

Daily

सच के हक में...

THE PHOTON NEWS

द फोटोन न्यूज़

Published from Ranchi

विदेश से भी आए अनेक श्रद्धालु

पुष्य वर्षा के प्रभारी वीके सिंह ने बताया कि स्नानार्थियों पर हर बार गुलाब की 20 किटल पंखुड़ियों की वर्षा कराई गई और कुल 120 किटल पंखुड़ियों की पुष्य वर्षा कराई गई है। उन्होंने बताया कि पहले दौर में सुबह आठ बजे पुष्य वर्षा कराई गई तथा सभी घाटों पर छह बार पुष्य वर्षा कराई गई। महाकुंभ मेले में ना केवल भारत के कोने कोने से लोग आ रहे, बल्कि पड़ोसी देश नेपाल से भी श्रद्धालु आए। नेपाल से आए चार किशोरों मनीष मंडल, रब्बज मंडल, अर्जुन मंडल और दीपक साहनी ने अपने चाचा डोमी साहनी के साथ महाशिवरात्रि पर संगम में डुबकी लगाई। पश्चिम बंगाल के सिलीगुड़ी से चार दोस्त आकाश पाल, अभिजीत चक्रवर्ती, राजा सोनवानी और अभिषेक पाल महाशिवरात्रि पर महाकुंभ में डुबकी लगाने पहुंचे। आकाश पाल ने बताया, हम दोस्त हैं और पश्चिम बंगाल से प्रयागराज तक कार से आए। जहां वाहन की अनुमति खत्म हुई, वहां से पैदल चलकर संगम पहुंचे।

महाकुंभ : महाशिवरात्रि अंतिम पुण्य स्नान

- ब्रह्ममूर्त में ही शुरु हो गया था अंतिम स्नान
- अंतिम दिन महाशिवरात्रि पर 1.44 करोड़ लोगों ने संगम में किया स्नान
- मेला प्रशासन ने स्नानार्थियों पर की 120 किटल गुलाब की पंखुड़ियों की वर्षा
- गोरखपुर से अंतिम स्नान पर्व की पल-पल की जानकारी लेते रहे सीएम योगी आदित्यनाथ
- 13 जनवरी को शुरु हुआ था पहला स्नान पर्व

66 करोड़ से अधिक श्रद्धालुओं ने लगाई पवित्र डुबकी

PRAYAGRAJ @ PTI : बुधवार को महाशिवरात्रि पर महाकुंभ का अंतिम स्नान हर-हर महादेव के उद्घोष के साथ प्रारंभ हुआ और तड़के से ही श्रद्धालुओं का गंगा और संगम में डुबकी लगाना जारी है। शाम चार बजे तक 1.44 करोड़ श्रद्धालुओं के स्नान के साथ महाकुंभ में स्नानार्थियों की संख्या 66 करोड़ पार कर गई। मेला प्रशासन ने स्नानार्थियों पर गुलाब की 120 किटल पंखुड़ियों की वर्षा कराई। अधिकारियों ने बताया कि बुधवार को शाम 6 बजे तक 1.44 करोड़ से अधिक श्रद्धालुओं ने गंगा और संगम में डुबकी लगाई। इसके साथ महाकुंभ में स्नानार्थियों की संख्या बुधवार शाम चार बजे तक 66.09 करोड़ पहुंच गई। प्रत्येक 12 वर्ष में आयोजित होने वाले महाकुंभ में पहला स्नान पर्व 13 जनवरी को हुआ था। 26 फरवरी को अंतिम स्नान पर्व महाशिवरात्रि के दिन ब्रह्ममूर्त से शुरु हो गया था। उत्तर प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ ने महाशिवरात्रि पर लोगों को बधाई देते हुए सोशल मीडिया मंच एक्स पर लिखा, महाकुंभ 2025, प्रयागराज में भगवान भोलेनाथ की उपासना को समर्पित महाशिवरात्रि के पावन स्नान पर्व पर आज त्रिवेणी संगम में आस्था की डुबकी लगाने के लिए पधारे सभी पूज्य साधु संतों एवं श्रद्धालुओं का हार्दिक अभिनंदन। उन्होंने कहा, त्रिभुवनपति भगवान शिव और पुण्य सलिला मां गंगा सभी का कल्याण करें, यही प्रार्थना है। हर हर महादेव। मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ महाकुंभ के अंतिम स्नान पर्व पर तड़के चार बजे से ही व्यवस्था की निगरानी के लिए नियंत्रण कक्ष में पहुंच गए। गोरखपुर प्रवास के चलते उनके लिए गोरखनाथ मंदिर में ही नियंत्रण कक्ष स्थापित किया गया है, जहां वह स्नान पर्व पर पल-पल की निगरानी करते नजर आए।

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|----------------------------------|---------|
| SARAFI | |
| सोना | : 8,230 |
| चांदी | : 106.0 |
| (नोट : सोना 22 केरट प्रति ग्राम) | |

महाकुंभ से स्नान कर लौटने के दौरान लातेहार में दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हुई गाड़ी सड़क हादसे में ज़ामुमो सांसद महुआ माजी का एक हाथ टूटा, नाक और चेस्ट पर लगी चोट

PHOTON NEWS @ RANCHI : बुधवार को लातेहार के सदर थाना क्षेत्र के होटवाग एनएच 75 के खुशबू ढाबा के पास एक खड़े ट्रक और कार की भीषण टक्कर होने के बाद कोहराम मच गया। हादसे में जेएमएम की राज्यसभा सांसद महुआ माजी समेत पुत्र सोमवित माजी, बहु कृति माजी व चालक भूपेंद्र बासकी घायल हो गए। जानकारी के अनुसार, सांसद महुआ माजी का दाहिना हाथ फ्रैक्चर हो गया है। नाक और चेस्ट में भी चोट लगी है। घटना अहले सुबह 4 बजे हुई। टक्कर इतनी जोरदार थी कि कार के आगे का हिस्सा पूरी तरह क्षतिग्रस्त हो गया। सांसद महुआ माजी का परिवार महाकुंभ से स्नान कर रांची वापस



लौट रहा था। इस दौरान लातेहार के होटवाग गांव के पास उनकी कार को टक्कर वहां पर पहले खड़े ट्रक से हो गई। बताया जाता है कि थकान की वजह से चालक को झपकी आ गई थी, जिस कारण ये हादसा हुआ। घटना की सूचना मिलने के बाद लातेहार थाना प्रभारी दुलड़ चौड़े तत्काल घटना स्थल पर पहुंचे और एंबुलेंस की मदद से उन्हें सदर अस्पताल पहुंचाया। घटना के बाद पुलिस पूरे मामले की छानबीन कर रही है। सांसद को रांची के ऑर्किड अस्पताल में भर्ती कराया गया है। घटना की जानकारी मिलते ही सीएम हेमंत सोरेन, विधायक कल्पना सोरेन व रांची विधायक सीपी सिंह एचबी रोड स्थित ऑर्किड अस्पताल पहुंचकर सड़क दुर्घटना में घायल राज्यसभा सांसद महुआ माजी से मुलाकात की।



