

NEWS IN BRIEF
FOUR ARRESTED IN JOURNALIST ATTACK CASE IN BENGAL'S MURSHIDABAD

Diary Times Desk : Police on Saturday arrested four persons, including the prime accused, in connection with the assault on a woman journalist during protests at Beldanga in Murshidabad district of West Bengal, an officer said. Murshidabad SP Kumar Sunny Raj identified the main accused as Matiur Rahman, alleging that he had been instigating the crowd over the past two days. The journalist was assaulted while covering protests against the killing of migrant workers and alleged atrocities against them in other states. She sustained injuries to her hands and legs and is currently undergoing treatment in hospital. The SP said, "We rescued two journalists from danger on Friday, and despite efforts by our officers, unfortunately, this journalist was assaulted. "We have arrested four persons specifically in connection with this incident. The prime accused, Matiur Rahman, had been provoking the crowd and inciting violence over the past two days. Police have been closely monitoring the situation to identify.

IF GOD IS WILLING, SHIV SENA (UBT) WILL HAVE ITS MAYOR IN MUMBAI:

UDDHAV THACKERAY

Diary Times Desk : A day after the alliance of BJP and rival Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena won the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) election, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday said his party can have its mayor if "God is willing". The cryptic remark came amid suspense over whether the mayor would be from BJP or Shinde's party. BJP-Sena combine on Friday wrested the control of the civic body, which the undivided

Shiv Sena led by the Thackerays had ruled for 25 years. "It's my dream to install a Shiv Sena (UBT) mayor in Mumbai, and if God is willing, this dream will be realised," Thackeray said, interacting with party workers. BJP thinks that it has finished off Sena (UBT) but it was not the case, said the former Maharashtra chief minister whose party won 65 seats in the 227-member civic body.

PM MODI NEWS

PM MODI LEADS ROADSHOW IN GUWAHATI; SLAMS CONGRESS FOR DISRESPECTING ASSAM, ALLOWING INFILTRATORS



Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi took part in a colourful roadshow in Guwahati on Saturday evening, witnessing diverse cultural elements of Assam on the first day of his two-day tour to the state. The PM arrived in the state capital on Saturday evening. In his two-day trip, he is scheduled to roll out projects worth around Rs 7,000 crore.

The roadshow began from the round-about on National Highway-17 outside the Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport (LGBIA) here and concluded at Azara, covering a distance of almost four kilometres.

Modi, who was sitting on the front of a black SUV, was seen waving to the enthusiastic crowd. He went to Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium inside Arjun Bhogeswar Baruah Sports Complex in Sarusajai to witness the traditional Bagurumba dance of the Bodo community by more than 10,000 artistes. Once his cavalcade reached the roadshow point, it slowed down, while slogans like "Modi Ji Zindabad" and "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" echoed through the streets. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and other senior party leaders joined Modi during the roadshow. The event was marked by a strong presence of BJP workers and volunteers, who had tried hard to ensure a grand reception for the Prime Minister. Meanwhile, he accused the Congress of disrespecting the culture and heritage of Assam, claiming that it was evident from the party rolling out a red carpet for infiltrators. Modi, speaking at Bodo folk dance performance here, also asserted that the BJP government was "cleansing the sins" of the previous Congress regimes. "When we show respect to Assam and its culture, some people don't like it. You all know which party doesn't like showing respect, and it is the Congress," he said.

MAMATA BANERJEE URGES CJI KANT TO PROTECT CONSTITUTION, JUDICIARY, DEMOCRACY

Diary Times Desk : West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday urged Chief Justice of India Surya Kant to protect the country's Constitution, democracy and judiciary. Banerjee, speaking at a programme to inaugurate a new building of the Jalpaiguri Circuit Bench of the Calcutta High Court, also called upon Justice Kant to protect the people of the country from being wrongly targeted by "agencies".

"Please protect the Constitution, democracy, judiciary, history and geography, as well as the country's borders, from disaster," she said, without elaborating. "You (the CJI) are the guardian of our Constitution. We are under your legal guardianship. Nobody is superior to you in the judiciary. On behalf of the people of the country, we request that there should be no bias on the basis of caste or religion. Let us work, speak and think for unity," she said. Banerjee, also the TMC supremo, urged the CJI to ensure that "media trials" of cases before their disposal are stopped completely.

"There is a growing trend of media trials before cases are disposed of. This must stop," she asserted. The Chief Minister also urged Justice Kant to take care of the new generation of lawyers, alleging that junior lawyers were struggling and not receiving their due benefits. Banerjee said that although the Central Government had "stopped funding" for fast-track courts in West Bengal, her government had set up 88 such courts.



SUPREME COURT

SC FLAGS DISCREPANCIES IN COMPENSATION REGIME UNDER NATIONAL HIGHWAYS ACT, 1956



Diary Times Desk : Highlighting discrepancies in the regime for grant of compensation for land under the National Highways Act, 1956, the Supreme Court has urged the Centre to revise the law to address landowners' concerns.

A three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant pointed out that the landowners whose land was acquired under the National Highways Act, 1956 for construction of national highways were placed at a disadvantageous position compared to those covered under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 and the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.

The top court said that "the land owners, whose land is acquired under the 1956 Act, vis-à-vis the land owners whose lands are acquired now under the New Act, have been treated as separate classes, apparently without any intelligible differentia. This leads to grave heartburn among the land owners of the first category, namely, those whose lands are acquired under the 1956 Act." It said, "Keeping these factors in view, we implore and suggest that the Union of India should revisit the legislative scheme.

SUSPENSE BUILDS OVER MUMBAI MAYOR'S POST; SHINDE'S CORPORATORS MOVED TO HOTEL



Diary Times Desk : The Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena on Saturday shifted its newly elected corporators in Mumbai to a luxury hotel in the city amid suspense over who would become the next Mayor.

Uddhav Thackeray, whose Shiv Sena (UBT) is the second single largest party, added to speculation by saying his party could have its Mayor if "Dev" (God) was willing. He also suggested that Shinde's party was scared of poaching attempts by its ally BJP.

The alliance of the BJP and Shinde-led Sena won a clear majority in the 227-member Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation on Friday, securing 89 and 29 seats, respectively. The Sena (UBT) won 65 seats. A senior leader of Shinde's party said the corporators were being moved to a luxury hotel in Bandra so that they can "refresh" themselves after a hectic election season. Another party functionary said the corporators would undergo "orientation", and will be housed in the hotel for a couple of days. Earlier in the day, Uddhav Thackeray said the BJP failed to finish off his party which had ruled the BMC for 25 years.

DGCA SLAPS RS 22.2-CRORE PENALTY ON INDIGO FOR FLIGHT DISRUPTIONS IN DECEMBER



Diary Times Desk : Aviation watchdog DGCA on Saturday imposed a Rs 22.20-crore penalty on IndiGo for last month's massive flight disruptions and issued stern warnings to airline chief Pieter Elbers as well as two other senior executives.

Besides, the regulator directed the airline to furnish Rs 50-crore bank guarantee to ensure compliance with its directives and long-term systemic correction. IndiGo cancelled hundreds of flights early in December, leaving thousands of passengers stranded across the country, as the airline was not adequately prepared to implement the new flight duty norms for pilots.

Following the large-scale disruptions in IndiGo operations, DGCA set up a four-member committee headed by Joint Director General Sanjay K. Brahmane to carry out a comprehensive review and assessment of the circumstances that led to such disruptions. The panel submitted its report to DGCA on December 27 last year.

"We are not taking this situation easily. We are doing an inquiry. We will take very, very strict action not only for this situation but also as an example," Union Civil Aviation Minister Rammohan Naidu had said, on IndiGo's massive operational disruptions, in the Rajya Sabha on December 8.

GRAP-4 CURBS REIMPOSED IN DELHI-NCR AS AIR QUALITY TURNS 'SEVERE'



Diary Times Desk : The Centre's pollution watchdog on Saturday invoked curbs under Stage 4 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in Delhi-NCR as the capital's air quality deteriorated to enter the 'severe' category, according to officials. "The AQI of Delhi, which was recorded as 400 on Saturday at 4 PM, exhibited a sharp increasing trend and has been recorded at 428 at 8 PM owing to a western disturbance, highly unfavourable weather and meteorological conditions, and lack of dispersal of pollutants," said a senior official of the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM). "Keeping in view the prevailing trend of air quality and relevant factors and in an effort to prevent further deterioration of air quality in the region, the CAQM Subcommittee on GRAP unanimously decides to invoke all actions as envisaged under Stage-IV of extant GRAP - 'Severe' Air Quality (DELHI AQI > 450), with immediate effect, in the entire NCR, as a proactive measure," the official said.

SUSPENSE BUILDS OVER MUMBAI MAYOR'S POST; SHINDE'S CORPORATORS TO MOVE TO HOTEL



Diary Times Desk : The Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena on Saturday decided to shift its newly elected corporators in Mumbai to a luxury hotel in the city, a party leader said on Saturday amid suspense over who would become the next Mumbai Mayor. Uddhav Thackeray, whose Shiv Sena (UBT) is the second single largest party, added to speculation by saying his party could have its mayor if "Dev" (God) was willing. The alliance of the BJP and Shinde-led Sena won a clear majority in the 227-member Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation on Friday, securing 89 and 29 seats, respectively. A senior leader of Shinde's party said the corporators were being moved to a luxury hotel in Bandra so that they can "refresh" themselves after a hectic election season. Another party functionary said the corporators would undergo "orientation", and will be housed in the hotel for a couple of days. Earlier in the day, Uddhav Thackeray said the BJP failed to finish off his party which had ruled the BMC for 25 years. "It's my dream to install a Shiv Sena (UBT) mayor in Mumbai, and if God is willing, this dream will be realised," Thackeray said, interacting with party workers.

