

NEWS IN BRIEF

INDIAN SPINNER RAHUL CHAHAR ANNOUNCES DIVORCE FROM WIFE ISHANI

Diary Times Desk : Indian spinner Rahul Chahar announced parting ways with his wife, Ishani, on Friday. Rahul made the announcement of his divorce on Instagram, pointing out that he spent "the last fifteen months navigating courtrooms, learning patience, resilience, and the strength". The 26-year-old also said that he "moves forward wiser, more self-aware and certain of the life he deserves to build". In a post on Instagram, Rahul wrote, "To Whom It May Concern. I entered marriage at a young age. Before I fully understood myself my worth, or the life I truly wanted to build. What followed were years of lessons I never expected, and the last fifteen months spent navigating courtrooms."

NEET-PG ADMISSION 2025-26: SC TO TAKE UP PETITIONS AGAINST REDUCTION IN CUT-OFF ON FEBRUARY 23

Diary Times Desk : The Supreme Court will take up petitions challenging the unusual reduction in qualifying cut-off percentiles for various categories for admission to NEET-PG 2025-26 on February 23.

A bench led by Justice PS Narasimha, which had on February 6 expressed surprise over an unusual reduction in qualifying cut-off percentiles for various categories for admission to NEET-PG 2025-26, on Friday agreed to hear the matter on February 23 after the petitioners' counsel mentioned it.

Since the Supreme Court has already passed a common order on February 6 in his case, along with two related matters, it would be appropriate for his matter to be heard together with the main NEET-PG case, the petitioners' counsel submitted. We were stunned to see why this method was adopted. These are all regular doctors... This is about standards. The question is whether those standards are being compromised," the court said, a stunned bench had said, directing Centre to explain the rationale behind the decision. Under the revised criteria categories.

AI SUMMIT NEWS

US UNVEILS 'AI SOVEREIGNTY' PLAN WITH INDIA AS KEY PARTNER AT SUMMIT



Diary Times Desk : Positioning India as a key partner in its global artificial-intelligence (AI) strategy, the United States (US) on Friday outlined a plan to expand adoption of American AI technologies among allies while allowing countries to retain data control and strategic autonomy at India AI Impact Summit.

The US delegation was led by White House science adviser Michael Kratsios and included Under Secretary of State Jacob Helberg, Under Secretary of Commerce William Kimmitt and Ambassador Sergio Gor.

Kratsios described India and other partner countries as central to what Washington calls "AI sovereignty" — the ability of nations to deploy advanced AI systems domestically while keeping sensitive data within national borders. He said countries need not pursue technological isolation but should instead adopt trusted technologies while maintaining independent decision-making.

"Real AI sovereignty means owning and using best-in-class technology for the benefit of your people and charting your national destiny amid global transformation," he said, urging developing economies to accelerate adoption in sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, education, energy infrastructure and public services.

The announcement formed part of the US government's new "American AI Exports Programme", unveiled under the administration of President Donald Trump. Washington said the initiative would help partner nations build domestic AI ecosystems using components of the American technology stack while strengthening local industry rather than replacing it. Officials outlined multiple measures including integrating leading companies from partner countries into US-supported AI deployment frameworks, financing support through international financial institutions, and creation of a "US Tech Corps" to provide technical expertise for implementing public-sector AI systems.

AMIT SHAH LAUNCHES 2ND PHASE OF VIBRANT VILLAGES PROGRAMME

Diary Times Desk : Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday launched the second phase of the Vibrant Villages Programme, which will cover 1,954 border villages in 15 states and two Union territories, from Assam's Cachar district.

The programme is a part of the Centre's efforts to strengthen border villages and promote inclusive development in these areas, an official statement said.

The Vibrant Villages Programme-II is a central sector scheme with an outlay of Rs 6,839 crore up to the 2028-29 financial year and will be implemented across 15 states and 2 Union Territories (UTs), it said.

The programme is designed to ensure the comprehensive and sustainable development of border villages through a saturation-based and convergence-driven approach. It focuses on improving essential infrastructure, enhancing access to basic services, and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities, thereby fostering secure, resilient and prosperous border communities in alignment with the vision of Viskit Bharat-2047, according to the release.



HATS OFF TO US SUPREME COURT FOR STRIKING DOWN TRUMP'S TARIFF STRATEGY: CONGRESS



Diary Times Desk : The Congress on Friday hailed the US Supreme Court decision striking down President Donald Trump's global tariffs and said the American system of checks and balances still seems to be working.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary in-charge communications, Jairam Ramesh, said, "Hats off to the US Supreme Court for striking down President Trump's entire tariff strategy! Quite an amazing decision given its ideological composition."

"A 6-3 verdict is decisive. The American system of checks and balances still seems to be working."

The US Supreme Court on Friday struck down President Donald Trump's far-reaching global tariffs, handing him a significant loss on an issue crucial to his economic agenda.

The 6-3 decision centred on tariffs imposed under an emergency powers law, including the sweeping reciprocal tariffs Trump levied on nearly every other country.

SUPREME COURT PASSES EXTRAORDINARY ORDER IN BENGAL SIR EXERCISE CASE



Diary Times Desk : Citing "trust deficit" between the West Bengal government and the Election Commission, the Supreme Court on Friday ordered deployment of judicial officers, including retired judges, for smooth conduct of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the state ahead of the upcoming assembly election.

The "extraordinary" order came from a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice Vipul M Pancholi, which took serious note of the poll panel's allegation that the state government hasn't spared enough grade 'A' officers for the SIR exercise.

Rejecting the state government's objections, the Bench allowed the EC to publish a final list of voters in West Bengal by the February 28 deadline. However, it said the poll panel could come out with supplementary lists later. No prejudice will be caused to anyone if supplementary voter lists are issued after February 28 as names of electors can be included till the last date of filing of nomination papers for the elections, it added.

The Bench lamented that constant bickering between the West Bengal government and the Election Commission was delaying the SIR process in the state.

J-K'S

SECURITY FORCES SET UP OVER 40 TEMPORARY BASES IN J-K'S HIGH-ALTITUDE AREAS TO TACKLE TERRORISTS



Diary Times Desk : Aiming to penetrate high-altitude areas in Jammu and Kashmir (J-K) post the Pahalgam terror attack, security forces have set up more than 40 temporary operating bases (ToBs) in the past few months in the safe havens of terrorists, who are operating from remote high reaches of the Himalayas.

Highly placed sources informed that terrorists operating from PoK and who infiltrate into J-K have been operating from high-altitude areas of the Himalayas in what is being termed as a change in tactics on their part.

Notably, the terrorists involved in the Pahalgam terror attack had also arrived through the higher reaches of the Himalayas, and after the incident, security forces were forced to do a rethink therefore, since September 2025, around 40-odd ToBs have been set up in the high-altitude regions more than 6,000 ft and above.

In fact, the first ToB was set up in the Tral-Pahalgam corridor, sources informed. Senior officials informed that just as in Chhattisgarh and other Naxal-infested areas, where security forces set up forward operation bases (FoBs) as an area dominating exercise in deep forests to target ultras and end their dominance.

GOVT SENDS EVICTION NOTICE TO 3 SLUM CLUSTERS NEAR PM'S RESIDENCE IN DELHI



Diary Times Desk : The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has sent eviction notices to three slum clusters located on Race Course Road, close to the Prime Minister's residence in the city.

According to the notice sent by the Land and Development Office (L&DO) under the ministry on Thursday, residents have been asked to vacate the premises of the clusters — Bhai Ram Camp, Masjid Camp and DID Camp — by March 6, and shift to flats allotted to them at the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) colony in Savda Chevra. Locals have been informed that failure to vacate could invite legal action. Reports suggested that around 717 households have been allotted alternative housing at Savda Chevra, located approximately 45 km from the current site. The slum clusters are also located a few kilometres from the Prime Minister's official residence at 7 Lok Kalyan Marg.

UP ENGINEER, WIFE GET DEATH SENTENCE FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF 33 CHILDREN



Diary Times Desk : A special court in Uttar Pradesh's Banda on Friday sentenced a former junior engineer of the state's Irrigation Department and his wife to death for the sexual exploitation of 33 minor boys -- some as young as three -- over a decade, officials said. The POCSO court termed the crimes as "rarest of rare" and held Ram Bhawan and Durgawati guilty of abusing children between 2010 and 2020. The duo circulated over two lakh objectionable videos and photographs of the victims to nearly 47 countries via the internet. The couple was convicted under provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act by the court of Additional District and Sessions Judge (POCSO) Pradeep Kumar Mishra. They were found guilty of offences, including aggravated penetrative sexual assault, using a child for pornographic purposes, storage of pornographic material involving children, and abetment and criminal conspiracy, Special Public Prosecutor Saurabh Singh said. The court directed the Uttar Pradesh government to pay Rs 10 lakh in compensation to each of the 33 victims.

