

## NEWS IN BRIEF

RLD STATE SECRETARY SHOT AT BY NEPHEW OVER PROPERTY DISPUTE IN UP'S BARABANKI; CRITICAL

**Diary Times Desk :** Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) state secretary Afsar Ali was shot at and critically injured by his nephew over an alleged property dispute in Loharhar village, police said on Tuesday. Ali, who lives with his family in Lucknow, had come to his native village to attend the last rites of an acquaintance in a neighbouring village, they said. According to the police, after returning from the cremation, Ali was sitting and talking with locals near a shop in the village when his nephew, Ubaid, arrived and fired at him with a country-made pistol. The pellets hit Ali in the chest, leaving him seriously injured. Hearing the gunshot, villagers rushed to the spot and Ali was immediately taken to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital in Lucknow, where his condition remains critical, police said. Following the incident, an additional police force was deployed in the village. Circle Officer Fatehpur Jagatram Kanodia inspected the spot and questioned family members. Kanodia said preliminary investigation suggests that the incident.

**GOVT WILL GO BY SC DIRECTIVE ON HOLDING BENGALURU CIVIC BODY POLLS BY JUNE 30: D K SHIVAKUMAR**

**Diary Times Desk :** Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Tuesday said the state government will go by the Supreme Court's directive and hold the long-pending elections to the five city corporations, under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (CBA), before June 30. Shivakumar, who is also the minister in charge of Bengaluru development and state Congress chief, has expressed confidence about Congress winning all five corporations in the city. The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Karnataka government and the state election body to hold Bengaluru local body polls by June 30. The tenure of the earlier elected body, under the erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), expired on September 10, 2020, and since then, a government-appointed administrator.

## ARMY CHIEF NEWS



## SITUATION ALONG LAC STABLE BUT REQUIRES CONSTANT MONITORING: ARMY CHIEF

**Diary Times Desk :** Referring to the situation along the disputed boundary with China, Indian Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi said on Tuesday that the situation remains "stable but needs constant monitoring."

Speaking at the annual press conference ahead of Army Day on January 15, he added, "Situation at northern front remains stable but needs constant monitoring. Our deployment along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) remains balanced."

In October 2024, India and China agreed to a patrolling arrangement along Depsang in Eastern Ladakh, ending the military standoff that began in April 2020. Since then, the Special Representatives of India and China — National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi — have met twice and agreed to work towards demarcating the boundary.

Meanwhile, the Army Chief said Operation Sindo, launched in May last year to strike at terrorist camps in Pakistan, is ongoing and that "any misadventure would be responded to." Addressing nuclear rhetoric during skirmishes with Pakistan, he clarified, "There was no mention of nuclear during the talks the two DGMOs had during that period."

"The nuclear rhetoric was being pushed by the political class," the Army Chief said, without naming the Pakistan leadership that had been brandishing the threat. Referring to post-May 10 developments, when the cessation of hostilities was announced, General Dwivedi said some forward mobilisation was pulled back by the end of May, "but our eyes and ears are open."

On the future of the Army, he said integration is underway and progress is being made towards theatre commands. "By 2026, we will have an Indian Army capable of striking deep," he added, highlighting significant upgrades and restructuring of forces. He also detailed new raisings, including Bhairav light commando battalions, Shaktibaan regiments, Divyastra artillery batteries, and Ashni platoons.

## EC DELETED 54 LAKH 'GENUINE VOTERS' IN BENGAL WITHOUT HEARING THEM: MAMATA BANERJEE

**Diary Times Desk :** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee alleged on Tuesday that the 54 lakh names, which were deleted from the draft rolls during the SIR in the state, were done unilaterally by the Election Commission which "misused" powers of electoral registration officers (EROs) to get the job done. Upping the ante against the EC amid the ongoing and contentious SIR exercise in the state, Banerjee alleged that a bulk of the deleted voters were "genuine electors", who were not allowed to defend themselves because they weren't even apprised of the grounds of deletion.

"The EC, while sitting in Delhi, used AI tools devised by the BJP to delete names. These AI softwares accounted for the names mismatch in SIR data. They deleted names of women who changed surnames post marriage. They have also 'killed' many voters across the state who are still living," Banerjee alleged, while addressing a press conference at the state secretariat Nabanna. These EROs were given responsibilities for the 54 lakh name deletions, whereas in many instances, these officers weren't even aware that the marked names were being removed, she added.

The chief minister has already written five letters to the Chief Election Commissioner Ganesh Kumar complaining of anomalies, unilateral decisions and digitisation errors in electoral rolls accounting for hardships faced by electors in the state.



## WILL ASK STATES TO PAY HEAVY COMPENSATION FOR DOG-BITE INCIDENTS: SUPREME COURT



**Diary Times Desk :** Expressing concern over failure to implement norms on stray animals for years, the Supreme Court on Tuesday said it will ask states to pay a "heavy compensation" to dog-bite victims. A Special Bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and NV Anjaria said that even dog lovers and feeders will be held "responsible" and "accountable" for dog-bite incidents.

"For every dog bite, death or injury caused to children or elderly, we are going to ask the state governments to pay heavy compensation, as they did not do anything on implementation of norms in the past five years," Justice Nath said.

Maintaining that responsibility and accountability will be fixed on those feeding stray dogs, Justice Nath said, "If you love these animals so much, then why don't you take them to your house. Why should these dogs loiter around, bite and scare people?"

"Who should be held accountable when dogs attack a 9-year-old -- the organisation that is feeding them. You want us to shut our eyes to the problem," Justice Mehta concurred.

## BLINKIT, ZOMATO, ZEPTO DROP 10-MINUTE DEADLINE AFTER GOVERNMENT'S PRESSURE



**Diary Times Desk :** The Government has asked quick commerce firms to drop their 10-minute delivery timelines, citing worker safety concerns. Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya met with representatives from Blinkit, Swiggy, Zomato, and Zepto, urging them to prioritise worker safety.

Most companies have revised their sales pitches. Blinkit changed its tagline from "10,000+ products delivered in 10 minutes" to "30,000+ products delivered at your doorstep". AAP MP Raghab Chadha welcomed the government's move to scrap quick commerce firms' 10-minute delivery timelines, following a December 15 protest by gig workers demanding better conditions and social security. AAP MP Raghab Chadha welcomed the move, saying it's a "much-needed step" to ensure delivery rider safety. He thanked citizens for supporting gig workers and urged companies to prioritise human life and dignity. Chaddha said, "I'm grateful to the Central Government for removing the '10-minute delivery branding from quick-commerce platforms. This is a much-needed step, as the pressure to meet this target is real and dangerous for riders." He added, "Over the past months, I've spoken to hundreds of delivery partners. Many are overworked, underpaid, and risk their lives to fulfil an unrealistic promise. I thank citizens who stood with us — you stood for human life, safety, and dignity. To every gig worker — you're not alone, we're all with you."

## SUPREME COURT

**BEANT SINGH MURDER: SC DEFERS HEARING ON JAGTAR SINGH HAWARA'S PLEA FOR TRANSFER TO PUNJAB JAIL**



**Diary Times Desk :** The Supreme Court on Tuesday deferred by two weeks the hearing on Beant Singh murder convict Jagtar Singh Hawara's plea seeking his transfer from Tihar Jail in the national capital to a prison in Punjab.

Hawara — a Babbar Khalsa terrorist — is serving life term in the case related to the assassination of former Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh in 1995. A Bench of Justice MM Sundresh and Justice N Kotiswar Singh adjourned the hearing as Solicitor General Tushar Mehta was not available. The 55-year-old prisoner has sought his transfer to a Punjab jail on grounds that he demonstrated good conduct in jail, the crime was committed at a time of social unrest and his daughter lived in Punjab. He has contended that all co-accused involved in the jail break were in Punjab jails and the Director General (Prisons) recommended his transfer to a jail in Punjab almost eight years ago on October 7, 2016. He also claimed that there was not a single case pending against him in Delhi and that he was unable to attend proceedings in a case pending in Punjab. Former Punjab CM Beant Singh and 16 others were killed on August 31, 1995, in an explosion outside the Civil Secretariat in Chandigarh on August 31, 1995. Hawara was arrested on September 21, 1995.

**'ATTACK ON TAMIL CULTURE': RAHUL GANDHI SLAMS CENTRE OVER DELAY IN VIJAY-STARRER 'JANA NAYAGAN'**



**Diary Times Desk :** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday alleged that the Centre's "attempt to block" Vijay-starrer 'Jana Nayagan' is an attack on Tamil culture, and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi will never succeed in "suppressing the voice of the Tamil people".

His remarks come a day after the producer of the Tamil film Jana Nayagan approached the Supreme Court, challenging an interim order of the Madras High Court that stayed a single-judge direction to grant the CBFC clearance to the movie. On January 9, the Madras High Court stayed a single judge's order directing the CBFC to immediately grant a censor certificate to Jana Nayagan, leaving the fate of actor-turned-politician Vijay's film, which has drawn attention for its political overtones, in limbo.