TREATIES SHOULD BE DRIVEN BY NATIONAL INTEREST, NOT PRESSURE FROM FOREIGN GOVT'S OR CORPORATIONS: SC

Diary Times Desk : As India negotiates trade deals with various countries, including the US, the Supreme Court has asserted that treaties should be driven by national interest and India must safeguard its tax sovereignty while entering into international agreements. In his separate but concurring judgment upholding domestic revenue authorities' decision that capital gains arising from a US-based investor firm Tiger Global's exit from Flipkart in 2018 are taxable in India, Justice JB Pardiwala emphasised that "Treaties should be driven by national interest, not pressure from foreign governments or corporations." Explaining the broader principles of international tax treaties, Justice Pardiwala said, "Tax treaties, international agreements, protocols and safeguards should be very engaging, transparent and capable of periodical reviews with the power to renegotiate with strong exit clauses to avoid unfair outcomes, safeguarding the nation's strategic and security, preventing erosion of tax base and loss or weakening of democratic control and introducing explicit carve outs safeguarding the sovereign's right of taxation." Noting that treaties should reflect broader economic and public interest, not just bureaucratic or diplomatic goals, he suggested a comprehensive set of safeguards that India should adopt while negotiating or renewing international tax treaties, including incorporating limitation of benefits clauses to prevent treaty shopping by shell companies, allowing domestic anti-avoidance laws such as the General Anti-Avoidance Rule.

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FUEL PAYMENT DISPUTE: HINDU MAN CRUSHED TO DEATH IN BANGLADESH

Diary Times Desk : A Hindu fuel station worker was crushed to death in Bangladesh after he tried to stop a vehicle from leaving a petrol pump without paying, police said. It has not been confirmed whether the incident, which took place on Friday in Rajbari district, is related to the recent spate of violence targeting Hindus in Bangladesh. The victim has been identified as 30-year-old Ripon Saha, The Daily Star newspaper reported on Saturday, quoting police officials. He was working at Karim Filling Station in Goalanda Mor at the time of the incident, it said. "We will file a murder case. The worker stood in front of the car after they refused to pay for fuel, and they ran him over before fleeing." Rajbari Sadar Police chief Khondakar Ziaur Rahman was quoted as saying by news portal bdnews24.com. According to police and eyewitnesses, a black SUV arrived at the filling station around 4:30 am on Friday and took fuel worth about Tk 5,000 (approx INR 3,710). When the driver attempted to leave without paying, Saha tried to block the vehicle. The car allegedly ran him over and sped away, killing him on the spot.

SEVERAL INDIANS RETURN FROM PROTEST-HIT IRAN IN COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS

Diary Times Desk : Several Indians, including students, have arrived here in commercial flights from Iran amid widespread protests in the Islamic nation and Tehran's crackdown that has so far killed more than 2,500 people. The flights arrived at the Delhi airport late on Friday night. It was not immediately known how many Indians had arrived in these commercial flights. Upon arriving at the airport here, Ali Naqui, who was a part of a group of 12 to 13 travellers, was asked if they faced any difficulty in Iran. "We didn't face any problem," he replied. "We have returned from Tehran. Earlier, we were in Iraq, then we travelled to Iran. After an eight-day stay there, we have returned to India," he said. A young woman, who is studying at a medical college in Shiraz, said, "The Internet was not working. So, we didn't exactly know what was happening around the country." The student said the situation in the city she was in was "fine". "We have come back on our own in a commercial flight, and not on the arrangement of the Indian government." Late on Friday night, many people arrived at the airport to receive their relatives arriving from Iran. While many seemed to be gripped by a sense of anxiety, they said that the Indian Embassy in Tehran has been reassuring all Indian nationals there.

FOUR NAXALITES KILLED IN ENCOUNTER WITH SECURITY FORCES IN CHHATTISGARH'S BIJAPUR

Diary Times Desk : Security forces on Saturday gunned down four Naxalites, including senior cadre Dilip Vedja, in an encounter in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, police said. The gunfight broke out in the morning in the forested hills of the district's northwest region, where a joint team of security forces was out on an anti-Naxal operation, Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Yadav said. He said that personnel belonging to the Special Task Force and District Reserve Guard, both state police units, and CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action) — an elite unit of CRPF — were involved in the operation, which was launched based on inputs about the presence of Vedja, a divisional committee member, in the area. "During the search, the bodies of two Maoists were recovered from the encounter site by noon. Subsequently, bodies of two more Maoist cadres, including a woman, were recovered in the evening," Yadav said. Weapons, including AK-47 rifle and .303 rifle, have also been recovered from the spot, he said, adding that a search operation is underway.

PRIYA KAPUR FILES CRIMINAL DEFAMATION CASE AGAINST SUNJAY KAPUR'S SISTER MANDHIRA KAPUR

Diary Times Desk : Priya Sachdeva Kapur has moved a criminal defamation complaint against Sunjay Kapur's sister, Mandhira Kapur Smith, and another individual, alleging that a series of statements made against her across podcasts, social media platforms, media interviews and republished online content constitute a sustained and deliberate campaign to damage her reputation. The complaint, filed before the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, asserted that the impugned remarks contain false assertions, insinuations and personal attacks presented as established facts, despite the issues being sub judice, thereby causing serious reputational harm. Priya Kapur is represented by senior advocate Maninder Singh, alongwith counsel Smriti Asmita. According to the complaint, the material circulating in the public domain advances misleading narratives and allegations aimed at maligning and harassing Priya Kapur through public discourse rather than lawful remedies. Maninder Singh submitted that such conduct squarely attracts the offence of criminal defamation under the applicable law. The matter was taken up before the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate.

PM FLAGS OFF FIRST VANDÉ BHARAT SLEEPER TRAIN, LAUNCHES RAIL, ROAD PROJECTS WORTH RS 3,250 CRORE IN WEST BENGAL



Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday flagged off India's first Vande Bharat sleeper train between Howrah and Guwahati, and launched several rail and road infrastructure projects worth Rs 3,250 crore in West Bengal. At a public function in Malda in north Bengal, the Prime Minister virtually flagged off four Amrit Bharat Express trains connecting New Jalpaiguri with Nagercoil and Tiruchirappalli, and Alipurduar with SMVT Bengaluru and Mumbai (Panvel). Modi launched the country's most advanced and the first set of Vande Bharat sleeper trains between Howrah and Guwahati (Kamakhya) from the Malda Town railway station. He also virtually flagged off the return Guwahati-Howrah Vande Bharat sleeper train from here. The fully air-conditioned sleeper train is expected to cut travel time on the Howrah-Guwahati route by around 2.5 hours. Currently, it takes nearly 18 hours from Howrah to Guwahati by train.

19 BILLS PENDING IN RAJYA SABHA, OLDEST DATES BACK TO 1992

Diary Times Desk : As many as 19 government Bills remain pending in the Rajya Sabha, with the oldest, pertaining to population control, dating back to 1992. The Rajya Sabha is a permanent House which is never dissolved, with one-third of its members retiring every two years. While the Bills pending in the Lok Sabha lapse when the House is dissolved, a Bill pending in the Rajya Sabha never lapses. According to a bulletin of the Upper House, there are 19 pending Bills at present, the oldest being The Constitution (Seventy-ninth Amendment) Bill, 1992. The Bill proposed to amend the Directive Principles of State Policy to provide that the State shall promote population control and the small family norm, and to include promoting and adopting the small family norm in the Fundamental Duties. It also proposed that an MP or an MLA should be disqualified if they have more than two children. Also among the pending Bills is The Delhi Rent (Amendment) Bill, 1997, which was to amend the Delhi Rent Act, 1995 that aimed to modernise rent.

COMMERCIAL OPERATION OF GUWAHATI-HOWRAH VANDÉ BHARAT SLEEPER TO BEGIN SOON: RAILWAYS

Diary Times Desk : After Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the first Vande Bharat Sleeper train from West Bengal's Malda on Saturday, the Railway Ministry said that its commercial operations for common passengers will begin soon. "This train is not available for booking for common passengers at present. But efforts are being made in the booking system to include it," a senior railway official said. The date from which the train will be available for general passengers has not yet been decided, he said. Many people who arrived at Assam's Kamakhya railway station to attend the virtual launch of the Vande Bharat Sleeper version by the Prime Minister, who was in Malda to physically flag off one train set, said the Railways should start the train's commercial run as soon as possible so that its benefits can be availed by needy travellers. On January 8, 2026, the ministry released a circular notifying the train's timetable and stoppages. According to the circular, one train set (Train No 27576).

NIA CHARGESHEETS FIVE FOR PROPAGATING IDEOLOGIES OF BANNED TERROR OUTFIT ONLINE

Diary Times Desk : The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday charged five persons, including a woman, in a case relating to online radicalisation of vulnerable youth by terror group Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) in Gujarat. The accused — identified as Mohammad Fardeen, Kureshi Sefulla, Mohammad Faique, Zeeshan Ali and Shama Parveen — have been named in the charge sheet filed before a special NIA court in Ahmedabad, officials said. NIA's investigation in the case had revealed that the accused used social media platforms for propagating, supporting and disseminating the anti-India ideologies of the banned AQIS, a statement issued by the probe agency said. They posted provocative posts, including videos, audios and photos, through various social media accounts, it said. NIA further found that, through these posts, the accused had called for armed revolt against the democratically elected Indian.