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HUMILIATING INDIA YOUR IDEA OF OPPN? GOYAL TO GANDHI AFTER YOUTH CONG WORKERS PROTEST TOPLESS AT AI SUMMIT VENUE

Diary Times Desk : A massive political slugfest erupted this afternoon as videos of topless Indian Youth Congress workers protesting at the venue of India AI Impact Summit went viral. While the BJP called the agitation a national shame, Commerce minister Piyush Goyal came out and asked if humiliating India was Rahul Gandhi's idea of a protest. "This is CONGRESS ARROGANCE & FRUSTRATION on display! So, Mr. Rahul Gandhi, humiliating India to target the Government is your idea of opposition!" said Goyal after the protestors were detained by Delhi police. Goyal said Gandhi wanted to choke India's growth. "While you want to CHOKe India's development by peddling lies about the recent trade deals, your foot soldiers are marching shirtless at the prestigious AI Summit, attempting to embarrass 140 crore Indians globally. This disruption strategy only exposes your and your party's lack of vision for India," he said. Coal minister G Kishan Reddy called Congress a national shame.

INDIA BACKS UN STATEMENT ON WEST BANK, CITES 2-STATE POSITION



Diary Times Desk : India on Friday clarified that its decision to associate with a United Nations statement criticising Israeli settlement plans in the West Bank was consistent with its long-standing support for a negotiated two-state solution. The clarification came after New Delhi initially skipped a joint appearance with several countries at the UN but later joined a statement issued in New York condemning unilateral measures altering the status of Palestinian territories. Responding to queries, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the text was not a negotiated UN resolution but a statement issued by a group of countries, and India associated itself with it in line with its previously articulated position. "Our position was recently expressed in the India-Arab League Ministerial joint statement. Both sides reaffirmed commitment to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East based on international law, relevant UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative," he said. The spokesperson reiterated India's support for "a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine based on 1967 borders living side by side in peace with Israel" and the protection of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. He added that several countries had similarly associated themselves with the initiative after it was issued.

BRIGADIER'S 17-YEAR WAIT ENDS: TRIBUNAL ORDERS NOTIONAL PROMOTION TO MAJOR GENERAL

Diary Times Desk : Seventeen years after the promotion of a Brigadier was stalled, the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) has directed that he be notionally promoted to the rank of Major General after holding that a disciplinary case which the officer had faced was initiated much later than the date he was supposed to be elevated to the higher rank. Brig Anil Kayastha, an Army Medical Corps officer of August 1975, was approved for promotion to Major General by a Selection Board held in October 2008, but was not given the next rank when the vacancy accrued on May 1, 2009 following the retirement of another Major General. He contended before the tribunal that although no reason was given for denying him promotion, he learnt that it was due to the pendency of disciplinary proceedings against him. At the time of his selection and on the date he was supposed to be promoted, there were no disciplinary proceedings pending against him, nor was he under any ban by the Discipline and Vigilance (DV) branch. He said that on the basis of an anonymous letter, a Court of Inquiry was initiated against him in December 2008 when he was posted at Headquarters 11 Corps in Jalandhar.

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KHARGA CORPS VALIDATES EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNTER-DRONE GRID

Diary Times Desk : Air Defence formations under the Kharga Corps of Western Command carried out a Combat Readiness Test Exercise (CRTE) to validate the effectiveness of the counter-unmanned aerial system (UAS) grid. Various weapons systems, including surface-to-air missiles, self-propelled and static anti-aircraft guns, radars and surveillance systems and communication equipment were evaluated in a realistic battlefield environment that included live firing. "The formation demonstrated exceptional professionalism and operational readiness while engaging hostile aerial targets, including a variety of drones with high precision during both day and night under simulated battle conditions," the Western Command said on Friday. The air defence exercise is part of a larger field exercise that Ambala-based Kharga Corps, the Army's most potent strike formation, is conducting at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in north-western Rajasthan.

RAJ KUNDRA APPEARS BEFORE COURT IN BITCOIN MONEY-LAUNDERING CASE; GRANTED BAIL

Diary Times Desk : A special court here on Friday granted bail to businessman Raj Kundra after he appeared before it in a money-laundering case linked to an alleged Bitcoin scam. Special judge for cases under Prevention of Money Laundering Act RB Rote had in January issued a summons to Kundra after taking cognizance of a charge sheet filed by the Enforcement Directorate. Kundra appeared before the court and filed a bail plea, which the court allowed. His lawyer, Prashant Patil, submitted that Kundra had cooperated with the ED's investigation since 2021. All the documents related to the case were already in the possession of the probe agency; therefore, his custody was not needed, said the lawyer. The court, while taking cognizance of the charge sheet, had said that the statements of witnesses and other evidence "prima-facie show" that Kundra and Dubai-based businessman Rajesh Satija were involved in an offence punishable under the PMLA. Kundra, the central probe agency has alleged, received 285 Bitcoins from the alleged mastermind of Gain Bitcoin Ponzi scam Amit Bhardwaj for setting up a Bitcoin mining farm in Ukraine. As the deal did not materialise, Kundra was still in possession of 285 Bitcoins valued at more than Rs 150 crore, the ED claimed. As per the charge sheet, Kundra claimed to have acted.

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14-YEAR-OLD'S JOYRIDE AFTER LOCKING PARENTS UP AT HOME ENDS IN ACCIDENT IN KERALA

Diary Times Desk : A late-night joyride by a 14-year-old boy and his school friend in the family car, after locking up his parents in their house, resulted in an accident at Karmana here on Friday with the vehicle plunging several feet down the roadside. The incident occurred around 2 am after the car broke through the railing on the side of the road and plunged several feet down, ending flipped over, according to visuals on TV channels. "Miraculously" both boys were not injured and climbed back up to the road on their own, police said. Subsequently, police informed the parents and that is when they realised what had happened, an officer of Karamana police station said. The officer said a case under the Motor Vehicles Act and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita has been registered against the car's registered owner -- the mother. The boys went on a joyride through the city from Kannammoola and it ended at the Karamana-Thampanoor road. The police said there have been several such incidents recently of children locking up.

FROM MANIPUR HILLS TO NATIONAL STAGE: CISF WOMEN'S BAND WINS CHAMPIONSHIP

Diary Times Desk : From the quiet hills of Manipur to the thunder of applause on the national stage, Constable Lydia Chingbiaksiam won the Best Conductor award as the CISF Women's Band lifted the Overall Championship at the 26th All India Police Band Competition-2025 (AIPBC). Lydia, who joined the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) in 2022, became part of history with the formation of the CISF Women's Band in 2023—turning dreams into duty. The constable's journey tells a story stitched with sacrifice, perseverance, and pride. She called the moment something where hard work met honor, and service found its rhythm. Her unwavering dedication, discipline, and passion serve as a powerful inspiration to young women across the nation, showing that with courage, perseverance, and belief, they too can rise, lead, and bring honor to the country. "CISF is continuously encouraging and nurturing talented youngsters.

PREPARATIONS START FOR RAHUL GANDHI'S BARNALA RALLY

Diary Times Desk : Hectic preparations are under way as the Punjab Congress gears up to present a united front ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls, with a rally scheduled in Barnala to be addressed by Rahul Gandhi. The Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) has appointed senior Congress leader Hardyal Singh Kamboj as the in-charge of Barnala district for the rally. He will coordinate with Barnala MLA Kuldeep Singh Dhillon to oversee the arrangements. Kamboj has held a series of meetings with party leaders in Patiala, Rajpura and Sangrur to review preparations for the political event. Party leaders said the rally will be held at the Barnala grain market, where key issues concerning Punjab will be highlighted. "Rahul Gandhi will address the gathering and expose the hollow promises of the AAP government, as well as the failure of state agencies to maintain law and order in Punjab," Kamboj said. "We have conducted meetings and coordinated with the Barnala unit to ensure foolproof arrangements for the rally.

10 YOUTH CONGRESS WORKERS DETAINED FOR STAGING PROTEST AT AI IMPACT SUMMIT EXPO HALL

Diary Times Desk : Ten India Youth Congress (IYC) workers were taken into custody after staging a protest at an exhibition hall in Bharat Mandapam during the AI Impact Summit, where they raised slogans against Prime Minister Modi. Youth Congress workers carried T-shirts with the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while shouting slogans "PM is compromised". The protesters were subsequently escorted to the Tilak Marg police station. The police said no one will be allowed to violate the law. The demonstration briefly disrupted proceedings at the summit, which was attended by policymakers, industry leaders and global participants. The BJP responded by criticising the protest and accusing the Congress of attempting to damage India's global image. Party spokesperson C R Kesavan said the conduct of the protesters was indefensible and alleged that it reflected a pattern of behaviour aimed at undermining the country. He further stated that such actions would not be forgotten by the public, particularly young citizens.



**US UNVEILS 'AI SOVEREIGNTY' PLAN
WITH INDIA AS KEY PARTNER AT SUMMIT**

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Kratsios described India and other partner countries as central to what Washington calls "AI sovereignty" — the ability of nations to deploy advanced AI systems domestically while keeping sensitive data within national borders. He said countries need not pursue technological isolation but should instead adopt trusted technologies while maintaining independent decision-making.

