's energy security, according to Dipanwita Mazumdar, Economist at Bank of Baroda. The agreement signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Oman earlier this week focuses on expanding trade and investment flows while creating new opportunities for labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, leather, footwear, gems and jewellery, and engineering products. These sectors, which are closely linked to employment generation, are expected to see improved market access in Oman under the pact. In addition, the CEPA significantly enhances commitments in the services sector, covering education, healthcare, computer services, professional services, business services and research and development.

NEW INVESTOR ADDITIONS IN
MARKETS DECLINED BY 11.6%
IN NOVEMBER (MOM): NSE
REPORT

Diary Times Desk : The pace of new investor additions in the equity markets slowed in November, with growth declining 11.6 per cent month-on-month, as only 13.2 lakh new investors joined the market during the month, according to a report by the National Stock Exchange (NSE). The report stated that the registered investor base stood at 12.3 crore as of end-November 2025, reflecting the addition of 13.2 lakh investors in November. After two consecutive months of sequential increases, the moderation in November signalled a cooling in investor onboarding momentum. The NSE report stated, "The pace of additions moderated during the month, declining 11.6 per cent MoM after two consecutive months of sequential increases." According to the NSE, new investor registrations have shown a downward trend for much of CY2025, except during the May-July and September-October periods. Global headwinds and market.

STRONG FUNDAMENTALS TO KEEP INDIA AMONG FASTEST-GROWING
MAJOR ECONOMIES: REPORT

Diary Times Desk : Structural drivers, such as digitisation, technological advancements and favourable demographics, may continue to position India among the fastest-growing major economies, according to the Economic Outlook 2026 released by the Mastercard Economics Institute (MEI). India's economy is expected to consolidate on its long-term growth trajectory in 2026, with real GDP growth moderating to 6.6 per cent and inflation rising to 4.2 per cent, according to the Economic Outlook 2026.

The outlook follows an expected strong performance in 2025, when India is estimated to record 7.8 per cent GDP growth with inflation at 2.2 per cent. MEI stated that "India's economy is expected to consolidate toward long-term trends in 2026," reflecting a shift from above-trend growth toward a more sustainable pace. Domestic policy measures are expected to support economic activity. Broadly, the Indian economy is supported by policy, demographics and digitalisation.



PRIVATE EQUITY INVESTMENT IN INDIA RELATIVELY SLOWS IN 2025 AMID
GLOBAL UNCERTAINTY: KPMG



Diary Times Desk : Private equity (PE) investment activity in India slowed in 2025, reflecting broader global uncertainty linked to geopolitical developments and evolving trade policies, according to KPMG's Pulse of Private Equity Q3'25 report.

As of the end of the third quarter of 2025, PE investments in India amounted to USD 14.9 billion across 217 deals, compared with USD 26.3 billion across 289 deals recorded in full-year 2024. KPMG noted that if the pace of activity observed through Q3 continues, 2025 could become the weakest year for private equity investment in India since 2019. "Should current trends continue, 2025 could be the slowest year for PE investment since 2019 and the slowest for deal volume since 2020," the report read. The report attributed the slowdown largely to uncertainty around US tariff policies and geopolitical tensions, which have increased difficulty in forecasting risks and returns. Despite the moderation in investment activity, the report stated that private equity investor interest in India remains intact.

Over the 2020-2024 period, India consistently attracted more than USD 20 billion in PE investments annually, with deal volumes peaking in 2024. KPMG highlighted India's macroeconomic fundamentals, demographic profile, domestic consumption growth and capital market performance as factors supporting continued investor engagement. The KPMG report observed that many global private equity firms operating in India are increasingly adopting a "business builder" approach.

HIMACHAL LEADS NATION IN SUBSTANDARD DRUGS, 49 SAMPLES FAIL QUALITY TEST

Diary Times Desk : A nationwide quality audit conducted by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) in coordination with state drug regulators has uncovered significant lapses in pharmaceutical manufacturing standards across the country. As many as 205 drug samples were declared 'Not of Standard Quality' (NSQ) in the drug alert issued on Wednesday evening, with Himachal Pradesh emerging as the single largest contributor. Of the total substandard drugs identified, 49 were manufactured in various industrial clusters of Himachal Pradesh, accounting for a staggering 23.09 per cent of the national tally. Other states that figured prominently in the list include Uttarakhand (39 samples), Gujarat (27), Madhya Pradesh (19), Tamil Nadu (12) and Haryana (nine). Telangana and Chennai reported seven samples each, while Sikkim and Puducherry accounted for five each. Maharashtra reported four, Punjab and West Bengal three each and two samples each were traced to Mumbai, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. One drug sample from Kerala was also found to be substandard.

