

NEWS IN BRIEF

BIRYANI, BURGER, PIZZA, DOSA MOST ORDERED FOOD ITEMS ON SWIGGY IN 2025

Diary Times Desk : Indians binged on biryani, burgers, pizzas and dosas in 2025, food delivery platform Swiggy said in a report on Tuesday. The 10th edition of 'How India Swiggy'd' report contains snapshots of the year's food delivery highlights based on orders placed by users on the platform.

With 93 million biryanis ordered in 2025, it remained the favourite of users, followed by burgers with 44.2 million orders, pizzas with 40.1 million orders, and dosas with 26.2 million orders, it said.

"Hyperlocal is the new authentic, with love for local cuisines. Pahari cuisine marked a 9x growth, while orders in Malabar, Rajasthani, Malvani and other regional cuisines also grew almost 2x in the past one year," the report said. Dinner orders were nearly 32 per cent higher than lunch orders, it stated.

Global cuisines entered the carts with Mexican (16 million orders), Tibetan (over 12 million orders), Korean (4.7 million orders) cuisines becoming consumer favourites, the report added.

UNNAO RAPE CASE: DELHI HIGH COURT SUSPENDS JAIL TERM OF KULDEEP SENGAR

Diary Times Desk : The Delhi High Court on Tuesday suspended the jail term of expelled BJP leader Kuldeep Singh Sengar, who is serving life imprisonment in the 2017 Unnao rape case, saying he has already served seven years and five months in prison. Sengar's sentence has been suspended by the high court till the pendency of his appeal challenging his conviction and sentence in the rape case. He has challenged a December 2019 trial court verdict in the case. He will, however, remain in jail since he is also serving 10 years' imprisonment in the custodial death case of the victim's father and has not been granted bail in that case. Imposing several conditions, the bench of Delhi High Court Justices

Subramonium Prasad and Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar directed Sengar to furnish a personal bond of Rs 15 lakh with three sureties of the like amount.

ISRO NEW MISSION

COUNTDOWN FOR LAUNCH OF ISRO'S BLUEBIRD BLOCK-2 MISSION BEGINS IN SRIHARIKOTA



Diary Times Desk : The 24-hour countdown for the launch of LVM3-M6 rocket, which will carry a new generation US communication satellite commenced here on Tuesday, ISRO said.

In a dedicated commercial mission, ISRO is scheduled to launch the Bluebird Block-2 spacecraft on board its heavy lift launch vehicle LVM3-M6 at 8:54 am from the second launch pad at this spaceport on Wednesday.

Weighing 6,100 kg, the communication satellite would be the heaviest payload to be placed into the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) in LVM3 launch history, the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency said. The previous heaviest was the LVM3-MS Communication Satellite 03, weighing about 4,400 kg that was successfully launched by ISRO on November 2. Wednesday's mission is being undertaken as part of the commercial agreement signed between NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL) and US-based AST SpaceMobile (AST and Science, LLC). NewSpace India Ltd is the commercial arm of ISRO.

The historic mission would deploy the next generation communication satellite designed to provide high-speed cellular broadband directly to smartphones worldwide. AST SpaceMobile is building the first and only space-based cellular broadband network, which is accessible directly by smartphones and designed for both commercial and government applications. Ahead of the launch, ISRO Chairman V Narayanan offered prayers at the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Tirumala on December 23. According to the Indian space agency, the 43.5 metre tall LVM3, also known as Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle MkIII, is a three stage rocket with a cryogenic engine designed and developed by ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre.

WILL HAPPEN IN TIME, IT'S INEVITABLE: ROBERT VADRA ON CALLS FOR PRIYANKA AS PM

Diary Times Desk : Businessman Robert Vadra on Tuesday said his wife Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has a bright future in politics and a time will come when people would like to see her at the top position. He was reacting to reports about Congress MP Imran Masood saying that Priyanka Gandhi would prove to be a strong prime minister like Indira Gandhi.

Masood was talking about the action to be taken in the context of the situation in Bangladesh, where Hindu minorities are facing persecution, and said Priyanka Gandhi would make a better prime minister and act the manner in which Indira Gandhi had in the past.

"I think Priyanka (Gandhi) also has learnt a lot from her grandmother (Indira Gandhi), her father (Rajiv Gandhi), Sonia ji and her brother (Rahul Gandhi) as well. People do admire her. People see that she has got... When she speaks, she speaks from her heart. She speaks on subjects that really need to be heard and she debates on them," Robert Vadra said when asked to comment on Masood's suggestion.

"I think she has a bright future in politics and a bright future in changing what is required on the ground in this country. I think so. That is with taking everybody's consent in mind, not her ideas only. The people's ideas are there to make the changes that they require. And, I think this will happen in time, it is inevitable," he said. There have often been demands from a section within for giving a bigger role for Priyanka Gandhi, after Congress' successive defeats at the hustings.



PATIALA POLICE FILE FORGERY CASE AFTER PUNJAB EX-IPS OFFICER'S 'RS 8 CRORE SCAM' SUICIDE NOTE



Diary Times Desk : Patiala police have registered a case of forgery and other offences against the cyber frauds as was alleged by former Punjab-cadre IPS officer Amar Singh Chahal who allegedly shot himself on Monday after being "defrauded" of over Rs 8 crore by online scammers. The IG continues to be in a critical state.

According to senior police officers, they have registered an FIR under sections pertaining to forgery and the IT Act on the basis of the suicide letter in which the former police officer had made serious allegations.

"We have registered an FIR and started a probe to ascertain the role of everyone involved," said Patiala SSP Varun Sharma. "We will ensure that the cyber thugs are brought to justice and a probe has been initiated. We will ensure that all linked to the fraud are identified and arrested," said Sharma. Meanwhile, following a surgery and other medical attention, the former cop continues to be under treatment with doctors monitoring him closely. According to senior officers who have been in touch with the doctors attending to the injured former IPS officer, his condition is critical and "the next 48 to 72 hours are crucial". Chahal was rushed to a private hospital.

INDIGO CANCELS 50 FLIGHTS AT VARIOUS AIRPORTS, INCLUDING CHANDIGARH, AMRITSAR



Diary Times Desk : Domestic carrier IndiGo, which is being probed for massive operational disruption earlier this month, cancelled around 50 flights on Tuesday, according to the airline's website.

The flights have been cancelled from across airports, including Mumbai, Delhi, Varanasi, Pune, Chandigarh, Amritsar, Indore, and Patna, among others. The airline, however, did not provide any reason for these cancellations.

As part of its winter schedule, IndiGo was initially allowed to operate 15,014 flights per week or 2,144 per day on domestic routes, which was 6 per cent more compared to 14,158 flights per week it operated in the summer schedule of 2025. However, following massive disruptions in operations that led to the cancellation of thousands of flights and caused severe hardships to lakhs of air passengers in the country, the government slashed its winter schedule by 10 per cent, or 214 flights per day.

Consequently, the airline cannot operate more than 1,930 flights per day, excluding international and cargo services. Following the large-scale flight cancellations, which at one point reached 1,600 in a single day, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) set up a 4-member probe panel to assess manpower planning, fluctuating rostering systems, and the airline's preparedness to implement the latest duty period and rest norms for pilots.

GOLD NEW HIGH

GOLD SCALES NEW PEAK OF RS 1.4 LAKH IN DELHI MARKETS AS GLOBAL PRICES HIT RECORD



Diary Times Desk : Gold prices stayed in ascending order for the second straight day, climbing Rs 2,650 to a fresh peak of Rs 14,850 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday, tracking robust trends in the global markets, according to the All India Sarafha Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity closed at Rs 13,8200 per 10 grams on Monday. So far this year, gold prices in the domestic market have jumped by Rs 61,900, or 78.40 per cent, from Rs 78,950 per 10 grams recorded on December 31, 2024.

Silver also rallied for the second consecutive day, surging Rs 2,750 to touch a record of Rs 21,7250 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). In the previous session, the white metal settled at Rs 21,4500 per kg after registering a sharp rise of Rs 10,400 per kg.

"An unprecedented rally continues in bullion, with spot gold nearing another milestone at the USD 4,500 mark. The latest round of rallies is driven by expectations that the Federal Reserve will deliver more than one rate cut in 2026, alongside rising geopolitical tensions that are strengthening the safe-haven appeal of gold and silver," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

HINDI WRITER AND JNANPITH WINNER VINOD KUMAR SHUKLA DIES AT 89



Diary Times Desk : Eminent Hindi writer and Jnanpith Award recipient Vinod Kumar Shukla died on Tuesday evening due to age-related ailments at a government hospital here, his family said. He was 88. Shukla was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Raipur, on December 2 after experiencing breathing difficulties. He breathed his last at 4:48 pm on Tuesday, his son, Shashwat Shukla, told PTI. According to the family, his mortal remains will first be taken to his residence here, and details regarding the last rites will be announced shortly. Shashwat said that after his father experienced breathing problems in October, he was admitted to a private hospital in Raipur. After his condition improved, he was discharged and continued treatment at home. However, his health deteriorated suddenly on December 2, after which he was taken to AIIMS Raipur, he added. Shukla is survived by wife, son Shashwat and a daughter. Born on January 1, 1937, in Rajnandgaon (now in Chhattisgarh), Shukla, widely regarded as one of the most distinctive voices in Hindi literature.