तेलंगाना सुरंग हादसा
मलबे में फंसे लोगों का पता लगाएगा खोजी कुता
NEWDELHI : तेलंगाना के नगरकुर्नुल जिले में श्रीशैलम लोफ्ट बैंक केनाल (एसएलबीसी) सुरंग के निर्माणधीन खंड के ढहने के कारण पिछले पांच दिनों से उसमें फंसे आठ लोगों का पता लगाने के लिए बचाव कर्मी खोजी कुत्तों की मदद लेने की योजना बना रहे हैं। जिला अधिकारी बी सतोष ने बुधवार को यह जानकारी दी। बता दें कि एसएलबीसी सुरंग के एक निर्माणधीन खंड का हिस्सा 22 फरवरी को ढह जाने के बाद परियोजना पर काम करने वाले आठ कर्मी सुरंग में फंस गए हैं। संतोष ने बताया कि सुरंग के अंदर कीचड़ और मलबा जमने लगा है। उन्होंने कहा कि राष्ट्रीय भूभौतिकीय अनुसंधान संस्थान (एनजीआरआई) के आज मुदा स्थिरिकरण सहित अन्य मुद्दों पर अपनी राय देने की उम्मीद है, जिसके आधार पर कार्य योजना तैयार की जाएगी। संतोष के मुताबिक, बचाव कर्मियों और विशेषज्ञों की एक टीम मछली पकड़ने वाली हल्की नौका पर सवार होकर सुरंग के अंतिम छोर तक पहुंचकर वहां से लौटने में कामयाब रही, लेकिन अंदर फंसे लोगों का पता नहीं लगाया जा सका। उन्होंने कहा कि कक्षा शुरुआत में (दुर्घटनास्थल से) 40 मीटर पहले तक ही पहुंचा जा सकता था, क्योंकि वहां कीचड़ था, लेकिन अब यह अधिकतम सीमा तक जम गया है। इसलिए टीम दुर्घटनास्थल तक जा सकती है।

झारखंड-बिहार का मोस्टवाटेड 13 लाख के इनामी नक्सली विवेक यादव को गोली मारकर उतारा मौत के घाट



PHOTON NEWS @ RANCHI : झारखंड-बिहार का मोस्टवाटेड 13 लाख इनामी नक्सली विवेक यादव को गोली मारकर मौत के घाट उतारा दिया गया। उसका मर्डर बिहार के गया जिले के डुमरिया थाना क्षेत्र के मंडौली स्थित टेकरा खुर्द गांव के समीप जंगल में किया गया। हत्या के पीछे का कारण नक्सलियों की आपसी वर्चस्व की लड़ाई बताई जा रही है। झारखंड में कई नक्सली घटनाओं में शामिल गौरतलब कि झारखंड पुलिस ने विवेक पर 10 लाख का इनाम रखा था। बिहार पुलिस ने उस पर तीन लाख का इनाम घोषित किया रखा था। विवेक बिहार-झारखंड स्पेशल एरिया कमेटी और मध्य बिहार जोनल कमेटी में शोष नक्सली लीडर में शामिल था और कई सालों से वह सक्रिय था। विवेक झारखंड में कई नक्सली घटनाओं में शामिल था। नक्सली नेता संदीप की मौत के बाद विवेक यादव ने ही माओवादी संगठन की कमान संभाल रखी थी। जंगल में मिली डेड बांडी घटना के संबंध में बताया जा रहा है कि पहाड़ी क्षेत्र में मंगलवार लकड़हारों और चरवाहों ने एक युवक का शव पड़ा देखा। उन्होंने स्थानीय

- बिहार में गया जिले के डुमरिया थाना क्षेत्र के मंडौली में किया गया वारदात को अंजाम
- नक्सलियों की आपसी वर्चस्व की लड़ाई बताई जा रही मर्डर की वजह
- झारखंड पुलिस ने रखा था 10 लाख का इनाम

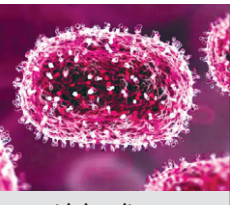
पुलिस को इसकी सूचना दी। पुलिस ने शव को बरामद कर पोस्टमार्टम के लिए गया के मगध मेडिकल कॉलेज भेजा और उसकी पहचान में जुट गई। मंगलवार की देर शाम में मृतक की पहचान नक्सली नेता विवेक यादव के रूप में की गई। प्रेमिका से आया था मिलने बताया जा रहा है कि विवेक यादव अपनी प्रेमिका से मिलने के लिए आया था। इसी दौरान उसके साथियों ने गोली मारकर उसकी हत्या कर दी। हत्या को क्यों अंजाम दिया गया, ये फिलहाल स्पष्ट नहीं हो पाया है। लेकिन आशंका जताई जा रही है कि पुलिस से पकड़े जाने के डर से विवेक के साथियों ने उसकी हत्या की है।

न्यू रिसर्च वैज्ञानिकों ने खोज निकाला एंटीबायोटिक बनाने का नया तरीका अब वायरस के सहयोग से होगा कई बीमारियों का इलाज

PHOTON NEWS @ RESEARCH DESK : माइक्रोस्कोपिक जीवों में वायरस यानी विषाणु और बैक्टीरिया यानी जीवाणु सर्वाधिक प्रमुख हैं। मनुष्य में बैक्टीरिया कई रोग पैदा करते हैं, लेकिन साथ ही इनके कई प्रकार शरीर की जैव क्रियाओं के लिए फायदेमंद भी होते हैं। इसके विपरीत विषाणुओं की प्रकृति केवल हानि पहुंचाने की होती है। उनके संक्रमण से सेहत में गंभीर स्थिति उत्पन्न हो सकती है। यहाँ तक कि समय पर इलाज न हो तो मौत की स्थिति भी बनने लगती है। मेडिकल साइंस के क्षेत्र में रोज हो रहे नए रिसर्च से नई जानकारीया सामने आ रही हैं। इस बीच यह महत्वपूर्ण जानकारी सामने आई है कि वैज्ञानिकों ने अब वायरस के सहयोग से कई बीमारियों के इलाज की विधि विकसित की है। नए शोध से पता चला है कि बैक्टीरिया वायरस से लड़ने के लिए वायरस के जेनेटिक कोड को छोटे-छोटे टुकड़ों में काट देता है। ये टुकड़े बैक्टीरिया के अपने जीनोम में संग्रहित होते हैं।

भविष्य में बैक्टीरिया के खिलाफ प्रभावी दवा बनाने की जगगी उम्मीद जीवाणुओं को संक्रमित कर उनके डीएनए में परिवर्तन का तलाशा रास्ता

- जंबो फेज की स्टडी में नया एंटीबायोटिक डेवलप करने की जताई गई संभावना
- अपनी प्रतिकृति बनाने के लिए बैक्टीरिया का इस्तेमाल करते हैं ये खास विषाणु
- विषाणुओं की संख्या के दबाव में रोग उत्पन्न करने वाले जीवाणुओं की हो जाती है डेथ



जंबो फेज में सामान्य स्थिति की तुलना में चार गुना अधिक पैदा होते हैं डीएनए

स्यूडोमोनास बैक्टीरिया का इस्तेमाल शोधकर्ताओं ने प्रयोग में सूडोमोनास बैक्टीरिया का उपयोग किया है, जो कई एंटीबायोटिक दवाओं के प्रति प्रतिरोधी होता है। इस शोध से न केवल नई एंटीबायोटिक दवाओं के विकास में मदद मिलेगी, बल्कि फेज थेरेपी को भी अधिक प्रभावी बनाया जा सकेगा। वैज्ञानिकों ने पहले ही सीआरआईएसपीआर तकनीक का उपयोग करके जंबो फेज में आवश्यक अनुवंशिक परिवर्तन करने की विधि विकसित कर ली है। यह तकनीक वैज्ञानिकों को डीएनए में बदलाव करने की अनुमति देती है। इसकी खोज मूल रूप से बैक्टीरिया में वायरस से बचने के लिए विकसित की गई थी।