**In a post on X, Gandhi said, "The I&B Ministry's attempt to block 'Jana Nayagan' is an attack on Tamil culture."**

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## ABU SALEM INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL, CAN BE GIVEN ONLY 2-DAY PAROLE: MAHARASHTRA GOVT TO HC

**Diary Times Desk :** Gangster Abu Salem, convicted in the 1993 serial bomb blasts case, is an "international criminal" and hence can be granted only two-day emergency parole with police escort, the Maharashtra government told the Bombay High Court on Tuesday. Salem had sought 14 days' parole, citing his elder brother's death. Public prosecutor Mankhuwar Deshmukh said a 14-day parole was not possible as Salem is an "international criminal". "The prison authority has said he can be given two days' parole along with police escort, the cost of which he will have to bear," Deshmukh told the court. Salem's lawyer, Farhana Shah, said two days will not be enough as he has to travel to Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh. "There is also no need for any police escort. He has been in jail for over two decades and is seeking emergency parole," Shah said, adding that Salem is an Indian citizen. A bench of Justices Ajay Gadkari and Shyam Chandak directed the government to file an affidavit stating its apprehension to grant Salem 14 days' parole, and posted the matter for further hearing next week. Salem, in his plea filed in December 2025, sought parole as his elder brother, Abu Hakim Ansari, passed away in November last year.

## 'KAI PO CHE' FROM THE POLS: AHMEDABAD OLD CITY TERRACES KEEP UTTARAYAN SPIRIT ALIVE

**Diary Times Desk :** As Ahmedabad gears up to celebrate 'Uttarayan' with kite flying, a familiar tradition quietly gathers momentum in the old city — the annual renting of terraces. Every year, as winter skies fill with kites, rooftops across the walled city transform into sought-after spaces for the celebration of Uttarayan, also known as Makar Sankranti, which falls on January 14 and marks the sun's northward journey and the transition towards summer. In the heart of the heritage city, amid the narrow alleys of the 'pols', as the old city neighbourhoods are called, the jubilant cries of "Kai Po Che" will echo through Khadia, Raipur, Sarangpur and Astodia. Here, rooftops are more than architectural features; they become platforms where memories are made. Renting terraces during Uttarayan is a long-standing tradition in the old city of Ahmedabad. For a day, these rooftops turn into shared spaces of belonging, where hosts and visitors come together to celebrate the festival in its most authentic form. To mark the occasion, terraces are carefully painted and adorned with colourful balloons, intricate dori work.

## MATHURA MAN CARRIES 1.5-FOOT-LONG SNAKE IN POCKET TO HOSPITAL AFTER BEING BITTEN

**Diary Times Desk :** An e-rickshaw driver walked into the district hospital here with a 1.5-foot-long snake in his pocket, which had allegedly bitten him, an official said on Tuesday. A purported video of the incident has also surfaced on social media. Deepak (39), a local, was bitten by the snake on Monday and came to the hospital for an anti-venom injection. In the video, when he was asked about the snake that had bitten him, he pulled the reptile from his jacket's pocket and put it back again. The patient said that he had come to the hospital around 30 minutes ago, and alleged that there are no facilities in the hospital. "The patient was told to leave the reptile outside as it was putting the lives of other patients in danger," Chief Medical Superintendent Neeraj Agrawal said. Police were called later, who rescued the serpent. However, it is suspected that the snake belonged to Deepak, the CMS added.

## RLD STATE SECRETARY SHOT AT BY NEPHEW OVER PROPERTY DISPUTE IN UP'S BARABANKI; CRITICAL

**Diary Times Desk :** Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) state secretary Afsar Ali was shot at and critically injured by his nephew over an alleged property dispute in Loharhar village, police said on Tuesday. Ali, who lives with his family in Lucknow, had come to his native village to attend the last rites of an acquaintance in a neighbouring village, they said. According to the police, after returning from the cremation, Ali was sitting and talking with locals near a shop in the village when his nephew, Ubaid, arrived and fired at him with a country-made pistol. The pellets hit Ali in the chest, leaving him seriously injured.

Hearing the gunshot, villagers rushed to the spot and Ali was immediately taken to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital in Lucknow, where his condition remains critical, police said. Following the incident, an additional police force was deployed in the village. Circle Officer Fatehpur Jagatram Kanojia inspected the spot and questioned family members. Kanojia said preliminary investigation suggests that the incident was linked to an old property dispute. A case has been registered and the accused has been arrested and is being interrogated, he said. Station House Officer Krishnakant Singh said the accused confessed during questioning that he had a long-standing land dispute with his uncle and carried out the attack due to personal enmity.

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## 'FOR EVERY DOG BITE, WE ARE GOING TO...': SUPREME COURT'S BIG REMARK ON STRAY DOG ISSUE

**Diary Times Desk :** The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it will ask states to pay a "heavy compensation" for dog-bite incidents as it flagged its concern over the lack of implementation of norms on stray animals for the past five years. A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and NV Anjaria said that even dog lovers and feeders will be held "responsible" and "accountable" for dog-bite incidents. "For every dog bite, death or injury caused to children or elderly, we are going to ask the state governments to pay heavy compensation, as they did not do anything on implementation of norms in the past five years. Also, responsibility and accountability will be fixed on those who are feeding these stray dogs. If you love these animals so much, then why don't you take them to your house. Why should these dogs loiter around, bite and scare people?" Justice Nath said. Justice Mehta concurred with the views of Justice Nath and said.

## 2 STUDENTS FROM ARUNACHAL'S REMOTE NAMSAI INVITED TO R-DAY PARADE IN DELHI AS SPECIAL GUESTS

**Diary Times Desk :** Two school students from Arunachal Pradesh's remote Namsai district have been invited as special guests for the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi after they won a national competition on waste management. Nang Sujata Jenow and Kusum Kumari Mishra, both Class XII students of Science at the Government Higher Secondary School in Chongkham, earned an invitation through their exceptional performance in the school innovation marathon (SIM), a national initiative under the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) of NITI Aayog, according to an official statement. The duo stood out in a rigorous national online competition focused on managing plastic waste, it said. Their project, which emphasised practical solutions for a plastic-free future and showcased a high degree of scientific temper, captured the attention of national evaluators, the statement said. Under the guidance of their teacher, Moirangthem Surchand Singh, the students developed.

## SIKKIM DISCONTINUES PHYSICAL PERMITS FOR FOREIGN TOURISTS

**Diary Times Desk :** The Sikkim government has decided to discontinue issuance of physical permits for foreign nationals visiting protected and restricted areas of the state, making online clearance mandatory. The state's Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation said the decision was taken in compliance with directives issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. In an official order, the state government said authorities will no longer issue Protected Area Permits (PAP) or Restricted Area Permits (RAP) in physical form to foreign tourists. Under the updated guidelines, foreign nationals are permitted to visit specific locations, including the Tsomgo Lake in East Sikkim, Yumthang Valley and Zero Point in North Sikkim, subject to obtaining prior approval through the designated online permit cell. Tourism department officials said the move aims to strengthen compliance with national security protocols, while streamlining the permit process through a more efficient digital system.

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## CHINA WARNS RETALIATION AS TRUMP'S IRAN TARIFF THREAT PUTS ITS CHEAP OIL IMPORTS AT RISK



**Diary Times Desk :** China, the largest buyer of Iranian oil, on Tuesday warned counter measures against US President Donald Trump's decision to impose 25 per cent tariffs on countries trading with Iran, amid concerns that sanctions could end Beijing's reliance on cheaper oil imports.

Trump announced on Monday that any country "doing business" with Iran will have to pay a 25 per cent tariff on its trade with the US, a move that could impact Tehran's major trading partners such as China, India and the UAE.

"There are no winners in a tariff war, and China will firmly safeguard its own legitimate and lawful rights and interests," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said while reacting to Trump's threat.

Trump's Iran tariff threats, coupled with the fall of the pro-Beijing Maduro regime in Venezuela which also supplied loan-linked oil supplies to China, sent "a dire warning" to Beijing's policymakers who, analysts said, need to urgently find ways to protect the country's strategic interests abroad. His announcement sent shockwaves in Beijing, which may have to reconsider its approach, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post quoted China watchers as saying. China is already grappling with the fall of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, one of its closest allies. His fall brought about an overnight end to Venezuela's allegiance to Beijing, which, according to reports, invested over USD 106 billion in the Latin American country.

## TRUMP ANNOUNCES 25 PER CENT TARIFFS ON COUNTRIES DOING BUSINESS WITH IRAN

**Diary Times Desk :** United States President Donald Trump on Monday (local time) announced a sweeping trade measure targeting countries that "continue to do business with Iran", imposing a 25 per cent tariff on all their business dealings with the US. In a post on Truth Social, Trump said that the decision would be "immediately" in effect and that the "order is final and conclusive." "Effective immediately, any Country doing business with the Islamic Republic of Iran will pay a Tariff of 25% on any and all business being done with the United States of America. This Order is final and conclusive. Thank you for your attention to this matter!" Trump said in his post. US Republican Senator Lindsey Graham praised the Trump decision to impose 25 per cent tariffs, saying that the US President's decision in "isolating" the Khamenei regime economically is most impressive. Sharing a post on X, Graham wrote, "Mr President: your decisive leadership in isolating this regime economically through your actions today are most impressive. Your promise to have the protesters' back and put the regime on notice that you will not tolerate the killing has led to the largest outpouring of demonstrators against this fanatical regime."