13 GET LIFE TERM FOR LYNCHING OF MAN, SON IN MURSHIDABAD DURING PROTESTS OVER WAQF ACT



Diary Times Desk : A court in West Bengal's Murshidabad district on Tuesday sentenced 13 people to life imprisonment for the lynching of a man and his son during the protests over the Waqf (Amendment) Act. Special public prosecutor Bivas Chatterjee said this is the country's second conviction in a mob lynching case and first in West Bengal. The fast-track court in Jangipur directed the state to give Rs 15 lakh compensation to the family of the victims. Haragobinda Das (72) and his son Chandan Das (42) were killed by a mob at their house in Jafrabad in the Samserganj police station area on April 12. Chatterjee said the prosecution had prayed for capital punishment for the convicts, maintaining that the crime falls in the rarest of rare category. He said the state government will decide whether it will appeal against the judgment before the Calcutta High Court. The court had convicted the 13 accused on Monday. Each of the 13 convicts was also sentenced to 10 years in prison for dacoity, 10 years of imprisonment for house trespass and a five-year term for rioting. All the sentences will run concurrently, the court said.

HINDU MAN KILLED IN BANGLADESH: MAJOR SHOWDOWN IN DELHI; PROTESTERS BREAK BARRICADES, CLASH WITH COPS

Diary Times Desk : Holding saffron flags and shouting slogans against the lynching of a Hindu man in Bangladesh, hundreds of supporters of the VHP and the Bajrang Dal broke barricades and clashed with police near the fortified Bangladesh High Commission on Tuesday. Several barricades lay in disarray as police struggled to contain the surge. The high security area witnessed a beefed-up police presence in the morning ahead of the protest announced by the Hindu right against the lynching of a Hindu man in the strife-torn neighbouring nation. The area had been secured with seven layers of barricades and a reinforced presence of police and paramilitary. An officer said a 1,500-strong police force was deployed ahead of the demonstration. He said police managed to hold the protesters about 800 metres from the high commission. DTC buses were parked as an obstacle to thwart the protesters' bid to reach the high commission. A sea of banners and placards bobbed in the air, reading denunciatory messages against the Bangladesh government. A placard read: "Hindu rakt ki ek ek boond ka hisaab chahiye (Each drop of blood of a Hindu must be accounted for)." On December 18, Dipu Chandra Das, a 25-year-old garment factory worker, was lynched by a mob and his body set on fire over blasphemy in Baluka in Mymensingh.

MAKE PRIYANKA VADRA THE PM, SHE'LL RETALIATE LIKE INDIRA GANDHI ON BANGLADESH VIOLENCE: CONGRESS MP



Diary Times Desk : Congress MP Imran Masood on Tuesday said that if Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were made the Prime Minister, she would give a strong response like her grandmother and former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. He was defending her remarks on rising violence against religious minorities in Bangladesh. Imran Masood, speaking to ANI, said, "... Is Priyanka Gandhi the Prime Minister? Make her the Prime Minister and see how she will retaliate like Indira Gandhi. She is Priyanka Gandhi. She has Gandhi added behind her name. She is the granddaughter of Indira Gandhi, who inflicted so much damage on Pakistan that those wounds still haven't healed. Make her the Prime Minister and see how she will retaliate. You won't dare to do that." Recently, Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra urged the Centre to take cognisance of the increasing violence against Hindu, Christian, and Buddhist minorities after the murder of Hindu youth Deepu Chandra Das in Bangladesh. Vadra pointed at the brutal killing of religious minorities in Bangladesh. In a post on X, she said, "The news of the brutal murder by a mob of Hindu youth Deepu Chandra Das in Bangladesh is extremely alarming."

HINDI WRITER AND JNANPITH WINNER VINOD KUMAR SHUKLA DIES AT 89

Diary Times Desk : Chhattisgarh-based eminent Hindi writer and Jnanpith Award recipient Vinod Kumar Shukla died on Tuesday evening due to age-related ailments at a government hospital here, his family said. He was 89. Shukla was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Raipur, on December 2 after experiencing breathing difficulties. He breathed his last at 4.48 pm on Tuesday, his son, Shashwat Shukla, told PTI. He is survived by wife, son Shashwat and a daughter. According to the family, his mortal remains will first be taken to his residence here, and details regarding the last rites will be announced shortly. Shashwat said that after his father experienced breathing problems in October, he was admitted to a private hospital in Raipur. After his condition improved, he was discharged and continued treatment at home. However, his health deteriorated suddenly on December 2, after which he was taken to AIIMS Raipur, he added. A celebrated literary figure.

4 ENGINEERING STUDENTS HELD HOSTAGE, ROBBED OF RS 1.5 LAKH NEAR BENGALURU

Diary Times Desk : Four engineering students were allegedly held captive and robbed of Rs 1.5 lakh while returning after having biryani at a popular food joint on the outskirts of the city, police said on Tuesday. The incident occurred on December 21 when the students were returning on two-wheelers from an early-morning trip to an eatery in Hoskote, they said. One of the accused has been arrested, and efforts are on to nab the remaining suspects, police said. According to the police, the students are from a private college in Bagalur. While returning from the eatery, they were allegedly intercepted near a toll plaza by a gang of men, who thrashed them and took away their mobile phones and two-wheelers. The gang allegedly took the students to a shed near Medahalli, held them captive, and robbed them. The assailants allegedly took Rs 40,000 in cash and transferred Rs 1.1 lakh from the victims' bank accounts, a senior police officer said. However, the students later got their vehicles back, he said. Based on a complaint lodged by one of the students, a case has been registered at Avalahalli police station.

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INDIA ANNOUNCES USD 450 MILLION PACKAGE AS PM MODI'S SPECIAL ENVOY MEETS CYCLONE-HIT LANKA'S TOP LEADERS

Diary Times Desk : India on Tuesday announced a reconstruction package of USD 450 million to Cyclone Ditwah-hit Sri Lanka, as External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met with the island nation's top leaders and assured Delhi's steadfast commitment to Colombo's rebuilding post-cyclone. Jaishankar, who arrived here as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Special Envoy, said that it was natural for India to step forward at a time when Sri Lanka faced a crisis. The minister called President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and conveyed PM Modi's warm wishes and message of solidarity in the aftermath of Cyclone Ditwah. "The letter from Prime Minister Modi that I handed over builds on our First Responder role and commits a reconstruction package of USD 450 million to Sri Lanka," Jaishankar said while addressing the press alongside Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Vijiha Herath. Jaishankar said he had a detailed discussion with the President on the damage caused by Cyclone Ditwah and their talks centred around how expeditiously India's assistance package can be delivered. "The assistance package that we have proposed is worth USD 450 million. It will include USD 350 million in concessional lines of credit and USD 100 million of grants," he said.

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MAN POSTS WHATSAPP STATUS WITH DEAD WIFE, HANGS SELF IN HOTEL ROOM IN UP

Diary Times Desk : A 27-year-old man hanged himself in a hotel room here after putting up a WhatsApp status with a photograph of his first wife, police said on Tuesday. "I am coming to you. Please forgive me, everyone," the status read, they said. Alok Verma from Jalalpur village was found hanging in a room of a hotel here in the Radhe Nagar locality Tuesday morning, police said. Hotel manager Anshik said Verma had been frequently staying at the hotel for the past few months, taking a room two to three times a week. On Monday, around 9.30 pm, he booked room 110 and did not open the door till around 10 am. The staff could hear a mobile phone ceaselessly ringing inside the room. Despite repeated knocks and calls, there was no response from the room. The hotel management informed the police. The door was opened in the presence of the police, who found Verma hanging from the ceiling fan with a plastic rope. Family members told police that Verma's first wife was dead and he had remarried. They said he appeared normal.

PM MODI MEETS OLYMPIC CHAMPION NEERAJ CHOPRA, WIFE

Diary Times Desk : PM Narendra Modi met Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra and his wife Himani Mor at 7, Lok Kalyan Marg on Tuesday. He shared on X that they had a "great interaction on various issues, including sports", and posted photos from the meeting. Neeraj Chopra, who has emerged as one of India's most decorated athletes, has often been lauded by the Prime Minister for his contribution to Indian sport and for inspiring young athletes across the country. The meeting underscored the government's continued emphasis on promoting sports and engaging with leading sportspersons.

The javelin superstar tied the knot with Himani Mor from Sonepat in June this year in a marriage that took everybody by surprise. Himani hails from Haryana's Larsaulli and is currently pursuing her Master of Science in sports management and administration from McCormack Isenberg School of Management in the US.

PART-TIME POLITICIAN RAHUL VISITED BIHAR DURING ELECTION, LEFT COUNTRY POST POLL: NITIN NABIN

Diary Times Desk : BJP's national working president Nitin Nabin on Tuesday termed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi as a "part-time politician", claiming that he came to Bihar only during elections and left the country once the polls got over. Nabin, while addressing the party workers here, asserted that the BJP flag will "fly high" in the upcoming Assembly polls of West Bengal and Kerala, where "part-time politicians like Rahul Gandhi would be punished by voters". The 45-year-old BJP leader also alleged that Gandhi "disrespected India" during his recent trip to Germany. "BJP workers and leaders work 24x7... We are not part-time politicians like Rahul Gandhi. During the assembly elections, he came to Bihar and went abroad once the elections got over. He went to Germany when the parliament sessions were underway, and criticised the Indian government there," he claimed. Nabin also alleged, "When he (Rahul Gandhi) is in India, he abuses the constitutional bodies like the Election Commission of India. He criticises the Supreme Court. The time has arrived to punish such politicians."