छोटे वायरस होते हैं बैक्टीरियोफेज वैज्ञानिकों ने बताया है कि जंबो फेज एक प्रकार का बैक्टीरियोफेज है। इनकी खोज 100 साल पहले हुई थी। मूल रूप से बैक्टीरियोफेज छोटे वायरस जैसे जीव होते हैं, जो बैक्टीरिया को संक्रमित करते हैं। वे आरएनए या डीएनए जीनोम के चारों ओर एक प्रोटीन कैप्सूल से बने होते हैं। पहले इन्हें जीवाणु संक्रमण का इलाज करने के लिए संभावित समाधान माना जाता था, लेकिन एंटीबायोटिक दवाओं के विकास के बाद इस पर शोध धीमा पड़ गया था।



This war is no longer about Ukraine

THREE years and counting — this is what we might have possibly said of Russia's conflict with Ukraine. But today, we may need to count no more. If this sounds too good to be true, it is. The big story on the third anniversary of the war is not the untold death and destruction, not the imminent collapse of the Ukrainian forces and not the rupture of Europe's relations with Russia. It is the arrival onto the diplomatic stage of the President of the United States, Donald Trump, with his determination to bring the war to an immediate end. President Trump is set to succeed, not because he says so but because the adversary is saying so. Russia is ready for closure. For India, and for most of the world, there could not be better news. India, for a very good reason, has been on the side of peace and has always wanted the conflict to end on the negotiating table. Not everyone is happy. The Munich Security Conference has been a celebration of the trans-Atlantic alliance. Its 2025 edition could well have been its funeral ceremony. The blunt admonition of Europe by US Vice-President JD Vance was the forerunner to even more dramatic events that followed. The US and Russia met face to face soon thereafter and in a historic breakthrough have set the ball rolling for an early summit meeting between their Presidents, and resetting the relationship. Ukraine will only be one piece of this reset.

Few would have imagined this turn of events. If Russia's invasion in 2022 was a geopolitical shock, the manner in which the war is being steered to an end is no less disruptive. Trump's diplomatic blitzkrieg has not happened in a vacuum. Apart from domestic causes within the US, it has come against the backdrop of a growing sense of frustration, despair and fatigue in Europe over the war. Europe's political institutions and its economy have not measured up to the challenge. The war has taken a heavy toll on the European project. Today, Europe is seething, bitter, divided and feeling let down. Trump has succeeded in convincing US voters that Europeans have become free riders. Europe is thus faced with its biggest crisis since the end of the Cold War.

Ukraine, and specifically President Zelenskyy, has been accused by Trump and Elon Musk of not only not avoiding the war, but of even causing it. The tables have been turned. Yesterday's allies are today's detractors. Ukraine's existence as a functional state is under question. It is on the brink of defeat with 20 per cent of its territory under Russian occupation and 60 per cent of its energy infrastructure damaged. On the Russian side, 30,000-35,000 troops are estimated to have been killed every month. According to British Defence Ministry sources, the war has led to 700,000 Russian casualties, the loss of 19,000 pieces of equipment and 9,000 tanks and APCs (armoured personnel carriers), giving it the epithet of a 'meat grinder'. In this war of attrition, Russia has won on the battlefield but at a high human cost and reputational damage. Even if not evident in the immediate term, sweeping sanctions have squeezed its economic choices.

The debate has shifted away from the minutiae of the terms of a settlement over Ukraine to the global chessboard. How far will the new version of US-Russia detente go? What will be its terms? And what impact will it have on the global order as we know it? A grand bargain is in the offing, reminiscent of the Ronald Reagan-Gorbachev moment. A new post-1991 architecture will be created to accommodate Russia's security interests in Europe, but with a deeply divided Europe. US and European approaches to Russia are set to diverge, and even within Europe, there are sharp differences. If Russia wants to build on the new opportunity that President Trump is offering it, and address European fears, it will have to make compromises and give concessions. Signals coming so far indicate that this is indeed the likely trajectory. The US is going it alone. Europe is watching and is a straggler, left to its own devices.

Spare a thought for the unwept migrant

Shackling people does seem to come a bit too easily to the nation that boasts of the Statue of Liberty.

PUNJAB — the land of the five rivers; the Greeks referred to it as Pentapotamia (which means the same). The region was associated in ancient times with the Indus Valley civilisation, the Rigveda and the Mahabharata. Alexander fought Porus on the banks of the Jhelum, Babur fought Ibrahim Lodhi, the Anglo-Sikh wars were fought here — there have been very few examples of a land so continuously invaded, ravaged and pillaged as Punjab has been down the centuries. We will start from 1947 onwards i.e. from what was supposed to be the dawn of a glorious period. The dawn was one of sheer joy and sunshine in India, except in the states of Punjab and Bengal. The Partition that took place was largely a partition of Punjab and Bengal. An imaginary line drawn by the British and accepted by the Congress leadership, Gandhi and Jinnah tore Punjab asunder. It was an amputation of the body and soul of Punjab. It left in its wake a tsunami of murder, rape and mayhem. It was a bloodbath like no other and led to probably the biggest forced migration in history. This enormous disruption was perhaps one of the main underlying causes for the first wave of migration that began to the Western world in the early 1950s. Initially, it was only a trickle and mainly to the UK, followed by Canada. The contribution of this region to the two World Wars was immense, and the returning men brought back stories and experiences from Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Humans have always looked for better pastures, and when the opportunities at home were dismal, they looked outwards. Back home, the Punjabi spirit gradually prevailed and with the help of good leadership and administration, we picked up the pieces and overcame the horrors of the Partition and settled down to a near-normal life. For a few decades, it seemed that we were on the path of prosperity and peace. This proved to be a mirage, and the usual fault lines began to appear in the political and administrative setup. An already truncated Punjab witnessed demands of further division that finally succeeded. The Akalis wanted a Sikh-dominated state, the hill folk demanded their own refuge, as did the people of Haryana. A combined Punjab was split into three states and a UT. Chandigarh, the modern capital being developed as a replacement for Lahore, was also

lost. There were five divisions of the Punjab province before the Partition — Jullundur (now Jalandhar), Lahore, Delhi, Multan and Rawalpindi. This was lauded as a great achievement, but it actually heralded the decline of Punjab as the faltering economy and decadent leadership led to chaos. The mountains and their forest and water resources went to HP, the proximity of the national capital with its dynamism and the lands along the Yamuna to Haryana. Perhaps the region should be renamed 'tiny ab' as it no longer represents 'Punjab'. The three states are laggards in most development indexes. In a democracy, votes count, and in Parliament a state with 80 seats does have a louder



voice and presence as opposed to one with 10 or 13. Gradually, the radicalisation of the youth took place, and a new militant leadership came up with new slogans under the cover of religion related to a violent movement. Behind it was the hand and mind of politicians of all hues; things built up and violence increased, the forces of the state increased. All this led to the disaster of Operation Blue Star and the assassination of Indira Gandhi, which was followed by the slaughter of Sikhs throughout India. This was allowed to go on for days till the bloodlust was partially quenched. The next decade was a lost one, with killings of innocents occurring daily. Our neighbour to the northwest took full advantage of the situation and launched a proxy war in the garb of militant and terrorist action. Punjab paid the price. Pakistan had lost major wars in 1948, 1965 and 1971; it was looking for revenge and we gave it on a platter (it was Punjab again that bore the brunt of the war in 1965 as most of the action was confined to on

this front). Things were never the same again in Punjab and it came under President's rule for almost a decade until elections were held. Despite popular demands, there was no financial package or special development programme for Punjab to compensate for decades of trauma for no fault of the people. It should be remembered that unlike the southern, western and eastern coastal areas, Punjab is a landlocked state, its only trade opened to the northwest and Central Asia. This avenue also closed and all pleas to open up have gone unheard. Events of the 1980s led to the second wave of migration, and this time it was big. The needle moved and pointed to Western shores for relief and employment.