"Real AI sovereignty means owning and using best-in-class technology for the benefit of your people and charting your national destiny amid global transformation," he said, urging developing economies to accelerate adoption in sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, education, energy infrastructure and public services. The announcement formed part of the US government's new "American AI Exports Programme", unveiled under the administration of President Donald Trump.

**KING CHARLES' BROTHER ANDREW RELEASED AFTER ARREST OVER MISCONDUCT
RELATING TO EPSTEIN**

Diary Times Desk : King Charles' younger brother Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor was released from police custody on Thursday evening after being arrested on suspicion of misconduct in public office over allegations he sent confidential government documents to Jeffrey Epstein. Mountbatten-Windsor, who turned 66 on Thursday, had been questioned all day by detectives from Thames Valley Police. Earlier this month, the police force said it was looking into allegations that he had passed documents to the late convicted sex offender while working as a trade envoy. The arrest of the senior royal, eighth in line to the throne, is unprecedented in modern times. "I have learned with the deepest concern the news about Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor and suspicion of misconduct in public office," King Charles said in a statement.

**US SUPREME COURT STRIKES DOWN DONALD
TRUMP'S SWEEPING TARIFFS**

Diary Times Desk : The Supreme Court struck down President Donald Trump's far-reaching global tariffs on Friday, handing him a significant loss on an issue crucial to his economic agenda. The 6-3 decision centres on tariffs imposed under an emergency powers law, including the sweeping "reciprocal" tariffs he levied on nearly every other country. It's the first major piece of Trump's broad agenda to come squarely before the nation's highest court, which he helped shape with the appointments of three conservative jurists in his first term. The majority found that the Constitution "very clearly" gives Congress the power to impose taxes, which include tariffs. "The Framers did not vest any part of the taxing power in the Executive Branch," Chief Justice John Roberts wrote. Justices Samuel Alito, Clarence Thomas and Brett Kavanaugh dissented. "The tariffs at issue here may or may not be wise policy. But as a matter of text, history, and precedent, they are clearly lawful," Kavanaugh wrote in the dissent.

**US STOCKS HOLD RELATIVELY STEADY AFTER
SUPREME COURT STRIKES DOWN TRUMP'S
TARIFFS**

Diary Times Desk : US stocks are holding relatively steady on Friday after the Supreme Court struck down President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs, which had thrown financial markets into panic when announced last year. The S&P 500 rose 0.1 per cent. It had been drifting between small gains and losses earlier in the morning, after discouraging reports showing slowing growth for the economy and faster inflation created relatively few ripples in the market. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 7 points, or less than 0.1 per cent, as of 10:15 am Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was 0.3 per cent higher. Treasury yields were mixed in the bond market following some initial squiggles up and down following the ruling. Like stocks, they had likewise moved little earlier in the morning following the disappointing.

**5.9-MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE
HITS PARTS OF PAKISTAN**

Diary Times Desk : A 5.9-magnitude earthquake on Friday struck parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Punjab provinces in Pakistan, with tremors felt in several cities, including Peshawar and Islamabad. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage. The epicentre of the quake that struck at 6.09 pm (local time) was in Afghanistan's Hindu Kush region at a depth of 101 km, Pakistan Meteorological Department said. The tremor was felt in different cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Punjab, as well as in Islamabad. Pakistan lies in a quake-prone zone due to its location along the boundary of the Arabian Sea, the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates. A 5.6-magnitude earthquake hit Balochistan province last Friday, but no loss to life or property was reported. Its epicentre was 86 km northeast of Khuzdar town in the province. The quake was preceded on the same day by another tremor of magnitude 3.8 that struck 75 km southeast of Khuzdar at a depth of 33 km. The worst quake the country suffered was in 2005, which killed about 74,000 people.

**ABANDONED BABY MONKEY
FINDS COMFORT IN STUFFED
ORANGUTAN, CHARMING
TOKYO ZOO VISITORS**

Diary Times Desk : At a zoo outside Tokyo, the monkey enclosure has become a must-see attraction thanks to an inseparable pair: Punch, a baby Japanese macaque, and his stuffed orangutan companion. Punch's mother abandoned the macaque when he was born seven months ago at the Ichikawa City Zoo, and when an onlooker noticed and alerted zookeepers, they swung into action. Japanese baby macaques typically cling to their mothers to build muscle strength and for a sense of security, so Punch needed a swift intervention, zookeeper Kosuke Shikano said. The keepers experimented with substitutes, including rolled-up towels and other stuffed animals, before settling on the orange, bug-eyed orangutan, sold by Swedish furniture brand IKEA. "This stuffed animal has relatively long hair and several easy places to hold," Shikano said. "We thought that its resemblance to a monkey might help Punch integrate back into the troop later on, and that's why we chose it." Punch has rarely been seen without it since, dragging the cuddly toy everywhere even though it is bigger than him, and delighting fans who have flocked to the zoo since videos of the two went viral. "Seeing Punch on social media, abandoned by his parents but still trying so hard, really moved me," said 26-year-old nurse Miyu Igarashi.



AI IMPACT SUMMIT: INDIA JOINS US-LED STRATEGIC BLOC 'PAX SILICA'

Diary Times Desk : India on Friday joined the United States-led high-technology and supply chain initiative, Pax Silica, signing the declaration on the sidelines of the AI Impact Summit at Bharat Mandapam and formally entering the strategic technology framework. The declaration was signed in the presence of Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and US envoy to India Sergio Gor and US Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Jacob Helberg. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has created global trust in India. The world trusts India because of its IT strength and large talent pool, and a foreign policy that reinforces that confidence. Pax Silica is important for semiconductor supply chain, manufacturing, chip design and for establishing a complete semiconductor ecosystem in the country," Vaishnaw said after the signing.

Referring to India's technology trajectory, the Minister said sustained policy continuity would allow the present generation to benefit from cumulative economic gains and asserted that Indian engineers were already working on advanced two-nanometre chip designs. The Minister added that the global semiconductor industry would require nearly one million additional skilled professionals and India aimed to supply a substantial portion of that workforce through expanded access to design tools and training programmes. India's inclusion aligns with its push to position itself as a global semiconductor and electronics manufacturing hub, supported by incentive schemes, critical minerals partnerships and expanding technology cooperation with the United States and partner nations.

**VENEZUELA APPROVES AMNESTY THAT COULD RELEASE HUNDREDS DETAINED FOR POLITICAL REASONS**

Diary Times Desk : Venezuela acting president on Thursday signed into law an amnesty Bill that could lead to the release of politicians, activists, lawyers and many others, effectively acknowledging that the government has held hundreds of people in prison for political motivations. The approval marks a stark turn for the South American nation, whose authorities have for decades denied holding any political prisoners. It is the latest policy reversal following last month's stunning US military raid in the country's capital, Caracas, to capture then-President Nicolas Maduro. Acting President Delcy Rodriguez, who proposed the Bill late last month, signed the measure into law hours after it was approved by the country's legislature. "It's not perfect, but it's a great step forward," opposition lawmaker Nora Bracho said during the debate.

US SUPREME COURT STRIKES DOWN TRUMP'S SWEEPING TARIFFS

Diary Times Desk : In a major blow to US President Donald Trump's signature economic policy, the US Supreme Court on Friday invalidated most of his sweeping tariff measures, The Washington Post reported. According to The Post, the US apex court held that the US President did not possess the authority under the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to impose extensive import duties on goods from nearly all US trading partners. The ruling is expected to have wide-ranging consequences for global trade, businesses, consumers, inflation trends and household finances across the country. The verdict marks a notable shift from a series of recent wins for Trump at the Supreme Court. Over the past year, the justices had largely sided with the administration in interim orders, allowing policies such as a ban on transgender troops serving in the military.

TRUMP DIRECTS PENTAGON, OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO RELEASE FILES ON UFOS

Diary Times Desk : US President Donald Trump said on Thursday that he's directing the Pentagon and other government agencies to identify and release files related to extraterrestrials and UFOs because of "tremendous interest." Trump made the announcement in a social media post hours after he accused former President Barack Obama of disclosing "classified information" when Obama recently suggested in a podcast interview that aliens were real. Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One, "I don't know if they're real or not," and said of Obama, "I may get him out of trouble by declassifying." In a post on his social media platform Thursday night, Trump said he was directing government agencies to release files related "to alien and extraterrestrial life, unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP), and unidentified flying objects (UFOs), and any and all other information connected to these highly complex, but extremely interesting and important, matters." Obama, who made his comments in a podcast appearance over the weekend, later clarified that he had not seen evidence that aliens "have made contact with us," but said, "statistically, the universe is so vast that the odds are good there's life out there."