'I DON'T LIKE PICTURES OF BILL CLINTON BEING SHOWN': TRUMP ON EPSTEIN FILES RELEASE



Diary Times Desk : Bipartisan anger over the US Department of Justice's slow release of Jeffrey Epstein documents grew on Monday as lawmakers threatened to launch an effort to hold Attorney General Pam Bondi in contempt of Congress and former President Bill Clinton sought the immediate release of any documents involving him. "The DOJ needs to quit protecting the rich, powerful, and politically connected," Representative Thomas Massie, a maverick conservative Republican from Kentucky, said in a posting on X. The Justice Department released thousands of documents on Friday related to Epstein, a convicted sex offender who committed suicide in 2019. The saga over the Epstein files, which has been dragging on for years, has caused a rift within the Republican Party, with MAGA supporters, who make up President Donald Trump's core voters, clamouring for full disclosure of Epstein documents. Trump has at times called the episode a Democratic "hoax," but has also signed into law a bill requiring the full disclosure. At a press conference on Monday that was mainly devoted to administration announcements on the building of new US Navy ships, Trump was asked about the Epstein files and pictures that possibly portray former President Bill Clinton in the files being released. "I don't like pictures of Bill Clinton being shown. I don't like pictures of others being shown, it's a terrible thing," Trump said. "A lot of Republicans are angry because of the fact that it's just used to deflect against a tremendous success" by the administration, Trump said.

GRETA THUNBERG ARRESTED AT PRO-PALESTINIAN PROTEST IN LONDON



Diary Times Desk : British police arrested Swedish activist Greta Thunberg in London on Tuesday at a pro-Palestinian protest, UK-based campaign group Prisoners for Palestine said. It said Thunberg was arrested under the Terrorism Act for holding a sign that said "I support the Palestine Action prisoners. I oppose genocide". The British government has proscribed Palestine Action as a terrorist group. A City of London spokesperson said two other people had been arrested for throwing red paint at a building. The spokesperson said a 22-year-old woman later attended the scene and was arrested for displaying a placard in support of a proscribed organisation. Prisoners for Palestine, which supports some detained activists who have gone on hunger strike, said the building had been targeted because it was used by an insurance firm which they said provided services to the British arm of Israeli defence firm Elbit Systems.

JAPAN'S FORMER EMPEROR AKIHITO, WHO ENJOYS RESEARCH ON FISH, TURNS 92

Diary Times Desk : Japan's beloved former Emperor Akihito marked his 92nd birthday Tuesday as his heart condition stabilised, palace officials said, following health concerns earlier this year. Akihito, the father of Emperor Naruhito, was diagnosed in May with insufficient blood flow to the heart muscles but has been in stable condition since he started a new medication in July, the Imperial Household Agency said in a statement. He still enjoys scientific research into goby fish, career work in which he found 10 new species, and he visits a biology lab on the palace compound twice a week, the agency said. Akihito, who has held the title of emperor emeritus since his abdication in 2019, was to celebrate his birthday with his family and receive guests, including Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi. Known for his efforts to make amends for Japan's wartime past, Akihito repeatedly prayed this year for its victims and the survivors who faced hardships as he marked the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II.

EX-AIDE SAYS NETANYAHU TASKED HIM WITH MAKING PLAN TO EVADE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OCT. 7 ATTACK

Diary Times Desk : A former close aide to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says that immediately following the October 2023 Hamas attack that triggered Israel's two-year war in Gaza, the Israeli leader instructed him to figure out how the premier could evade responsibility for the security breach. Former Netanyahu spokesperson Eli Feldstein, who faces trial for allegedly leaking classified information to the press, made the explosive accusation during an extensive interview with Israel's Kan news channel on Monday night. Critics have repeatedly accused Netanyahu of refusing to accept blame for the deadliest attack in Israel's history. But little is known about Netanyahu's behaviour in the days immediately following the attack, while the premier has consistently resisted an independent state inquiry. Speaking to Kan, Feldstein said "the first task" he received from Netanyahu after Oct. 7, 2023, was to stifle calls for accountability. "He asked me, What are they talking about in the news? Are they still talking about responsibility?" Feldstein said. "He wanted me to think of something that could be said that would offset the media storm surrounding the question of whether the prime minister had taken responsibility or not."



BANGLADESH SUMMONS INDIAN ENVOY OVER SECURITY CONCERN FOR MISSIONS

Diary Times Desk : Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Pranay Verma, was on Tuesday summoned to Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs amid concerns over the security of Bangladeshi missions in India. Bangladesh's Foreign Secretary Asad Alam Siam summoned the Indian High Commissioner, Prothomalo.com reported. Diplomatic sources confirmed the matter. According to the sources, Verma was summoned in light of the emerging security situation surrounding Bangladesh missions located in various parts of India, including New Delhi and Kolkata, the report added. Diplomatic sources said that Verma has been requested to ensure strengthened security for Bangladesh missions located in various parts of India. This marks the second time in the past 10 days that Verma has been summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The neighbouring country's envoy has been summoned at least six times over various incidents during the tenure of the interim government.

UNDER 5% OF DISEASE-FOCUSSED STUDIES CONDUCTED IN LOW, MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES: WHO

Diary Times Desk : More than 80 per cent of genomic studies across the world looking into diseases are concentrated in high-income countries, and under five per cent in low and middle-income countries, according to a new global analysis by the World Health Organization (WHO). More than 6,500 genomic clinical studies were registered globally between 1990 and 2024 via the WHO's International Clinical Trials Registry Platform, with a steep rise after 2010 driven by advances in sequencing technologies, lower costs and wider applications, it said.

China led the list of top ten countries ranked by total number of genomic clinical studies registered over the past three decades, followed by the United States and Italy. India featured among the top 20 countries. "Fewer than five per cent of all studies were conducted in lower middle-income and low-income countries combined, while high-income countries accounted for over 80 per cent of all genomic studies," authors of the 'Human genomics technologies in clinical studies-the research landscape' report said. Low and middle-income countries (LMICs) were included as study sites within multicountry studies, but rarely as the leading partner -- India figured in 235 studies, Egypt in 38, South Africa in 17 and Nigeria in 14, the report said.

MESSI'S SISTER HOSPITALISED AFTER MIAMI CAR CRASH, WEDDING POSTPONED

Diary Times Desk : Lionel Messi's sister, Maria Sol Messi, has reportedly been forced to suspend her January 3 wedding after suffering serious injuries in a traffic accident in Miami. According to a report by The Sun, the 32-year-old sustained spinal fractures, burns, and multiple other injuries after losing control of her pick-up truck and crashing into a wall. A clothing designer and entrepreneur, Maria Sol has long kept a low profile, having lived in Spain for a period before returning to Argentina to pursue her own projects. Quoting Argentinian TV journalist and presenter Angel de Brito, the report said Messi's mother, Celia Cuccittini, confirmed that Maria Sol is "out of danger" but will require a long period of rehabilitation. Speaking on America TV's programme LAM, de Brito said Maria Sol had been due to marry Julian "Tuli" Arellano, a member of Inter Miami's under-19 coaching staff, in Rosario, Argentina, on January 3, but the ceremony has now been postponed. "She suffered burns, which are very difficult to treat, as well as displacement of vertebrae," Brito said, adding that she has already begun rehabilitation in Rosario. The wedding was set to take place in her native Rosario, the same city where her famous brother married Antonela Roccuzzo. The entire Messi family, including the Inter Miami and former Barcelona star, had been expected to attend. Like Lionel Messi and his wife, Maria Sol and her partner grew up in the same neighbourhood.



UN CHIEF GUTERRES VOICES CONCERN OVER VIOLENCE IN BANGLADESH, INCLUDING LYNCHING OF HINDU MAN

Diary Times Desk : UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has voiced concern over the violence in Bangladesh, including the lynching of a Hindu man in the country. "Yes, we're very concerned about the violence that we've seen in Bangladesh," Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, said at the daily press briefing on Monday. He was responding to a question on the Secretary-General's response to the attacks on minorities in Bangladesh and especially the lynchings of Hindus in the last few days. "Whether it's in Bangladesh or any other country, people who don't belong to the 'majority' need to feel safe, and all Bangladeshis need to feel safe. And we're confident that the Government will do what it can to keep every single Bangladeshi safe."

VINCE ZAMPELLA, VIDEO GAME PIONEER BEHIND 'CALL OF DUTY', DIES AT 55

Diary Times Desk : Vince Zampella, one of the creators behind such best-selling video games as "Call of Duty," has died. He was 55. Video game company Electronic Arts said Zampella died Sunday. The company did not disclose a cause of death. In 2010, Zampella founded Respawn Entertainment, a subsidiary of EA, and he also was the former chief executive of video game developer Infinity Ward, the studio behind the successful "Call of Duty" franchise. A spokesperson for Electronic Arts said in a statement on Monday that Zampella's influence on the video game industry was "profound and far-reaching." "A friend, colleague, leader and visionary creator, his work helped shape modern interactive entertainment and inspired millions of players and developers around the world. His legacy will continue to shape how games are made."

AT LEAST 5 KILLED AFTER MEXICAN NAVY PLANE ON MEDICAL MISSION CRASHES IN TEXAS

Diary Times Desk : A small Mexican Navy plane transporting a young medical patient and seven others crashed on Monday near Galveston, killing at least five people and setting off a search in waters along the Texas coast, officials said. Four of the eight people aboard were Mexican Navy officers and four were civilians, including a child, Mexico's Navy said in a statement. Two of the passengers were associated with a nonprofit organisation that provides aid to Mexican children suffering from severe burns, including transport to a Galveston hospital. US Coast Guard Petty Officer Luke Baker confirmed that at least five passengers had died in the crash but did not identify which passengers. The cause of the crash is under investigation. Mexico's Marines said in a statement that it was sending "its deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in this tragic accident." The crash took place on Monday afternoon in Galveston Bay, near the base of the causeway that connects Galveston Island to the mainland. Emergency responders and search teams rushed to the scene near the popular beach destination along the Texas coast that is about 50 miles (80.5 kilometres) southeast of Houston.