## KEEP PROTESTING, HELP IS ON ITS WAY, TRUMP TELLS IRANIANS



**Diary Times Desk :** President Trump said on Tuesday that he's cancelled talks with Iranian officials amid a protest crackdown, telling Iranian citizens "help is on its way". Trump did not offer any details about what the help would entail, but it comes after the Republican president earlier this week said Iran wants to negotiate with Washington after his threat to strike the Islamic Republic that has killed more than 2,000, according to human rights monitors. But Trump with his latest message on social media appeared to make an abrupt shift about his willingness to engage with the Iranian government. "Iranian Patriots, KEEP PROTESTING - TAKE OVER YOUR INSTITUTIONS!!!" Trump wrote in a morning post on Truth Social. "Save the names of the killers and abusers. They will pay a big price. I have cancelled all meetings with Iranian Officials until the senseless killing of protesters STOPS. HELP IS ON ITS WAY." The president has repeatedly threatened Tehran with military action if his administration finds the Islamic Republic is using deadly force against anti-government protesters.

## ABOUT 2,000 KILLED IN IRAN PROTESTS, SAYS OFFICIAL

**Diary Times Desk :** Around 2,000 people were killed in Iran protests, an Iranian official told Reuters on Tuesday, blaming "terrorists" for the deaths of civilians and security personnel. Meanwhile, the UN human rights chief said that he was "horrified" by mounting violence by Iran's security forces against peaceful protesters.

"This cycle of horrific violence cannot continue. The Iranian people and their demands for fairness, equality and justice must be heard," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said in a statement read out by UN rights office spokesperson Jeremy Laurence. Asked to comment on the scale of the killings, Laurence, citing the United Nations' own sources in Iran, said: "The number that we're hearing is hundreds."

## 2021 EDITED SPEECH: BBC SEEKS TO DISMISS TRUMP'S \$10 BN DEFAMATION LAWSUIT IN FLORIDA COURT

**Diary Times Desk :** The BBC will ask a court to throw out US President Donald Trump's \$10 billion lawsuit against the British broadcaster, court papers show. Trump filed a lawsuit in December over the way the BBC edited a speech he gave on Jan. 6, 2021. The claim, filed in a Florida court, seeks \$5 billion in damages for defamation and \$5 billion for unfair trade practices. The speech took place before some of Trump's supporters stormed the US Capitol as Congress was poised to certify President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 election that Trump falsely alleged was stolen from him. The BBC had broadcast the documentary — titled "Trump: A Second Chance?" — days before the 2024 US presidential election. It spliced together three quotes from two sections of the 2021 speech, delivered almost an hour apart, into what appeared to be one quote in which Trump urged supporters to march with him and "fight like hell." Among the parts cut out was a section where Trump said he wanted supporters to demonstrate peacefully. The broadcaster has apologised to Trump over the edit of the Jan. 6 speech. But the publicly funded BBC rejected claims it had defamed him. The furore triggered the resignations of the BBC's top executive and its head of news.

## IRAN EASES SOME RESTRICTIONS, ALLOWS CALLS ABROAD AS DEATH TOLL SPIKES

**Diary Times Desk :** Iran eased some restrictions on its people and, for the first time in days, allowed them to make phone calls abroad via their mobile phones on Tuesday. It did not ease restrictions on the internet or allow texting services to be restored as the toll from days of bloody protests against the state rose to at least 646 people killed.

Although Iranians were able to call abroad, people outside the country could not call them, several people in the capital told The Associated Press.

The witnesses, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal, said SMS text messaging still was down and internet users inside Iran could not access anything abroad, although there were local connections to government-approved websites. It was unclear if restrictions would ease further after authorities cut off all communications inside the country and to the outside world late Thursday.



## DENMARK, GREENLAND FOREIGN MINISTERS TO MEET VANCE, RUBIO ON WEDNESDAY AMID TRUMP'S THREAT

**Diary Times Desk :** The foreign ministers of Denmark and Greenland will meet with US Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Wednesday, the Danish foreign minister said on Tuesday, amid President Donald Trump's push to take control of the Arctic island. Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen and his Greenlandic counterpart Vivian Motzfeldt had requested a meeting after Trump recently stepped up threats to take over Greenland, an autonomous territory under the Kingdom of Denmark.

Trump first floated the idea of a US takeover of Greenland in 2019 during his first term in office, although he faces opposition in Washington, including from within his own party. While Denmark has ruled Greenland for centuries, the territory has gradually been moving towards independence since 1979, a goal shared by all political parties elected to the island's parliament.



## MACHADO SEEKS POPE LEO'S SUPPORT FOR VENEZUELA'S TRANSITION DURING VATICAN MEETING

**Diary Times Desk :** Pope Leo XIV met with Venezuelan opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner María Corina Machado in a private audience at the Vatican on Monday, during which the Venezuelan leader asked him to intercede for the release of hundreds of political prisoners held in the Latin American country. The meeting, which hadn't been previously included in the list of Leo's planned appointments, was later listed by the Vatican in its daily bulletin, without adding details. Machado is touring Europe and the United States after she reemerged in December after 11 months in hiding to accept her Nobel Peace Prize in Norway. "Today I had the blessing and honour of being able to share with His Holiness and express our gratitude for his continued support.

## OVER 100 CHILDREN KILLED IN GAZA SINCE CEASEFIRE: UNICEF

**Diary Times Desk :** The UN children's agency said on Tuesday that over 100 children have been killed in Gaza since the October ceasefire, including victims of drone and quadcopter attacks. "More than 100 children have been killed in Gaza since the ceasefire of early October," UNICEF spokesperson James Elder told reporters at a UN briefing by video link from Gaza. "Survival remains conditional, whilst the bombings and the shootings have slowed, have reduced during the ceasefire, they have not stopped." He said that nearly all the deaths of the 60 boys and 40 girls were from military attacks, including air strikes, drone strikes, tank shelling, gunfire and quadcopters and a few were from war remnants that exploded. The tally is likely an underestimate since it is only based on deaths for which sufficient information was available, he said.

## IRANIANS ABLE TO MAKE SOME CALLS ABROAD WHILE INTERNET ACCESS STILL OUT AFTER PROTESTS

**Diary Times Desk :** Mobile phones in Iran were able to call abroad on Tuesday after a crackdown on nationwide protests in which the internet and international calls were cut. Witnesses said the internet remained cut off from the outside world. Iran cut off the internet and made calls on Thursday as protests intensified. US President Donald Trump has said Iran wants to negotiate with Washington after his threat to strike the Islamic Republic over its crackdown on protesters that activists said had killed at least 646 people. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, speaking to the Qatar-funded satellite news network Al Jazeera in an interview aired on Monday night, said he continued to communicate with US envoy Steve Witkoff. The communication "continued before and after the protests and is still ongoing," Araghchi said. However, "Washington's proposed ideas and threats against our country are incompatible." White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Iran's public rhetoric diverges from the private messaging the administration has received from Tehran in recent days.



## IRAN'S LEADERSHIP IS IN ITS 'FINAL DAYS AND WEEKS': GERMANY'S MERZ

**Diary Times Desk :** German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said on Tuesday he assumes Iran's leadership is in its "final days and weeks" as it faces widespread protests. Demonstrations in Iran have evolved from complaints about dire economic hardships to calls for the fall of the clerical establishment in the Islamic Republic.

"I assume that we are now witnessing the final days and weeks of this regime," Merz said during a trip to India, questioning the Iranian leadership's legitimacy. "When a regime can only maintain power through violence, then it is effectively at its end. The population is now rising up against this regime." Merz said Germany was in close contact with the United States and fellow European governments on the situation in Iran, and urged Tehran to end its deadly crackdown on protesters. He did not comment on Germany's trade ties with Iran. US President Donald Trump said on Monday that any country that does business with Iran will face a tariff rate of 25% on trade with the United States.

## RUSSIA LAUNCHES ANOTHER MAJOR ATTACK ON UKRAINE'S POWER GRID, KILLING 4

**Diary Times Desk :** Russia launched a second major drone and missile bombardment of Ukraine in four days, officials said on Tuesday, aiming again at the power grid and apparently snubbing US-led peace efforts as the war approaches the four-year mark. Russia fired almost 300 drones, 18 ballistic missiles and seven cruise missiles at eight regions overnight, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on social media.

One strike in the northeastern Kharkiv region killed four people at a mail depot, and several hundred thousand households were without power in the Kyiv region, Zelenskyy said. The daytime temperature in the capital was -12°C. The streets were covered with ice, and the city rumbled with the noise from generators. Four days earlier, Russia also sent hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles in a large-scale overnight attack and, for only the second time in the war, it used a powerful new hypersonic missile that struck western Ukraine in what appeared to be a clear warning to Kyiv's NATO allies that it won't back down. On Monday, the United States accused Russia of a "dangerous and inexplicable escalation" of the fighting, when the Trump administration is trying to advance peace negotiations. Tammy Bruce, the US deputy ambassador to the United Nations, told an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council.