**"BUILDING ON WARM, HISTORIC TIES BETWEEN 2 COUNTRIES": MEA ON INDIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH NEW BANGLADESH GOVT**

Diary Times Desk : The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Friday said India looks forward to working closely with the new government in Bangladesh, underlining its commitment to further strengthening the multifaceted bilateral relationship between both countries. Addressing the weekly media briefing, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that following the recent 13th national parliamentary elections in Bangladesh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman. He said, "You would have seen that once the elections happened in Bangladesh, our Prime Minister congratulated the Prime Minister, Tarique Rahman. On the 17th, when the swearing-in ceremony, we had our Speaker Om Birla representing the Government of India at the swearing-in ceremony, there he handed over a letter from the Prime Minister to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, he also had a bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, the letter that was handed over underlined India's commitment to support, democratic progressive and inclusive Bangladesh."

"INDIA'S PROPOSAL FOR INCLUSIVE, SOCIAL-PURPOSE AI VERY IMPORTANT": CUBAN DELEGATION PRESIDENT AT AI IMPACT SUMMIT

Diary Times Desk : Highlighting the significance of responsible and inclusive artificial intelligence, Rafael Luis Torralbas Ezepeleta, President of the Cuban Delegation at the India AI Impact Summit 2026, said on Friday that India's vision for social-purpose AI is highly relevant for Cuba. Speaking to ANI on the sidelines of the summit, Torralbas Ezepeleta, on his first visit to India, expressed admiration for the country and appreciation for hosting a Global South-focused AI event. "This is my first time in India. I'm really impressed by this country, and I would like to thank the Government of India for inviting a Cuban delegation to the AI Impact Summit. This is the first Global South--big summit in Artificial Intelligence, and we appreciate the quite relevant proposal of India about inclusive Artificial Intelligence," he said. He noted that Cuba has its own national strategy to deploy AI responsibly, focusing on applications in healthcare and the biopharmaceutical sector. The country is also investing in developing highly skilled human resources in AI, informatics, and data science through its 50 universities nationwide. "Cuba is a small country with a population of only 9 million. Compared with India, we are like a small city in India."

RUSSIAN SCIENTISTS DEVELOP HIGH-EFFICIENCY SOLAR CATALYSTS FOR WATER PURIFICATION

Diary Times Desk : Scientists at the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (MIPT) have developed a new class of photocatalysts capable of purifying water using visible sunlight, marking a major step forward in sustainable water treatment technologies, according to the institute's official website. The research was conducted by experts from MIPT's Centre for Photonics and Two-Dimensional Materials in collaboration with international partners. The team identified the most efficient material structure for photocatalytic activity within the visible light spectrum, as reported by TV BRICS. According to TV BRICS, Photocatalysis is considered a promising method for removing organic pollutants such as dyes, pharmaceutical residues, pesticides and oil traces from water. However, most existing photocatalysts function mainly under ultraviolet light, which constitutes only about 5 per cent of the solar spectrum. In comparison, visible light accounts for nearly half of solar radiation.



"DEEPAKES, MISINFORMATION POSE SERIOUS THREATS TO DEMOCRACY": OM BIRLA

Diary Times Desk : Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Friday drew attention to the growing challenges posed by deepfakes and misinformation while stressing the need for developing robust safeguards alongside technological advancements to protect democratic discourse from manipulation and confusion. He was addressing the special session titled "AI for Democracy" at the India AI Impact Summit held at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. He emphasised that Artificial Intelligence (AI) must be used to strengthen truth and credibility, not to distort or suppress facts. Birla noted that AI has the potential to make democracy more transparent, accountable and citizen-centric. He stressed that the nation's guiding principle has always been "Sarvajana Hitaya, Sarvajana Sukhaya" for the welfare and happiness of all. India, he noted, works with the spirit of global well-being, rooted in its enduring civilizational values. Highlighting the transformative role of technology in legislative functioning.

"KEEPING AN EYE ON SITUATION IN IRAN," MEA SPOX SAYS AMID ESCALATION WITH US

Diary Times Desk : Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs, Randhir Jaiswal, on Friday said that India is keeping an eye on Indians in Iran amid escalation with the US. Addressing the weekly press briefing, Jaiswal said, "We are keeping an eye on the situation and staying in constant touch with the Indian community living there (in Iran)." Iran's envoy to the United Nations has said that Tehran will respond "decisively" to any "military aggression" by the United States in a letter urging the UN Security Council to condemn recent threats from US President Donald Trump, Al Jazeera reported. Iran's UN ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani had yesterday called on members of the council and UN chief Antonio Guterres to act, noting in particular Trump's recent specific threat to use an airfield located in the Indian Ocean in the Chagos Islands, in a potential attack on Iran. "Given the volatile situation in the region and the persistent movement and build-up of military.

"BOTH SIDES WORKING TO FINALISE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL TRADE AGREEMENT": MEA ON INDIA-US INTERIM TRADE AGREEMENT FRAMEWORK

Diary Times Desk : India and the United States of America are working towards finalising a mutually beneficial trade agreement under the interim trade agreement framework announced on February 7, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Friday. Addressing the weekly media briefing, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said both countries are moving ahead in line with the joint statement adopted on February 7. "We have adopted the joint statement between India and the US recently. As per the joint statement, both sides are working to finalize mutually beneficial trade agreement. A team from our side led by the chief negotiator, is expected to head to the US next week," Jaiswal said. Jaiswal further said that a team from India's side, led by the "chief negotiator", is expected to head to the US next week. Earlier today in a press conference on the sidelines of the Global AI Impact Summit taking place in the national capital.

"TRADE CAN DRIVE GLOBAL AI DIFFUSION": WTO DEPUTY DG HILL ON TECH FACILITATION AROUND THE WORLD

Diary Times Desk : Highlighting the role of trade in accelerating the global adoption of artificial intelligence, Johanna Hill, Deputy Director General of the World Trade Organisation, on Friday said that trade is a key vehicle to facilitate discussions and diffusion of AI technology worldwide. Speaking to ANI on the sidelines of the India AI Impact Summit 2026, Hill emphasised the importance of leveraging the multilateral trading system to ensure that AI goods and services are accessible to countries across the globe. "We see that trade is a vehicle that can facilitate the diffusion of AI, of AI technology. And therefore, we are urging members to use the multilateral trading system so that these AI goods and services can be broadly received in the rest of the world," she said. Hill also pointed out that realising these opportunities requires investments in skills development and digital infrastructure. "At the conference, you heard many talk about the need for skills development and to invest in digital infrastructure. These are the areas that are needed. In the international organisation space, we are working together with partners like the World Bank.

MEET 'LUSI', THE 'MADE IN INDIA' AI-INTEGRATED ROBOTIC BABY REVOLUTIONISING MEDICAL TRAINING AT AI IMPACT SUMMIT



Diary Times Desk : The India AI Impact Summit 2026 in the national capital has showcased some groundbreaking technological marvels across all sectors, with several Indian companies pushing the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" initiative on such a global stage. One such standout stall comes from the healthcare sector, which transforms how medical professionals are trained. The IITI DRISHTI CPS Foundation stall showcases a realistic 2.5 kg robotic newborn named 'LuSi' (Lungs Simulator) that helps doctors and students bridge the gap between theory and high-stakes clinical practice. Developed by Maverick Simulation Solutions, LuSi is not just a mannequin; it is a physiologically autonomous lung simulator designed to mimic the complex respiratory conditions of a newborn infant. Integrated with Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, the system provides high-fidelity, scenario-based training that was previously only possible on real patients. Speaking to ANI on the model, Ajit Kumar, Senior Vice President of Maverick Simulation Solutions, highlighted the ethical and practical necessity of such technology. "This is a very advanced baby, which is like a newborn right now, and it can mimic any kind of respiratory condition. The diseases that children have, this baby can mimic. So, this baby is used for training. When a child is born and has various types of respiratory diseases, instead of treating real children and using them as guinea pigs, you can use this mannequin for training. You can learn to treat all those diseases on this baby," Kumar said.

"STRONG ENDORSEMENT OF OUR POLICY": UNION MINISTER VAISHNAW ON INDIA'S 'MANAV' VISION ON AI AT IMPACT SUMMIT



Diary Times Desk : Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday said India's 'MANAV' vision for Artificial Intelligence, outlining a human-centric framework for ethical, accountable and inclusive AI governance, received strong global endorsement during the India AI Impact Summit 2026. Speaking at a press conference in the national capital, Vaishnaw highlighted the international recognition for India's AI policy, which focuses on developing a sovereign bouquet of AI models across five layers. "We also found very strong endorsement of our policy of working on all five layers and our focus on having a sovereign bouquet of models, the models which were released. In every bilateral that I had with the industry leaders, they were really surprised at the quality of output with such few resources... with such frugal resources, our engineers and researchers have produced such good models, which is what gives us huge, huge, useful," he said. The minister also praised the engagement of India's youth in AI innovation, which was showcased during the Expo and Summit in Bharat Mandapam. "We met very young innovators over the past few days who have done remarkable work in AI. This is very encouraging because if the youth sees that hope in this new world, they will have positivity about this technology," he added.