The third wave is an ongoing one as the youth look for better pastures for education and livelihood. I call it the third wave because it now comprises the youth who have inherited an indebted (Punjab has a debt of around Rs 4 lakh crore) state devoid of opportunities or the education to create them. The Internet has brought awareness, and awareness has awakened desire. The youth aspire for the life and comforts of the Western world. Alas, they do not get it here or the tools and environment to create it here. People migrate from all over Punjab, legally or illegally. The nexus of politicians, police and travel agents operates openly; humongous amounts of money are paid. Land is sold, loans are taken and relatives mobilised to get the required amount.

Coaching centres came up to teach English and again money was extracted. All this action happened openly and was common knowledge in villages, towns and in the corridors of power. However, no action was initiated to stem this plunder of Punjab. Now, the great purge has begun, led by the US. They have started by deporting illegal immigrants in a manner so humiliating that no self-respecting nation can take it lying down. Migrants are brought in shackles in military aircraft with their hands and feet in chains and without turbans. Shackling people does seem to come a bit too easily to the nation that boasts of the Statue of Liberty. Whatever happened to "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." (American Declaration of Independence)?

Quick retreat

Address lawyers' concerns over draft Bill

WIDESPREAD protests by lawyers and objections by the Bar Council of India have prompted the Central Government to withdraw the draft Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025. The draft Bill was put in the public domain on February 13 for comments and feedback, but a severe backlash has brought the exercise to an abrupt end. It is back to the drawing board for the government, which has decided to review and revise the proposed legislation in consultation with various stakeholders. Perhaps the most contentious provision pertains to the 'prohibition' of strikes. The participation of advocates and Bar associations in strikes or boycotts that disrupt court proceedings will be regarded as professional misconduct, subject to disciplinary action. Symbolic or one-day protests are permitted, only if they do not interfere with court operations. Staging a peaceful protest is a democratic right of every Indian citizen, and imposing curbs on lawyers can only be



counter-productive. However, the onus is on Bar bodies to ensure that such strikes are not held on flimsy grounds. Another provision seeks to expand the definition of a 'legal practitioner', bringing under its ambit law

graduates doing legal work in any private or public organisation, including domestic as well as foreign law firms and corporate entities. This is an attempt to take the legal practice beyond the court-oriented framework, factoring in contemporary realities of the profession. There is a need to allay the concerns of lawyers, who are fearing that their pre-eminent position will be undermined by this reform.

It is laudable that the government is keen to make the legal profession fair, transparent and accessible to all. But this process should be conducted slowly and judiciously. The withdrawal of the draft Bill is itself an admission that it has flaws. In a refreshing change, the Centre has taken corrective action without any delay, something it had not done in the case of the three farm laws, which were repealed only after an agitation that lasted a whole year.

Outrage, obscenity and our selective morality

It is almost Faustian how everyone is happy to defend free speech in the Allahbadia case, but is still putting on record how offended they are by his remarks.

ILIKE humour, though I could never quite take to the phenomenon of 'stand-up comedy'. Whenever I chanced to watch stand-up comedians, I often felt the humour didn't land well. Comedy is a tough act to pull off, comic timing is supposed to be the key, though that appears to have been replaced by a generous use of expletives to generate audience reaction. I am aware of the popularity of the genre and I believe in "In joco veritas — In jest, there is truth." Since my knowledge in this form of truth-telling is rather limited, I must admit I had no idea of who Ranveer Allahbadia was, except when I first saw his name in the news. I assumed him to be a poet. His utterances were far from poetic, though he seems to have taken the liberty of 'poetic licence' very seriously. I was told that Allahbadia also goes by the name of 'Beer Biceps' and is a popular podcaster who has gained political heft of the right hue. He manages to get people in high places on his shows, including Narendra Modi. But now that Allahbadia is running for cover, the regime he pandered to doesn't have his back. His joke (I still haven't got the joke!) on a YouTube show, India's Got Latent, about parents and sexual intercourse has 'offended' many Indians, who have liberally got FIRs registered in several states under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, the Information Technology Act, 2000 and the Indecent Representation of Women Prohibition Act, 1986. (Incidentally, another comic, Kanan Gill, reportedly made the same 'joke' a decade ago and no one paid any attention). Following threats and charges, Allahbadia approached the SC for relief, which was granted to him, though his freedom of speech was restricted and he was made to surrender his passport. It is now that the plot thickens. The Supreme Court inadvertently, or with clear intentions, stoked a dangerous fire when Justice

Surya Kant told the Additional Solicitor General: "We would like you (government) to do something, if the government is willing to do something, we are happy. Otherwise, we are not going to leave this vacuum and barren area the way it is being misused by so-called YouTube channels and YouTubers."

The government didn't waste time and has already announced the strengthening of its grip over OTT platforms that had in some ways succumbed to censorship. The government has now asked OTT platforms to adhere to an age-based classification of content, ensure self-regulation and follow the Code of Ethics prescribed in the IT Rules 2021. This is only a prelude and the parliamentary panel has asked the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to submit a note on the efficacy of the existing laws and suggest amendments to bring online platforms under legal scrutiny. Over the last few years, many journalists have taken to such platforms to produce news related content, much to the ire of the current regime. YouTubers like Ashish Chanchlani, Jaspreet Singh and Apoorva Makhija have been served notices by the Assam police. It is not surprising, given that the CM of the BJP-ruled state has been proactive in grabbing attention that gives him some national space and allows him to play to the gallery. Once free speech is restricted, it will set a dangerous precedent. Whether it is Allahbadia or Umar Khalid, everyone should have their right to free speech. It is almost Faustian how everyone in this matter is happy to defend free speech, but is still putting on record how offended they are by his remarks. The controversy has singled not just the contours of free speech but has also invaded another space. "The words you have chosen, parents will be ashamed, sisters will be ashamed. The entire society will feel ashamed. The pervert mind. These are the levels of

depravity you and your henchmen have gone," said Justice Kant. He not only led the government to twist its censorship knife on freedom of expression but his observations on obscenity also take us back to colonial India. Colonial India continues to survive through laws on sedition, obscenity, blasphemy, etc.



It is telling how Saadat Hasan Manto's comment on cases of obscenity against him still rings relevant: "If you find my stories intolerably obscene, it is because the society you live in is obscene." Manto had frequent run-ins with the law over his writings. The colonial state tried to punish and silence him in line with the emergency legislation of the period. His friend Ismat Chughtai was also summoned under the same charges for her story Lihaaf. The court could not quite define 'obscene', though an attempt was made. As a magistrate in Lahore put it: "The test of obscenity in all cases is

whether the tendency of the matter charged as obscene is to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences." Obscenity is not explicitly defined under the criminal law or the IT Act 2000. The erotic art of Khajuraho and Konark may appear obscene to some, but we have lived through centuries with erotica in public view.