J&J VOWS APPEAL AFTER US JURY HITS IT WITH RECORD USD 1.5 BILLION TALC CANCER AWARD

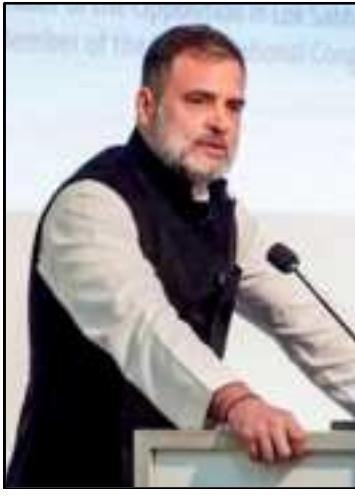
Diary Times Desk : A Baltimore jury ordered Johnson & Johnson and its subsidiaries to pay more than \$1.5 billion to a woman who claimed that decades of exposure to asbestos in the company's talc-based products caused her peritoneal mesothelioma, a rare form of cancer. Jurors in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City, Maryland, on Monday found the company, two of its subsidiaries, and spinoff Kenvue liable for failing to warn plaintiff Cherie Craft that its baby powder contained asbestos. Johnson & Johnson said it will appeal the jury's decision, which the plaintiff's law firm described as the largest-ever sum awarded against the company for a single plaintiff. The award to Craft, who was diagnosed with mesothelioma in January 2024, includes US \$59.84 million in compensatory damages, along with punitive damages of US \$1 billion against Johnson & Johnson and US \$500 million against Pecos River Talc, a J&J subsidiary, according to court documents. The case follows a California jury decision earlier in December that awarded US \$40 million to two women who said the company's baby powder caused their ovarian cancer.

US LAWMAKERS CONDEMN KILLING OF HINDU MAN IN BANGLADESH

Diary Times Desk : US lawmakers have condemned the targeted mob killing of a Hindu man in Bangladesh, calling on authorities to protect religious minorities and restore the rule of law. Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi condemned the targeted mob killing of Dipu Chandra Das, amid rising instability and unrest. Krishnamoorthi, an Illinois Democrat, called on Bangladeshi authorities to ensure accountability, protect religious minorities, and restore the rule of law. "I am appalled by the targeted mob killing of Dipu Chandra Das, a Hindu man in Bangladesh—an act of violence amid a period of dangerous instability and unrest," Krishnamoorthi said in a statement Sunday. "While authorities have reported arrests, the Government of Bangladesh must aggressively pursue a full and transparent investigation and prosecute all those responsible to the fullest extent of the law. It must also take urgent action to protect Hindu communities and other religious minorities from further violence. For the sake of all Bangladeshis, this unrest must end and the rule of law must be upheld," he said. New York State Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar said she is "deeply disturbed" by the ongoing violence against Bangladesh's Hindu minority, exemplified most recently by the brutal lynching of Das.

RAHUL GANDHI RAISES CONCERN OVER ELECTORAL PROCESS DURING LECTURE IN GERMANY

Diary Times Desk : Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Monday alleged irregularities in India's electoral process while addressing a lecture at the Hertie School in Berlin, Germany. He claimed there were serious issues with voter lists and questioned the fairness of recent Assembly elections. Speaking on the topic "Politics Is the Art of Listening," Rahul Gandhi said the Congress had raised concerns regarding the conduct of elections in Haryana and Maharashtra in 2024. He asserted that despite presenting evidence, the party did not receive satisfactory responses from the Election Commission of India. "We have won elections in Telangana and Himachal Pradesh, but when it comes to Haryana and Maharashtra, we believe the elections were not fair," Gandhi said. He alleged the presence of duplicate entries in voter lists, citing an example where a foreign national's name allegedly appeared multiple times in the Haryana voter list. He further claimed that there was a systematic weakening of India's institutional framework. According to him, central investigative agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) were being used selectively against opposition leaders.



SHARJAH FESTIVAL OF AFRICAN LITERATURE TO OPEN JANUARY 14

Diary Times Desk : The Sharjah Festival of African Literature (SFAL) will be held from January 14-18 in University City in Sharjah, under the patronage of Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah. Organised by the Sharjah Book Authority (SBA) under the directives of Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi, Chairperson of SBA, the festival aims to strengthen cultural exchange between the Arab world and Africa through literature, highlighting African writing as one of the world's most influential literary traditions. This year's festival builds on the success of its inaugural edition, which attracted more than 10,000 visitors. The programme will focus on themes such as social transformation and collective memory, offering audiences insight into the diversity and intellectual depth of African narratives. "SFAL reflects the global cultural role Sharjah has earned as an inclusive international hub that views literature as a shared human space beyond borders.

CHINESE COURT SENTENCES TIBETAN ACTIVIST TSERING TSO TO ONE YEAR IN PRISON, SUSPENDS TERM

Diary Times Desk : Tsering Tso, a Tibetan human rights advocate, has received a one-year prison sentence from the Trikha (Ch. Guide) County People's Court located in Tsolho (Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in eastern Tibet. She was charged with "picking quarrels and provoking trouble," a vague accusation often employed by Chinese authorities to suppress dissent, as reported by Tibet Times, a media outlet based in Dharamshala, according to Phayul. The sentence was announced on December 9, 2025. The court decided that her one-year sentence would be suspended for two years, placing Tsering Tso on probation. Despite this suspension, she remains under close surveillance and movement restrictions, and her attempts to legally contest the ruling have reportedly faced significant procedural hurdles, as noted by the Phayul report. As reported by TT, she has submitted full documentation.

RUSSIA HAMMERED UKRAINE WITH MISSILES AND DRONES IN A NEW AIR ATTACK ON TUESDAY



Diary Times Desk : Russia battered Ukraine with missiles and drones in a fresh air assault on Tuesday, killing at least three people; including a child, and triggering emergency power cuts across the country as Ukrainians prepared to celebrate Christmas, authorities said. Moscow's latest combined strike hit energy facilities in western regions the hardest, Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said. The attack came just days after another round of U.S.-led peace talks aimed at ending the nearly four-year-old war. Two people, including a four-year-old child, were killed in the central Zhytomyr region, while one person died outside the capital Kyiv, where local officials said at least five others were wounded.

"This Russian strike sends an extremely clear signal about Russia's priorities," President Volodymyr Zelenskiy wrote on X, adding that the attack involved more than 30 missiles and 650 drones across at least 13 regions. "An attack ahead of Christmas, when people simply want to be with their families, at home, and safe."

Ukraine's grid operator said most regions were experiencing emergency power outages following the assault. Local authorities reported damage to critical and energy infrastructure in the northern Chernihiv, western Lviv and southern Odesa regions.

"COMMON BANGLADESHIS NOT ANTI-INDIA; FUNDAMENTALISTS WHIPPING UP HOSTILITY": BANGLADESHI ACTOR ROKEYA PRACHY

Diary Times Desk : Bangladeshi actor and activist Rokeya Prachy on Tuesday said that ordinary citizens in Bangladesh are not opposed to India and that anti-India sentiments are being deliberately stoked by fundamentalist groups for political gains. Speaking to ANI, Prachy, who is also a member of the Awami League, expressed concern about the current situation in Bangladesh and criticised the approach adopted by the interim Yunus government toward India, calling it "unwise" and harmful to the interests of the Bangladeshi people. Awami League is the political party of the ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. "The common people of Bangladesh are not against India. Fundamentalists are trying to whip up anti-Indian sentiments," Prachy said, alleging that radical groups were attempting to provoke tensions by creating hostility against India. She claimed that organisations such as Jamaat-e-Islami, Hizb ut-Tahrir and other extremist outfits were systematically fuelling an anti-India narrative. According to Prachy, the anti-India rhetoric benefits only those propagating it and does not serve the interests of Bangladesh or its people. "This anti-Indian rhetoric will only benefit those who are whipping it up."

'USE 'EAST TURKISTAN,' NOT 'XINJIANG,' SAYS UYGHUR LEADER, CALLS CHINA'S ACTIONS COLONIAL GENOCIDE

Diary Times Desk : Salih Hudayar, Foreign and Security Minister of the East Turkistan Government in Exile (ETGE), has welcomed Genocide Watch's recent alert titled "Genocide Emergency: Xinjiang, China 2025," while cautioning that certain terminology and framing used in the report risk reinforcing Beijing's narrative, as noted in his post on X. According to Hudayar, the use of the term "Xinjiang" without context obscures the historical and political reality of what he described as China's military occupation of East Turkistan. He stressed that "Xinjiang," meaning "new territory," is a colonial name imposed unilaterally by Beijing and erases East Turkistan's history as an independent country, which he said lies at the root of the ongoing genocide. Hudayar further challenged population figures referenced in international reporting. As cited in his post, he stated that East Turkistan is home to far more people.