"AI SHOULD BE USED TO IMPACT LIVES, DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES, HUMAN RIGHTS, NOT JUST TO MAKE PROFITS": GS OF INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Diary Times Desk : Stressing that Artificial Intelligence must serve humanity beyond commercial interests, Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), said AI should be leveraged to strengthen democratic processes, protect human rights and improve people's lives, rather than merely generate profits. Speaking to ANI on the sidelines of the India AI Summit 2026 in the national capital, Chungong commended the Government of India for hosting the first such AI summit in the Global South, calling it a significant and timely initiative. "I must commend the Government of India for hosting this very important summit on artificial intelligence. In so doing, they are hosting the first such summit in the Global South, which is something very important for us because the conversation on artificial intelligence needs to have global inputs and not just from certain parts of the world," he said. He emphasised that discussions on AI must reflect perspectives from both developed and developing nations to ensure legitimacy and inclusivity in global governance frameworks.

"INDIA-US WORKING TOGETHER AT EVERY LAYER OF SUPPLY CHAIN," SAYS US UNDER SECY OF STATE JACOB HELBERG

Diary Times Desk : United States Under Secretary of State Jacob Helberg has underscored the importance of India becoming part of the Pax Silica initiative led by India. Speaking to ANI at the sidelines of the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi, Helberg said that it reinforces the need to work together for shared economic security. "Being here really underlines the importance of India being a friend and a partner in the PAX SILICA project. There are so many American companies who came here and rolled out incredibly historic projects. Google rolled out a transpacific and oceanic submarine cable that connects India to the United States. Micron was here earlier rolling out fabs that actually complement their activities in the US. I think this is part of a much bigger story about India and the US working together at every layer of the supply chain stack to help reinforce our shared economic security. Ultimately, Pax Silica is an economic security coalition.

PM MODI MEETS QUALCOMM CEO CRISTIANO AMON ON SIDELINES OF INDIA AI IMPACT SUMMIT

Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday held a bilateral meeting with Cristiano Amon, President and CEO of Qualcomm, in the national capital on the sidelines of the India AI Impact Summit 2026. The Prime Minister met the Tech CEO at the Hyderabad House. The meeting follows the Qualcomm CEO's remarks at the summit. Cristiano Amon, during his address, said that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will fundamentally change how we think about the mobile device and highlighted that the work done by Qualcomm in this direction will create the hardware and software that will help enable this future across all devices. "We look at our smartphones as an inseparable device. In the future, revolution is going to increase robotics in the industrial area, which will lead to a change in the way we see our mobile devices today," he said. "We're one of the few companies working on chips from sub 2 milli-watts to a smart earbud that you're going.

"ATTENDED AS AN OBSERVER": MEA ON INDIA'S ATTENDANCE AT BOARD OF PEACE MEETING

Diary Times Desk : India attended the Board of Peace meeting in Washington DC in the capacity of an observer, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Friday. Addressing the weekly media briefing, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal confirmed India's participation and reiterated New Delhi's position on ongoing peace efforts related to Gaza. "We did attend the Board of Peace meeting in Washington DC as an Observer. We have also welcomed the Gaza Peace Plan initiative of President Trump, as well as efforts underway as part of Resolution 2803 of the UNSC," Jaiswal said. The spokesperson said that India has welcomed the Gaza Peace Plan initiative of President Trump as well as the efforts underway as part of Resolution 2803 of the UNSC. The resolution, which endorses the US-backed "Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict of 29 September 2025", according to the official UN document.

PM MODI MEETS OPENAI CEO SAM ALTMAN ON SIDELINES OF INDIA AI IMPACT SUMMIT 2026

Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday held a bilateral meeting with Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, on the sidelines of the India AI Impact Summit in the national capital. Prior to his meeting with the OpenAI CEO, the Prime Minister met with Cristiano Amon, President and CEO of Qualcomm. The Prime Minister met the Tech Giants at the Hyderabad House. Earlier on Thursday, Altman hailed the India AI Impact Summit 2026 as a critical platform for international cooperation. Delivering his keynote address at the Summit, Altman said India's rapid adoption of AI technologies and its push toward sovereign AI infrastructure position it uniquely in the global technology landscape.

"It's really a treat to be here in India. And it's incredible to see the country's leadership in advanced AI," he said. "I was last here a little over a year ago, and it's striking how much progress has happened since then. We've gone from AI systems that struggled with high school-level math to systems that can do research-level mathematics now and derive novel results in theoretical Physics," he added. Commenting on the recent developments India has made in the field of AI, he said, "It's also striking how much progress India has made in its mission to put AI to work for more people in more parts of the country. And India's leadership in sovereign AI, building on infrastructure, SLMs, and much more.



STOCK MARKETS BOUNCE BACK AFTER FALLING IN EARLY TRADE

Diary Times Desk : Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty recovered their early losses and were trading higher on Friday, lifted by buying in banking and capital goods shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 291.93 points, or 0.35 per cent, to 82,206.21 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 74.6 points, or 0.29 per cent, to 25,379.75. However, both benchmark indices soon rebounded from their early losses and were trading in positive territory. The BSE benchmark quoted 161.43 points higher at 82,659.57, and the Nifty traded 65.55 points up at 25,519.90.

Among the Sensex constituents, Bharat Electronics Ltd, NTPC, Larsen & Toubro, Hindustan Unilever, Titan, Axis Bank, Tata Steel, PowerGrid, Sun Pharmaceutical, UltraTech Cement, ICICI Bank, and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the gainers. Tech Mahindra, Infosys, Eternd, Bharti Airtel, HCL Technologies, Mahindra & Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Asian Paints, and Trent were the laggards.

GLOBAL LEADERS HAIL INDIA TO BE GLOBAL POWERHOUSE IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ADOPTION, INNOVATION

Diary Times Desk : Top executives from the world's leading technology firms reiterated that India was positioned to lead the global landscape in Artificial Intelligence due to its massive scale, talent pool, and digital infrastructure, during the India AI Impact Summit 2026. The industry heads emphasised that the country was transitioning from a software hub to a primary engine for AI development and deployment. Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, noted that the nation possesses the necessary elements for significant growth. "India has all the ingredients to be a full-stack AI leader," Altman said. He further remarked, "This will be one of the biggest markets for AI in the world, and I think India will have a huge amount of influence." Echoing similar sentiments, Alexandr Wang, Meta's Chief AI Officer, highlighted the strategic importance of the region. "India is one of the most important.

PM DISCUSSES POTENTIAL OF HARNESSING AI IN AGRI, EDU WITH CEOS OF AI & DEEPTECH STARTUPS

Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday discussed the potential of harnessing artificial intelligence technology in various sectors like agriculture, environmental protection, and promoting higher education in mother tongue, among others, with CEOs of AI and deeptech startups. CEOs and founders of 16 AI and deeptech startups presented their ideas and work at a roundtable meeting with the prime minister. Modi underscored the need for strong data governance, cautioned against misinformation, and urged the development of solutions tailored to India's needs, said a statement from Prime Minister's Office. Referring to UPI as a model of simple and scalable digital innovation, he expressed confidence in Indian companies and encouraged trust in domestic products. He also spoke about expanding private participation in the space sector and noted strong investor interest in Indian startups.



US-INDIA PARTNERSHIP HAS CRITICAL ROLE TO PLAY TO MAKE AI BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE: PICHAI

Diary Times Desk : The US-India partnership has a critical role to play in making the benefits of AI available to everyone and everywhere, said Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google and its parent company Alphabet Inc. Speaking here at the AI Impact Summit ahead of the India and US signing of Pax Silica declaration, he said Google was proud to serve as a connection point between the two countries "both figuratively and literally". "Yesterday, at the opening session, I shared some thoughts on this profound moment of AI. I said we are on the cusp of an era of hyper progress and new discoveries, but the best outcomes are not guaranteed," Pichai said. He further said, "We must work together to ensure the benefits of AI are available to everyone and everywhere. The US India partnership has a critical role to play." Elaborating, he said, "We have teams across both countries working seamlessly together on some of our most important initiatives, innovations that start in India, like Google Pay are making products better for people all over the world." Bullish on India, Pichai said, "I believe India is going to have an extraordinary trajectory with AI, and we are supporting it with a full stack commitment, including product scaling and infrastructure."



AI SUMMIT HAS ATTRACTED \$250 BN INVESTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE: ASHWINI VAISHNAW

Diary Times Desk : Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday said India received "a lot of" investment pledges at the India AI Impact Summit 2026 with over USD 250 billion under infra-related investments and about USD 20 billion under Venture Capital and deep tech investments.

"The numbers are important, but what is important is that the world has confidence in India's role in the new AI age," Vaishnaw, who holds the portfolios of Information and Broadcasting, Electronics and IT, and Railways, said. Addressing a press conference in the national capital today, the Information and Technology minister said, "We also have a lot of investment pledges...I think the number is growing each day, it's already crossed USD 250 billion for the infra-related investments and about USD 20 billion for the VC deep tech investments which have been committed by investors. This is a very important sign for us..." He said that the AI Summit was a "major success" and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Manav AI' vision was highlighted at the AI Summit. Further, he noted that over 2.5 lakh students participated in the mega event, setting a Guinness World Record for student participation.