## BIRMINGHAM'S PINK SKY: RARE NORTHERN LIGHTS OR JUST 'FOOTBALL' TRICK?

**Diary Times Desk :** Birmingham, UK, was treated to a breathtaking sight on Thursday evening as the night sky turned a vibrant pink hue. However, to everyone's surprise, the unusual display was in fact caused by the LED floodlights at St Andrew's Stadium, home of Birmingham City Football Club, reflecting off heavy snowfall and low-hanging cloud cover. The pink glow was so striking that residents initially thought it was the Northern Lights, but meteorologists quickly dispelled the myth. Graham Madge of the Met Office explained that the snowfall scattered blue wavelengths of light, allowing longer wavelengths like red and orange to dominate, creating the pink effect. "Caused quite a stir didn't they," an Instagram user commented. Another reacted, "you had the whole of the town fooled.. So funny." A third wrote, "I wonder what the local residents around the stadium think about this light pollution." Birmingham City FC got in on the action, tweeting "Pink sky at night, Blues delight" alongside a stunning image of the neon-soaked clouds. The phenomenon was a result of Storm Gorretti, which brought sub-zero temperatures and travel disruption to the UK. The storm has since moved to continental Europe.



## PUNJAB-ORIGIN YOUTH SHOT DEAD IN CANADA'S ABBOTSFORD AMID 'DRUG GANG CONFLICT'

**Diary Times Desk :** A Canada-born Punjabi youth from Sudhar village in Ludhiana was shot dead in West Abbotsford on Friday, allegedly as part of an ongoing gang conflict among drug peddlers in British Columbia. The Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT) of Abbotsford had earlier confirmed that the murder was linked to gang activity but had withheld the victim's identity. The deceased has now been identified as 28-year-old Navpreet Singh Dhaliwal. Domy Bal, who had previously claimed responsibility for the murders of Kabaddi promoter Rana Balachaur and Sarpanch Jarmal Singh, has reportedly taken responsibility for Navpreet's killing. Sources from Dhaliwal's native village said he had rarely visited Sudhar during his adulthood. Former Block Committee chairman and SAD leader Mehar Singh Dhaliwal stated that the deceased was the grandson of his cousin.

## G7, OTHER ALLIES DISCUSS WAYS TO REDUCE DEPENDENCE ON CHINESE RARE EARTHS

**Diary Times Desk :** Finance ministers from the G7 and other major economies met in Washington on Monday to discuss ways to reduce dependence on rare earths from China, including setting a price floor and new partnerships to build up alternative supplies, ministers said. The meeting, convened by US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, included finance ministers from G7 members Japan, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Canada and the US as well as officials from Australia, Mexico, South Korea and India. US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer and representatives from the US Export-Import Bank and JP Morgan also attended, but no joint statement was issued by the meeting's participants. The Treasury said in a statement that Bessent sought "to discuss solutions to secure and diversify supply chains for critical minerals, especially rare earth elements."

## EU TO "SWIFTLY" PROPOSE FRESH SANCTIONS OVER IRAN CRACKDOWN, SAYS VON DER LEYEN



**Diary Times Desk :** European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Tuesday stated that the European Union will move quickly to propose additional sanctions against those linked to the crackdown on demonstrations in Iran. In a post on X, von der Leyen said, "The rising number of casualties in Iran is horrifying. I unequivocally condemn the excessive use of force and continued restriction of freedom." She added, "Further sanctions on those responsible for the repression will be swiftly proposed." Von der Leyen's statement comes as sustained nationwide protests in Iran since late December have drawn divided reactions globally, with some governments describing the unrest as foreign-instigated riots, while others have accused Iranian authorities of using violence against demonstrators, Al Jazeera reported. Amid the unrest, several senior Iranian figures have acknowledged grievances raised by protesters, while attempting to distinguish between those driven by economic hardship and rising costs and what they have described as rioters seeking to "sow discord", as Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi stated. Araghchi has said Iran is not seeking war but told Al Jazeera that Tehran was "prepared for all options" after US President Donald Trump threatened military action over the response to the protests. Against this backdrop, Iran's exiled crown prince Reza Pahlavi has appealed to US President Donald Trump to move "sooner rather than later" against Iran's clerical leadership, as demonstrations continue across the country amid reports of a harsh crackdown.

## UN RIGHTS CHIEF VOLKER TURK SAYS HE IS "HORRIFIED" BY RISING VIOLENCE AGAINST PROTESTERS IN IRAN

**Diary Times Desk :** United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk on Tuesday expressed alarm over the rising violence against protesters across Iran, saying he was "horrified" by the situation. In a post on X, Turk said, "The killing of peaceful demonstrators must stop, and the labelling of protesters as 'terrorists' to justify violence against them is unacceptable." He also criticised Iranian authorities for using excessive force against demonstrators, condemning what he described as a decision "to inflict brutal force to repress legitimate demands for change." Turk's remarks come as Iranian voices abroad have also raised fresh allegations of atrocities linked to the ongoing unrest. Prominent Iranian activist and journalist Masih Alinejad alleged that the Iranian regime is committing large-scale atrocities amid the ongoing protests in Iran, urging urgent international action. In a post on X, Alinejad wrote, "Killing more than 12,000 people in just a few days of protests, after cutting off the internet to hide the crime, is a war crime." She further alleged that "terrorists ruling Iran are waging war against unarmed civilians" and said, "We Iranians are heartbroken and outraged, not because we are weak, but because we are desperate to move the free world to act."

## IRANIAN ACTIVIST MASIH ALINEJAD ALLEGES "WAR CRIMES," SAYS REGIME "SLAUGHTERING" UNARMED CIVILIANS AMID PROTESTS

**Diary Times Desk :** Prominent Iranian activist and journalist Masih Alinejad alleged that the Iranian regime is committing large-scale atrocities amid the ongoing protests in Iran, urging urgent international action. In a post on X, Alinejad wrote, "Killing more than 12,000 people in just a few days of protests, after cutting off the internet to hide the crime is a war crime." She further alleged that "terrorists ruling Iran are waging war against unarmed civilians" and said, "We Iranians are heartbroken and outraged, not because we are weak, but because we are desperate to move the free world to act." Targeting Iran's leadership, Alinejad claimed, "The Islamic Republic is ISIS in power.. She added, "The same ISIS that used chemical attacks against schoolgirls. The same ISIS now slaughtering women, men, children, the elderly, entire families in the streets of Iran." Calling for decisive action, she wrote.

## "RISING NUMBER OF CASUALTIES IN IRAN IS HORRIFYING": EU CHIEF VON DER LEYEN



**Diary Times Desk :** European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Tuesday expressed concern over the rising number of casualties in Iran and condemned what she described as the excessive use of force and continued restriction of freedom. In a post on X, von der Leyen said, "The rising number of casualties in Iran is horrifying. I unequivocally condemn the excessive use of force and continued restriction of freedom." She noted that the European Union has already taken action under its human rights sanctions regime. "The European Union has already listed the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in its entirety under its human rights sanctions regime," she said. Von der Leyen added that further measures would be proposed in coordination with the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. "In close cooperation with HRVP @kajakallas, further sanctions on those responsible for the repression will be swiftly proposed," she said. Expressing support for the people of Iran, von der Leyen said, "We stand with the people of Iran who are bravely marching for their liberty." Her remarks come amid sustained nationwide protests in Iran since late December, which have sparked divided reactions globally.

## ZELENSKY BRIEFS DUTCH PM SCHOOF ON INTENSIFIED RUSSIAN STRIKES, SEEKS MORE AIR DEFENCE AND ENERGY SUPPORT

**Diary Times Desk :** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday stated he spoke with Netherlands Prime Minister Dick Schoof and briefed him on what he described as intensified Russian drone and missile attacks targeting Ukrainian cities and communities. In a post on X, Zelenskyy wrote, "I spoke with the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Dick Schoof @MinPres. I informed him about the intense Russian drone and missile attacks on our cities and communities." Pointing to the broader impact of the strikes, Zelenskyy added, "It is evident that the Russians are bent on destroying life rather than on diplomacy. Their target is the energy sector." Stressing the urgency of international assistance, he wrote, "It is very important that there is sufficient support for Ukraine right now. This concerns both our resilience and recovery, as well as sufficient air defense munitions." Zelenskyy underlined immediate priorities.

## ONE INDIAN STUDENT DEAD, TWO INJURED IN KAZAKHSTAN ROAD ACCIDENT

**Diary Times Desk :** The Indian Embassy in Kazakhstan on Tuesday said that 11 Indian students from Semey Medical University were involved in a road accident in Oskemen while returning from an excursion to the Altai Mountains in East Kazakhstan. Sharing details in a post on X, the Embassy said, "In a tragic accident in Oskemen, a group of 11 Indian students from Semey Medical University, who were on an excursion trip to the Altai Mountains (East Kazakhstan), encountered an accident on their way back to Oskemen City." As a result of the incident, the Embassy said that one student, Mili Mohan (date of birth: 17.04.2000), died, while two other students -- Ashika Sheejamini Santhosh and Jaseena B -- sustained injuries. It further stated that the injured students are receiving treatment at City Hospital No. 1 in Oskemen. "According to the latest reports, their condition is stable," the Embassy said.