KULLU-MANALI READY TO ROLL OUT RED CARPET FOR XMAS, NEW YEAR TOURISTS

Diary Times Desk : With the onset of the winter festive season, hoteliers and tourism stakeholders of Kullu-Manali are fully prepared to welcome tourists for Christmas and New Year celebrations. A noticeable increase in tourist arrivals has already brought fresh hope to the region's tourism industry, which had suffered major setbacks due to rain-related disasters earlier this year. According to tourism stakeholders, hotel room occupancy in Kullu-Manali has crossed 60 per cent in recent days and is expected to reach 100 per cent during Christmas and New Year celebrations. Online enquiries and bookings are steadily increasing, indicating a strong revival of tourism activity in the region. Hira Lal Rana, president of the Himachal Pradesh Travel Agents Association, said online queries for Christmas and New Year vacations are pouring in. "We are hopeful that hotels in Manali will witness full occupancy during these festive occasions."

CONGRESS' FISCAL FORMULA DELIVERS RS 3,800-CRORE EDGE OVER PREVIOUS HIMACHAL GOVT

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Saturday said the state has earned Rs 26,683 crore from its own resources over the past two-and-a-half years, marking an increase of Rs 3,800 crore over the previous regime's average revenue. "After coming to power, the Congress introduced the auction-cum-tender process for liquor vend, which generated Rs 5,408 crore, compared to just Rs 1,114 crore during the previous government's tenure," he said. The CM stated that his government inherited a debt burden of over Rs 75,000 crore, besides Rs 10,000 crore in employees' liabilities. "Our government had to repay 70 per cent of this enforced loan — Rs 12,266 crore in interest and Rs 8,087 crore in principal — left behind by the previous government," he said. Of the Rs 29,046 crore borrowed by the present government so far, only Rs 8,693 crore remained available for development works, he added.



INCOMPLETE STRETCHES OF PATHANKOT-MANDI FOUR-LANE HIGHWAY INCONVENIENCE RESIDENTS

Diary Times Desk : The half-completed stretches of the Pathankot-Mandi four-lane highway project at various locations in Kangra and Mandi districts have disrupted normal life. People living in villages and towns along the Pathankot-Mandi highway are facing uncertain times, as they do not know when they may lose their homes, land and properties due to these projects. An incomplete detailed project report (DPR) of the Pathankot-Mandi four-lane project has brought development in the areas from Rajol to Thanpuri and from Parour to Padhar to a standstill. On the other hand, the Central Government claims that rapid development is taking place in the region. However, this highway project has exposed the hollow claims of the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. Land acquisition for the project began in 2021 and the construction work started in 2022. However, in reality, the project was executed partially and detailed project reports were also prepared in piecemeal manner. Even today, the DPRs of the highway stretches from Parour to Padhar and Rajol to Thanpuri have not been prepared. Moreover, the alignments of the proposed Rajol-Thanpur and Paror-Padhar four-lane highway stretches have not yet been finalised.

MIGRATION FROM SNOW-BOUND DHAULADHAR SANCTUARY PUTS WILD ANIMALS AT RISK FROM POACHERS

Diary Times Desk : The seasonal migration of wild animals from the snow-bound areas of the Dhauladhar Wildlife Sanctuary to the lower hills has put their lives at serious risk due to increased poaching activity. Wild goats, wild boar, sambar and barking deer are the primary targets of poachers. All these species are protected under various schedules of the Wildlife (Protection) Act.