INDUSTRY LEADERS HIGHLIGHT INDIA'S POTENTIAL TO EMERGE AS GLOBAL AI HUB AT INDIA AI SUMMIT 2026

Diary Times Desk : The India AI Impact Summit 2026 highlighted India's potential to lead in artificial intelligence through its unique digital infrastructure and talent scale. Industry tech leaders indicated that the event served as a central platform for showcasing domestic technological advancements and fostering international collaboration. Sanjeev Bikhchandani, Founder of Info Edge, stated that the summit effectively brought all Indian AI companies and technologies onto one platform. "India will get a lot in the AI summit. I think what the AI summit has done is bring all Indian AI companies and technologies onto one platform for everyone to see. Awareness has spread," Bikhchandani said. He noted that the general public became more aware of the technology due to the significant turnout. He added, "I think a trade deal with the US, who is largest trading partner, will help India a lot."

"INDIA DIFFERENT COUNTRY TODAY": SARVAM AI CO-FOUNDER CONFIDENT OF COUNTRY'S POTENTIAL TO BE CREATOR OF TECHNOLOGY

Diary Times Desk : Sarvam AI co-founder Vivek Raghavan expressed confidence in India's potential to be a creator of technology and not remain a mere user of technology. He observed that the country previously remained only a user, but now possessed the confidence to lead in innovation. "We have seen how we have only become the users of technology, not the creators of technology. Today, India is a different country. We're a country which has so much more confidence. So we can do this," Raghavan told reporters here. He attributed this change to the contributions of the younger generation. "These are the young kids of India who are doing this," he said while discussing the shift in the country's technological landscape. Speaking to the media at the sidelines of the India AI Summit 2026, Raghavan detailed his company's efforts to build a global model heavily grounded in Indian language data. He noted that the new model utilised 18 trillion tokens, with 10 to 20 per cent.

"WORLD LOOKS AT US AS TRUSTED PARTNER FOR SEMICONDUCTOR SUPPLY CHAIN": VAISHNAW ON INDIA JOINING PAX SILICA COALITION

Diary Times Desk : Noting that the world looks at India as a trusted partner for the semiconductor supply chain, Union Minister for Electronics and IT Ashwini Vaishnaw has said that semiconductors will emerge as a major sector in the country, which will also gain from AI innovation.

"From all the discussions that we had, it very clearly emerged that the world looks at India as a trusted partner for semiconductor supply chain, which means the way semiconductor industry will grow in our country in the coming years, that looks like a very important as it will emerge as a major sector," Vaishnaw told the media at the India AI Impact Summit 2026.

He was answering a query on India joining the Pax Silica coalition. India formally joined the Pax Silica coalition on Friday, the fifth day of the India AI Impact Summit 2026, marking a significant milestone in the strengthening of strategic technology and supply chain cooperation between India and the United States. On the discussion around cost-cutting happening around the innovation, the Minister pointed to ongoing innovation aimed at reducing manufacturing expenses. "People are looking at reducing power cost by 50 per cent. The same thing will happen in chip cost. So much innovation is happening," he said.



40% GLOBAL JOBS HIT, ENTRY-LEVEL ROLES IN DANGER: IMF CHIEF'S AI ECONOMY WARNING



Diary Times Desk : An estimated 40 per cent of the global workforce – entry-level jobs in particular – will be impacted by Artificial Intelligence and AI-based technological disruptions, IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva warned NDTV Friday, comparing the era-defining shift as a "tsunami hitting labour markets".

Referring to International Monetary Fund-backed studies, she said this number could shoot up to 60 per cent in advanced economies but will likely settle at 26 per cent for India.

These figures, Georgieva indicated, underline the importance of policymaking to prepare populations for the AI economy. This includes learning specific skills, but also learning to be more flexible in deploying these skills, to guard against the risk of people being left behind.

"Who gets squeezed? The category of jobs we worry particularly about, and there is evidence this is already happening, are entry-level roles. These are usually tasks that can be easily automated... and what does this mean for young graduates looking for their first jobs?" "... our conclusion is we are falling behind (in) the demand of transformation that comes with AI, in terms of appropriate policies to prepare people for what is already here today," she said. As the world's most populous country, India already has an enormous workforce that millions more join every year; between 2024 and 2023, for example, that number was 19.01 million.

MASSIVE FOREST FIRE ERUPTS IN KULLU'S BIJLI MAHADEV AREA, SWIFT ACTION AVERTS MAJOR DAMAGE

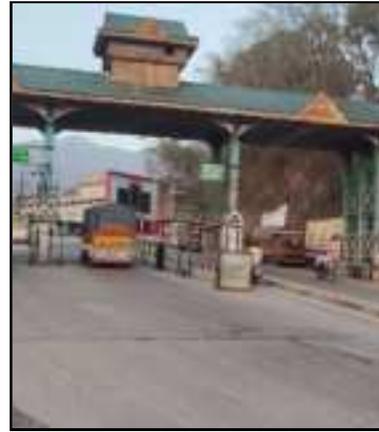
Diary Times Desk : A massive fire broke out last night in the forest area of Bijli Mahadev in the Kullu circle, triggering panic among residents of nearby Bhuntar. The blaze, which reportedly started in the dry grass slopes, quickly spread across a significant patch of forest land before being brought under control by the forest department with active assistance from local youths of Ward Number 4, Bhuntar. According to Sandeep Sharma, Conservator of Forests, the fire season pattern in Kullu differs from other parts of Himachal Pradesh. While most districts witness peak fire incidents during March, April and May, Kullu's vulnerability is closely linked to its vast stretches of "ghasni" (grasslands). Once the grass dries, even a small spark can escalate into a major forest fire. He noted that the interior and steep terrains further complicate firefighting efforts, particularly when fires are reported during evening hours.

HIMACHAL WOMAN WHO SUFFERED BURNS DIES DURING TREATMENT AT PGI CHANDIGARH

Diary Times Desk : A woman who sustained severe burn injuries in Mandi district has died during treatment at Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, police said on Friday. According to officials, a complaint regarding a woman sustaining burn injuries was received at Sadar Mandi Police Station on February 12. A team from the Regional Forensic Science Laboratory (RFSL), along with the Additional Superintendent of Police, Mandi, immediately visited the scene and collected crucial evidence. Given the seriousness of the matter, the woman's husband, Thakar Das, a resident of Saploh village under Kotli tehsil in Mandi district, was arrested soon after the incident. A detailed investigation was launched to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the case. The victim, identified as Neelam Thakur, was initially taken to the Community Health Centre in Kotli. Due to the severity of her injuries, she was referred to the Zonal Hospital in Mandi and later shifted to Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Government Medical College, Nerchowk. As her condition remained critical,

PUNJAB ROUNDS ON HIMACHAL OVER HIKE IN ENTRY TAX, VOWS TO TAKE UP THE ISSUE WITH CENTRE

Diary Times Desk : The increased entry tax of Himachal Pradesh for vehicles registered outside the state has evoked strong political reaction from the ruling and opposition parties in Punjab. Besides the political opposition from Punjab, the increased toll has also been opposed by Himachal leaders residing in border areas. The Punjab Government would take up the issue of increased entry tax toll of Himachal from Rs 70 to 170 with the Union Ministry of Transport. Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains said that the entry tax of Himachal on vehicles registered outside the state was illegal. The tax was being imposed on national highways and toll roads of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), which was unconstitutional. We will take up the matter with Union Minister Nitin Gadkari. The Punjab Government would also fight legal battle against the toll up to the Supreme Court, he said. Bains added that the people living in the border areas of Punjab were being taxed illegally by the Himachal Government, and the Punjab Government would oppose the toll politically as well legally.



BJP COUNCILLORS WALK OUT OF SHIMLA MC SESSION AS MAYOR PRESENTS BUDGET

Diary Times Desk : The budget session of the Shimla Municipal Corporation (SMC) began on a stormy note after BJP councillors objected to Mayor Surinder Chauhan presenting the budget, claiming he is not constitutionally authorised to do so as the government has not yet issued a notification extending his term. Raising slogans against the Mayor and the proposed budget, the BJP councillors said they do not accept the budget as valid and demanded his resignation on moral grounds. They later walked out of the session as the Mayor began delivering his budget speech. Speaking to the media on the sidelines, BJP councillors stated, "As per the reservation roster, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in Shimla are appointed for a tenure of two and a half years. According to the roster, the Mayor's post is technically vacant. Since his extension has not been officially notified, he does not have the authority to present the budget." The councillors also alleged that none of their development works were being executed. Questioning the financial position of the civic body, they said, "On what basis is the Mayor presenting the budget when the corporation is already in debt and has no substantial revenue sources?"