INFILTRATION BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR BENGAL, REFUGEES NEED NOT WORRY: PM MODI AT MALDA RALLY

Diary Times Desk : Ahead of the West Bengal Assembly polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday made infiltration the central theme of his attack on the TMC government, alleging that large-scale illegal migration had altered the state's demographic balance and fuelled riots, while reassuring refugee communities such as the Matuas that they had nothing to fear. Addressing a mega rally here in the Muslim-majority district of north Bengal, Modi said infiltration posed "a very big challenge" before the state, alleging that illegal migration had flourished under the TMC's "patronage and syndicate raj" and its alliance with infiltrators. "There are developed and prosperous countries in the world which have no shortage of money, yet they are removing infiltrators. It is equally necessary to remove infiltrators from West Bengal," he said, adding that a BJP government would take "big action" to stop illegal migration and weed out infiltrators once voted to power.



US CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION SEEKS TO REASSURE DENMARK, GREENLAND AFTER TRUMP'S THREATS



KHAMENEI CALLS TRUMP 'CRIMINAL' FOR BACKING IRAN PROTESTS, BLAMES DEMONSTRATORS FOR DEATHS



Diary Times Desk : Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Saturday branded US President Donald Trump a "criminal" for supporting protesters in Iran, and blamed demonstrators for causing thousands of deaths. In a speech broadcast by state television, Khamenei said the protests had left "several thousand" people dead — the first indication from an Iranian leader of the extent of the casualties from the wave of protests that began December 28 and led to a bloody crackdown. "In this revolt, the US President made remarks in person, encouraged seditious people to go ahead and said: 'We do support you, we do support you militarily,'" said Khamenei, who has final say on all state matters. He reiterated an accusation that the US seeks domination over Iran's economic and political resources. "We do consider the US President a criminal, because of casualties and damages, because of accusations against the Iranian nation," he said. He described the protesters as "foot soldiers" of the United States and said they had destroyed mosques and educational centres.

Diary Times Desk : A bipartisan US Congressional delegation on Saturday sought to reassure Denmark and Greenland of their support following President Donald Trump's threat to punish countries with tariffs if they don't back the US taking over the strategic Arctic island. Delegation leader Senator Chris Coons, a Delaware Democrat, said the current rhetoric around Greenland is causing concern across the Danish kingdom. He said he wants to de-escalate the situation.

"I hope that the people of the Kingdom of Denmark do not abandon their faith in the American people," Coons said in Copenhagen, adding that the US has respect for Denmark and NATO "for all we've done together".

Coons gave a news conference Saturday ahead of rallies planned in Copenhagen and Nuuk, the Greenlandic capital, in support of the self-governing island. His comments contrasted with those emanating from the White House. Trump has sought to justify his calls for a US takeover by repeatedly claiming that China and Russia have their own designs on Greenland, which holds vast untapped reserves of critical minerals. The White House hasn't ruled out taking the territory by force. "There are no current security threats to Greenland," Coons said. Trump for months has insisted that the US should control Greenland, a semi-autonomous territory of NATO ally Denmark, and said earlier this week that anything less than the Arctic island being in US hands.

REGIONAL PASSENGER AIRCRAFT WITH 11 PEOPLE MISSING IN INDONESIA; SEARCH UNDERWAY

Diary Times Desk : A regional passenger aircraft carrying 11 people lost contact with ground control Saturday while approaching a mountainous region between Indonesia's main island of Java and Sulawesi island, officials said. A search and rescue operation is underway. The turboprop ATR 42-500 operated by the Indonesia Air Transport was on the way from Yogyakarta to the capital city of South Sulawesi when it vanished from radar, said Endah Purnama Sari, a spokesperson for the Transportation Ministry. The plane was last tracked at 01:17 pm in the Leang-Leang area of Maros, a mountainous district of South Sulawesi province. Multiple search and rescue teams, supported by air force helicopters, drones and ground units have been deployed, Sari said in a statement. Hopes for locating the wreckage grew after hikers.

US, PAKISTANI TROOPS CONCLUDE JOINT TRAINING EXERCISE 'INSPIRED GAMBIT 2026' IN PABBI

Diary Times Desk : American and Pakistani troops concluded joint training at the National Counter-Terrorism Centre in Pabbi during exercise "Inspired Gambit 2026". Training exercises like this between the US and Pakistan strengthen our long-standing defence ties, Dawn reported on Saturday, quoting a statement issued by the US Central Command (Centcom). The exercise concluded this week "focused on combined infantry skills and tactics, and counterterrorism operations," the statement added. The two-week exercise held between January 8-16 comes amid broader signs of re-engagement between the two defence establishments, the report said. Military-to-military ties between Pakistan and the United States appear to be strengthening, marked by renewed joint training, major defence sales and unusually warm rhetoric from President Donald Trump towards Pakistan's military leadership, it added.



UGANDA'S 81-YEAR-OLD PRESIDENT MUSEVENI RE-ELECTED TO SEVENTH TERM

Diary Times Desk : Veteran President Yoweri Museveni was declared the landslide winner of Uganda's presidential election on Saturday, extending his rule into a fifth decade and seventh term after a contest marred by violent incidents and allegations of fraud.

The result hands the 81-year-old Museveni the decisive victory he sought to bolster his political position as speculation mounts about his eventual succession.

Uganda's electoral commission said at a ceremony in the capital Kampala on Saturday that Museveni had received just under 72% of the vote. His main challenger, the pop singer-turned-politician Bobi Wine, was credited with 24%.

Wine has alleged mass fraud during the election, which was held under an internet blackout that authorities said was needed to prevent "misinformation", and called on supporters to protest. Wine's whereabouts were unknown on Saturday after he said he had escaped a raid by the military on his house. People close to him told Reuters he was at large in Uganda.

JUDGE RULES FEDS IN MINNEAPOLIS IMMIGRATION OPERATION CAN'T DETAIN OR TEAR GAS PEACEFUL PROTESTERS

Diary Times Desk : Federal officers in the Minneapolis-area participating in its largest recent US immigration enforcement operation can't detain or tear gas peaceful protesters, including people observing the agents, a judge in Minnesota ruled on Friday. US District Judge Kate Menendez ruled in a case filed in December on behalf of six Minnesota activists.

Thousands of people have been observing the activities of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol officers enforcing the Trump administration's immigration crackdown in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul area since early December. The ruling prohibits the officers from detaining drivers and passengers in vehicles when there is no reasonable suspicion they are obstructing or interfering with the officers. Safely following agents "at an appropriate distance does not, by itself, create reasonable suspicion to justify a vehicle stop," the ruling said. Menendez said the agents would not be allowed to arrest people without probable cause or reasonable suspicion the person.

IRAN CALM AFTER PROTESTS, HARD-LINE CLERIC CALLS FOR EXECUTIONS, THREATENS TRUMP

Diary Times Desk : As Iran returned to uneasy calm after a wave of protests that drew a bloody crackdown, a senior hard-line cleric called Friday for the death penalty for detained demonstrators and directly threatened US President Donald Trump — evidence of the rage gripping authorities in the Islamic Republic. Trump, though, struck a conciliatory note, thanking Iran's leaders for not executing hundreds of detained protesters, in a further sign he may be backing away from a military strike. Executions, as well as the killing of peaceful protesters, are two of the red lines laid down by Trump for possible action against Iran.

Harsh repression that has left several thousand people dead appears to have succeeded in stifling demonstrations that began December 28 over Iran's ailing economy and morphed into protests directly challenging the country's theocracy. There have been no signs of protests for days in Tehran, where shopping and street life have returned to outward normality, though a week-old internet blackout continued. Authorities have not reported any unrest elsewhere in the country.

"Iran canceled the hanging of over 800 people," Trump told reporters in Washington, adding that "I greatly respect the fact that they canceled." Trump did not clarify who he spoke to in Iran to confirm the state of any planned executions.



CANADA, CHINA CUT LEVIES, RESET TIES

Diary Times Desk : Breaking with the United States, Canada has agreed to cut its 100 per cent tariff on Chinese electric cars in return for lower tariffs on Canadian farm products, Prime Minister Mark Carney said Friday. Carney made the announcement after two days of meetings with Chinese leaders. He said there would be an initial cap of 49,000 vehicles on Chinese EV exports to Canada, growing to 70,000 over five years. China will reduce its tariff on canola seeds, a major Canadian export, from about 84 per cent to about 15 per cent, he told reporters. "It has been a historic and productive two days," Carney said, speaking outside against the backdrop of a traditional pavilion and a frozen pond at a Beijing park. "We have to understand the differences between Canada and other countries, and focus our efforts to work together where we're aligned." Earlier Friday.

INDIA CLARIFIES ABSENCE FROM SOUTH AFRICA LED BRICS NAVAL EXERCISE

Diary Times Desk : India on Saturday said it skipped a South Africa-initiated multilateral naval wargame featuring a number of BRICS countries as the exercise was not an institutional activity under the grouping. The exercise held in South African waters comprised the navies of China, Russia, Iran, Egypt, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) among others. The week-long military wargame took place amid increasing tensions in Iran over possible military strikes on the country over its crackdown on anti-government protesters. "We clarify that the exercise in question was entirely a South African initiative in which some BRICS members took part," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "It was not a regular or institutionalised BRICS activity, nor did all BRICS members take part in it," he said. Jaiswal was responding to media queries on India's absence.