I have not understood why the depiction or mere mention of sex offends the average Indian even though there is only an occasional outrage over routine sexual assault. Or, why hate speech is not considered obscene. Justice Krishna Iyer attempted to articulate this grey zone in Raj Kapoor & Others vs State (1979), where the court quashed criminal proceedings against the makers of the film, Satyam Shivam Sundaram. He observed: "The relation between reality and relativity must haunt the Court's evaluation of obscenity, expressed in society's pervasive humanity, not law's penal perspective. Social scientists and spiritual scientists will broadly agree that man lives not alone by mystic, squints, ascetic chants and austere abnegation but by luscious love of beauty, sensuous joy of companionship and moderate non-denial of normal demands of the flesh." While the jury on obscenity will continue to seek refuge under legalese, free speech is slowly but steadily being chained and gagged.

As an aside, Allahbadia may have truly assumed the role of 'disruptor of the year' (an award he won last year) for shifting the focus from the Maha Kumbh, where lives have been lost and there is an alert for toxic water. He may have done the PM a favour by distracting the bad press on Kumbh, but will the joke now be on free speech?

Tesla shares tumble nearly 9%, market value dips below \$1 trillion. Here's why

New Delhi. Tesla shares tumbled in overnight trading session, dropping below \$1 trillion for the first time since November 2024. The electric vehicle (EV) giant's stock fell 8.39%, closing at \$302.80. With this, the company's market capitalisation now stands at \$948 billion, its lowest since November.

WHAT TRIGGERED TESLA'S STOCK DECLINE?

The decline followed data from the European Automobile Manufacturers Association, which reported Tesla's sales in Europe fell 45% in January. In contrast, overall EV sales in the region rose 37%. This sharp drop has added to concerns about Tesla's weakening global demand, especially after a dip in deliveries last year.

Investors are pressuring CEO Elon Musk to introduce lower-priced models and advance autonomous vehicle plans. Some investors are also uneasy about Musk's growing political involvement. "He's a very hands-on operator, and if you're spending that much time in an office in the White House, how much time are you spending running all of your other companies, including the one that's publicly traded?" Art Hogan, chief market strategist at B. Riley Wealth, told news agency Reuters. Additionally, concerns over excessive investment in artificial intelligence (AI) have weighed on Tesla, as well as on Microsoft and Meta, ahead of Nvidia's earnings report.

Tesla's stock currently trades at 112 times expected earnings, well above its five-year average of 93, as per LSEG data. In comparison, Ford trades at eight times earnings and GM at seven. Despite Tuesday's drop, Tesla shares remain up over 51% over the past 12 months but have declined 20% year-to-date.

Infosys employees get 5-8% salary hikes, lower than before: Report

New Delhi Infosys has rolled out salary hikes for its employees, but the increases are lower than in previous years, according to a report by The Economic Times (ET).

The IT firm sent salary revision letters to employees, offering hikes between 5% and 8% for most, depending on their performance rating.

A small number of high-performing employees received a double-digit increase, as per sources mentioned in the report. The company classified employees into three performance categories "met expectations," "commendable performance," and "outstanding performance." Employees in the "met expectations" category received a 5-7% raise, while those rated as "commendable" got 7-10%. "Outstanding" performers, who make up a small group, were given increments ranging from 10% to 20%. Employees who were rated as "needs improvement" did not receive any salary increase.

The salary revisions applied to employees at Job Level 5 (up to team leaders) and Job Level 6 (managers below vice presidents). Those at JL5 will see their salary hikes take effect from January 1, while for JL6 employees, the revised salaries will be effective from April 1.

Indiatoday.in has not been able to verify the salary hike news. The latest salary increments are reportedly 5-10% lower across all performance bands compared to the last pay revision in November 2023. The company's performance bonus (variable pay) has also seen a similar reduction, reflecting the current industry slowdown. Infosys has around 3.23 lakh employees, and the latest salary hike is based on the appraisal period from September 2023 to October 2024. Employees received their performance ratings in December.

Failed to deposit TDS Tax officials may be knocking soon

New Delhi. The income tax department is planning a nationwide regulatory action on individuals and businesses that have failed to deduct and deposit taxes collected at source (TDS/TCS), reported The Economic Times (ET). According to sources cited in the report, around 40,000 taxpayers are under scrutiny for potential defaults in tax deductions for the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has designed a 16-point plan to track and identify cases of TDS non-compliance. In addition to this, the department's data analytics team has prepared a detailed list of taxpayers suspected of failing to deposit TDS. A senior official, speaking to The Economic Times, said, "We have data from the analytics team, and we will reach out to such taxpayers, initially through intimation, in case they have missed out on depositing tax." The official also mentioned that the focus will be on repeat offenders and cases where there is a huge difference between tax deducted and the advance tax paid. Authorities will scrutinise cases where companies frequently change or correct deductee details, as well as businesses using sick units or subsidiaries with negative profit margins in their financial audits. The CBDT has directed tax officers to closely examine cases where large disallowances have been reported under Section 40(a)(ia) of the Income Tax Act. This section disallows deductions in cases where TDS has not been deducted or deposited with the government. Another key area of concern for tax officials is the repeated revision of TDS returns, especially when such revisions lead to a sharp reduction in the default amount. Authorities suspect that some businesses may be altering their filings to lower their tax liabilities artificially. To address this, the tax department has asked field officers to use data analytics to detect patterns and irregularities in TDS payments. Officials mentioned in the report have assured that, like previous enforcement drives, this crackdown will be non-intrusive.

Tata Motors shares down 44% from 52-week high. Should you buy the dip

Tata Motors shares: In the previous trading session, the stock closed lower 1.2% lower at Rs 660.30. So far this year, it's lost over 11%. In six months, it's down 40%. Over a year, it's fallen 30%.

New Delhi. Tata Motors has been going through a rough patch on Dalal Street as its stock has emerged as the worst performer on the Nifty50. In the previous trading session, the stock closed lower 1.2% lower at Rs 660.30. So far this year, it's lost over 11%. In six months, it's down 40%. Over a year, it's fallen 30%. Moreover, the carmaker's stock price has plunged 44% from its 52-

week high of Rs 1,179. The fall comes as JLR demand weakens in key markets like China, the UK, and the EU. On top of that, US import tariffs on European cars have only made things worse. Investors have been spooked by these factors, causing a sharp sell-off. Global brokerage firm CLSA pointed out that JLR is trading at just 1.2x FY27 estimated EV/EBITDA, way below its historical 2.5x multiple. CLSA believes the market has already factored in a 10% volume drop and EBIT margin slipping under 8%.

But CLSA sees the sell-off as excessive and says this could be a good time to enter for long-term investors. Meanwhile, BNP Paribas isn't too bullish in the short term. They have an 'Outperform' rating with a Rs 935 target but admit there aren't many positive triggers right now. Tata Motors is in a consolidation phase, and they expect it to remain weak through 2025. Analysts warn of multiple risks—JLR

demand issues, intense competition in India's PV and EV markets, weak M&HCV sales, and margin pressures from high warranty and emission compliance costs. Tesla's recent attempt to enter the Indian market has also raised



concerns for local carmakers. However, Nomura analysts indicated that Tesla's pricing—expected to be above Rs 40 lakh—keeps it from directly competing with Tata's EV lineup. While Tesla might attract some buyers, Indian EV players should still dominate the mass market. SHOULD YOU BUY THE DIP?

Despite all the negatives, some see hope. CLSA has upgraded Tata Motors to 'High Conviction Outperform' with a Rs 930 target, suggesting a 40% upside. JLR's long-term plan to reposition itself as a modern luxury brand could pay off, with the Range Rover EV launch in FY26 expected to boost sales. CLSA also highlighted Tata Motors' improving FCF. JLR's free cash flow is projected to hit GBP 1.7 billion by FY27, up from sub-GBP 1 billion levels now. Plus, the company aims to be net cash positive by FY26, a big turnaround from past crises when JLR was drowning in GBP 3-4 billion net debt. While Tata Motors' steep correction has left investors shaken, many believe the worst is priced in. For long-term investors, this might be a good entry point. The short term could remain choppy due to macro headwinds, but with targets of Rs 930 (CLSA) and Rs 935 (BNP Paribas), the stock could see strong upside if JLR recovers and India's demand picks up.