SHIMLA MC PRESENTS RS 688-CRORE BUDGET FOR 2026-27

Diary Times Desk : Shimla municipal corporation mayor Surinder Chauhan on Friday presented a Rs 688.02 crore budget for the financial year 2026-27, focusing on strengthening permanent revenue sources, reducing dependency on grants, increasing income of the corporation through its assets, prioritising cleanliness, public health, environmental protection, and ensuring targeted social security for the urban poor, women, youth, and senior citizens. However, this year's budget is three times more than what was presented last year. For FY 2025-26, the mayor had presented a Rs 188.35 crores budget. This is the third budget that has been presented by Surinder Chauhan after he became mayor of the corporation back in 2023. Highlighting the priorities for the FY 2026-27, Chauhan announced construction of a wellness centre at Kachhighati for Rs 66 crore, construction of 72 staff quarters at Boileauganj for Rs 34 crore, construction of residential flats for Rs 200 crore, development of a multi-purpose modern complex at Rs 140 crore, installation of 1,000 solar street lights across the town, establishment of a 2 Megawatt (mw) solar power plant in Bharyal and implementation of e-Nigam. He also said extensive efforts have been made by the corporation.

YOUR HOROSCOPE

21-02-2026

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Aquarius
Today you may have to face 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.

EXPELLED CONGRESS LEADER NAVJOT KAUR FIRES FRESH SALVO AT PUNJAB UNIT CHIEF WARRING

Diary Times Desk : Expelled Congress leader Navjot Kaur Sidhu has renewed her attack on Amrinder Singh Raja Warring, the party's Punjab unit chief, alleging that he bought 100 acres of land in Zirakpur, of which 60 acres were "snatched illegally" from innocent people using fake signatures and thumb impressions. Warring, on his part, has rubbished the charge and said he would not comment on a person whose "mental condition is not right". In a post on X on Thursday night, Kaur said, "Raja Warring ji, come and reply in court how you have bought 100 acres of land in Zirakpur? Only 40 acres you could buy with your looted money, 60 acres you snatched illegally from innocent people by doing fake signs and taking thumb impressions of people. 2,400 crore scam with ex-Punjab Congress in-charge from Rajasthan! Reply in court and get ready for jail. Prepare yourself ji. Best of luck."

HC SLAMS BRAKES ON PSPCL ASSET SALE PLAN AMID RS 12,500-CRORE GOVT DUES ROW

Diary Times Desk : Less than a month after issuing notice on a public interest litigation (PIL) alleging that massive unpaid electricity dues by government departments was pushing PSPCL into a severe financial crisis prompting plans to sell valuable public assets to cover up the shortfall, the Punjab and Haryana High Court on Friday stayed the move. The high court had on the previous date of hearing sought a response on the PIL alleging that its departments owed Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) electricity dues of Rs 2,582.24 crore as on the end of August 2025, apart from unpaid power subsidy exceeding Rs 10,000 crore. As the matter came up for hearing, the bench of Justice Ashwani Kumar Mishra and Justice Rohit Kapoor passed the order after hearing senior counsel Baltej Singh Sidhu. Petitioner Rajbir Singh's counsel had earlier contended that the state despite being a consumer "like any other" failed to discharge its "moral, ethical and statutory obligation" to pay electricity charges, thereby crippling PSPCL's finances. It was submitted that PSPCL, instead of exercising its statutory powers under Section 56 of the Electricity Act, 2003, had been compelled.

TWO BKU(U) ACTIVISTS SHAGANDEEP SINGH JEOND, BALDEV SINGH CHAUKE RELEASED FROM JAIL AMIDST PROTESTS

Diary Times Desk : Two days after a violent clash between farmers and police at Jeond village, and on the same day the Punjab and Haryana High Court granted bail to two incarcerated Bharti Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan) activists, Shagandeep Singh Jeond and Baldev Singh Chauke, were released from Central Jail today. Their release was delayed as the court orders hadn't reached the jail authorities earlier. A number of farmers, including women, gathered outside the jail and welcomed them warmly. They raised slogans, announcing their agitation would continue until the FIRs against them are cancelled. Shingara Singh Mann, state secretary of the union, said, "We will oppose the cases registered against over 2,000 farmers on February 6, nearly 400 farmers on February 18, and others, seeking their cancellation." The farmers had assembled on February 6 and 18 to march towards Bathinda District Administrative Complex, demanding Shagandeep and Baldev's release.



FEROZEPUR-DELHI VANDE BHARAT TRAIN FINALLY HALTS AT BARNALA AFTER OVER THREE-MONTH WAIT

Diary Times Desk : The Ferozepur-Delhi Vande Bharat train, which was flagged off on November 8, 2025, has finally started halting at the Barnala railway station, nearly three-and-a-half months later. This development comes after AAP leader and Sangrur MP Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer's persistent demands for a stoppage at Barnala, threatening to start a stir if not fulfilled. The MP also expressed gratitude to the Railway Ministry. The Railway authorities officially approved the stoppage on December 17, 2025, citing the need to serve residents of Barnala and surrounding districts, including Malerkotla, Sangrur, and Mansa. Meet Hayer welcomed the decision, stating that the long-pending demand of the people had been fulfilled. The train arrived at the Barnala railway station at 9.59 am today. Initially, the train received a slow response, but passenger footfall has now increased to nearly 80 per cent of its capacity. A Railway official said, "The coaches run to full capacity from Patiala, and the number of passengers is increasing from the Bathinda railway station." The train operates six days a week, except Wednesday, with fares ranging from Rs 1,080 to Rs 2,530. Sources, however, said that Vande Bharat takes slightly longer than another train running on the Bathinda-Delhi route, which departs a little earlier.

HARYANA BUDGET SESSION KICKS OFF WITH VANDE MATARAM, GOVERNOR OUTLINES VISION

Diary Times Desk : The proceedings of the Haryana budget session commenced with the playing of Vande Mataram, here today. The proceedings began 5 minutes before the scheduled time. Addressing the Haryana Vidhan Sabha on the opening day of the budget session, Haryana Governor Ashim Ghosh began his speech by saying that Vande Mataram was the "call of India's soul". He went on to say that the essence of Vande Mataram was "engrained" in the culture, folk songs and culture. Reiterating the government's commitment to building a 'Viksit Bharat', the document laid down six main resolutions for achieving the goal. "The first of these is to make Haryana a carbon-negative state by 2047 through a triple-C approach, i.e., Clean, Carbon Negative and Conducive Environment," the Governor said. The second resolution involved advancing Haryana's finance and security frameworks through a triple-S approach, i.e., Safe, Secure and Sustainable policies. The third dimension of industrialisation involves making Haryana a global industrial hub that meets international standards through a triple-I approach, i.e., AI innovation, Inclusion and International alignment.

BITTU BAJRANGI FALLS PREY TO MARRIAGE SCAM, LOSES RS 30,000

Diary Times Desk : Bittu Bajrangi, president of the cow protection Bajrang Force, Faridabad, was duped of Rs 30,000 by a group posing as a marriage party. An FIR has been registered at Saran police station.

Bittu was introduced to a woman named Rani and a man named Bunty, who claimed to have a relative looking to get married. They showed Bittu several potential brides, but he didn't like any.

On September 5, 2025, Bunty and Rani arrived at Bittu's house with the young woman and her family. After everything was finalised, the wedding was arranged for February 7.

On February 6, Bittu transferred Rs 30,000 to them for the bride's clothes. However, when he arrived in Aligarh with the wedding procession, the accused were nowhere to be found, and their phones were switched off.



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

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

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

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

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



Hilary Whiteman

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

The evolution of drones

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

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

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



Australia's About To Find Out

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

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



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

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

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

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

From December 10, sites

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INFA

A Blue Schoolbag In A Mass Grave

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

Two human skeletons lie entangled on the rough earth – the arms of one wrapped around the other's head, as though protecting them from danger. Simply known as numbers 177 and 178, their identities remain a mystery. They are among 240 human skeletal remains, including children and babies, uncovered at this mass gravesite in Chemmani in Sri Lanka's northern Jaffna district.



Helen Regan

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

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

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

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

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

A blue school bag

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

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

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

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

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

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



10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT WASSILY KANDINSKY

Diary Times Desk : Wassily Kandinsky was born in Moscow in 1866 to a multicultural, bourgeois family: his father was a tea merchant from Siberia, his mother descended from Mongolian aristocracy. He trained as a lawyer, and was associate professor of law at Moscow University before ever picking up a paintbrush. Everything changed when, in 1896, he came upon a painting from Monet's 'Haystack' series in an exhibition — and was awestruck. As Kandinsky would later put it, the way the worldly forms dissolved into a blaze of colour 'surpassed my wildest dreams'.

That year, at the age of 30, Kandinsky abandoned his career and moved to Munich to study art. Among the early styles he embraced were Impressionism and Jugendstil (the German equivalent of Art Nouveau). Travels across the rest of Europe followed, before he settled with his lover, Gabriele Münter, in the picturesque Bavarian town of Murnau in the foothills of the Alps.

Works from this time — such as Murnau — Strasse (1908) and Murnau — Ansicht mit Burg, Kirche und Eisenbahn (1909) — mark a stunning advance. Bathed in high-key colour, they show the influence of Henri Matisse and the Fauves. Even more striking is the way Kandinsky simplified the forms of the town and surrounding landscape, reducing them to basic shapes. This was a crucial period in his transition towards abstraction.