EGYPT AND SUDAN WELCOME TRUMP'S OFFER TO MEDIATE NILE RIVER DAM DISPUTE

Diary Times Desk : Egypt and Sudan welcomed on Saturday President Donald Trump's offer to resume US mediation efforts with Ethiopia to resolve a long-running Nile River water dispute following Addis Ababa's construction of a giant dam. Ethiopia inaugurated the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, or GERD, last fall. It is Africa's largest and is meant to produce more than 5,000 megawatts, doubling Ethiopia's electricity generation capacity. Egypt sees the dam as a "grave violation of international law" that poses "an existential threat," fearing a severe effect on Nile water flow. Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi said in a social media post that he valued "President Trump's attention to the central importance of the Nile River issue for Egypt," adding that his country is committed to "serious and constructive cooperation with the Nile Basin countries, based on the principles of international law, in a manner that achieves shared interests without causing harm to any party." He said that Egypt supports the US efforts to resolve the dispute with Ethiopia. In a post on X, Gen Abdel-Fattah Burhan, chairman of Sudan's ruling Sovereign Council and its military chief, hailed Trump's initiative as a step "to find sustainable and satisfactory solutions that preserve everyone's rights." There was no immediate comment from Ethiopia.



PUTIN DIALS IRAN, ISRAEL PMS, OFFERS MEDIATION

Diary Times Desk : Russia on Friday said it was committed to making mediation efforts and promoting a constructive dialogue involving all concerned parties in West Asia, as President Vladimir Putin dialled Israeli and Iranian leaders to discuss the regional situation amid US threats of a strike on the Islamic Republic. Putin spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and discussed the state of affairs in West Asia and the situation surrounding Iran, the Kremlin said in a statement. "The Russian side confirmed its commitment to continuing making mediation efforts and promoting a constructive dialogue involving all concerned parties," it said. Putin also dialled Iranian President Masoud Pekeshkian, who briefed him on the Iranian government's sustained efforts to normalise the situation in the country hit by protests over the economic crisis. Later in the day, Iranian opposition figure Reza Pahlavi urged the international community to ramp up pressure on the government in Tehran to help protesters overthrow clerical rule, even as a deadly crackdown appears to have broadly quelled demonstrations.

WUC'S AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY "EYES OF THE MACHINE" SHEDS LIGHT ON CHINA'S MISTREATMENT OF UYGHURS

Diary Times Desk : The World Uyghur Congress (WUC) is ramping up its global advocacy efforts. Their award-winning documentary "Eyes of the Machine" is shedding light on China's mistreatment of Uyghurs, reinforcing global attention on China's policies in East Turkistan. The documentary "Eyes of the Machine," directed by Dutch filmmaker Daya Cahen, is a key component of the World Uyghur Congress (WUC)'s current global advocacy efforts to expose human rights violations in East Turkistan.

The film contrasts the haunting personal testimony of Kalbinur Sidik, an ethnic Uzbek survivor who was forced to work in Chinese internment camps, against official state propaganda, exposing the scale and mechanics of China's mass surveillance and detention system. Completed in August 2025, the 76-minute feature utilises leaked police photographs, intercepted messages, and open-source data to illustrate China's pervasive surveillance and detention system. After receiving a strong public response during extended screenings in Amsterdam and winning acclaim at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam, the documentary is now set to compete at film festivals in Geneva and Prague in 2026, with 10-day screenings planned in both cities.

INDIA-JAPAN UNDERLINE IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTHENING SPECIAL STRATEGIC AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP DURING FM MOTEGI'S VISIT

Diary Times Desk : India and Japan reaffirmed their Special Strategic and Global Partnership during the visit of Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi from January 15-17, with both sides agreeing to deepen cooperation in AI, critical minerals, defence and regional security. Motegi called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and also held the 18th India-Japan Strategic Dialogue with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. In an official statement, the Ministry of External Affairs said that during the Strategic Dialogue, the Ministers reviewed the entire gamut of the multi-faceted relations, including supply chain resilience in critical sectors, investment, trade, technology and innovation, defence, people-to-people exchanges and cultural ties. "They underlined the importance of further strengthening the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership in keeping with the outcomes of the 15th Annual Summit of August 2025 and the recent discussions between the Prime Ministers in Johannesburg," the MEA said. "Taking forward the Japan-India AI Initiative (JAI) announced by the two Prime Ministers, the Ministers launched the AI Dialogue giving a coherent push to bilateral cooperation in this sector. Both sides also decided to convene the Joint Working Group on Critical Minerals.



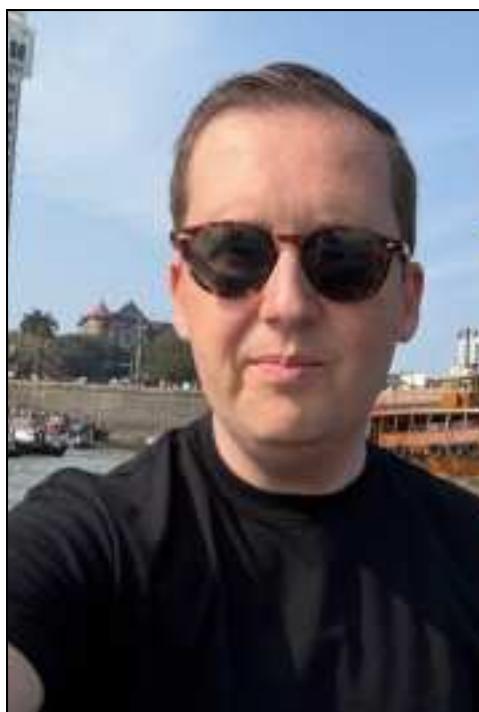
JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER TOSHIMITSU MOTEGI TAKES A RIDE ON DELHI METRO

Diary Times Desk : Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, along with Japanese Ambassador to India, Keiichi Ono, took a ride on the Delhi Metro on Saturday. The Japanese delegation was briefed about the Delhi Metro project by senior DMRC officials at Central Secretariat, followed by a train ride from Central Secretariat to Patel Chowk and back. As per a statement by the DMRC, during his visit, the Minister showed keen interest in various aspects of the construction and operation of the Delhi Metro, which is a proud symbol of Indo-Japanese friendship and collaboration. The statement highlighted that the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has extended financial support to the Delhi Metro project since Phase 1. Toshimitsu Motegi is in India from January 15 to January 17, as per the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). During his visit to India, Motegi also paid a courtesy call to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

CHINA'S "SUPER EMBASSY" PLAN IN LONDON TRIGGERS SECURITY FEARS AND POLITICAL STORM

Diary Times Desk : The British government is nearing approval of a contentious proposal by China to establish what would be its largest diplomatic mission in Europe, raising alarms over security, sovereignty and civil liberties. The planned complex, often described as a "super embassy," is to be built at Royal Mint Court, a landmark location close to London's financial district, as reported by Phayul. According to Phayul, Prime Minister Keir Starmer could formally approve the project as early as January 20, 2026. The decision is expected just ahead of Starmer's first official bilateral visit to China, a coincidence that has fuelled speculation about political and diplomatic pressure. China acquired the Royal Mint Court site in 2018 for an estimated £225 million, with the intention of consolidating all its diplomatic offices in London.

"EVERYONE MUST VISIT TO FEEL ITS MAGIC!": US AMBASSADOR ON MUMBAI'S GATEWAY OF INDIA



Diary Times Desk : Sergio Gor, US Ambassador to India, visited the iconic Gateway of India during his visit to Mumbai and urged people to discover the splendour of the city. In a post on X, he posted his picture with the Gateway of India in the backdrop and said, "Discover the enchanting beauty of Mumbai - a vibrant tapestry of bustling streets, iconic landmarks like the Gateway of India, and the sparkling Arabian Sea. Everyone must visit to feel its magic!"

The Gateway of India is an arch monument built in the 20th century. It was erected to commemorate the landing of King George V and Queen Mary at Apollo Bunder during their 1911 visit to India. Built in Indo-Saracenic style, the foundation stone for the Gateway of India was laid on 31 March 1911. The structure is an arch made of basalt, 26 metres (85 feet) high. The Gateway was later used as a symbolic ceremonial entrance to India for Viceroys and the new Governors of Bombay. It served to allow entry and access to India, the official website of Mumbai City noted. The monument has also been referred to as the Taj Mahal of Mumbai, and is the city's top tourist attraction. On Saturday, Ambassador Gor met Maharashtra's Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday. The two leaders discussed strategic priorities to build the relationship across areas such as trade, entertainment, tech and manufacturing.

"REGIME IS CONTINUING WITHOUT ANY CHANGE," THAROOR SAYS ON VENEZUELA

Diary Times Desk : Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Sunday said that the United States did not carry out a regime change in Venezuela but simply a decapitation. Addressing reporters here, Tharoor said that as an interim president has taken over, the regime is continuing without any changes.

"Now, Venezuela, we've seen a very curious situation where the head of the government has been removed and taken away, but that the regime is continuing without any change. All the ministers, the National Assembly, the government, the interim president is the former vice president, the security forces, everything is under control. So it is literally a decapitation, but not a change of regime," he said. Tharoor said that the regime change is not to bring about democracy, but as Trump has openly said it is for oil. "It's the same regime that's continued. And in those circumstances, it does look as if this change of government was brought about without any talk of democracy or any of those usual things we're used to hearing from Washington when such changes happen. Instead, he has said very openly it's about the oil, the only area that Americans have asserted control over is Venezuela and oil, American oil companies.

UNION MINISTER KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH PARTICIPATES IN KITE FESTIVAL IN CAIRO

Diary Times Desk : Union Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh participated in a Kite festival organized by the Indian diaspora in Egypt. Taking to social media platform X, he wrote, "Delighted to participate in the kite festival alongside members of the Indian diaspora in Cairo." Singh, further hailed the Indian community living abroad for promoting Indian culture beyond borders. Appreciated the dynamic Indian community for their efforts in promoting Indian culture and preserving our traditions across borders," the Union Minister added in his post. Earlier, Singh met Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty and held wide-ranging discussions aimed at further strengthening the Strategic Partnership. "Pleased to meet H.E. Badr Abdelatty, Foreign Minister of Egypt, and held wide-ranging discussions on strengthening-Strategic Partnership. Discussions also covered the forthcoming India-Arab Foreign Ministerial Meeting, strengthening of India-Egypt.