KREMLIN SAYS WEEKEND UKRAINE PEACE TALKS NOT BREAKTHROUGH: REPORT



Diary Times Desk : Talks between Russia and the United States in Miami on ways to resolve the conflict in Ukraine should not be seen as a breakthrough, the Izvestia news outlet cited Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying in remarks published on Tuesday. "This is a working process," Peskov said, when asked whether the negotiations that took place in Miami on December 20-21 could be seen as a turning point. Over the weekend, US officials held parallel meetings in Miami on possible terms to end Russia's war in Ukraine, now nearing its four-year anniversary. The talks involved Ukrainian and European counterparts and separate meetings with Kirill Dmitriev, a Kremlin envoy who heads Russia's sovereign wealth fund. US special envoy Steve Witkoff has described the discussions as "productive and constructive," though key issues including territory and security guarantees remain contentious. Peskov told Izvestia the discussions were expected to continue in a "meticulous" expert-level format and that Russia's priority was to obtain from the United States details of Washington's work with Europeans and Ukrainians on a possible settlement. He said Moscow would then judge how far those ideas matched what he called the "spirit of Anchorage."

EAM JAISHANKAR HOLDS TALKS WITH SL TAMIL LEADERS ON CYCLONE DITWAH'S PROPOSED RELIEF PACKAGE BY INDIA

Diary Times Desk : External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday held talks with Sri Lankan Tamil leaders. Jaishankar highlighted India's efforts in reconstruction post Cyclone Ditwah havoc. In a post on X, he said, "Interacted with Sri Lankan Tamil leaders this afternoon. Underlined our commitment and efforts towards post-Ditwah reconstruction and rehabilitation." Earlier in the day, during a press statement at a meeting with Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath, Jaishankar said India was prioritising the fastest delivery of aid to the country, given the damage caused by the cyclone. "We are conscious that work towards mitigating the impact of Cyclone Ditwah on the people of Sri Lanka must be done in the quickest time possible. We are discussing an effective coordination mechanism for the earliest possible delivery," he said. To boost the economy, Jaishankar said India will continue to encourage tourist travel to Sri Lanka.

NINE US LAWMAKERS URGE WAR DEPARTMENT TO LIST CHINESE TECH FIRMS TIED TO PLA

Diary Times Desk : A group of nine legislators has addressed a letter to Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, requesting the inclusion of several Chinese tech companies in a department-maintained list for allegedly supporting the military of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), as reported by The Epoch Times (TET).

The letter, dated December 18, mentions that these nonmilitary tech companies are aiding in the "modernisation, internal security initiatives, and military projection capabilities" of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). In 2021, the National Defence Authorisation Act created a list to be kept by the Defence Department (now the War Department) identifying all Chinese military entities, aimed at preventing the U.S. government from accidentally supporting the military, surveillance, and intelligence functions of the CCP.

RUSSIA DEVELOPS NEW WEAR-RESISTANT MATERIAL FOR ENERGY, AVIATION

Diary Times Desk : Scientists at the Russian National University of Science and Technology MISIS have developed a new composite material combining high strength, thermal resistance and durability, which could be used in aviation, energy and mechanical engineering, TV BRICS reported, citing Russia's Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Researchers said that conventional heat-resistant alloys tend to lose strength and undergo oxidation during prolonged exposure to high temperatures, leading to material failure and increased safety risks. To address the issue, the team added aluminium oxide nanoparticles to an alloy composed of chromium, iron, cobalt, nickel and copper. These particles prevent the penetration of oxygen, which is one of the causes of material degradation when heated, thereby preventing the formation of microcracks. Tests showed the modified alloy was 29 percent stronger and 27 percent harder than the base material, while its wear resistance increased sixfold. The composite also withstood prolonged heating at temperatures of up to 750 degrees Celsius, with the oxidation rate reduced by half. The material retained its ductility and did not fail under compression. "The new composite may find application in the manufacture of components exposed to high loads and temperature fluctuations: turbine and compressor parts, engine valves, nozzle elements, and protective coatings, as well as contact surfaces of electrical engineering equipment," said engineer Umedzhon Narzulloev, who participated in the study.



BANGLADESH: INQILAB MONCHO HOLDS PROTEST RALLY IN DHAKA OVER KILLING OF OSMAN HADI

Diary Times Desk : Inqilab Moncho on Tuesday held a protest rally in Dhaka over the killing of Osman Hadi at Shahbagh in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. This comes after Inqilab Moncho on Monday concluded its protest at the Central Shaheed Minar after issuing a 24-hour ultimatum to the government, seeking justice for the killers. The platform also announced it would hold a "Shaheedi oath" ceremony at Shahbagh at 3 pm on Tuesday, according to Member Secretary Abdullah Al Jaber.

Inqilab Moncho has demanded that the killers of its convenor Osman Hadi be brought to justice before the 13th national election and the referendum takes place in Bangladesh, as reported by BDNews24 on Monday.

According to BDNews24, Member Secretary Abdullah Al Jaber of the group said at a media briefing on Monday that it will protest in the streets until justice is delivered. "You can't get away without informing [the people] who the murderer of Hadi was by just holding an election -- this is not done. Justice [for Hadi] must be ensured before the election. Otherwise, no election will take place," Inqilab Moncho leader was quoted as saying by BDNews24.

BANGLADESH: SHEIKH HASINA, 16 OTHERS INDICTED AT ICT OVER ALLEGATIONS OF ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

Diary Times Desk : The International Crimes Tribunal on Tuesday framed charges in a crimes against humanity case against 17 accused, including former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina over allegations of enforced disappearances during the Awami League's rule, Daily Star reported. It further reported that the three-member tribunal passed the order after reading out the four charges brought against the accused, who also include Hasina's former defence and security adviser Maj Gen Tarique Ahmed Siddique (retd) and 11 army officers. As per Daily Star, of the 17 accused, 10 former Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) officers from the army were produced before the tribunal during the proceedings. Before framing the charges, the tribunal asked the accused present in the dock whether they pleaded guilty. All ten pleaded not guilty. One of them told the court they expected justice through the tribunal. According to Daily Star, the officers are Brig Gen Md Qamrul Hasan, Brig Gen Tofayel Mostafa Sarwar, Brig Gen Md Mahbub Alam.

CHHATTISGARH GOVT, GAIL SIGN MOU TO DEVELOP GAS-BASED FERTILISER PROJECT

Diary Times Desk : The Chhattisgarh government and GAIL (India) Limited joined hands for the development of a greenfield gas-based fertiliser project in the state. A non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for this was signed in the presence of the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Vishnu Deo Sai. The MoU was signed by Rajat Kumar, Secretary (Commerce & Industries), Government of Chhattisgarh and Rajeev Kumar Singhal, Director (Business Development), GAIL (India) Limited. As per the MoU, GAIL will undertake detailed techno-economic studies to set up a urea manufacturing plant of 12.7 Lacs Metric Ton (LMT), to be strategically located along GAIL's Mumbai-Nagpur-Jharsuguda Natural Gas Pipeline (M NJPL) corridor. Based on the techno-economic evaluation, an investment decision will be taken for setting up the fertiliser project by GAIL. The Government of Chhattisgarh will provide facilitation across all stages of the project, including support for feasibility studies, identification and allocation of suitable land parcels, coordination with State and Central authorities.

RBI TO INJECT RS 2 LAKH CRORE VIA OMO PURCHASES, DOLLAR SWAP TO BOOST LIQUIDITY IN BANKS

Diary Times Desk : In a bid to inject liquidity into the banking system, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday announced a series of measures after reviewing prevailing liquidity and financial market conditions. As part of the initiative, RBI will conduct open market operation (OMO) purchase auctions of Government of India securities worth Rs 2 lakh crore. "The purchases will be carried out in four equal tranches of Rs 50,000 crore each, scheduled for December 29, 2025; January 5, 2026; January 12, 2026; and January 22, 2026," the RBI said. In addition, the RBI will hold a USD/INR buy/sell swap auction of USD 10 billion with a tenor of three years on January 13, 2026, aimed at easing liquidity pressures and supporting orderly market conditions. Further, RBI noted that detailed instructions for each of these operations will be issued separately. It also reiterated that it will continue to closely monitor evolving liquidity.

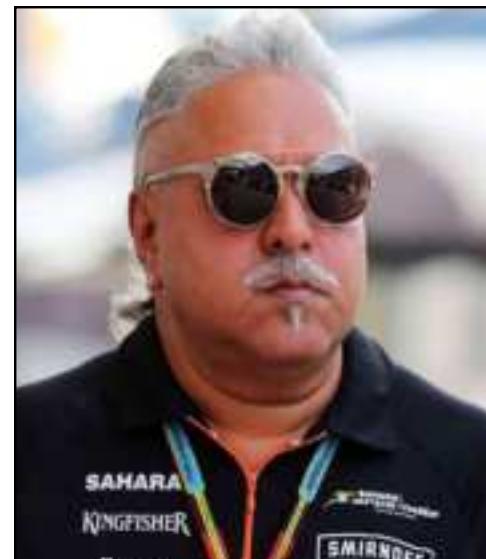
SENSEX SLIPS 42 POINTS AFTER 2-DAY RALLY; IT, PHARMA SHARES FALL ON PROFIT-TAKING

Diary Times Desk : Benchmark stock index BSE Sensex slipped by 42 points in a volatile trade on Tuesday following profit-taking in IT and pharma shares and mixed global cues. Snapping the two-day gaining streak, the 30-share BSE Sensex dipped 42.64 points or 0.05 per cent to settle at 85,524.84. The index moved in a range during the day, hitting a high of 85,704.93 and a low of 85,342.99. The 50-share NSE Nifty closed marginally up by 4.75 points or 0.02 per cent to 26,177.15. Metals, FMCG and energy shares witnessed buying interest, while IT and pharma saw selective pressure. Among Sensex firms, Infosys, Bharti Airtel, Adani Ports, Sun Pharma, Tech Mahindra, Eternel, Axis Bank and Maruti were the major laggards. However, ITC, UltraTech Cement, Tata Steel and HDFC Bank were among the gainers. The BSE smallcap index climbed 0.38 per cent and midcap gauge went up marginally by 0.07 per cent.