A few months ago, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Sanjeev Sharma and his team arrested a group of poachers near Jia while they were returning in a jeep after illegally hunting in the Dhauladhar hills. Forest officials recovered carcasses of wild goats and also seized firearms and the vehicle used in the crime. Gunshots are frequently heard in the upper reaches of the Dhauladhar hills, indicating active poaching. In areas such as Nurpur, Nadaun, Kaloha and Dehra, poachers are using traps to hunt wild animals. In rural parts of the district, crude traps made from clutch wires of two-wheelers are commonly laid. These wire traps are designed in such a manner that once an animal is caught, the more it struggles to escape, the tighter the trap becomes, often causing permanent and fatal injuries.

YOUR HOROSCOPE
22-12-2025

Aries

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

Taurus

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

Gemini

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

Cancer

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

Leo

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

Virgo

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

Libra

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

Scorpio

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

Sagittarius

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

Capricorn

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

Aquarius

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

Pisces

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

GODARA-BOXER GANG
SHARPSHOOTER INVOLVED IN
HARYANA COURT FIRING HELD
IN GUJARAT

Diary Times Desk : A joint team of Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and Kutch East police apprehended an alleged sharpshooter linked to the Rohit Godara-Naveen Boxer gang, an official said on Sunday.

Vikas alias Golu Sheoran, originally from Kakroli in Haryana, was apprehended from Rapar town in Kutch district following specific intelligence inputs about his movement and hideout, he said. "Sheoran is an active member of the Rohit Godara-Naveen Boxer gang, a criminal syndicate involved in several cases of violent crime across north India. He is allegedly involved in the fatal shooting of Lavjeet, resident of Rohtak, who was shot from inside the court premises of Bhiwani city in Haryana on September 4," an ATS release said.

"Sheoran and his associates Ajay and Rohit opened fire at close range. The weapons used in the crime were allegedly supplied by Rohit Godara. A murder case was registered at a police station in Bhiwani against several members of the Rohit Godara-Naveen Boxer gang," the release added.

Following the incident, the accused had gone underground at the instruction of the gang leaders and took shelter at Rapar, the ATS said.

KURUKSHETRA DOCTOR
MURDER: COURT AWARDS
DEATH PENALTY TO FIVE, TWO
ACQUITTED

Diary Times Desk : The Court of Additional District and Sessions Judge (Fast Track Special Court) has sentenced five persons to death penalty in the murder case of doctor Vanita Arora, who was killed in her Kurukshetra home in 2023. The court has sentenced Manish Kumar, Vikramjeet, Vikram, Poonam and Sunil Kumar. However, Ketram and Umesh Kumar, who were also arrested in connection with the case, were acquitted from the charges leveled against them. In the jail warrant issued by the court, it was mentioned that the death sentence be not executed until and unless the same is confirmed by the High Court under section 407 of BNSS. All the sentences will run concurrently. Dr Vanita Arora (60) was killed on the night of January 9.

SHAHEEDI JOD MELA BEGINS AT CHAMKAUR SAHIB, HONOURING SUPREME
SACRIFICE OF SAHIBZADAS

Diary Times Desk : The three-day annual Shaheedi Jod Mela began with deep devotion and emotion at historic Chamkaur Sahib on Sunday, as thousands of devotees from Punjab, other parts of India and abroad gathered to remember the supreme sacrifice of Guru Gobind Singh's elder sons, Baba Ajit Singh and Baba Jujhar Singh, along with the brave Singhs who attained martyrdom while fighting the Mughal forces. The Shaheedi Jod Mela of Chamkaur Sahib holds immense historical and spiritual significance in Sikh history. It commemorates the Battle of Chamkaur (1704), where the Sahibzadas embraced martyrdom while upholding righteousness against overwhelming odds. From the early morning hours, pilgrims paid obeisance at Gurdwara Shri Katalgarh Sahib, the site associated with the martyrdom of the Sahibzadas. Ragi and Dhadi jathas filled the air with soul-stirring katha, kirtan and ballads recounting tales of bravery, drawing listeners into the turbulent days of 1704. Many devotees said the recitations made history come alive, allowing them to emotionally connect with the sacrifices of the Guru's family.



MEAT, ALCOHOL BAN AT THREE 'HOLY CITIES' NOW
IN EFFECT: PUNJAB CM MANN

Diary Times Desk : The sale of meat, tobacco, alcohol, other intoxicants are now prohibited in Amritsar Walled City, Talwandi Sabo and Sri Anandpur Sahib after a notification was issued by the Punjab government, according them 'holy city' status.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, in a video message on Sunday, said the decision to grant holy city status to the three places revered among Sikhs has now come into effect after a Punjab government notification.