SYRIA ISSUES HISTORIC DECREE RECOGNISING KURDISH LANGUAGE, RIGHTS IN PUSH FOR NATIONAL INCLUSION



Diary Times Desk : Syrian interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa has issued a landmark presidential decree that for the first time formally recognises the rights of the country's Kurdish minority, including recognising the Kurdish language as a national language and restoring citizenship to previously stateless Kurdish Syrians, reported Al Jazeera. The move, announced on Friday amid ongoing tensions in the country's north, is being described by officials as a major step toward addressing decades of marginalisation and integrating Kurds more fully into Syria's national framework. Decree No. 13 of 2026 declares Syrians of Kurdish origin an "essential and integral part" of the Syrian people and affirms that their cultural and linguistic identity is an inseparable component of the nation's diverse identity. Under the decree, the Kurdish language is designated a national language alongside Arabic and may be taught in public and private schools in areas where Kurdish communities are significant. In a symbolic gesture, the decree also makes Nowruz, the Kurdish New Year celebrated on March 21.

TAIWAN DETECTS CHINESE DRONE IN ITS AERIAL ZONE

Diary Times Desk : Taiwan detected a Chinese army's reconnaissance UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) entering Taiwan's southwestern ADIZ. Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said that the UAV departed after radio warnings. In a post on X, it said, "At 0541hrs (UTC+8), a PLA reconnaissance UAV was detected entering Taiwan's southwestern ADIZ and entering airspace near Dongsha (the Pratas Islands). After radio warnings, the UAV departed the area. The ROC Armed Forces are monitoring the situation and responding accordingly." Earlier in the day, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense detected the presence of 26 sorties of Chinese military aircraft, eight naval vessels, and an official ship around its territorial waters. Of the 26 sorties, seven crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's northern, central, and southwestern ADIZ. In a post on X, the MND said, "26 PLA aircraft, 8 PLAN vessels and 1 official ship operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today.

"NOT REGULAR ACTIVITY": MEA CLARIFIES INDIA DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN 'BRICS NAVAL EXERCISE'

Diary Times Desk : Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Randhir Jaiswal on Saturday said that the so-called 'BRICS Naval Exercise' was entirely a South African initiative in which some BRICS members took part. Responding to comments relating to India's non-participation in the 'BRICS Naval Exercise', Jaiswal said that it was not a regular or institutionalised BRICS activity, nor did all BRICS members take part in it. In an official statement, the MEA said, "We clarify that the exercise in question was entirely a South African initiative in which some BRICS members took part. It was not a regular or institutionalised BRICS activity, nor did all BRICS members take part in it. India has not participated in previous such activities. The regular exercise that India is a part of in this context is the IBSAMAR maritime exercise that brings together the navies of India, Brazil and South Africa.

STEFAN PRIESNER BEGINS ROLE AS UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR IN INDIA

Diary Times Desk : The United Nations in India announced Saturday that Stefan Priesner has assumed office as the UN's Resident Coordinator in India, after presenting his credentials to the Government of India, an official statement said. As Resident Coordinator, Priesner will lead the work of the UN Country Team (UNCT) in India, supporting national development priorities and guiding progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a coherent and integrated UN response. Priesner, who was appointed to the role by the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, presented his credentials to the Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs, Sibi George, during a ceremony in Delhi on Friday, as per the statement. Speaking afterwards, Priesner said, "I am honoured to take up this responsibility in India, a country whose diversity, dynamism and history make it such a key partner of the United Nations. We at the UN are ready to work even more closely with the Government and other partners here to support inclusive and sustainable development that leaves no one behind." Priesner brings nearly three decades of experience in international development, policy advisory and the management of complex, multi-sectoral programmes to the role. At the UN, he most recently served as Resident Coordinator in Iran (2021-2025), following an assignment as Resident Coordinator for Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, and Singapore (2017-2021). He was also Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Uzbekistan (2013-2017).



THINK TANKS CONVENE DISCUSSION IN US AHEAD OF FEBRUARY'S AI SUMMIT IN INDIA

Diary Times Desk : Observer Research Foundation with the Indian Embassy in the US, the Senate AI Caucus, and the Special Competitive Studies Project convened a panel discussion on India-US collaboration in the field of technology. At the discussion held on Friday (local time), Deputy Chief of Mission Ambassador Namgya Khampa outlined India's priorities and vision ahead of the AI Impact Summit to be held in February. In a post on X, the Indian Embassy in the US said, "Ahead of the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi (February 2026), the Embassy together with ORF America, the Senate AI Caucus, and the Special Competitive Studies Project convened a panel discussion at the US Congress. Deputy Chief of Mission Ambassador Namgya Khampa outlined India's priorities and vision for the Summit, underscoring India-USA collaboration in technology and innovation as a key pillar of the bilateral partnership." Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Wednesday participated in Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras Pongal celebrations, during which he announced that India will host the prestigious AI Impact Summit next month under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

INDIAN ARMY SUCCESSFULLY BUILDS THIRD 120-FEET-LONG BAILEY BRIDGE IN SRI LANKA

Diary Times Desk : The Indian Army's Engineer Task Force has successfully constructed the third Bailey Bridge, measuring 120 feet, at KM 15 on the B-492 Highway in Sri Lanka. The bridge, located in the Central Province, reconnects the Kandy and Nuwara Eliya districts, restoring a critical lifeline that had remained disrupted for over a month following the devastation caused by Cyclone Ditwah.

Taking to social media X, the Indian Army posted, "The Indian Army's Engineer Task Force, after successfully launching two critical Bailey bridges in the Jaffna and Kandy regions, has constructed the third Bailey Bridge of length 120 feet at KM 15 on the B-492 Highway in Sri Lanka's Central Province." "Linking the Kandy and Nuwara Eliya districts, the bridge will restore a vital lifeline which was cut off for over a month in the aftermath of Cyclone Ditwah. This effort reaffirms India's steadfast commitment to Sri Lanka and the Neighbourhood First policy," the post read.

WEF CHIEF BØRGE BRENDE WARNS DEBT, GEOPOLITICS AS KEY THREATS TO GLOBAL GROWTH

Diary Times Desk : The World Economic Forum (WEF) is preparing for its annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, with top global leaders, CEOs, and experts set to attend. Despite the challenges posed by the current geopolitical landscape, WEF CEO and President Børge Brende remains optimistic about the potential for dialogue and collaboration. In a post on X, Brende shared excerpts from an interview with a Swiss French-language daily newspaper highlighting the importance of technological innovation in driving growth and progress. "The economy is very resilient; it's holding up very well," Brende said. "And from our perspective, this is mainly thanks to the huge investments in artificial intelligence and related technologies." Brende also highlighted the significant structural economic challenge of global debt, which has reached its highest level since 1945. "Debt interest is the largest item in some countries' budgets," he said. "Current geopolitics is very complex. We are entering a new era. We are seeing the outlines of a new world order. I hope it will not be marked by a return to the law of the jungle," he said. "We must find a way to navigate this environment. Incidentally, businesses and trade are a bit like water finding its way," Brende added.

OFFICE LEASING, LIQUIDITY LIFT REAL ESTATE SENTIMENT IN Q4 2025: KNIGHT FRANK-NAREDCO REPORT

Diary Times Desk : Sentiment in India's real estate sector stabilised in the October-December quarter of 2025, with both current and future outlook remaining firmly in the optimistic zone. As per the 47th edition of the Knight Frank-NAREDCO Real Estate Sentiment Index the Current Sentiment Score inching up to 60 in Q4 2025 from 59 in the previous quarter, while the Future Sentiment Score remained unchanged at 61. The readings indicate balanced expectations for the next six months, supported by improving macroeconomic visibility, easing inflationary pressures and steady funding conditions. Despite sentiment levels remaining below the highs recorded during 2023-24, resilient office demand.

DGCA IMPOSES RS 22.20 CRORE PENALTY ON INDIGO OVER DECEMBER 2025 FLIGHT DISRUPTION

Diary Times Desk : The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has imposed penalties amounting to Rs 22.20 crore on IndiGo Airlines following widespread flight disruptions in early December 2025 that affected more than three lakh passengers across the country. The action follows a comprehensive inquiry ordered by the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) after IndiGo cancelled 2,507 flights and delayed 1,852 others between December 3 and 5, 2025. A four-member committee constituted by the DGCA examined the airline's operational planning, crew rostering, management oversight and software systems. According to the committee's findings, the primary causes for the disruption were over-optimisation of operations, inadequate regulatory preparedness, along with deficiencies in system software support and shortcomings in management structure and operational control on the part of IndiGo. The inquiry noted that the airline's management failed to adequately identify planning deficiencies, maintain sufficient operational buffer, and effectively implement the revised Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) provisions, leading to large-scale cancellations and delays.