Kandinsky wasn't religious in the traditional sense, but he was deeply spiritual. Among the thinkers who most influenced him was Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, co-founder of the Theosophical Society in 1875, who contended that there is a higher, immaterial realm beyond the visible world.

In the painting Strandszene ('beach scene'), Kandinsky provided what appears to be a glimpse of that realm: a rich patch of red at the top of the canvas, beneath which human figures toil in the material world. In 1911, he wrote *On the Spiritual in Art*, a text in which he outlined the transcendental potential of art, suggesting that it should no longer depend upon discernible reality. His thinking in that treatise brought him one step closer to abstraction.

Alongside Münter, Franz Marc and a few others, Kandinsky briefly formed part of a group called Der Blaue Reiter ('The Blue Rider'). This loose association of experimental painters first showed their work together in Munich, before exhibiting in Herwarth Walden's Der Sturm gallery in Berlin. Walden was so taken by Kandinsky's work that, in 1912, he offered the artist his first solo show. It left the majority of critics bemused. Oskar Bie, of the Berliner Börsen-Courier newspaper, wrote that he couldn't make 'head nor tail' of the semi-abstract objects and figures.



THE COLLECTION OF ROGER AND JOSETTE VANTHOURNOUT: 'A REFLECTION OF TWO PEOPLE'S PASSION TO LIVE WITH THE OBJECTS THAT SPOKE TO THEM'

Diary Times Desk :

Roger Vanthournout was renowned for the notes he made and the photographs he took when he and his wife Josette visited art galleries, dealers or auction houses together. He would also ask questions, and sometimes even take measurements — all in the name of research and preparation for adding a particular work to their collection.

The Belgian couple's considerations extended beyond just liking an item, to appraising where best it might be shown in the carefully curated display of pieces at their home.

Lovingly and diligently put together over six decades, the Vanthournouts' collection offers a rich overview of the course of modern and contemporary art. It covers a range of movements, styles and media — painting and sculpture most notably, but also works on paper and photography, spanning more than 100 years of artistic creation.

Highlights include works by the likes of René Magritte, Pablo Picasso, Max Ernst and Henry Moore, as well as Yayoi Kusama, Bruce Nauman, Thomas Schütte and Tracey Emin.

The collection is being offered by Christie's across a trio of dedicated auctions, collectively titled Modern Visionaries — The Roger and Josette Vanthournout Collection: an Evening Sale on 5 March 2026, a Day Sale on 6 March — both in London — and an Online Sale running from 25 February to 12 March.

'Each acquisition Roger and Josette made was a reflection of their shared vision and values,' says Olivier Camu, Christie's deputy chairman, Impressionist and Modern Art. 'Their collection was built on curiosity and a passion for art, and shaped by a sense of discovery and thoughtful decision-making.'

Roger Vanthournout studied interior design as a young man, before embarking on a successful career running a furniture business in the city of Izegem in Flanders. Josette was a painter, and the couple began collecting art together from the early days of their marriage, in the mid-1950s. Their initial interests included Chinese ceramics and Flemish Expressionism, though the collection as we know it today started to take shape when the Vanthournouts turned to Surrealism — in many cases buying work by their compatriots, such as Paul Delvaux and Magritte.



BARCELONA NEW SIGNING COULD BE A VALUABLE OPTION FOR FLICK VS LEVANTE AMID LACK OF MINUTES



Diary Times Desk : It has been close to 40 days since Joao Cancelo returned to FC Barcelona for a second stint. The veteran right-back was signed in the winter transfer window, on a season-long loan deal from Al Hilal in Saudi Arabia. So keen was Cancelo to make the switch happen that he accepted a reduced salary and was even happy to take a secondary role in the team.

However, well over a month into his second spell in Barcelona, the Portuguese international, things have hardly gone accordingly to plan for Cancelo, as he has barely played in recent weeks. But, as highlighted by SPORT, Cancelo could be a valuable option this Sunday against Levante for manager Hansi Flick. The relegation-battling outfit, currently in 19th place, are expected to adopt a defensive approach. And Barça will need to attack decisively, and one quality the Portuguese guarantees is his ability to reach the byline consistently.

BARCELONA OUTRAGED OVER DOUBLE STANDARDS FROM REFEREE AFTER 2-1 LOSS TO GIRONA

Diary Times Desk : FC Barcelona fell to a shock 2-1 defeat to Girona on Monday night away at Estadi Montilivi, which meant they are now trailing Real Madrid by two points in the title race.

While the performance was not at its best, the headlines were dominated by the controversial refereeing once again, as Girona's winner should have been chalked off for a foul on Jules Kounde in the buildup, but was overlooked by the referee and the VAR. As such, Mundo Deportivo reports that there is serious anger and indignation within Barcelona over the clear stamp by Claudio Echeverri on Kounde before Girona's decisive goal, especially when compared with similar incidents in the past. The Blaugrana are outraged over the double standards shown by referees. Last season, when Barcelona took on Rayo Vallecano, a goal by Robert Lewandowski was disallowed in the 74th minute for a slight prior stamp by Kounde on Pep Chavarria, with the VAR intervening. But, on Monday, the contact was much stronger from Echeverri on the Frenchman, there was absolute silence from the VAR after the referee waved play on. The on-field referee was Cesar Soto Grado on both occasions.

BARCELONA OUTRAGED OVER DOUBLE STANDARDS FROM REFEREE AFTER 2-1 LOSS TO GIRONA

Diary Times Desk : The Barcelona election season is finally here, with Joan Laporta and Victor Font emerging as the two main candidates.

In an election that is going to play a key role in determining Barcelona's future, one of the key issues is the situation of referees in La Liga.

Barcelona believe that they have been at a disadvantage due to the lack of competency from the Spanish referees and have already filed an official complaint to the RFEF. As reported by AS, Victor Font scheduled a counter-event on Tuesday to announce the primary initiatives he will undertake if elected on March 15. One of his first decisions will be to file a lawsuit against the Technical Committee of Referees (CTA) over an alleged conflict of interest, and against Real Madrid Television for attempted competition manipulation. "After the match against Girona, we must make it clear that Barcelona fans are deeply disappointed and more vulnerable than ever," Font stated. "For the last five years, Real Madrid has managed to distort the competition. During this time, Real Madrid has been awarded 26 more penalties than Barça," he added.

OFFICIAL: GAVI RETURNS TO BARCELONA GROUP TRAINING AFTER MORE THAN FIVE MONTHS OUT

Diary Times Desk : In a major development, FC Barcelona have officially announced that midfield sensation Gavi has resumed group training with the rest of the squad after spending more than five months sidelined.

The club shared a video on social media where the midfielder was welcomed back to training by his teammates with a customary 'tunnel of slaps' at the Ciutat Esportiva. The La Masia sensation suffered a knee injury very early in the season and had to undergo arthroscopic surgery in September for the same. Given the past complications with his knee, Barça have been very careful with his recovery, not rushing things at any step. Over the past few days, the midfielder had resumed training on the pitch initially and soon started working with the ball, gradually increasing the intensity of his sessions. Now, he is in the final phase of his recovery and rehabilitation, as he has now been reintegrated into group training with the rest of his teammates. He is understood to have done a part of the session with the squad today.



BARCELONA PRESIDENTIAL CONTACT CLAIMS CONTACT MADE WITH BUNDESLIGA GOAL-MACHINE'S CAMP

Diary Times Desk : Xavi Vilajoana presented on Friday his sporting project for his pre-candidacy for the presidency of FC Barcelona, alongside Jordi Codina.

During the presentation, Vilajoana made a huge claim, stating that there has been contact made with the entourage of Bayern Munich and England striker Harry Kane about a potential move in the summer.

On Thursday, the pre-candidate surprised many Barcelona supporters with a message on X in which he openly discussed the possibility of signing Kane.

Going a step further today, Vilajoana confirmed that there has been contact with the Englishman's camp.

"Yes, we have started contacts. I personally have not, but people who will be part of my project have begun sounding things out," he said.

"Not only Harry Kane, in general. I mentioned Kane because he is a profile that could suit Barcelona, but I could have mentioned more players," Vilajoana replied.

BARCELONA CONSIDER OFFERING IMPROVED CONTRACT TO 18-YEAR-OLD MIDFIELD GEM

Diary Times Desk : Having been eased back from an ACL injury layoff with great care and caution FC Barcelona midfielder Marc Bernal is gradually seeing a rise in his minutes and prominence within the team.

During the winter transfer window, a loan departure was even considered due to his limited playing time, but the situation has now changed radically.

Manager Hansi Flick spoke with the teenage midfielder in January and promised more minutes, and he has kept his word. Now, according to MARCA, Bernal's progress has led Barcelona to begin considering an improvement to his contract. Before the Christmas break, Bernal had played ten matches for a total of 201 minutes. Since 1 January, he has featured in nine matches and accumulated 274 minutes. His performances have improved, and he even scored his first goal for the senior side, finding the net against Mallorca. It is true that he renewed his deal a year ago, but at that time, he was in a particular situation as he was recovering from injury, and there was uncertainty about how he would return.