Last month, a resolution was passed unanimously during a special session of the Punjab Assembly held in Sri Anandpur Sahib, which was convened to mark the 350th martyrdom anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Later on December 15, a notification was issued by the state government granting 'holy city' status to Sri Anandpur Sahib in Rupnagar district, Talwandi Sabo in Bathinda and the 'Gallara' area around the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

In his video message, Mann said there are five 'takhts' of Sikhs, out of which three — Sri Akal Takht Sahib (Amritsar), Sri Damdama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo, Bathinda) and Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib (Sri Anandpur Sahib) are in Punjab.

SANGRUR POLICE INTENSIFY 'WAR
AGAINST DRUGS', REGISTER 7 CASES

Diary Times Desk : Sangrur Police on Saturday said a total of seven cases had been registered under the NDPS and Excise Acts and eight accused arrested during the special operation conducted over the past two days.

SSP Sartaj Singh Chahal said that under the 'War Against Drugs' campaign, the district police, under the supervision of SP (Punjab Bureau of Investigation) Navreet Singh Virk, SP (Detective) Davinder Attri and SP (Headquarters) Rajesh Chhibber, carried out a cordon-and-search operation at the sub-division level. During these operations, police recovered 12 gm of heroin and 24 bottles of liquor.

The SSP said that as part of the Punjab government's intensive anti-drug drive, a large number of drug peddlers have already been arrested, and several illegal structures raised by traffickers demolished with the support of the civil administration. He reiterated that the government has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards drugs and that stringent action is being taken against those involved in the illegal trade.

CHAUTALA REMEMBERED AMID FAMILY & POLITICAL DIVIDE IN SIRSA



Diary Times Desk : Haryana's former Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala was remembered on Saturday on his first death anniversary, with his family's two political parties holding separate events in Sirsa district.

The Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) organised a memorial programme at Chautala's samadhi at the Tejakhera farm house in Sirsa. The event included a prayer meeting and an all-faith ceremony. Senior leaders and party workers from across Haryana attended.

Among those present were former Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal and former Punjab minister Manpreet Singh Badal. They paid tribute to Chautala, describing him as a leader who worked throughout his life for farmers, labourers, youth and the poor. They said the large turnout reflected his popularity and long political influence in Haryana. Addressing the gathering, INLD state president Rampal Majra openly projected Abhay Singh Chautala as the party's chief ministerial face for the future. INLD leader Abhay Singh Chautala thanked supporters and said the gathering was a sign of respect and blessings in the name of his late father. He described Om Prakash Chautala as a sensitive leader who understood the problems of weaker sections and implemented welfare schemes with long-term vision during his time as the Chief Minister.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

It's probably just the beginning.

The evolution of drones

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

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

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



Australia's About To Find Out

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

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



Hilary Whiteman

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

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

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

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

From December 10, sites



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INFA

A Blue Schoolbag In A Mass Grave

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A blue school bag

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

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

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

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

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

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



THE WORLD OF CHRISTIAN MATTTLER: 'A PERFECT ARCHIVE OF MID-CENTURY MODERN ART AND DESIGN'

Diary Times Desk : Capucine Tamboise never imagined when she entered the top-floor flat of a Parisian apartment block in the 15th arrondissement that she would be stepping into a time capsule. 'It was a perfect archive of mid-century modern art and design,' says the head of Design sales at Christie's in Paris.

The light-filled duplex, with sloping rectangular windows and a long balcony, was, until his death this year, the home of the architect Christian Mattler. In the course of his career, Mattler worked on several notable commissions, including Terminal 3 of Paris's Charles de Gaulle airport, and the restoration of the Tour Montparnasse.

Born in 1959, Mattler developed an early love of art through his Austrian mother, who introduced him to the stylish innovations of the Vienna Secession — works by artists and designers such as Josef Hoffmann and Otto Wagner.

After training as an engineer and architect, he was employed in the offices of the French designer Jean Prouvé, who instilled in him a commitment to craft and a respect for traditional materials.