WILL CONSIDER PLEA AGAINST FUGITIVE OFFENDERS ACT ONLY IF MALLYA SUBMITS TO INDIAN JURISDICTION: HC

Diary Times Desk : The Bombay High Court on Tuesday sent a clear message to fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya that the court will not consider his challenge to the Fugitive Economic Offenders (FEO) Act until he submits to Indian jurisdiction. A bench of Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhar and Justice Gautam Ankhad also questioned when the businessman plans to return to India. Mallya, based in the UK since 2016, has filed two petitions in the high court — one challenging an order declaring him as a fugitive economic offender and the other questioning the constitutional validity of the 2018 Act. The high court posed the question to the 70-year-old liquor baron, wanted in India to face trial on fraud and money laundering charges, on his return home while hearing his twin pleas. The court made it clear to the embattled businessman's counsel Amit Desai that it would not hear Mallya's plea against the Act unless he first submits himself to the court's jurisdiction. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Enforcement Directorate (ED), opposed the pleas arguing fugitives should not be permitted to challenge the validity of an Act without being subjected to courts of the country.



NOIDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PARTNERS WITH TECH MAHINDRA FOR NETWORK AND CYBER SECURITY

Diary Times Desk : Noida International Airport has entered into a partnership with Tech Mahindra to build and manage an integrated Network and Security Operations Centre. This collaboration aims to create a secure and resilient digital system for the airport. According to a Tech Mahindra release, the centre will handle both network and cybersecurity operations to ensure smooth and safe travel for passengers. As part of this agreement, Tech Mahindra provides round-the-clock monitoring of the airport's critical IT infrastructure. This includes managing applications, databases, and servers to prevent any technical disruptions. The integrated operations center focuses on finding and fixing network or security issues before they cause problems. This proactive approach helps the airport maintain continuous operations and a strong defense against digital threats. Speaking about the partnership, Christoph Schnellmann, Chief Executive Officer, Noida International Airport, said, "As a greenfield airport, we have the unique opportunity to embed resilience, security, and operational excellence into our digital ecosystem from day one. Our partnership with Tech Mahindra is a critical step in building a robust, future-ready network and cyber security framework that supports safe, reliable, and seamless airport operations." The partnership focuses on making cybersecurity a core part of airport functions.



TATA NEXON.EV BECOMES INDIA'S FIRST EV TO CROSS 1 LAKH SALES, BRAND HITS 2.5 LAKH MILESTONE

Diary Times Desk : Tata Motors has revealed that over 2,50,000 Tata.ev vehicles are currently on Indian roads, marking a significant achievement in the nation's growing electric mobility landscape. This milestone underscores the company's consistent progress in the electric passenger vehicle segment and strengthens its position as a key player in India's shift toward sustainable transportation. By reaching this landmark, Tata Motors continues to reinforce its leadership role in driving cleaner, greener mobility solutions across the country. India's electric mobility market is steadily shifting from niche to mainstream, with Tata Motors playing a key role in this transition. Since the launch of the Nexon.ev in 2020, the company's Tata.ev range has maintained a strong presence in the segment. The Nexon.ev, in particular, has been central to this growth, becoming the first electric vehicle in India to cross 1,00,000 cumulative sales, marking an important milestone in the country's EV adoption journey.

CHOLAMANDALAM

INVESTMENT SHARES RISE 8% AS FIRM TERMS COBRAPOST REPORT AS 'MALICIOUS AND BASELESS'

Diary Times Desk : Shares of Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Ltd climbed 8% on December 23 after the Murugappa Group company clarified on allegations made by Cobrapost in a report. "The entire allegations (in the report) are malicious and baseless stated with ulterior motives," said Cholamandalam in a stock exchange filing. The company re-assured investors that performance, asset quality and liquidity position remain robust. "The Company wishes to reassure its investors that the performance of the Company, its asset quality and its liquidity position continues to be robust as disclosed in the audited financial statements of the Company for the half year ended September 2025. There is no revision in its guidance provided in the past and the Company will continue to deliver as per its Board approved business plan. The liquidity position of the Company continues to be strong with its cash."

AXIS BANK LAUNCHES DIGITAL MERCHANT CASH ADVANCE LOANS FOR MSMES, OFFERING UNSECURED LOANS RANGING UP TO RS 20 LAKH

Diary Times Desk : Axis Bank launches Digital Merchant Cash Advance Loans for MSMEs. According to a release from Axis Bank, this new service provides unsecured loans to micro and small businesses across the country. These loans range from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 20 lakh. This is the first of its kind in the industry and focuses on the daily cash flow of a business. It is designed to help small merchants, like retail shops, get the money they need quickly for their daily work. The bank uses a fully digital process to decide who can get a loan. Instead of looking at traditional financial papers or old statements, the bank uses cash-flow intelligence and other digital data to check eligibility. This system allows merchants to get a credit decision in just a few minutes after they apply. Once the bank approves the loan, the money is sent to the merchant within a few days. The bank also provides current account services to these customers to make the entire process smooth from start to finish. The repayment system is built to help small shops manage their money without stress. Merchants do not have to pay large monthly amounts. Instead, the bank collects repayments through small everyday instalments. This means the payments are linked to the actual daily sales of the shop. This Everyday Instalment (EDI) model gives merchants more flexibility.



CRYPTO FUTURES TRADING ON MARGEX: LOW FEES, HIGH ACCURACY & REAL-TIME TOOLS



Diary Times Desk : Trade crypto futures on Margex with low fees, precise execution, and advanced tools for Bitcoin, Ethereum, and other assets. A secure platform built for confident trading. Crypto Futures Trading on Margex: Low Fees, High Accuracy & Real-Time Tools Crypto derivatives have become one of the most efficient ways to trade market volatility, and Margex stands out as a platform designed specifically for fast, precise and low-cost crypto futures trading. Unlike many exchanges that complicate the process or inflate spreads, Margex keeps trading clean, transparent, and accessible for both beginners and advanced traders.

With deep liquidity, a modern interface and strong risk-management tools, Margex provides a reliable environment where traders can open long or short positions on Bitcoin, Ethereum and other popular assets with ease. Futures allow traders to benefit from price movement in both directions – which makes a stable, well-optimized trading platform essential.

Why Traders Prefer Futures on Margex Margex gives users a clear advantage by combining simplicity with professional-grade execution:

- low and transparent trading fees
- no unfair price manipulation
- aggregated liquidity from top providers
- seamless long/short position opening
- accurate real-time charting
- isolated margin for safer risk control
- up to 100x leverage

For traders who value precision and security, this structure creates a more predictable environment, even during high market volatility. Benefits of Crypto Futures Trading Futures trading appeals to users who want more flexibility and strategic depth. It allows you to:

- trade rising and falling markets
- amplify positions with controlled leverage
- hedge long-term holdings
- reduce exposure during uncertain conditions
- take advantage of rapid intraday volatility

Margex makes all of this accessible without overwhelming the trader. The interface is designed to highlight what actually matters: price action, order placement, and risk metrics.

DOCTOR ASSAULTS PATIENT AT IGMC, SHIMLA, SUSPENDED

Diary Times Desk : A young resident doctor at Indira Gandhi Medical College and Hospital (IGMC) allegedly assaulted a patient on Monday, triggering public outrage and protests on the hospital premises. The doctor has been suspended and a high-powered committee has been constituted to probe the incident. A video recorded by an attendant shows the doctor repeatedly punching a patient lying on a bed. The clip went viral, drawing widespread condemnation on social media. IGMC Medical Superintendent Dr Rahul Rao said the patient, a resident of Kupvi in Shimla district, had undergone bronchoscopy earlier in the day. "He was advised rest and asked to return after two hours for an X-ray. He went to the pulmonary ward, where he and the resident doctor had an altercation," Dr Rao said. The patient, Arjun Panwar, alleged that rude behaviour by the doctor triggered the incident. "I was struggling to breathe and lying on the bed. The doctor spoke to me in a rude tone. When I asked him to mind his language, he attacked me," he claimed.

MAHATMA GANDHI INSULTED, RIGHTS OF POOR TRAMPLED UPON: HIMACHAL CONGRESS

Diary Times Desk : The Congress held a protest in Shimla today against the renaming of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and the Centre's alleged attempt to weaken the Act. While addressing the protesters, state Congress president Vinay Kumar said the Congress would not let the BJP's conspiracy to weaken the Act and would launch a public awareness campaign across the state and the country. "The Congress government had provided the crucial guarantee of employment to the poor and destitute at their own place through MGNREGA. The Narendra Modi government is trying to weaken it," he said.

He further said that the BJP had not only insulted Mahatma Gandhi by renaming the scheme but had also trampled upon the rights of the poor. Stating that the law was passed unanimously after a discussion of 100 hours in Parliament under the UPA rule, Kumar said the Modi government got it passed in haste. "The Congress will continue to fight for the rights of the poor and destitute," he said.

HC SUSPENDS LIFE SENTENCE OF EX-IPS OFFICER ZAIDI IN CUSTODIAL DEATH CASE, QUESTIONS CBI'S CONSPIRACY THEORY

Diary Times Desk : The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Tuesday suspended the life sentence awarded to former IPS officer Zahur Haider Zaidi in a custodial death case linked to sensational Kotkhai rape and murder case investigation. The bench of Justice Anoop Chitkara and Justice Sukhvinder Kaur held that *prima facie* CBI's conspiracy narrative suffered from inherent contradictions, besides noting that Zaidi was not present at the police station when the custodial death occurred and had already undergone over five years of custody. Zaidi, heading an SIT as Inspector-General of Police in Himachal Pradesh, was convicted by CBI Court, Chandigarh, in January for offences including criminal conspiracy and murder following the custodial death of Suraj Singh during investigation of minor Gudiya's rape-and-murder case.