## "STANDS READY TO WORK WITH OTHER PARTIES" TO DEEPEN BRICS COOPERATION: CHINESE ENVOY TO INDIA XU FEIHONG

**Diary Times Desk :** Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong on Tuesday reiterated China's readiness to work with other countries to deepen BRICS cooperation, as he reposted External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's post on the launch of the BRICS India 2026 website, logo and theme. In a post on X, Xu Feihong wrote, "China stands ready to work with other parties to promote high-quality development of greater BRICS cooperation, and make new contributions to an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization." The repost was made after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar earlier in the day emphasised the need for more inclusive and representative international institutions and urged BRICS to commit to a reformed multilateral system that reflects current global realities. Speaking at the launch of the BRICS 2026 logo, Jaishankar said the world is navigating multiple complex challenges, making the demand for a reinvigorated, inclusive, and effective multilateral order more urgent than ever. "At a time when the world is also navigating multiple complex challenges, the call for a reinvigorated, inclusive, and effective multilateral order has never been more urgent. BRICS must commit to a reformed multilateralism that reflects contemporary realities, one where institutions like the United Nations, the WTO, IMF, and the World Bank are representative and inclusive," he said.



## IRAN'S EXILED CROWN PRINCE REZA PAHLAVI URGES TRUMP TO ACT "SOONER RATHER THAN LATER" SO REGIME "FINALLY COLLAPSES"

**Diary Times Desk :** Iran's exiled crown prince Reza Pahlavi has appealed to US President Donald Trump to move "sooner rather than later" against Iran's clerical leadership, as protests continue across the country amid reports of a harsh crackdown. In an interview with CBS News on Monday, Pahlavi said, "We need action to be taken." "The best way to ensure that there will be less people killed in Iran is to intervene sooner, so this regime finally collapses and puts an end to all the problems that we are facing," he said. Pahlavi has been living in exile since his father, Iran's last shah, was toppled in the 1979 Islamic Revolution that brought the current system to power. He said he has been in contact with the Trump administration, though he did not disclose details of their discussions. He further alleged that the Islamic Republic's recent outreach to the US administration was aimed at containing the nationwide demonstrations that he said could threaten the rule of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Trump told reporters on Sunday night that he spoke with Iranian leaders on Saturday and said they "called to negotiate" even as he has threatened military action against the regime. The US President said he was considering his options after warning on Friday that the United States would intervene if the regime began "killing people like they have in the past."

## NEPAL ISSUES ADVISORY FOR IRAN AS PROTESTS INTENSIFY, AUTHORITIES RESORT TO USE OF FORCE

**Diary Times Desk :** Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued an advisory for Iran as protests continue to rise, with authorities resorting to the use of force. Hundreds of protesters are hitting the streets against rising inflation and demanding reforms. Authorities have reportedly opened fire, with casualties recorded in the hundreds as of now. In the wake of the situation, the Foreign Ministry said, "Nepali citizens currently living and working in Iran are advised to follow the security advisory of the competent authorities of Iran, stay indoors, remain alert, and exercise caution." Following it, the ministry has urged its citizens to halt travel amid the ongoing unrest. "Likewise, the Ministry urges all the Nepali citizens planning to travel to Iran to avoid their plan until the situation in the country returns to normal," the Foreign Ministry added.

## ADANI ENERGY SOLUTIONS TRANSMISSION NETWORK REACHES 27,901 CKM; ORDER BOOK HITS RS 77,787 CRORE IN Q3FY26

**Diary Times Desk :** Adani Energy Solutions Limited (AESL) expanded its transmission network to 27,901 circuit kilometres (ckm) and reached a total order book of Rs 77,787 crore during the third quarter of the 2026 fiscal year (Q3FY26), according to a company press release. The company fully commissioned the North Karanpura Transmission Line (NKTL) and operationalised 299 circuit kilometres during the period. This growth followed the acquisition of the KPS III (Khavda South Olpad) HVDC project. The transmission utility maintained a robust system availability of 99.69%. The company's power transformation capacity increased to 1,18,175 MVA in the third quarter of FY26, up from 84,186 MVA in the corresponding quarter of the previous year. The release noted that a "new order win boosted the transmission network, reflecting strong bidding capabilities and market potential". Furthermore, the transformation capacity "expanded with a new project win" involving three HVDC lines, including the Adani Electricity Mumbai Infra Limited and KPS III HVDC Transmission Limited projects.

## RBI TO END PAUSE ON LICENSING FOR NEW URBAN CO-OPERATIVE BANKS, PROPOSES RS 300 CRORE CAPITAL THRESHOLD

**Diary Times Desk :** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday released a discussion paper proposing the possible resumption of licensing for new Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs), ending a pause that has been in place since 2004. The move comes amid significant changes in the regulatory framework and an improvement in the overall financial health of the UCB sector. "Since 2004, licensing for Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs) had been paused. Considering the positive developments in the sector during the last two decades and in response to the growing demand from the stakeholders, we propose to publish a discussion paper on licensing of new UCBs," RBI said in a statement. In its discussion paper titled,

## INDIA HIRING RISES 15% IN DECEMBER; SIGNALLING SHIFT TO MEASURED EXPANSION: REPORT

**Diary Times Desk :** Hiring activity rose 15 per cent year-on-year and 5 per cent sequentially in December 2025, indicating the job market is moving from a cautious recovery phase to measured expansion, a report said on Tuesday. Artificial intelligence emerged as the defining hiring force of the year, with 2,90,256 AI-linked roles posted in 2025. India's job market closed 2025 with renewed confidence, with hiring activity rising by 5 per cent month-on-month and 15 per cent year-on-year, signalling a clear shift from cautious recovery to measured expansion, according to the Insights Tracker report by foundit (formerly Monster APAC and ME). This momentum is set to accelerate further, with AI hiring projected to grow 32 per cent year-on-year in 2026 to nearly 3.8 lakh roles, the report added. "The year 2025 was one of expansion and discipline in hiring. AI is no longer experimental; it is central to workforce planning. In 2026, hiring will be increasingly skills-led, mid-career-focused, and spread across both tier I and emerging tier II talent hubs.



## STOCK MARKETS END LOWER ON FOREIGN FUND OUTFLOWS, SELLING IN BLUE-CHIPS

**Diary Times Desk :** Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Tuesday after a day's breather, as investors pared exposure to index majors Reliance Industries, L&T and Bharti Airtel amid global tariff-related concerns. Market sentiment was also sluggish due to a weak start to the earnings season and continued flight of foreign capital from Indian markets, according to traders. In a volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 250.48 points, or 0.30 per cent, to settle at 83,627.69. During the day, it declined 615.38 points, or 0.73 per cent, to 83,262.79. The 50-share NSE Nifty edged lower by 57.95 points or 0.22 per cent to 25,732.30. The session began on a negative note following disappointing results from IT major TCS and drifted lower for most of the session, though a rebound in the final hour trimmed some losses. From the 30-Sensex firms, Trent, Larsen & Toubro, Reliance Industries, InterGlobe Aviation, Maruti, ITC, Adani Ports and Bharat Electronics were among the biggest laggards. In contrast, Eternal, ICICI Bank, Tech Mahindra, State Bank of India and Tata Consultancy Services were among the gainers. The country's largest IT services exporter TCS on Monday reported a 13.91 per cent drop in December quarter profit at Rs 10,657 crore, majorly on a one-time impact of new labour codes.



## RUPEE DECLINES 4 PAISE TO CLOSE AT 90.21 AGAINST US DOLLAR

**Diary Times Desk :** The rupee declined 4 paise to close at 90.21 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, weighed down by higher crude oil prices, a firm American currency and incessant outflow of foreign funds. Analysts said geopolitical tensions and weak equity markets also put pressure on the Indian currency. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 90.24 and touched the intra-day low of 90.30 against the greenback. The currency ended the session at 90.21 (provisional) against the dollar, down 4 paise from its previous close. On Monday, the rupee ended 1 paise higher at 90.17 against the US dollar. Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset ShareKhan, said the rupee declined amid ongoing geopolitical tensions and global risk aversion. Weak domestic markets, FII outflows and a surge in crude oil prices also pressurised the rupee. "However, optimism on the India-US trade deal and rising odds of a rate cut amid weak labour market reports last week may support the rupee at lower levels. Any intervention by the central bank may also support the rupee. Traders are now focusing on US inflation data. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 90.10 to 90.70," Choudhary said. Market sentiment improved after the new US envoy to India, Sergio Gor, on Monday said that both sides are actively engaged in firming up a trade deal, forex analysts said. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.07 per cent higher at 98.69.



## UNION BUDGET 2026 EXPECTATIONS: COAI SEEKS CUT IN TELECOM LEVIES, GST RELIEF

**Diary Times Desk :** The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has submitted a set of recommendations to the government ahead of the Union Budget 2026-27, calling for a reduction in regulatory levies and reforms in Goods and Services Tax (GST) to ease the financial stress on the telecom sector. COAI, the industry body representing telecom service providers, said the proposed measures are aimed at enabling further expansion of digital infrastructure and accelerating the rollout of next-generation connectivity in line with the vision of a *Viksit Bharat*. A key demand relates to the reduction of regulatory levies. Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar, Director General, COAI, noted that the current License Fee, comprising a 3% levy on Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) and a 5% contribution to the Digital Bharat Nidhi, continues to impose a significant financial burden on licensed telecom operators.

## KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES 'GRUHA LAKSHMI DIGITAL MARKETING' PORTAL

**Diary Times Desk :** In a landmark move to boost economic independence and digital inclusion for women, the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Karnataka,

has announced the launch of Gruha Lakshmi Digital Marketing, a dedicated online portal designed to showcase the products of women entrepreneurs from across the state to a global audience.

This initiative has been launched under the visionary guidance of Hon'ble Chief Minister Sri Siddaramaiah and Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Sri D.K. Shivakumar.

It is spearheaded under the dynamic leadership of Smt. Lakshmi Hebbalkar, Hon'ble Minister of Women and Child Development, Disabled and Senior-Citizens Empowerment, Government of Karnataka,

and under the chairmanship of Smt. G. Padmavathi, Chairperson, Karnataka State Women's Development Corporation.

## PENSION BAZAAR WILL BOOST ADOPTION LIKE POLICY BAZAAR DID FOR INSURANCE: PFRDA CHIEF

**Diary Times Desk :** The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has joined forces with PB Fintech to launch a major initiative aimed at expanding pension coverage beyond government employees through the Pensionbaazar.com platform, marking a significant shift in India's retirement planning landscape. PFRDA Chairperson Sivasubramanian Ramann announced the regulator's strategic pivot toward the non-government segment, emphasising flexible regulations and a phygital distribution model to make pension products more accessible to the general public. "Pension Bazaar is an assurance like Policy Bazaar has given the option to people that, with a click on mobile, they can buy any insurance policy. If we can also provide such a platform to people in pension, then the adoption rate will be increased," Ramann told ANI. The platform will enable pension funds to partner with Pensionbaazar.com and launch their products, giving people the option to choose from multiple funds based on their preferences. The initiative permits individuals aged 85 or younger to purchase pension policies. "I can assure that investment through Pension Bazaar will be safe," Ramann emphasised, noting that the regulator conducts quarterly review meetings to ensure pension funds don't misallocate investments. Investors will have access to the top 250 stocks listed on NSE and BSE through the platform. In a significant development, PFRDA has constituted a high-level committee to formulate guidelines for assured payouts under the National Pension System (NPS). The committee will be chaired by MS Sahoo, founder of Dr. Sahoo Regulatory Chambers and former Chairperson of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI).



## US TARIFF ON IRAN PARTNERS TO HAVE MINIMAL IMPACT ON INDIA: GOVT SOURCES



**Diary Times Desk :** India's trade and economic engagement with Iran remains limited and is unlikely to be significantly impacted by recent tariff measures announced by the US, government sources said on Tuesday after President Donald Trump's announcement of a 25 per cent tariff on Iran's trading partners. For India, Iran does not even figure in the top 50 global trading partners. Last year, India's trade with Iran was USD 1.6 billion, approximately 0.15 per cent of India's total trade, government sources said. They said India's trade value with Iran is expected to decline further in the coming Financial Year, given external economic factors. In 2024, Iran's total imports were about USD 68 billion, of which its leading import partners were the UAE (USD 21 billion accounting 30%), China (USD 17 billion accounting 26%), Turkiye (USD 11 billion accounting 16%), EU (USD 6 billion accounting 9%). India's share is only USD 1.2 billion, which accounts for only 2.3%, they said. Notably, the Indian exporting community remains watchful yet composed. Earlier speaking to ANI, Ajai Sahai, CEO & DG of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), said he is not unduly concerned about the statement, as Indian industry and banks deal only with Iran on goods that fall outside the scope of US OFAC sanctions. Akshay Gupta, Head- Bulk Exports, KRBL, the parent company of India Gate rice, said in a statement that "Iran has been a key market for Indian basmati rice from an export perspective. Rice exporters have observed significant consumer demand in this region. When trade with Iran was fully open, KRBL exported approximately 250,000 tonnes of basmati rice. However, over the years, sanctions and increased market restrictions have considerably impacted our business." US President Donald Trump had announced a sweeping trade measure targeting countries that "continue to do business with Iran", imposing a 25 per cent tariff on all their business dealings with the US.

## ARKI FIRE: BATHROOM BECOMES DEATH TRAP FOR 8-YR-OLD

**Diary Times Desk :** Himanshu, an eight-year-old boy full of life, met a heartbreaking end in a devastating fire that engulfed a building at Arki, turning an ordinary morning into a nightmare for his family. As flames erupted from all sides and thick smoke filled the corridors, panic set in. His parents, clutching their infant and desperately trying to escape, ran for their lives. In the chaos, terrified by the advancing fire, Himanshu broke away and hid inside a bathroom, believing it would save him. That moment sealed his fate. Unaware of where their son had gone, his father Rakesh and mother searched frantically after reaching safety. When they could not find Himanshu, they approached local MLA Sanjay Awasthi, who was present at the scene. A rescue operation was immediately launched. Hours later, around 7 am, rescuers recovered the child's charred body from the bathroom. Himanshu succumbed to his injuries while being rushed to hospital. The family, migrant workers from Bihar, had come to Arki hoping for a better life. Instead, they were left with an unbearable loss that words cannot heal.

## HIMACHAL TOURISM CORPN LAUNCHES EVS AT PREMIUM UNITS FOR BETTER MOBILITY

**Diary Times Desk :** To promote eco-friendly tourism and improve visitors' mobility, the Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) has introduced five battery-operated electric vehicles in its premium units such as The Palace Chail, Tea Bud, Palampur, Devdar Khaejjari and New Ros Common, Kasauli. The six-seater vehicles, capable of running up to 60 km on a single charge with a maximum speed of 25 kmph, are expected to greatly enhance the internal transport of guests, especially senior citizens and those with limited mobility. "These battery-operated vehicles will not only facilitate the easy movement of tourists within the units but will also be a boon to elderly visitors," said Rajiv Kumar, Managing Director of the HPTDC, while speaking to The Tribune. He called it a concrete step towards promoting pollution-free transport and accelerating the state's transition to electric mobility.

## SOLAN BUILDING FIRE: CHARRED REMAINS OF 3 FOUND AS NDRF CONTINUES SEARCH FOR MISSING NEPALESE NATIONALS

**Diary Times Desk :** Charred remains of three bodies were recovered by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team on Tuesday from Arki Bazar in Himachal Pradesh's Solan district, where a massive fire had engulfed several buildings on Sunday night. Earlier, the remains of two bodies, along with the body of an eight-year-old boy, were retrieved by the State Disaster Response Force. The NDRF team and dog squads on Tuesday joined operations to locate six Nepalese nationals feared buried under debris of a massive fire at Arki Bazaar, officials said on Tuesday. The fire destroyed a four-storey building primarily occupied by migrant families and damaged several adjacent structures. Three persons, including an eight-year-old child, have been confirmed dead. Officials said child died while being taken to a hospital, while the charred and fragmented remains of two others were recovered from the site yesterday. The charred remains retrieved from the fire today were yet to be identified as they were burnt beyond recognition.



## 'SERVE HIMACHAL, DON'T RULE IT': VIKRAMADITYA SLAMS 'NON-LOCAL BUREAUCRATS', BACKS DEPUTY CM IN LATE-NIGHT FACEBOOK POST

**Diary Times Desk :** Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Vikramaditya Singh has launched a sharp attack on senior bureaucrats posted in Himachal Pradesh who hail from outside the state, warning them to prioritise public service over authority and personal influence. In a strongly worded Facebook post late Monday night, the minister said that some senior IAS and IPS officers, particularly those from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, were allegedly indifferent to the interests of Himachal Pradesh and needed to be dealt with firmly. Vikramaditya Singh cautioned that if timely action was not taken against such officers, the interests of the state could suffer. He asserted that bureaucrats were meant to serve the people and the government, not act as rulers. Without naming any individual officer, the minister alleged that certain officials were functioning in a manner detrimental to the state's welfare and governance. The PWD minister also expressed solidarity with Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri, endorsing his recent remarks made at a public event in Mandi. During his speech, Agnihotri had criticised a section of bureaucrats for allegedly maintaining close links with the (BJP).

## MAJOR AMAN DHAR AWARDED SENA MEDAL FOR BRAVERY IN J&K COUNTER-TERROR OPERATION

**Diary Times Desk :** On November 9, 2024, during a counter-terrorist operation at Sopore in Baramulla district, Jammu and Kashmir, Major Aman Dhar, while leading a Quick Reaction Team, displayed exceptional courage, leadership and presence of mind. He, while acting on credible intelligence, swiftly closed in on the target area and established an effective cordon. During the encounter, a terrorist broke into a nearby house while firing heavily, endangering innocent civilians. In an act of extreme bravery, Major Dhar rescued seven civilians, including four children, by evacuating them through the rear window of the house. Thereafter, he used a JCB machine to gain access to the terrorist's hideout and engaged him in a fierce close-quarter battle. When the terrorist attempted to escape by hurling a grenade and firing indiscriminately, Major Dhar, with resolute courage and composure, neutralised him in close combat. For his indomitable courage, conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty, he was awarded the "Sena Medal" (Gallantry), which was conferred on him by the President of India and presented to him by the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Western Command.