This is evident in his compact, white-walled apartment, which embodies Le Corbusier's 'resplendent purity' in its functional utility and its use of strategic primary colours. 'It looks minimalist,' says the specialist, 'but actually there are many amazing things' — by which she means armchairs by Prouvé, tables by Mathieu Matégot, vases by Georges Jouve and a superb group of Charlotte Perriand furniture. These objects will be offered in Design, 1925-2025: la Modernité en Héritage on 26 November 2025 at Christie's in Paris.

One of the most dramatic features of the interior is the iron stairwell in which Mattler suspended artworks, among them a striking frieze by the painter Jean Dewasne. As co-founder of the Atelier d'Art Abstrait in 1950, Dewasne pioneered geometric abstraction in Paris and was responsible for the colour scheme of the Centre Pompidou, working alongside Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano. 'Mattler had a deep intellectual curiosity,' says the specialist, noting the many well-thumbed books to be found in the apartment. 'He needed to know everything about a designer, who they worked with and hung out with, and that is reflected in his choice of art and design.'



A COLLECTOR'S GUIDE TO THE ICONS OF ITALIAN MID-CENTURY DESIGN

Diary Times Desk :

Giovanni 'Gio' Ponti was a modern Renaissance man. With a career spanning seven decades, his work as a designer and architect ranged from armchairs to cars to skyscrapers, while he also edited magazines for more than 50 years.

After training as an architect, Ponti began to design Neoclassical villas while also, from 1923 to 1930, serving as art director for the Richard Ginori ceramics factory, creating classically inspired porcelain. His later furniture designs would come to epitomise post-war Italy's design confidence: one of his most iconic pieces, the Superleggera ('super light') chair, was remarkably strong, yet so light that a schoolchild could lift it with one finger.

Ponti created his furniture for some 120 different companies, with a view to making it accessible to as many people as possible. Manufacturers would adapt his designs to fit their production, which is why Ponti's pieces appear in a range of subtly different proportions, materials and methods of construction.

Ponti's work across a variety of media has been celebrated in numerous exhibitions, including a major 2018-19 retrospective at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris.

Probably the two most crucial periods of his influence were the early years of the 1930s, when he supported the internationalisation of the Italian identity through Domus — the magazine he had founded in 1928 — and the post-war period of around 1945-1960. Works from these periods have become increasingly scarce, and are actively sought-after by collectors.

Although Carlo Mollino and Gio Ponti were friends and respected each other's work, the two could not have been more different. Unlike Ponti, who favoured a universal, international approach to design, Mollino preferred to remain active only within his immediate environment of Turin.

Born into a wealthy family, Mollino could afford to be selective with his projects. Many of his furniture designs were one-off commissions for friends or private clients, such as the record-breaking glass and oak table he created for the Casa Orengo in Turin. The 'Tipo B' side chair was designed as a wedding gift for Gio Ponti's daughter, Lisa.



BARCELONA SET TO CONSIDER A NEW SIGNING IN JANUARY TRANSFER WINDOW



Diary Times Desk : As Barcelona look ahead to 2026, the club have been dealt a fresh injury blow, with Andreas Christensen picking up a serious-looking ACL knock. The Danish international has been ruled out for at least three to four months, with the club set to follow a conservative treatment policy.

Christensen leaves Barcelona extremely thin when it comes to defensive options, which, coupled with Inigo Martinez's summer exit, has put pressure on the Barcelona board. Now, in a significant development, Diario SPORT reports that Barcelona will consider a new signing in the upcoming January transfer window.

This is a direct response to Christensen's injury, in addition to the fact that Ronald Araujo has been out due to mental health problems, although the Uruguayan international is expected to return at the start of next year.

OFFICIAL: BARCELONA CONFIRM ACL INJURY TO VETERAN DEFENDER; OUT OF 3-4 MONTHS

Diary Times Desk : FC Barcelona have issued an official medical update that confirms a worrying injury for FC Barcelona, with defender Andreas Christensen set to spend time on the sidelines.

The Danish centre-back suffered the problem during a training session, forcing the club to clarify his condition and the path forward.

The incident occurred during Saturday's training, when Christensen made an awkward movement that resulted in an unfortunate twist of the knee. After undergoing medical tests in Barcelona on Sunday, the club released a statement explaining the extent of the injury and the decision taken by the medical staff.