Capgemini CEO on ideal workweek: Not 90, not 70, not even 50 hours

New Delhi Work-life balance has been a major topic of discussion in corporate India, especially since industry leaders like Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy and Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Chairman S N Subrahmanyam have advocated for longer working hours. While the debate seemed to favour extended workweeks, Capgemini India's CEO, Ashwin Yardi, has introduced a different perspective, one that supports a more balanced approach. Speaking at the Nasscom Technology and Leadership Forum (NTLF) on Tuesday, Yardi said he believes the ideal workweek should be 47.5.

This is much lower than the 70-hour and 90-hour weeks suggested by other business leaders in recent months. "Forty-seven and a half hours. We have about nine hours a day and five days a week," said Yardi when questioned about his view on the ideal

number of work hours. He also took a stand against sending work emails on weekends, saying that unless an issue can be resolved immediately, there is no need to escalate it over the weekend. "My guiding principle for the last four years is don't send an e-mail on a weekend even if it is an escalation unless you know you can solve it on a weekend," he added. While some leaders advocate longer working hours, Yardi mentioned the need to consider the expectations of younger employees.

He acknowledged that he sometimes works on weekends but avoids sending emails to employees, as it only adds unnecessary pressure when the work cannot be completed before Monday. His view differs from that of industry veterans like Narayana Murthy, who suggested a 70-hour workweek, and L&T's Subrahmanyam, who advocated for 90-hour weeks.

Both had said that India needs longer working hours to boost economic growth. At the same event, Nasscom Chairperson Sindhu Gangadharan, who also leads SAP India, said that outcomes should matter more than the number of hours worked. Marico CEO Saugata Gupta agreed, saying that the focus should be on results rather than time spent at work.

However, he admitted to sending emails at odd hours, including 11 pm, suggesting that different leaders follow different working styles. Yardi also spoke about how Capgemini is adapting to the changing expectations of younger employees. He said the company has introduced quarterly promotion cycles to allow faster career growth, six-week employee surveys to understand concerns and expectations, and structured career paths to help employees plan their professional journey.

Defence stocks like BEL, HAL are in a slump. Is it an opportunity to buy



New Delhi. Defence stocks have taken a beating over the past few months and have undergone sharp corrections. For instance, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) have seen their share prices fall 12-21% this year alone. In the past six months, shares of HAL are down nearly 32%, while BEL stock has tumbled nearly 17%. Moreover, the Nifty Defence Index has dropped 12% in a month and 23% in six months in comparison with Nifty 50's

1.1% and 10% dips. Basically, these stocks have taken a much bigger hit than the broader market. However, the sharp decline has garnered positive views from brokerages on defence stocks and here are 3 reasons why they are bullish: VALUATIONS HAVE CORRECTED

Stocks like HAL and BEL have fallen anywhere between 25-50% from their peaks in 2024. This suggests that such stocks have lost their astronomical valuations. Global brokerage JPMorgan says this correction has

removed the excess hype, making them more attractive again. They prefer BEL to HAL but have "overweight" ratings on both. Price targets? Rs 343 for BEL (33% upside), Rs 4,958 for HAL (49% upside).

BUSINESS REMAINS SOLID

Shares of defence firms may have tumbled, but their business remains strong. Elara Securities said in a note that HAL's order book could touch Rs 2.5-2.6 lakh crore by FY26, up from Rs 1.3 lakh crore in Dec 2024. BEL is also expecting a big Rs 25,000 crore missile order, plus more deals in FY26. Therefore, business isn't slowing down, making it a good opportunity to invest in the stock.

ANALYSTS REMAIN BULLISH

Even after the drop, analysts remain bullish about defence stocks. In the case of BEL, 24 out of 27 analysts have a "buy" rating on the stock. And in the case of HAL, 15 out of 16 analysts are bullish. Elara Securities is bullish on defence companies after Aero India 2025, citing more budgetary allocation and government push for indigenisation.

RBI eases lending rules for small borrowers and NBFCs. Here's what it means

The RBI has also put on hold its earlier proposals to increase the capital that banks must set aside for new project loans and the liquidity they need to maintain for digital deposits.

New Delhi. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has eased the stricter loan rules for small borrowers and non-bank lenders at a time when the economy is showing signs of slowing down. The RBI has also put on hold its earlier proposals to increase the capital that banks must set aside for new project loans and the liquidity they need to maintain for digital



deposits. The RBI has reduced the risk weight requirement for banks on consumer microfinance loans by 25 percentage points to 100%. Risk weights determine how much capital banks need to keep aside for every loan they issue. In 2023, the RBI had raised these requirements by 25 percentage points to 125% for retail loans. This was done due to concerns about a rapid rise in small personal loans. However, while some categories, such as housing loans, were excluded from these higher capital requirements at that time, microfinance

loans were not. Now, with the latest decision, the capital requirement for banks on microfinance loans has been brought back to its earlier level. The RBI did not give a specific reason for why it decided to roll back this measure.

RELIEF FOR NON-BANK LENDERS

In another announcement on Tuesday, the RBI stated that it was restoring the risk weights applicable to banks' lending to non-bank financial companies (NBFCs). The risk weight will now be based on the credit rating of the NBFCs. Previously, in November 2023, the RBI had

raised the risk weight on bank loans to NBFCs by 25 percentage points if the external credit rating of the NBFCs required banks to set aside less than 100% in risk capital. With the latest change, the capital requirement for these loans will return to the earlier system, which depends on the creditworthiness of the borrower. These measures provide relief to banks, NBFCs, and small borrowers, as they lower the capital requirements for loans. This means banks will have more flexibility in lending to microfinance borrowers and NBFCs, which in turn can make borrowing easier for individuals and businesses. The timing of these changes is significant, as they come after a leadership change at the RBI, with Sanjay Malhotra taking charge as governor. The adjustments also follow concerns over slowing economic growth, which has led the central bank to take a more flexible approach in certain areas of banking regulation.

With these changes, banks and NBFCs are likely to have more liquidity available for lending, potentially boosting credit flow to small businesses and individual borrowers in the coming months.

Rs 28K crore in 2015-16 to Rs 65K crore in 2021-22: DTC's debt doubled

Despite this massive financial injection, the Corporation continued to operate at a loss, raising concerns over mismanagement and inefficiencies.

NEW DELHI. The Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) has seen its liabilities more than double between 2015-16 and 2021-22 under the AAP government, according to a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report accessed by this newspaper. The report reveals that DTC's total



liability—comprising equity capital, electric bus subsidies, and government loan interest—jumped from Rs 28,263 crore in 2015-16 to Rs 65,274.31 crore in 2021-22. Despite this massive financial injection, the Corporation continued to operate at a loss, raising concerns over mismanagement and inefficiencies. As of March 2022, DTC managed a fleet of

3,762 buses across 36 depots, ferrying 15.62 lakh passengers daily. However, the audit flagged a declining fleet strength, with the number of buses shrinking from 4,344 in 2015-16 to 3,937 by March 2023. While the Corporation procured 300 electric buses between 2021 and 2023, the process was delayed, and a penalty of Rs 29.86 crore for late delivery

was never imposed on operators. "During the period 2015-23, fleet of the Corporation reduced from 4,344 (2015-16) to 3,937 buses (2022-23). The Corporation could procure only 300 Electric buses (EBs) during 2021-22 and 2022-23 despite availability of funds from GNCTD. There was delay in addition of EBs in the fleet for which penalty amounting to Rs 29.86 crore for delayed delivery was not imposed on the operators," an excerpt from the report read. The number of low floor "overaged buses" in the Corporation during 2015-22 increased from 0.13 per cent (five buses) to 17.44 per cent (656 buses) which further increased to 44.96 per cent (1,770 buses) as of March 2023 of its total fleet. DTC lacked a Business Plan or Perspective Plan to guide its operations. No Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also signed with the Delhi government to set financial and operational benchmarks, making it difficult to contain losses.