COMMITTED TO TAKING FULL COGNISANCE OF DGCA ORDERS, WILL TAKE APPROPRIATE MEASURES: INDIGO

Diary Times Desk : The Chairman and Members of the Board of Directors of InterGlobe Aviation Limited on Saturday said that they are committed to taking full cognisance of the findings of the DGCA orders in relation to IndiGo's operational disruptions in December last year and "will take appropriate measures". "We would like to take this opportunity to inform all of our stakeholders, particularly our valued customers, that the Board and the Management of IndiGo are committed to taking full cognizance of the orders and will, in a thoughtful and timely manner, take appropriate measures," Chairman and Members of the Board of Directors of InterGlobe Aviation Limited said in a message. Additionally, an in-depth review of the robustness and resilience of the internal processes at IndiGo has been underway since the disruption to ensure that the airline emerges stronger out of these events in its otherwise pristine record of 19+ years of operations, it said. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has imposed penalties amounting to Rs 22.20 crore on IndiGo Airlines following widespread flight disruptions in early December 2025 that affected more than three lakh passengers across the country.



GAUTAM ADANI SAYS VISHAKHA GROUP'S COORDINATED INDUSTRIAL ECOSYSTEM REPRESENTS NEW MODEL OF INDIAN MANUFACTURING

Diary Times Desk : Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani on Saturday said that Vishakha Group's coordinated industrial ecosystem spanning solar glass, aluminium, polymer films and advanced materials represents a new model of Indian manufacturing capable of strengthening the country's renewable energy future while setting international benchmarks. Speaking on the 25-year journey of Vishakha Group, he stressed that the success was not the result of legal agreements alone, but of shared conscience and mutual respect. He also acknowledged broader contributions of Jigish Doshi, Chairman, Vishakha Group, to the society, including leadership roles in community and charitable organisations. Adani pointed to the commissioning of India's largest solar glass furnace, a 660-tonne-per-day facility, completed within just 24 months, as evidence of this shift. "This was not an Indian timeline trying to catch up with global standards. It was an Indian benchmark setting a global benchmark," he said. Adani added that the upcoming second phase would scale capacity to 1,260 tonnes per day, making it the largest solar glass furnace ever built in India, with an ambitious execution target of 20 months. He further highlighted one of the country's largest integrated aluminium complexes at Vishakha Group, anchored by India's largest fully automated anodizing line. "What makes the enterprise distinctive is not any single asset, but the integration of glass, aluminium and films into a single, 12-gigawatt solar manufacturing ecosystem an industrial configuration he described as unique globally," he mentioned.



INDIA'S AVERAGE RETURN ON FDI REMAINS ROBUST AT 7.3%, OUTPERFORMING EMERGING ECONOMIES: CAREEDGE

Diary Times Desk : In the last five years, between the Financial Year 2020 to 2025, India's annual gross FDI inflows have hovered between USD 70 and 85 billion, recording a flat Compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 2%. As per the data shared by CareEdge Ratings, the Net FDI flows have fallen from USD 44 billion in FY20 to USD 1 billion in FY25.

While gross inflows have improved, we also observe higher repatriation of profits by investors and FDI outflows from India. This has led to a sharp decline in net FDI inflows," it said. However, an analysis by the rating agency indicates that India's average return on inward FDI remains robust at 7.3%, outperforming many emerging and developed economies. A foreign company's decision to reinvest or repatriate profits typically reflects its strategic priorities and capital allocation philosophy. Similarly, outward FDI growth indicates access to foreign resources and markets.

GREEN ENERGY SEVA RECORDS STRONG GROWTH IN SOLAR EPC AND FRANCHISE OPERATIONS ACROSS INDIA

Diary Times Desk : Green Energy Seva, one of India's fastest-growing solar EPC and franchise networks, has reported strong growth across its solar project execution and franchise partner ecosystem, reinforcing its position as a key enabler in the country's renewable energy transition. The company has witnessed significant traction across residential, commercial, and semi-urban markets, driven by rising solar adoption, favourable policy support, and increasing interest from entrepreneurs seeking structured entry into the clean energy sector. Green Energy Seva's integrated model--combining EPC execution, CRM-driven project management, franchise enablement, and technical training--has enabled faster project turnaround times and improved execution quality across its network. Over the recent period, the company expanded its franchise footprint, onboarded new solar entrepreneurs, and strengthened its end-to-end delivery capabilities, from lead generation and system design to commissioning, net metering.

ELECTRONICS MANUFACTURING LEADS PLI SCHEME AS PRODUCTION JUMPS 146%: REPORT

Diary Times Desk : Electronics manufacturing, especially of mobile phones, has emerged as a standout performer, in the Performance Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, with production rising 146% from Rs 2.13 lakh crore in the Financial Year 2021 to Rs 5.45 lakh crore in Financial Year 2025, as per the data shared by the CareEdge Ratings. The rise in production was aided by USD 4 billion FDI inflows, 70% of which came to PLI beneficiaries, the rating agency said. However, the report highlighted that the total budgetary outlay towards the PLI scheme covering 14 sectors stands at Rs 1.97 lakh crore. In contrast, the aggregate PLI disbursements up to September 2025 stood low at Rs 23,946 crore, representing only 12% of the total envisaged PLI disbursement. The pace of disbursement has shown signs of a pickup, with Rs 10,112 crore in incentives disbursed during FY25, with further disbursements of Rs 19,742 crore expected during FY26, it said. Disbursements stood at Rs 2,968 crore in FY23, before more than doubling to Rs 6,753 crore in FY24. The upward momentum continued in FY25, with incentive payouts rising significantly to Rs 10,112 crore, marking the highest annual disbursement in the period under review.



INDIA'S APPAREL RETAIL MARKET POISED TO REACH RS 16 LAKH CRORE BY FY30: CAREEDGE



Diary Times Desk : India's apparel retail market is set for a significant expansion over the next five years, with industry size projected to touch nearly Rs 16 lakh crore by 2029-30, driven by rising disposable incomes, rapid digitalisation and strong growth in value fashion and e-commerce, according to a CareEdge Ratings report. The apparel market, estimated at Rs 9.30 lakh crore in 2024-25, has grown at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 7 per cent since 2017-18. Organised retail currently accounts for approximately 41 per cent of the total market and is expected to grow at a faster pace of 10-13%, supported by increasing consumer preference for branded apparel, the entry of international brands and the expansion of structured retail formats. A key driver of growth is the value fashion segment, which is benefiting from rising brand awareness and consumer price sensitivity. Value fashion, estimated at Rs 3.5 lakh crore in 2023-24, is expected to grow at a CAGR of 7 per cent to reach Rs 5.0 lakh crore by 2029-30. Retailers such as Zudio, Max Fashion and Reliance's Yousta are aggressively expanding their store networks, particularly in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, which are emerging as major consumption hubs, it said. E-commerce is another major growth engine for the sector. Online channels currently account for about 22 per cent of organised apparel retail and are projected to increase their share to nearly 25 per cent by 2029-30, translating into a market size of around Rs 5.0 lakh crore. Rising internet penetration, increasing adoption of smartphones and the influence of Gen-Z consumers on fashion trends are accelerating the shift towards digital-first and omnichannel retail strategies. While the industry faced demand pressures in 2024-25 due to inflation and adverse weather conditions, signs of recovery emerged during the festive and wedding season towards the end of the year.

SHIVRATRI FEST SOUVENIR TO HIGHLIGHT 500 YEARS OF MANDI CITY'S HISTORY

Diary Times Desk : The historic city of Mandi is set to complete 500 years of its coming into existence. The souvenir of the upcoming International Shivratri festival will have special focus on the city's rich historical legacy, cultural heritage and developmental journey. This was decided at a meeting of the Souvenir Sub-Committee of the International Shivratri festival held at the office of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (Civil), Sadar Mandi, under the chairmanship of SDM Rupinder Kaur. Detailed deliberations on the theme of the souvenir, cover page design, diversity and the originality of the content and overall publication quality were held. It was unanimously agreed at the meeting that the milestone of 500 years of Mandi city should be prominently reflected in the souvenir through well-researched and fact-based articles.

HIMACHAL FOREST DEPT GEARING UP TO LEASE OUT 73 MORE ECO-TOURISM SITES

Diary Times Desk : Having allotted 18 ecotourism sites, the Forest Departments is gearing up to lease out another 73 more such sites, which can emerge as major tourist attraction, especially for adventure lovers. In the first phase, a total of 18 sites have been allocated to private players under private public partnership (PPP) mode. Promoting eco-tourism is also helping generate the much-needed revenue as an annual income of almost Rs 10 crore has already been generated by leasing out these sites. The Forest Department is now in the process of completing the formalities for allotting 73 more identified sites in various parts of the state. "We can lease out the eco-tourism sites only after the Centre approves the working plans of the areas where they fall. We are in the process of completing the working plans of areas like Kasauli, Dalhousie, Rohru and other parts, where many eco-tourism sites have been identified," said Sanjay Sood, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest. The Master Plan for undertaking eco-tourism activities in Himachal had been prepared. The main objective is to identify new potential ecotourism destinations and prepare site-specific ecotourism plans.

HIMACHAL BRACES FOR HEAVY SNOW, RAIN ON JANUARY 23; YELLOW ALERT ISSUED

Diary Times Desk : Himachal Pradesh is set to witness heavy snow and rain on January 23, as the State Meteorological Department has issued a yellow warning for higher reaches. The higher reaches are expected to receive heavy snow, along with isolated rain, while light snow and rain are likely to continue in these areas until January 22. Weather in the rest of the state is expected to remain dry until January 21. The department stated that two Western Disturbances are likely to affect Northwest India in quick succession from January 19 and January 21, leading to one or two spells of heavy rain and snowfall at isolated places in the high hills on January 23. Meanwhile, very light snow was recorded in higher reaches during the past 24 hours, while most parts of the state remained dry. Tribal districts in Lahaul and Spiti — including Keylong, Gondla, Kumumseri, and Handa village — reported light snow. Also, minimum temperatures in most of the places were 3°C to 8°C above normal, ranging between minus 3°C to 10°C while maximum temperatures were also above 2°C to 8°C in most parts of the state, ranging between 2°C to 23°C. Shimla recorded 8.4°C minimum temperature while Dharamsala recorded 2.8°C. Minimum temperature in Manali was 7.1°C, Kangra 5.6°C, Mandi 6.3°C, Solan 5°C.