In their official communication, Barcelona confirmed,

"The first team player, Andreas Christensen, has a partial tear of the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee as a result of an unfortunate twist of the knee in Saturday's training session."

Following further assessments, the club outlined the approach that will be taken to manage the injury.

PSG FAIL TO BREAK BARCELONA'S HISTORIC RECORD

Diary Times Desk : When it comes to attacking output across an entire calendar year, FC Barcelona still set a benchmark that even one of Europe's most potent offences in 2025 could not surpass.

Barcelona's incredible 180-goal haul in 2015 remains the official record for the most goals scored in a calendar year by any club in football history.

That tally was achieved under then-manager Luis Enrique, with a frontline boasting Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Neymar, who combined for the lion's share of those strikes and helped Barca dominate on all fronts that year.

By comparison, Paris Saint-Germain in 2025 – despite their attacking brilliance in Ligue 1, Champions League and other competitions – ended the calendar year with 178 goals across all competitions.

While a stunning achievement in its own right, it still falls short of Barcelona's mark from a decade earlier. That means Barça's historic 2015 remains the highest attacking output any club has registered in a single year.

OFFICIAL: BARCELONA STARTING XI TO FACE VILLARREAL | LEWANDOWSKI, RASHFORD BENCHED

Diary Times Desk : Barcelona are set to lock horns with Villarreal in about an hour, in what will be the club's final game of 2025. Heading into this game at La Ceramica, Barça have announced their starting eleven for this final game.

Quite unsurprisingly, coach Hansi Flick has announced a whole lot of changes from the side that secured a win over CD Guadalajara in the Copa Del Rey this midweek.

Joan Garcia returns in goal and will be covered by a defensive line involving the two centre-backs, Gerard Martin and Pau Cubarsi, while Jules Kounde and Alejandro Balde are set to operate as fullbacks.

In midfield, Eric Garcia retains his place and will occupy the double-pivot alongside Frenkie de Jong, with Pedri suffering from a slight niggle.

Fermin Lopez keeps his place in the attacking midfield role and will look to offer the creative impetus in the final third, alongside Lamine Yamal and Raphinha. Crucially, Flick has also decided to start with Ferran Torres in the number nine position, ahead of veteran star Robert Lewandowski.

LA LIGA REGULATIONS ALLOW BARCELONA TO SIGN REPLACEMENT FOLLOWING DEFENSIVE STAR'S ACL INJURY

Diary Times Desk : Just moments ahead of Barcelona's final game of the year against Villarreal, the club have confirmed a fresh injury in the form of Andreas Christensen.

The Danish international appears to have picked up an ACL injury, could be ruled out for a period of up to 3-4 months. The club confirmed that they have chosen to go with conservative treatment and are not taking any risks. Christensen, therefore, is out of contention, and while signing a player in January could be an option, a lot will depend on Christensen's return window. According to Diario SPORT, Barcelona are permitted to exceed their squad registration limit to sign a replacement if Christensen's incapacity is projected to last four months or more.

To activate this mechanism, the club must request a favourable medical report from La Liga's Medical Commission within 25 days of the injury. If the commission validates the long-term absence, Barcelona will be authorised to use 80% of Christensen's imputed salary cost to register a new player.

FORMER BARCELONA DEFENDER OPENS UP ON DIFFICULT SPELL AND PAINFUL EXIT – 'I SUFFERED FROM LONELINESS'

Diary Times Desk : Playing for big European clubs is a matter of pride for any player in world football. However, what is less known is the pressure and expectation that comes with it.

While many go on to embrace the responsibility and spotlight that come with playing for a big club, other players struggle to make the same adaptation and begin sinking.

In the case of Barcelona, Samuel Umtiti is one such example of a player who was expected to hit greatness but began sinking because of fitness issues and poor form. Reflecting on his struggles, as quoted by AS, the former Barcelona defender revealed how his final months in Catalonia were anything but easy for him on a personal and psychological level. "I suffered from loneliness. I didn't want to talk to anyone. Meanwhile, I was injured and played very little." He then revealed how being mentally down affected his performances on the field, saying, "If you are not well psychologically, your body does not perform at its best and your performance suffers."