Supreme Court to state on Bhopal gas leak waste disposal: Prove there's no danger

NEW DELHI. The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked authorities to inform it about the precautions taken for the disposal of 337 metric tonnes of hazardous waste of the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy in Madhya Pradesh's Pithampur. The court asked the state counsel to examine if there is any substance in apprehension raised by the petitioner about the process being hazardous, and if there is, then, what steps the state is taking. "We are not going to stop it unless the apprehension is found to be well-founded," the bench observed. The bench said the authorities should go through the petition and find out whether the concern raised by the petitioner was with or without substance. It said if there was any substance in the concern raised, it should be specified what steps were being taken by the authorities. "Tell us that you have taken all the precautions," the bench observed. The petitioner has challenged High Court's order which was passed in a PIL against non removal of toxic waste from Union Carbide Factory site. A request for urgent listing of the plea was made citing the high court's subsequent order directing the State to conduct a first trial run to dispose of 10 metric tonnes of the waste material on February 27.

A bench led by Justice BR Gavai agreed to hear the matter on February 27 as the first matter. The petitioner flagged safety hazards in the plan to incinerate toxic waste, stating that 337 metric tonnes of waste were being transported to the Pithampur incinerator site allegedly without proper safety and rehabilitation measures. The petition argued that the incinerator site is close to a large population, and safety measures and trial runs recommended by MoEF not done. Further, 126 crores were sanctioned by the Center for safety measures and trial under CPCB monitoring in 2023, but nothing was done on the ground.

Army guns down Pakistani intruder, foils infiltration bid in Punjab's Pathankot



NEW DELHI. Alert Border Security Force (BSF) troops successfully foiled an infiltration attempt along the International Border (IB) in Pathankot, Punjab, during the early hours of February 26. According to officials, BSF personnel stationed at the BOP Tashpatan border area observed suspicious movement across the IB. An unidentified intruder was spotted attempting to cross into Indian territory. Despite being challenged by the alert troops, the intruder continued advancing, ignoring repeated warnings. Sensing a potential threat, BSF troops took action and neutralised the infiltrator. Authorities are working to ascertain the identity and motive of the intruder. Meanwhile, BSF has confirmed that a strong protest will be lodged with the Pakistan Rangers over the attempted infiltration.

BJP leader's 'Oscar' remark for Air India. But it is not for what you think

NEW DELHI. BJP national spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill has become the latest politician to blast Air India over its services after Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, asserting that it deserved an "Oscar for the worst airline". In a hard-hitting post on X, Shergill shared his recent flight experience with the airline, listing a host of shortcomings - from broken seats to customer service. The BJP leader said while flying Air India was not a pleasant experience, it "broke all records" today. Venting his frustration, Shergill said, "If there was an Oscar equivalent for worst airline, Air India would win hands down in every category: Broken seats, worst staff, pathetic on-



ground support staff, give two-hoots attitude to customer service." After Shergill shared his ordeal on X, Air India apologised for the "inconvenience". **SHIVRAJ CHOUHAN SLAMS AIR INDIA** Shergill's outburst comes days after Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan slammed Air India for allotting him a "broken and sunken" seat during his recent flight (AI436) from Bhopal to New Delhi. Chouhan said such an unpleasant experience amounted to "cheating" the passengers despite being charged the full fare. "I was allotted seat number 8C. When I reached my seat and sat down, I found that it was broken and sunk. Sitting was uncomfortable," Chouhan said in a long post on X. The former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister said when he confronted the airline staff, they told that the management had been apprised of the condition of the seat. "When I asked the flight attendants, they told me that the management had been informed earlier about the condition of the seat and its ticket should not be sold," he further said. As Chouhan's post went viral, Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu spoke to the minister and assured him of action. The aviation regulator, DGCA, has been asked to enquire into the matter.

What judges said on refusing demands for a death sentence to Sajjan Kumar

NEW DELHI. A Delhi court on Tuesday awarded life imprisonment to former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar in a murder case related to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. The court noted that his old age and illness weighed in favour of a lesser sentence instead of the death penalty. Kumar was convicted of the murder of Jaswant Singh and his son Tarundeep Singh on November 1, 1984. Jaswant Singh's wife had sought the death penalty for Kumar, who is now 79.



WHAT SPECIAL JUDGE KAVERI BAWEJA'S VERDICT SAID "The 'satisfactory' conduct of the convict as per the report of the jail authorities, the ailments from which he is reportedly suffering, the fact that the convict has roots in the society and the

possibility of his reformation and rehabilitation are material considerations which, in my opinion, tilt the scales in favour of sentence for life imprisonment instead of death penalty". Nothing "adverse" was reported about Kumar's behaviour" and his conduct was "satisfactory", according to a jail report.

The case in question was part of the same incident and could be seen in the continuity of the incident for which Kumar was sentenced to life imprisonment by the Delhi High Court in December 2018. "Though the killings of two innocent persons in the present case is no less an offence. However, the above noted circumstances, in my opinion, do not make this a 'rarest of rare case' warranting the imposition of death penalty," the court said. The judge also took note of the psychiatric and psychological evaluation report of the convict, which revealed that he was undergoing treatment in the Departments of Medicine, Urology, and Neurology at Safdarjung Hospital and was prescribed antidepressants and sleep medication.

MCD session turns stormy as BJP, AAP spar over proposals

NEW DELHI. A session of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) House descended into turmoil on Tuesday as councillors from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) engaged in heated confrontations over two key proposals—a house tax waiver and the regularisation of 12,000 contractual municipal workers.



Chaos erupted soon after the session began, with councillors shouting slogans, waving banners, and accusing each other of misconduct. The disorder intensified when AAP attempted to introduce the proposals, but the deputy commissioner was absent. AAP members insisted that the session continue under the additional commissioner, a move fiercely opposed by BJP councillors. This led to a shouting match, with AAP members chanting slogans such as "Gundaagardi nahin chalegi" and "Jai Bhim," while BJP councillors countered with "Arvind Kejriwal, Sharm Karo" and "Mayor, Sharm Karo." At the heart of the dispute were two proposals with

significant financial implications. The house tax waiver scheme would allow homeowners who clear their 2024-25 dues to have all previous unpaid taxes written off. Additionally, properties between 100 and 500 square yards would receive a 50% tax reduction, while properties under 100 square yards would be completely exempt. The second proposal sought to regularise 12,000 municipal workers who had long been demanding permanent status. Despite the disruptions, MCD Mayor Mahesh Kumar Khichi later declared in a press conference that both proposals had been passed. He asserted that with

over 70 AAP councillors present, the quorum was met, ensuring the session's legitimacy. Khichi accused the BJP of deliberately creating chaos to disrupt the proceedings, claiming that the session had started on time but was derailed by opposition members. However, BJP leaders strongly contested the mayor's claims, arguing that the proposals were not passed through the correct legal process. Leader of Opposition Raja Iqbal Singh dismissed Khichi's statement as misleading and insisted that proper procedures were not followed. Later in the evening, Singh wrote to MCD Commissioner Ashwani Kumar, demanding that the session be declared "invalid and abandoned." Singh alleged that AAP councillors had manipulated the process by convening the session ten minutes early, rushing through the agenda, and adjourning within minutes. He argued that under the Delhi Municipal Corporation (DMC) Act, 1952, the presence of the commissioner or an authorized official is mandatory, yet none were in attendance.