CABINET RESHUFFLE IN COMING DAYS: HIMACHAL PRADESH CM SUKHU

Diary Times Desk : Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Friday said that the state cabinet could be shuffled in the coming days. Sukhu made the statement while speaking to the reporters upon his return from Delhi where he met several Union ministers. He said Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had assured him that the adoption of a region-specific approach while finalising fiscal devolution, grants, and disaster management frameworks would be examined.

The step would help ensure that hill states like Himachal Pradesh receive adequate support to meet their developmental needs and disaster-resilience challenges, he said. Sukhu said Sitharaman also assured him that the state's request for financial support by allowing additional borrowing of two per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) would be considered, and so would the state of orchardists. "I strongly raised the issue of the import of apples from New Zealand, which has adversely affected the interests of local orchardists," the Chief Minister said in a statement. Sukhu said he raised the same issues with Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, who said he would consider steps to stop apple imports during July–November.

'MAHARASHTRA HAS QUIT THEM': BJP'S BMC VICTORY HAS PERSONAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR KANGANA RANAUT AFTER 2020 DEMOLITION

Diary Times Desk : The outcome also holds personal significance for the actor-turned-politician. In 2020, the BMC, then controlled by the undivided Shiv Sena, had demolished a portion of Ranaut's Mumbai office. Actor and BJP MP Kangana Ranaut has congratulated her party leadership, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, after the BJP registered a major victory in the Brihammumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections, ending the long-standing dominance of the Shiv Sena in India's richest civic body.

Calling the result a "historic win," Ranaut told NDTV, "I am absolutely thrilled with the BJP's landslide victory in the Maharashtra BMC election. I congratulate Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis ji, and the entire BJP family of Maharashtra for this incredible saffron sweep all the way." The outcome also holds personal significance for the actor-turned-politician. In 2020, the BMC, then controlled by the undivided Shiv Sena, had demolished a portion of Ranaut's Mumbai office.

YOUR HOROSCOPE

18-01-2026



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.

Leo

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

Virgo

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

Libra

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

Scorpio

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

Sagittarius

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

Capricorn

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

Aquarius

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

Pisces

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

JAKHAR SLAMS PUNJAB AAP OVER 'POLITICALLY MOTIVATED' FIR IN ATISHI VIDEO ROW

Diary Times Desk : Punjab BJP president Sunil Jakhar has strongly criticised the AAP government in Punjab over what he called a politically motivated FIR in connection with a video of Delhi AAP leader Atishi, alleging disrespect towards Sikh Gurus. Congress leader Sukpal Khaira, who faced protests by AAP workers for circulating the video, said his stand stood vindicated and action should be taken for the false FIR registered by the Punjab Police. Their remarks came after Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta confirmed that a forensic examination of the clip found it to be genuine and free from tampering. In a tweet, Jakhar said, "After a forensic examination of the video of AAP leader Atishi, conducted by the Delhi Legislative Assembly, the Speaker has clearly stated that there was no tampering with the video. After these facts came to light, the forensic investigation conducted by the Punjab Police has automatically come under suspicion, because the Punjab Police had claimed that the video was tampered with." He further accused the Punjab Government of trying to protect its leader and termed their actions "extremely condemnable."

HARYANA SLIPS TO 10TH PLACE IN NITI AAYOG'S EXPORT PREPAREDNESS INDEX

Diary Times Desk : Haryana has slipped five places to rank 10th in the Niti Aayog's Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2024, down from fifth position in the 2022 edition. The state's overall score has also declined sharply, from 63.55 to 55.01. The EPI 2024 evaluates the export readiness of all states and Union Territories across four core pillars — Export Infrastructure, Business Ecosystem, Policy and Governance and Export Performance. These pillars are further assessed through 13 sub-pillars and 70 parameters. Maharashtra topped the index, followed by Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. Neighbouring Punjab was ranked seventh, while Himachal Pradesh stood at the 30th position. The index was released on January 14. Under the 'Export Infrastructure' pillar, Niti Aayog flagged Haryana's poor performance, pointing out that the state has "limited renewable energy penetration."

BIG RELIEF FOR PUNJAB'S FARMERS AS CENTRE HAS AGREED TO SHIFT BORDER FENCE CLOSER TO IB: CM MANN

Diary Times Desk : Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday claimed a major relief for farmers in the state's border belt after the Centre agreed in principle to shift the security fence closer to the International Border. Mann, after his meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, said the move will clear the way for unhindered cultivation of thousands of acres of farmland currently trapped beyond the fencing. The Punjab Chief Minister said farmers have long been forced to cross the fence with identity cards and under BSF escort to reach their own fields, facing daily hardship and uncertainty along the 532-km-long India-Pakistan border, where fencing lies deep inside Punjab's territory. He said the Home Minister informed him during the meeting that the issue is under active consideration and that the fencing will be shifted towards the border, bringing Punjab's land back on the accessible side without compromising national security.



SIKH GURU REMARK ROW: 'ATISHI VIDEO NOT TAMPERED,' SAYS DELHI SPEAKER CITING FORENSIC PROBE REPORT

Diary Times Desk : Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta on Saturday said a forensic science laboratory report had found that the video clip linked to Leader of Opposition Atishi's remarks allegedly disrespecting Sikh gurus "was original and free from any tampering". Addressing a press conference, Gupta said the clip had been sent for forensic examination on January 8 on the demand of the opposition Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). "The report clearly states that the alleged remarks by Atishi match frame by frame with the video and that it is completely original," he said. The statement comes amid conflicting claims after the police in AAP-ruled Punjab earlier said their forensic examination had concluded that the video was "doctored", following which an FIR was registered. Subsequently, AAP's chief whip in the Delhi Assembly, Sanjiv Jha, had demanded that Speaker Gupta should initiate breach of privilege proceedings against Delhi Minister Kapil Mishra for sharing the clip on social media. Gupta alleged that the AAP government had acted hastily by conducting a separate forensic test and registering an FIR. He said he would seek a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the entire episode, including the forensic examination.

CIVIL ENGINEER KILLED, FRIEND INJURED AS SPEEDING CAR HITS DIVIDER IN GURUGRAM

Diary Times Desk : A 30-year-old man was killed, and his friend critically injured when their speeding car allegedly collided with a divider in the underpass near the Rapid Metro station on Golf Course Road in DLF Phase 1, officials said on Saturday. The deceased has been identified as Anil Kumar, a resident of Sikar, Rajasthan, and a civil engineer at a private company in Udyog Vihar. His friends, Mohit, Mithilesh, and Bilal, also work at the same company. The injured, Mithilesh, was admitted to a hospital in critical condition. The police handed over the body of the deceased to his family after the postmortem and are investigating the incident. According to police, late on Friday night, Mithilesh, Mohit, and Anil were traveling in a Honda City to Faridabad to drop Bilal. Mohit was driving, while Anil and Mithilesh were in the rear seat. Around 1:00 am on Saturday, the car lost control at the Golf Course Road metro underpass and collided with a divider, leaving all four injured and causing significant damage to the vehicle. Doctors declared Anil dead at the hospital. Mithilesh is in the ICU, while Mohit and Bilal sustained minor injuries.

'ON-PAPER' DOCTORS, 'FAKE' WORK CERTIFICATES: HOW AL FALAH UNIVERSITY MISLED REGULATORS TO GET NMC APPROVALS



Diary Times Desk : Faridabad-based Al Falah University had appointed three doctors -- two arrested by the National Investigation Agency and the third an alleged suicide bomber of the November 2025 Red Fort area blast -- apart from other specialists without police verification or scrutiny, the Enforcement Directorate has found. The agency, as part of its money laundering probe against the promoter of the university, is understood to have furnished statements of various senior executives and faculty of the varsity in this context in a chargesheet filed before a Delhi court on Friday.

Arrested 61-year-old Al Falah Group chairman Jawad Ahmad Siddiqui and the Al Falah Charitable Trust that controls all the educational institutions of the varsity are the two accused named in the complaint filed under various sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The about 260-page chargesheet seeks prosecution of Siddiqui and his Trust for alleged generation of illicit funds from fees paid by students, while allegedly misrepresenting the accreditation and recognition of his institutions. In a statement issued on Friday, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said it has provisionally attached the university land and building, worth about Rs 140 crore and located in the Dhauj area of Faridabad. The court is yet to take cognisance of the ED chargesheet.

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.

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.



1

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.



DRIVE THE DREAM: FIVE THRILLING CARS FROM GOODING CHRISTIE'S FIRST AUCTION IN EUROPE

Diary Times Desk : Drawn by the allure of high-octane thrills and classic designs, car enthusiasts from across the world gather each year in Paris for Rétromobile, Europe's leading indoor automotive show. This year, for its 50th anniversary, Gooding Christie's has become the show's official partner, and on 29 January will hold its first auction of collector cars on the continent. 'Rétromobile is essentially Art Basel for the car world,' explains Rupert Banner, senior specialist and head of sale at Gooding Christie's in New York. 'It's a wonderful convergence of manufacturers, dealers, restorers, collectors and enthusiasts.'

Gooding Christie's was formed at the beginning of 2025, after Christie's acquired the leading car auction house Gooding & Company to bridge the worlds of art, luxury and collector cars. 'At the top end, the markets are becoming more intertwined, and fine cars are going from strength to strength,' says Banner. The first Gooding Christie's sale took place in March 2025 at Amelia Island in Florida, and realised more than \$67 million. The top lot was a 1955 Ferrari 375 MM Berlinetta, which made \$9,465,000.