## YOUR HOROSCOPE

14-01-2026



### 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 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.

## SIT SEEKS SGPC RECORDS IN 328 'MISSING SAROOPS'

### PROBE

**Diary Times Desk :** The Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Punjab Police on Tuesday sought records from the SGPC in connection with their probe into the 328 missing 'saroops' of the Guru Granth Sahib case. The SIT on Tuesday formally requested the records from the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) offices in both Amritsar and Chandigarh. "We met the SGPC officials and have given a written request that the record be provided. They said they will soon provide us with the record. Once we have the record, we can properly investigate," SIT member Jagatpreet Singh told reporters in Amritsar after meeting the SGPC officials. Earlier on Monday, Akal Takht acting Jathedar Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargaj had directed the SGPC to cooperate with the Punjab government over the 328 missing sacred 'saroops' case. The Jathedar on Monday said, "In view of the confusion being created among the 'sangat' by some people in the present matter of the sacred 'saroops' and keeping in mind the larger Panthic interests.

## 26 YEARS ON, HC SHUTS DOOR ON CHALLENGE TO 1999 KANUNGO SELECTION UNDER DISABILITY QUOTA

**Diary Times Desk :** Bringing finality to a recruitment dispute dating back to 1999, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has refused to unsettle the appointment of a revenue official selected against a post reserved for persons with disabilities. Justice Namit Kumar held that a decades-old service career could not be disturbed in the absence of any substantive illegality. The matter was placed before Justice Namit Kumar after a candidate challenged the selection of a kanungo from amongst the quota fixed for handicapped category pursuant to an advertisement issued on March 24, 1999. The petitioner alleged that the selected candidate was "neither handicapped, nor suffered from disability". He was wrongly sent for training and his name was not sponsored by the Special Employment Officer (for Disabilities). It was argued that the selected candidate was not recruited through a selection process either in 'general category' or in 'physically handicapped category'. As such, his selection.

## AKAL TAKHT ALTERS MEETING SCHEDULE, PUNJAB CM READIES TO COME AT ORIGINAL TIME

**Diary Times Desk :** In a bizarre turn of events, Akal Takht's officiating Jathedar, Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargaj, rescheduled a meeting with Punjab CM Bhagwant Singh Mann at Akal Takht Secretariat, citing the CM's prior appointments. However, the CM clarified via X that he was ready to attend at the original 10 am time on January 15. On January 5, the Jathedar summoned the CM to Akal Takht Secretariat at 10 am on January 15 to clarify allegations of insulting Sikh principles and institutions through his conduct in the past. The Akal Takht Secretariat later sent a letter changing the meeting time to 4.30 pm, citing the CM's prior appointments. The CM responded, "I have no appointment on January 15. I have conveyed this to the Office of the President. January 15, as per your orders, was fully devoted to Akal Takht Saheb. No official intimation about changing the time from me or my office was released. I am ready to come humbly at 10 am". The CM was scheduled to accompany President Droupadi Murmu to two convocation ceremonies in Punjab: GNDU Amritsar on January 15 and NIT Jalandhar on January 16.



## HARYANA POLICE'S DIGITAL CRACKDOWN; 67 SONGS REMOVED TO CURB GANG CULTURE

**Diary Times Desk :** In a major crackdown against gang culture and the glorification of weapons and violence, the Special Task Force (STF) and Cyber Unit of Haryana Police have carried out a landmark operation that has significantly reshaped the digital space. During an extensive investigation, the STF and cyber teams found that several songs were influencing youth, glorifying gangsters, and portraying an unrealistic image of luxury associated with criminal life, thereby pushing young people toward crime. Responding to this alarming trend, Haryana Police acted against 67 objectionable songs available on platforms such as YouTube, Spotify, Amazon Music, Gaana, and JioSaavn. As a result, most of the content has either been removed or blocked. Haryana Police has made it clear that this is only the beginning and more stringent actions will follow against such content. Director General of Police (DGP) Haryana, Ajay Singh, termed the action a crucial step taken in the interest of society and the younger generation. He said that the objective of Haryana Police is not merely to stop crime, but also to save young people from stepping into the world of crime. He emphasised that such songs project criminals as role models.

## HARYANA: OVER 1,400 CONTRACTUAL VARSITY TEACHERS SEEK JOB SECURITY

**Diary Times Desk :** While the Haryana Government has ensured job security for extension (contractual) lecturers working in government colleges across state by framing a criteria, contractual teachers working in state universities continue to struggle for similar protection. A sense of resentment prevails among these teachers, who fear losing their jobs whenever regular recruitment takes place at universities. Many of them have been serving for several years and have repeatedly raised the demand for job security to safeguard their future, but at present, the issue remains unresolved.

"More than 1,400 teachers are working as Assistant Professors on a contractual basis or as resource persons in various state universities. While the state government granted job security to extension lecturers in colleges over a year ago, it left our future hanging by not providing the same to contractual university teachers. We are being forced to make repeated rounds of government offices just to secure our livelihood," said Dr Vijay Malik, president of the Haryana Universities Contractual Teachers Association (HUCTA).

## 'STRICTLY AVOID' 'HARIJAN', 'GIRIJAN' IN OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS, HARYANA GOVT TELLS DEPARTMENTS



**Diary Times Desk :** The Haryana Government has asked all its departments, public and educational institutes and others to "strictly avoid" using the terms 'Harijan' and 'Girijan' in official communications in respect of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) respectively. The Haryana Chief Secretary's Office issued a letter in this regard on Tuesday. Mahatma Gandhi had named the SCs as 'Harijans', meaning 'people of God'. However, BR Ambedkar was against the use of 'Harijans' and he preferred to call them Dalits. "The Haryana Government has issued directions to all Administrative Secretaries, Heads of Departments, Boards, Corporations, Public Sector Undertakings, Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, Sub-Divisional Officers (Civil) and Registrars of Universities in the state to strictly avoid the use of terms such as 'Harijan' and 'Girijan' in all official matters and correspondence," an official statement said. It has been reiterated in the letter that the Constitution of India does not use these expressions for denoting SCs and STs. The state government has referred to the instructions of the government of India which clearly mandate the discontinuation of these expressions in official dealings. "The matter was reviewed by the state government, during which it came to notice that certain departments had not been strictly adhering to the said instructions.

## 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 spy-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.

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

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

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

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

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

INFA

## 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.



## 25 YEARS OF GALERIE KREO: 'WE CREATE THE STORIES DESIGNERS WANT TO TELL'

**Diary Times Desk :** Some galleries follow the market; others set the agenda. For nearly three decades, Galerie kreو has been a place where innovation happens. Founded by collectors Clémence and Didier Krzentowski — now joined by their daughter, Clara — the gallery collaborates with the world's leading industrial designers to produce limited-edition works, guided by an unwavering commitment to creative freedom.

Representing established and rising talents such as Marc Newson, Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec and Marco Campardo, the team operate, as Clémence Krzentowski puts it, 'like movie producers: we create the stories designers want to tell'.

An exhibition celebrating 25 years of this groundbreaking gallery, *kreо: Icons of 21st-Century Design*, is on show at Christie's in Paris, 14-28 January 2026. Here, Clara Krzentowski speaks to Christie's about how it all began — and why 'slow design' truly matters.

When was Galerie kreо founded?

My parents started Galerie kreо in 1999. Before that, they ran an agency that connected industrial designers with major brands and civic projects. In the 1990s, the mayor of the 13th arrondissement in Paris introduced reduced rents for galleries, hoping to cultivate a thriving community similar to Manhattan's SoHo in the 1980s. My parents became part of this community, first as art collectors, and when a space became available, they took it.

They adopted a model similar to fine-art photography or sculpture. Each design is produced in a numbered and signed edition of eight, plus two artist's proofs and two prototypes. The idea was to balance scarcity and feasibility — close to unique, but not one-off. It also aligned with treating designers' work with the same respect as art.

My father is an expert in Italian lighting from the 1940s to the 1980s, especially the work of Gino Sarfatti, who's central to our vintage programme. Sarfatti was a pioneer of modern lighting and endlessly inventive — in the 1940s he set up his own lighting production company, Arteluce, through which he produced not only his own creations but also those of leading architects and designers of the time. So the vintage side grew naturally from that expertise, and today we focus on pieces from roughly the 1930s to the 1980s. I've lived in London for 12 years now, and it's an incredibly vibrant city — full of designers and artists. Some of our long-term designers are British-based: Edward Barber & Jay Osgerby, Marc Newson, Jasper Morrison, Marco Campardo... From a creative standpoint, the British can sometimes feel a little more playful and subversive.