HIMACHAL GOVT MOVES TO CREATE 6 NEW GRAM PANCHAYATS

Diary Times Desk : Even as the High Court is hearing the matter regarding the deferment of Panchayati Raj Institution polls, the state government has proposed creating six new gram panchayats and reorganising 31 gram sabhas across Himachal. The Department of Panchayati Raj has issued a notification under the Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, seeking objections and suggestions within a week from December 18. After the deadline, the respective Deputy Commissioners will begin the reorganisation process. The notification has been issued at a time when the deferment of Panchayati Raj elections under the Disaster Management Act is under judicial scrutiny. The case was listed on Monday, but with the Urban Development Department yet to file its reply, the next hearing has been fixed for December 30, 2025. The highest number of gram sabhas proposed for reorganisation — seven each — are in Kangra and Solan districts. In Kangra, these include Chandpur (Langha) in Palampur, Sihorpati, Ghalor, Bug, Thill, Dhol Khariyana in Surani and Nyagal in Nagrota Surian. In Solan, reorganisation has been proposed in Chamdar (Nalagarh), Shahrol and Hanuman Barog (Kunihar), Jabli (Dharampur) and Sultanpur, Bohli and Biisha (Solan).

94 SCHOOLS HAVE GOT CBSE AFFILIATION, 6 WILL GET SOON: HIMACHAL EDU MINISTER

Diary Times Desk : Education Minister Rohit Thakur today said that 94 schools of the state have granted affiliation by the CBSE, and the remaining six schools will get it by the end of this month. The state government plans to have 100 government schools affiliated to CBSE from the coming academic session. While chairing a review meeting of the Education Department, Thakur said a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for teacher appointments had been prepared and would be placed before the Cabinet soon. The minister reviewed the Limited Direct Recruitment (LDR) Test 2025-26 for 1,427 Job Trainee posts, scheduled on February 22, 2026, and directed officials to ensure smooth completion of the process. He also reviewed progress of Rajiv Gandhi Day-Boarding Schools, sanctioned Rs 94.46 crore for 42 locations and instructed strengthening of sports infrastructure and filling vacant regular posts of coach in all nine sports hostels. Thakur said the recruitment process for 389 Assistant Professors had been initiated. He directed that schools with zero enrolment be merged, teacher postings rationalised based on actual need and non-performing teachers and schools face strict action. He further instructed that all promoted headmasters join.

YOUR HOROSCOPE
24-12-2025

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.

REJECTION OF CONGRESS' NOTICES SPARKS WALKOUT IN HARYANA VIDHAN SABHA

Diary Times Desk : The Congress today staged a walkout in the Haryana Vidhan Sabha to protest Speaker Harvinder Kalyan's decision to reject the party's notices on adjournment and calling attention discussions, while allowing a privilege motion moved by BJP MLA Shakti Rani Sharma against Congress MLA Indu Raj Narwal. The privilege motion was moved during zero hour on the last day of the winter session by Shakti Rani Sharma, BJP MLA from Kalka, against Narwal over remarks made by him on December 19 on the alleged "sale of votes for money" during the Rajya Sabha elections. Narwal had alleged that INLD leader and former MLA Abhay Chautala had "dipped his hands in former Union minister Venod Sharma's pockets and sold votes for crores". Shakti Rani Sharma, wife of Venod Sharma, termed the allegations "baseless" and moved the privilege motion against the Congress MLA for referring to a person who was not present in the House. The Speaker put the motion to vote, following which more than 15 MLAs, mostly from the ruling benches, stood up in its support. Speaker Kalyan then allowed the motion and referred it to the Privileges Committee for "examination and investigation".

HARYANA'S 25 LAKH FAMILIES TO GET OWNERSHIP RIGHTS AS ABADI DEH BILL CLEARED

Diary Times Desk : In a first in Haryana's history, nearly 25 lakh families occupying land in 'abadi deh' areas — land falling within a village's 'lal dora' — are set to get ownership rights following the passage of the Haryana Abadi Deh (Vesting, Recording and Resolving of Ownership Rights) Bill, 2025, by the state Assembly on the final day of its winter session today. The Bill, described as a "revolutionary step" by the Nayab Singh Saini government, seeks to confer legal ownership on long-time occupiers of residential land within village limits, a move expected to significantly improve ease of living and unlock development potential in rural areas. Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Vipul Goel said the new law would bring villages closer to planned urban development. "It will provide and upgrade civic services and environment in villages to integrate them with planned urban development, levy any cess or tax for community development.

PATIALA POLICE FILE FORGERY CASE AFTER PUNJAB EX-IPS OFFICER'S 'RS 8 CRORE SCAM' SUICIDE NOTE

Diary Times Desk : Patiala police have registered a case of forgery and other offences against the cyber frauds as was alleged by former Punjab-cadre IPS officer Amar Singh Chahal who allegedly shot himself on Monday after being "defrauded" of over Rs 8 crore by online scammers. The IG continues to be in a critical state. According to senior police officers, they have registered an FIR under sections pertaining to forgery and the IT Act on the basis of the suicide letter in which the former police officer had made serious allegations. "We have registered an FIR and started a probe to ascertain the role of everyone involved," said Patiala SSP Varun Sharma. "We will ensure that the cyber thugs are brought to justice and a probe has been initiated. We will ensure that all linked to the fraud are identified and arrested," said Sharma. Meanwhile, following a surgery and other medical attention, the former cop continues to be under treatment with doctors monitoring him closely. According to senior officers who have been in touch with the doctors attending to the injured former IPS officer, his condition is critical and "the next 48 to 72 hours are crucial".



HARYANA ASSEMBLY PASSES BILL TO INCREASE DAILY WORKING TIME TO 10 HOURS FOR SHOP EMPLOYEES

Diary Times Desk : The Haryana Assembly on Monday passed a bill increasing the daily working hours from nine to ten hours while retaining the overall weekly limit of 48 hours for employees of shops and private commercial establishments. The Haryana Shops and Commercial Establishments (Amendment) Bill, 2025 has been passed to amend the Haryana Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, 1958. While Labour Minister Anil Vij said that the Bill aims to reduce the compliance burden on smaller establishments through reforms for promoting economic growth while ensuring continued protection for workers, Congress MLA Aditya Surjewala differed. Pointing to some of its provisions, he asked if it was ease of doing business or legalising "modern-day slavery". Minister Vij said that the Bill was beneficial for both workers and shopkeepers, and it was in the interest of workers as well as traders. There is also a provision for an increase in the permissible limit of overtime work per quarter from 50 hours to 156 hours, enabling shops and commercial establishments to meet peak business demands more efficiently. The Bill also seeks to increase the maximum period of continuous work without rest from five to six hours.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION TURNS GARBAGE SPOT INTO GREEN SPACE IN JAGADHRI

Diary Times Desk : The Municipal Corporation, Yamunanagar-Jagadhri (MCYJ), has cleared heaps of garbage from in front of the Solid Waste Management Plant in Kail village (Jagadhri), providing relief to residents from the foul odour in the area. After removing the garbage heaps, the MCYJ planted fragrant potted plants and evergreen ornamental plants at the site. Additional Municipal Commissioner Dheeraj Kumar inspected the plant and instructed the staff to ensure proper maintenance of the plantation. According to information, heaps of garbage had accumulated on the road in front of the plant a few months ago. Following the issuance of a new tender for door-to-door garbage collection, the MCYJ recently cleaned the garbage dumped outside the plant and planted saplings, along with placing decorative flower pots at the site. The area has now been transformed into a green space with evergreen ornamental plants. Municipal Commissioner Mahabir Parsad said the MCYJ is working to make the twin cities of Yamunanagar and Jagadhri clean, beautiful and hygienic.

ELECTORAL REFORMS DEBATE TRIGGERS CHAOS, REPEATED WALKOUTS IN HARYANA VIDHAN SABHA



Diary Times Desk : The Haryana Vidhan Sabha on Monday witnessed repeated adjournments, sloganeering and walkouts as the House took up a motion to discuss the "situation arising out of the ongoing electoral reforms relating to the preparation of electoral rolls", with Congress legislators disrupting proceedings and terming the issue beyond the Assembly's jurisdiction. After the Opposition staged two walkouts, the House passed a resolution condemning the Congress for what it described as unruly conduct and for refusing to participate in the discussion on an issue of public importance. Appeals by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini and Speaker Harvinder Kalyan to the Congress members to return to the House went unheeded. The disorder began soon after Speaker Kalyan admitted the motion, moved by BJP legislators Ram Kumar Kashyap and Yoginder Rana. As Kashyap rose to speak, Congress members shouted slogans, forcing the Speaker to adjourn the House for 15 minutes. When proceedings resumed, some Congress MLAs — including Kuldeep Vats, Indu Raj Narwal, Balram Dangi, Vikas Saharan and Jassi Petwar — who had been expelled on Friday for unruly behaviour, again raised slogans, making it impossible for the House to function. The Congress legislators then staged a walkout, arguing that electoral reforms fell under the Union List and that the Haryana Assembly was not competent to discuss the issue.

EDITORIAL

Drones have already revolutionized warfare.