The following August, at Pebble Beach in California, a second auction realised over \$128 million. The top lot, a 1961 Ferrari 250 GT SWB California Spider Competizione made \$25.3 million, setting a new world record at auction for the California Spider model, and becoming the most valuable car ever to be auctioned by Gooding Christie's since inception. By the end of the year, the prices achieved by Gooding Christie's had broken more than a dozen world records. What does Banner suggest are the most important things for newcomers to the category to consider? 'As with art, watches or wine, collectors prize rarity, provenance and condition. Then there are factors like mileage and exhibition history to take into account. We're also seeing a growth in nostalgic cars from the 1980s and 1990s – the sorts of machines people had posters of on their bedroom walls as teenagers.' The upcoming sale includes 85 cars, spanning 120 years of automotive history, from iconic pieces of early-20th-century design to cutting-edge, track-only hypercars. Here, Banner outlines five of his favourites. In 1985, a Sicilian doctor named Vincenzo Garraffa placed an order with Ferrari's official dealership in Rome for a 288 GTO – a new, landmark car designed to deliver competition-level performance in a form suited to the road. The model had been announced by Enzo Ferrari in 1983, then unveiled at the following year's Geneva Motor Show. Internally, it was the first Ferrari to feature a twin-turbo engine, which delivered previously unseen levels of exhilarating power. Externally, its appearance was radically aggressive: flared arches, aerodynamic ducting and a distinctive rear grille were sculpted from Kevlar and carbon fibre and styled by Pininfarina.



COLLECTING GUIDE: THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

Diary Times Desk :

When collecting ancient objects, it is often the history that speaks to us. Whether it is from one, two, three thousand years ago, it carries with it a long-forgotten tale. The societies that made up the ancient Near East, beginning with the Sumerians in southern Mesopotamia, which dates back to more than 5,000 years ago, produced the first written language – a system of writing consisting of wedge-shaped characters we call cuneiform (coming from the Latin word cuneus for wedge).

From massive stone wall panels to more intimate gold images of deities, there is much more than meets the eye when looking this deep into the past. Near Eastern art refers to works created in Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and the Levant, as well as the South Arabian peninsula, Iran and Afghanistan, from the 6th millennium BC until the Arab conquest in the 7th century AD. In present-day terms, this is the area bounded by the Mediterranean sea to the West, Turkey to the North, Afghanistan in the East and Yemen in the South.

Perhaps the most typical type of objects that one sees on today's art market are stamp and cylinder seals. These had figural scenes engraved onto their surfaces that were designed to be viewed in relief once the seal was pressed or rolled into clay. Stamp seals appeared first, with the earliest examples dating to the 6th millennium BC, while cylinder seals emerged a bit later, during the second half of the 4th millennium BC, around when cuneiform writing was developed. The usage of cylinder seals was a direct response to the needs of a growing bureaucracy that was increasingly involved with long-distance trade. Many of them are of the highest artistic quality, illustrating mythological subjects and often accompanied by cuneiform inscriptions identifying the owner. They can be carved from colourful stones such as jasper, chalcedony, agate, hematite and limestone, while less common examples are made from shell, bronze and frit. Another class of object encountered on today's market are cuneiform tablets, typically in clay but copper, stone and even gold examples are known. Most clay tablets are humble documents that focus on an aspect of the detailed administrative functions of daily life, such as the number of livestock brought to temples, allotments of agricultural fields, and crop harvests. More elaborate tablets, cylinders or barrels can record political and diplomatic letters sent by rulers to their counterparts, mythological stories such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, or the exploits and lineages of a king.



FLICK EQUALS LUIS ENRIQUE'S BARCELONA RECORD BUT STILL FAR BEHIND FRANK RIJKAARD



Diary Times Desk : Barcelona were able to advance to the quarterfinals of the Copa Del Rey thanks to a 2-0 win over Racing Santander. Barça's win rounded up an excellent week for the club, especially keeping in mind that their arch-rival Real Madrid are also out of the competition and are facing a major sporting crisis. However, there is more reason for Barcelona's elation, as the team has now equalled a prestigious record held by Luis Enrique, who is reportedly playing a key role in Dro's potential move to PSG. The win over Racing Santander meant Barcelona have now strung together a series of 11 back-to-back wins in all competitions. This means the Catalans, under Hansi Flick, have now equalled a record set by Enrique's Barcelona team during the treble-winning campaign of 2014/15. This is even more impressive considering the fact that the Barça team managed by Enrique had some of the most gifted players in world football, including the front trio of Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Neymar.

KEY BARCELONA WINGER NOT TRAINING WITH SQUAD AHEAD OF REAL SOCIEDAD CLASH

Diary Times Desk : FC Barcelona return to La Liga mode this weekend after securing qualification for the Copa del Rey quarterfinals and defeating Real Madrid in the Spanish Super Cup final.

The Barcelona players are enjoying a very positive run, with 11 consecutive victories, and are aiming to continue picking up points to maintain their lead in the table when they take on Real Sociedad. The Barcelona squad trained for the final time before travelling on Sunday morning. Hansi Flick knows that he can count on almost all of his players for the league match, with the only confirmed absences being Gavi and Andreas Christensen.

However, according to SPORT, key winger Raphinha did not train with the rest of the group today. Despite his absence, the Brazilian international has not been ruled out of travelling to Anoeta, and Flick will confirm his decision at the press conference. The Brazilian did travel with his teammates to the Ciutat Esportiva and trained individually in the gym after feeling some discomfort, but he did not take part in the session on the pitch.

PSG VERY CLOSE TO REACHING VERBAL AGREEMENT WITH BARCELONA WONDERKID – ROMANO

Diary Times Desk : It appears that Pedro 'Dro' Fernandez will be heading for France as he prepares to leave FC Barcelona in the ongoing transfer window.

News about the 18-year-old's shock departure broke out on Friday, with the La Masia graduate opting to move on by paying his €6 million release clause. There has been no shortage of suitors for Dro, with Manchester City, Chelsea, Borussia Dortmund, and PSG among the clubs keen on acquiring his services. Now, though, according to Fabrizio Romano, PSG seem to be the best placed to sign Dro from Barcelona. Indeed, as per the reliable transfer expert, the French and European champions are close to reaching a verbal agreement with the Barcelona youngster. The Parisian giants, as such, are ahead of the English and German clubs also vying to sign the 18-year-old starlet, with manager Luis Enrique himself understood to be involved in securing the deal. PSG are hoping to close the agreement with Dro soon before they can activate his €6 million release clause and swoop him away from Barcelona.

PSG BOSS LUIS ENRIQUE'S CRYPTIC RESPONSE WHEN ASKED ABOUT INTEREST IN BARCELONA STARLET

Diary Times Desk : Pedro 'Dro' Fernandez has been dominating the headlines in the Barcelona sphere over the past 12 hours or so, after it emerged that he was set to leave the club in the current window.

The La Masia attacking midfielder, who recently turned 18, wants to move to a team where he can play regularly and continue his development, with his €6 million release clause enabling the exit.

Several top teams across Europe have emerged as suitors for the Spanish starlet, with the likes of Chelsea, Borussia Dortmund, and Manchester City making moves.

More recently, PSG, too, have made an offer for Dro. However, when asked about PSG's interest in the Barcelona youngster during a press conference, manager Luis Enrique opted to keep his cards close to his chest. "I don't know, I don't answer," said the former Barcelona manager when quizzed about the Parisians' plans for the January window and interest in Dro.



LUIS ENRIQUE THE KEY FACTOR BEHIND BARCELONA STARLET'S IMMINENT MOVE TO PSG – REPORT

Diary Times Desk : Paris Saint-Germain expect to finalise the signing of Pedro 'Dro' Fernandez from FC Barcelona in the coming days.

The 18-year-old midfielder represents a market opportunity for the reigning European champions, who have accelerated negotiations with the La Masia talent with the intention of paying his €6 million release clause and completing the signing. PSG moved quickly to take advantage of the release clause the moment Dro turned 18 on January 12.

And, according to AS, the presence of Luis Enrique has been decisive in PSG getting ahead of a large number of European clubs that had shown interest in signing Dro and were even willing to offer him significantly higher wages.

PSG's position as favourites to sign Dro is largely down to the former Spain national team coach, regarded as one of the best managers in the world and a key figure in changing the recent history of the Parisian club. The 18-year-old Barcelona starlet is attracted by the idea of playing under the Spanish coach. The style of play and leadership he has shown since arriving in Paris convinced the youngster that he would have a clear opportunity to earn minutes in the French capital.

FLICK TALKS DRO, RAPHINHA, TER STEGEN, RASHFORD, BERNAL AHEAD OF REAL SOCIEDAD VS BARCELONA

Diary Times Desk : FC Barcelona will be aiming to make it 12 wins in a row when they take on Real Sociedad in La Liga on Sunday, away at Anoeta.

The Blaugrana have been unstoppable since their UCL loss to Chelsea in November, securing 11 wins in a row, while lifting the first trophy of the season in the form of the Spanish Super Cup.

Now, the focus will shift back to the league, with the aim of consolidating their position at the top of the league table. Ahead of the visit to the Basque country, Barcelona manager Hansi Flick addressed the media in his pre-match press conference, discussing various matters, including the imminent exit of Pedro 'Dro' Fernandez. "They have more confidence after two wins and a draw. I know the German coach, and he has given them more confidence. We're back in the league, and we want to win," said Flick, talking about the game against Real Sociedad.