## EXPEDITION, LEGEND, CHARACTER: A SPECIALIST'S VIEW ON THE ART OF THE AMERICAN WEST

**Diary Times Desk :**

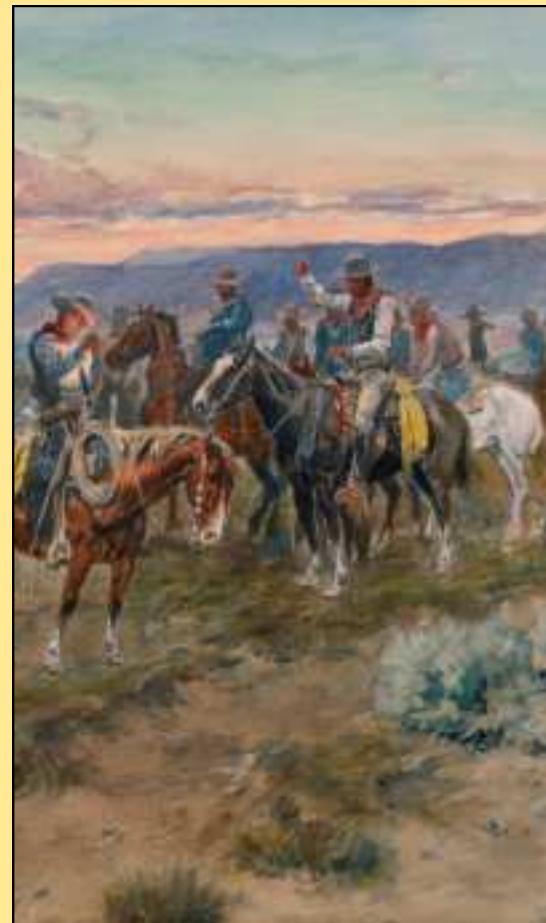
What are the qualities that define the American West? 'Self-reliance, independence, controlling your own destiny,' says William I. Koch. On 20 and 21 January, Christie's will present *Visions of the West: The William I. Koch Collection* Evening and Day Sales, two landmark sales drawn from the collection of the eponymous industrialist, scientist and winner of the America's Cup. Bringing together masterworks by Frederic Remington, Charles Marion Russell and their contemporaries, the collection reflects the very best of the artists who shaped the visuals — and values — that came to define the culture and mythos of the American West.

Those ideals run through the imagery of Western art that has long captivated many, including Tylee Abbott, Christie's Head of American Art. His professional stewardship of the field is informed by a lifelong personal connection to the West. In the reflections that follow, Abbott considers how Western art has documented these values and carried them forward, shaping American culture and storytelling across generations.

**Tylee Abbott:** I was born in Philadelphia, but my relationship with the West started early. From the time I was two years old, my brothers and I spent our summers at a dude ranch near Cody, Wyoming. We were immersed in the Western landscape, exposed to cowboys, fully engaged in cowboy play ourselves, and steeped in a place that actively lives its Western identity.

A descendant and namesake of the Western painter William Tylee Ranney, I was also exposed to his imagery of the American frontier at a young age. Through that connection, my family became deeply involved with the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, and I grew up learning by osmosis — through art, through that institution and through the people who shaped this field.

Eventually my parents bought a ranch in Montana, and summers stretched into months working alongside people who might be considered cowboys through and through. The quality of character in those places was formative. It shaped who we became. That value system — hard work, responsibility, loyalty, self-reliance — is what I find so compelling about the American West. These images have documented those values and distributed them throughout our culture for centuries.



## OFFICIAL: BARCELONA MIDFIELDER WILL MISS COPA DEL REY CLASH VS RACING AFTER ONE-MATCH BAN CONFIRMED



**Diary Times Desk :** The Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) has officially confirmed that FC Barcelona midfielder Frenkie de Jong has been handed a one-match ban after his red card against Real Madrid. Barcelona midfielder was sent off in the 90th minute of the Super Cup final for a foul committed on Real Madrid forward Kylian Mbappe. The refereeing decision, taken by the on-field official Jose Luis Munuera Montero and not overturned by VAR, Daniel Jesus Trujillo Suarez, has now earned the Netherlands international a single-match suspension. Issuing a verdict on the suspension, the sole judge for the non-professional competitions of the RFEF wrote: "One match suspension for acting violently in the course of play or as a direct consequence of an incident therein, with an additional fine in application of Article 52." De Jong will serve the suspension in the next match, in accordance with Article 56 of the Disciplinary Code, which specifies:

## BARCELONA OFFER TRIAL TO 17-YEAR-OLD SOUTH AMERICAN DEFENSIVE MIDFIELDER

**Diary Times Desk :** FC Barcelona continue to closely monitor the South American market for young talents to reinforce the club ranks with an eye on the future.

A number of Brazilian prospects are already on the club's radar, while the sporting department also plans to send scouts to monitor young gems in the Copinha tournament soon. The Blaugrana continue to keep an eye out for talent in other South American nations as well, with one talent from Ecuador seemingly catching their eye. Indeed, according to SPORT, Barcelona are interested in the 17-year-old midfielder, who came through the youth ranks of LDU Quito. With the consent of his club, as he is still a minor, the player has travelled to Barcelona for a trial at the Catalan club, where he will be evaluated over the coming days by the club's technical staff. The next few days will be decisive for his future. "It is official. We tried to keep it discreet, but Ederson went to Barcelona to take part in a trial. It is a limited period of time that he will be there and then he will return. We are monitoring his performance," confirmed LDU president Isaac Alvarez.

## REASON WHY BARCELONA DELETED POSTS OF JOAO CANCELO SIGNING ANNOUNCEMENT – REPORT

**Diary Times Desk :** Barcelona's handling of Joao Cancelo's return took an unexpected turn after the club briefly announced the signing on its official platforms, only to remove all related content shortly afterwards.

The sudden deletion sparked confusion among supporters, especially after the move had seemingly been confirmed through formal club channels.

The Catalan giants had initially revealed Cancelo's arrival via their website and social media, presenting the deal as complete.

The Portuguese full-back was announced as joining on loan until the end of the season, and the communication suggested everything had been finalised.

It was even speculated that Cancelo could make his debut as early as Thursday in the Copa del Rey clash against Racing.

However, the situation changed rapidly. Within a short space of time, Barcelona removed every mention of Cancelo from their platforms, including the official statement and all social media posts.

No immediate explanation was provided by the club, leaving fans puzzled as to how an "official" announcement could suddenly disappear.

## LA LIGA PRESIDENT TALKS BARCELONA FAIR PLAY SITUATION, LAMINE, RAPHINHA: 'HE'S MADE THE DIFFERENCE'

**Diary Times Desk :** Javier Tebas recently delivered an address at the Europa Press breakfast, where he notably talked about Barcelona's fair play situation. The La Liga president, who has been quite appreciative of Barcelona in recent times, also talked about how Raphinha is underrated.

He offered insights about other matters related to Barcelona as well, including the game in Miami against Villarreal, which was cancelled. First and foremost, Tebas talked about Barcelona's financial health, amid reports that the club are confident about returning to the 1:1 rule. While admitting that he is up to date with the matters, the La Liga president lauded Barcelona for managing to win titles despite not being in the 1:1 rule.

"Barcelona are subject to financial fair play, and this leads them to have an increasingly compliant spending policy. Being able to inaugurate the stadium is very important. "Even without being subject to the famous 1:1 rule, they win league titles. Their coffers are fuller. If they comply with La Liga's regulations, I'm not worried," he said (h/t Mundo Deportivo).

## OFFICIAL: BARCELONA SIGN JOAO CANCELO ON LOAN; SHIRT NUMBER CONFIRMED

**Diary Times Desk :** FC Barcelona have officially confirmed the return of Joao Cancelo, with the Portuguese defender joining the club on loan from Al Hilal until the end of the current season.

The move marks a familiar reunion, bringing back a player who already knows the environment, the demands, and the expectations of playing at the Spotify Camp Nou.

After weeks of speculation surrounding Barcelona's search for defensive reinforcement, the club moved to secure Cancelo's services once again. In an official announcement released by the club, Barcelona confirmed the deal and welcomed the defender back to Catalonia.

"Cancelo is once again a Barça player. FC Barcelona and Al Hilal Saudi FC have reached an agreement for the loan of the Portuguese full-back until the end of the season," read a statement from the club. The signing was formalised on Tuesday at the club's offices, with several key figures present to mark the occasion.

## MANCHESTER UNITED LEGEND IN AWE OF BARCELONA SENSATION: 'I'M HAPPY I'VE RETIRED'

**Diary Times Desk :** Having finished as the runner-up of last year's Ballon d'Or, the spotlight has always shone bright on Lamine Yamal to see if he could keep up the high level he showed last season. As a teenager, after all, keeping up the same level was easier said than done.

Despite playing most of the ongoing season while dealing with pubalgia, however, Yamal has not stopped and has scored seven goals and provided as many assists in La Liga. He is one of the team's most influential creators and progressors of the ball, and his dribbling ability has only gotten better this time around, giving opposition defences nightmares. Manchester United legend Rio Ferdinand was asked about the Barcelona teenager and his quality in a recent interaction via Mundo Deportivo. His reply, while short, spoke volumes about how special Yamal is and how difficult it is for opposition defences to control him. "I'm happy I've retired," he said, making it very clear that defending against Yamal would have been a nightmare had he still been in his playing days.