They're about to do it again

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

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

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

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



Brad Lendon

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

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

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

But the Goliaths have caught up, while – according to one report – drug cartels the world over are innovating, improving and adapting drones to fight the narco-wars of the future.

"It's like gunpowder. That's how insanely it's changed the war," Patrick Shepherd, a former US Army officer, said of the advent of cheap aerial drones.

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

The evolution of drones

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

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

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



Australia's About To Find Out

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



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 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.

"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.

INFA

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 49.5 million Australian dollars (\$32 million).

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 its children.

A Blue Schoolbag In A Mass Grave

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



Tamilis, 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.



HOW ART DECO ENCHANTED A CENTURY OF COLLECTORS

Diary Times Desk : Few events have changed the course of design history as significantly as the 1925 Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes. Often referred to as the 1925 Paris Exhibition, the government-sponsored presentation sought to introduce an aesthetic that was truly modern, intentionally devoid of references to historical antecedents and a marked departure from Art Nouveau. While the exhibition was open to international exhibitors, ranging from Great Britain and Italy to Japan and the Soviet Union, one of its goals was to reinforce France's dominance as a cultural capital at the cutting edge of luxurious, artisanal design, across the decorative arts, architecture, jewellery and more.

Originally scheduled for 1915, the Paris Exhibition was delayed due to World War I. By 1925, the 'Art Deco' style (a name that resulted from the exhibition's success) had already been popular in France; however, as Victoria Tudor, Christie's Head of Sale, Design, notes, the exhibition 'catapulted' Art Deco to an international stage. More than 16 million people visited during its six-month run. In the hundred years since, collectors can't get enough of the movement's artwork and objects, noted for their bold geometric designs and luxurious materials.

Celebrating the centennial of the 1925 Paris Exhibition, Christie's will present 1925 | A Modern Vision on 11 December in New York. This dedicated design auction will feature works by many of Art Deco's most celebrated creators, including Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann, André Groult, Jean Dunand, Eugène Printz, Edgar Brandt and more.

'Art Deco was as important in 1925 as it is today in 2025,' says Tudor. 'The love of Art Deco can be seen throughout the world. Christie's own New York galleries are located at Rockefeller Center, an icon of Art Deco architecture and design.' Included in the upcoming sale is a plaster model for Alfred August Janniot's bronze bas-relief that graces the facade of La Maison Française at Rockefeller Center's 610 Fifth Avenue to this day.

While the 1925 Paris Exhibition inspired edifices as iconic as New York City's Empire State and Chrysler Buildings, it also served as a catalyst for the careers of numerous French creators and ensembliers, at the centre of which was Ruhlmann, who designed stunning works that considered the 'totality of an environment,' says Tudor: 'There was an understanding of how everything in the interior interacts, from wall treatments to furnishings and lighting, and how those elements came together to create an ambiance.'



WHAT J.M.W. TURNER BOUGHT AT CHRISTIE'S

Diary Times Desk :

The art market is, and always has been, a business that thrives on relationships. This year marks the 250th anniversary of J.M.W. Turner's birth, and Christie's rich relationship with the artist goes back to Turner's twenties. Over the years, Christie's has sold a great number of his works — recently including a rediscovered watercolour, *The Approach to Venice, and Lake Brienz, with the Setting Moon*. But our precious auctioneers' books — which record every work of art ever sold in our hundreds of years of history — reveal that J.M.W. Turner was a Christie's buyer, too. And one successful bid reveals a great deal about him, not only as an artist, but as a friend.

The earliest known sale of Turner's work at Christie's took place on 29 May 1800, when the artist was only 25 years old. The sale cover boasts, among other delights, a collection from an 'Eminent Amateur' and 'A Capital and Valuable Assemblage of drawings by the most admired Ancient and Modern Masters'. Among these were six drawings by Turner and one on which he collaborated with his contemporary, Thomas Girtin. The eminent amateur was Dr Thomas Monro, whose patronage of artists (including Turner) was so prolific that his circle was sometimes referred to as the 'Monro School'. A medical doctor by profession, he was a passionate collector and connoisseur, as well as a watercolourist himself.

This sale was also the first known occasion of Turner being a Christie's client. Two of his own works, *The Welsh Bridge over the Dee at Chester* and *The Cloisters of Chester Cathedral*, were bought by the artist himself, in a purchase that the auctioneer's notes suggest was made after the sale. We don't know why — perhaps he missed having those pictures in his own collection.

Some 33 years later, after the death of Dr Monro, his collection was sold at Christie's. Once again, Turner purchased a number of his own pieces. This time, it might have been because he was preoccupied with his legacy. When he died, he bequeathed what remains to this day the largest donation of works of art to London's National Gallery, but also specified how he wished them to be displayed. In particular, he wanted two of his canvases — *Dido building Carthage* and *Sun rising through Vapour* — to be shown alongside paintings by Claude Lorrain, to establish the connection he felt between his work and that of the French artist.



BARCELONA SUPERSTAR COULD MISS OUT ON FIFA WORLD CUP SQUAD DESPITE STELLAR PERFORMANCES



Diary Times Desk : Among all the new signings that were made last summer, Joan Garcia certainly stands out as one of the most successful in 2025. Joining FC Barcelona from rivals Espanyol, Garcia has visibly improved Barcelona's solidity in between the sticks and has emerged as one of the best-performing 'keepers in La Liga this season.

Garcia's mastery was evident once again as he awed the Barcelona bench with his saves against Villarreal. It was his sixth clean sheet in La Liga in just 12 matches.

Usually, a performance of such high calibre guarantees you a place in the national team. But Garcia has been particularly unlucky. The first-choice Barcelona star was not fully fit when Spain were in action during the November international break. And now, with the FIFA World Cup 2026 just around the corner, Garcia could end up missing out on the international, reports Cadena SER.

THE WORRYING NUMBER OF MATCHES BARCELONA DEFENDER HAS MISSED THROUGH INJURY

Diary Times Desk : Barcelona's defensive headache deepened after another cruel setback involving Andreas Christensen, an incident that could quietly mark the end of his time at the club.

During a training session ahead of the match against Villarreal, the centre-back suffered an awkward twist to his left knee. Medical tests later confirmed a partial tear of the anterior cruciate ligament, a diagnosis that, while stopping short of surgery, still carries serious consequences.

Because the ligament damage is not complete, Christensen will follow a conservative recovery plan rather than go under the knife. Even so, the estimated rehabilitation period of three to four months effectively rules him out for the remainder of the season.

In all honesty, Barcelona must now plan as if the Danish defender will not play again before the campaign concludes. Christensen's deal with Barcelona expires at the end of the season, and the club had already made it clear internally that a renewal was not a priority. While Christensen still had some hope of extending his stay, this setback all but erases any remaining optimism.

BARCELONA SUPERSTAR ADVISED AGAINST AC MILAN MOVE – 'HOPE TO SEE HIM IN THE US OR IN AN ARAB COUNTRY'

Diary Times Desk : The future of Robert Lewandowski at Barcelona continues to attract attention, and now one of the most respected voices in Polish football has weighed in on the subject. Legendary striker Zbigniew Boniek has discussed the options ahead of the Barcelona forward should he decide not to renew his contract beyond this summer.

Speaking about the natural course of a footballer's career, Boniek first addressed Lewandowski's current stage, offering a realistic yet respectful assessment of his evolution.

"It's an inevitable process. Robert is 37 years old and has aged a bit. As long as he keeps playing football, he will score goals, but he's not the same player he was a few years ago."

"The captain is ageing with dignity, and I hope to see him in the United States or in an Arab country next season."

"He will play two more years to earn some extra money," said Boniek as quoted by Mundo Deportivo.



ATHLETIC CLUB ICON CRITICISES BARCELONA DIRECTOR OVER NICO WILLIAMS SAGA: 'THREW THE BOY TO THE WOLVES'

Diary Times Desk : The Nico Williams-Barcelona saga was one of the stories of the summer transfer window. The Athletic Club winger appeared all set to join Barcelona, with the club making preparations to pay his release clause and reaching an agreement over a contract. However, a sudden U-turn from the player and his camp saw the Spanish international snub the Blaugrana and sign a new long-term contract with the Basque club. Now, former Athletic Club footballer and sporting director, Rafa Alkorta, has hit out Barcelona director Deco over how the entire Nico Williams case was handled. Deco had come out and spoken openly about the talks that were held between the two camps before the move eventually fell through, something that Alkorta has been critical of in the past as well.

"I thought what he did was wrong. He threw the boy, who had a contract with Athletic, to the wolves," he said. "That really shocked me, knowing that Deco was a footballer and understands the quicksand that surrounds these circumstances."

KEY BARCELONA STAR ON THE VERGE OF SPAIN CALL-UP AFTER CLUTCH PERFORMANCES

Diary Times Desk : Barcelona's revival since the painful El Clasico defeat at the end of October has been one of the most encouraging storylines of their season.

Much of the spotlight has understandably fallen on the team's attacking firepower, but behind that resurgence lies a quieter, equally important pillar, namely, Joan Garcia.

From all the heroics, the goalkeeper's performance against Villarreal in particular deserves special attention, as it showed just how influential he has become during this recent run. Notably, for the first time since Hansi Flick took charge, Barcelona have managed to string together three consecutive clean sheets across all competitions. Victories against Villarreal, Guadalajara, and Osasuna all came without conceding a single goal. Although Garcia was rested for the Guadalajara match, his presence in the other two fixtures was central to maintaining that defensive solidity. Garcia's importance is even more impressive considering the circumstances of his return. At the end of September, he suffered an injury in his left knee. Since recovering, however, he has returned sharper and more decisive.