PM Modi Extends Maha Shivratri Wishes, Calls For 'Viksit Bharat'

New Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday extended warm greetings to the nation on the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivratri, expressing his wishes for happiness, prosperity, and a stronger resolve toward building a 'Viksit Bharat'. Sharing a video on X, PM Modi wrote, "I wish all my countrymen a very happy Mahashivratri, a festival dedicated to Lord Shiva. May this divine occasion bring happiness, prosperity, and good health to all of you and also strengthen the resolve for a Viksit Bharat. Har Har Mahadev!" Union Home Minister Amit Shah also conveyed his Maha Shivratri greetings, emphasising the festival's deep spiritual and introspective significance. "Heartiest greetings to all countrymen on the holy festival of Mahashivratri. This festival of the union of Shiva and Shakti is a great festival of spirituality, introspection, and faith. I pray to Devadhivev Mahadev for the welfare of all," he posted on X. BJP National President and Union Minister JP Nadda also extended his best wishes, writing on X, "Hearty congratulations and best wishes to all the countrymen on the holy festival of Maha Shivratri. I pray to the God of Gods, Mahadev, that this great festival brings happiness, prosperity, and health in everyone's life. May the blessings of Baba Bholenath remain on everyone." People across the country are celebrating Maha Shivratri with great devotion and enthusiasm, visiting temples dedicated to Lord Shiva and offering prayers. Maha Shivratri is widely believed to mark the divine marriage of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. However, scholars argue that there is no mention of this event in ancient scriptures, including the Shiva Purana. The Shiva Purana states that the Shivratri first manifested on the fourteenth day of the Shukla Paksha in the month of Falgun, known as Chaturdashi Tithi. On this day, Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma worshipped the Shivratri, establishing it as a sacred occasion called Shivratri.

Critically ill: 60 per cent hospitals run without ICUs, blood banks

Out of 27 hospitals reviewed, 14 did not have ICU services, 16 lacked blood banks, and 12 did not have ambulances.

NEW DELHI. A new report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has painted a grim picture of Delhi's public healthcare system under the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government. The findings, which are yet to be officially tabled in the Delhi Assembly, expose serious shortcomings in critical and emergency services at government hospitals, contradicting AAP's claims of a healthcare revolution over the past decade. According to the CAG report, more than half of Delhi government-run hospitals do not have ICU facilities, and nearly 60 per cent lack blood banks. Several hospitals also fall short of essential services, including ambulances and mortuary facilities. Out of 27 hospitals reviewed, 14 did not have ICU services, 16 lacked blood banks, and 12 did not have ambulances. Shockingly, eight hospitals were found to be operating without a proper oxygen supply, while 15 had no mortuary services. At sole Delhi government-run trauma facility, Sushruta Trauma Centre, the report found no



permanent arrangement for specialist doctors and senior residents to provide 24-hour emergency services. Additionally, the Centralised Accident and Trauma Services (CATS) ambulance fleet was found to be running without necessary medical equipment. The report also highlighted severe shortages of essential medicines in government hospitals. Due to failures in procurement by the Central Procurement Agency (CPA), hospitals were forced to buy between 33 per cent to 47 per cent of essential drugs directly from vendors.

Super-specialty hospitals in the capital were also severely understaffed, leading to underutilization of critical healthcare facilities. At Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital (RGSSH), major facilities like modular operation theaters, transplant ICUs, and general hospital beds remained non-functional due to a lack of staff. Similarly, Janakpuri Super Speciality Hospital (JSSH) struggled to run its emergency services, blood bank, and intensive care units. Non-utilisation of clinical infrastructure at both super speciality centers happened due to an alarming shortage of staffs which include upto 74 per cent vacancy of doctors, upto 96 per cent shortage of Nursing Staff, and upto 62 per cent shortage of paramedic staff. The report further exposed the dire state of hospital wards, where overcrowding forced multiple patients to share a single bed or lie on the floor. In nine hospitals, bed occupancy rates ranged from 101 per cent to 189 per cent, while in seven others, it was between 109 per cent and 169 per cent.

NEWS BOX

'Injustice corrected': Supreme Court overturns Richard Glossip's death sentence in landmark ruling

WASHINGTON. The Supreme Court on Tuesday threw out the murder conviction and death penalty for Richard Glossip, an Oklahoma man who was found guilty in the killing of a motel owner but has steadfastly maintained his innocence...

'The fall changed her whole life': Jury awards \$7.25 million to woman injured on Harry Potter ride

LOS ANGELES. A federal jury has awarded \$7.25 million to a 74-year-old Arizona woman for a spine injury she suffered in a fall while exiting the Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey ride at Universal Studios Hollywood.

Iran denounces new US sanctions as 'sign of hostility'

TEHRAN. Iran on Wednesday condemned a new round of US sanctions as a "clear sign of hostility" after Washington blacklisted more than 30 people and vessels linked to its oil trade.

South Korea's birthrate rebounds after 8 years of decline

South Korea's birthrate rose in 2024 for the first time in nine years, driven by government policies, corporate incentives, and a post-pandemic marriage surge. However, experts say sustained growth requires further reforms to support freelancers, temporary workers, and broader societal shifts.

childbirth that is providing huge help," said Nam, whose employer - Booyoung - started to give out 100 million won (\$70,000) from last year to its employees for childbirth bonus. That shift in societal norms could prove pivotal in a country that over the past decade has seen its birthrate plummet to the lowest in the world...

Quarterly data showed the number of second newborns, such as Nam's, jumped 12% in the second half of 2024, versus an 11% rise in first-born babies.

support. Interviews conducted by Reuters over the past week with policymakers, industry experts, economists and Korean mothers credited the government's policy support - in three areas of work-family balance, childcare and housing - and a campaign to encourage business to incentivise employees on parenthood for the positive turn.



Trump proposes fines, jail time for illegal immigrants who fail to register

Washington. Immigrants in the US illegally who fail to register with the federal government could face significant fines, potential imprisonment or both, according to a directive issued by the Department of Homeland Security on Tuesday.



been fingerprinted, the Department of Homeland Security will issue evidence of registration, which must be carried by immigrants over the age of 18 at all times, according to the website.

White House says Amy Gleason, not Elon Musk, is heading Trump's DOGE

Washington,UPDATED After weeks of refusing to answer the question, the White House on Tuesday revealed the identity of the Department of Government Efficiency's acting administrator, a little known former healthcare technology consultant named Amy Gleason.



profile says she has worked as a senior adviser since last month. Gleason did not immediately reply to a message sent via the site. A former USDS staffer told Reuters that Gleason returned to the agency ahead of Trump's inauguration as part of an effort to smooth the transition.

Bangladesh 'at risk' from infighting, warns army chief amid surge in crime

The South Asian nation has been struggling to stem a surge in violent crime, with the security forces arresting thousands this month, targeting gangs allegedly connected to the party of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

without singling out any group by name. "Since stakeholders are busy accusing each other, miscreants find the situation favourable. They believe they can get away with anything," he said at an army memorial event.

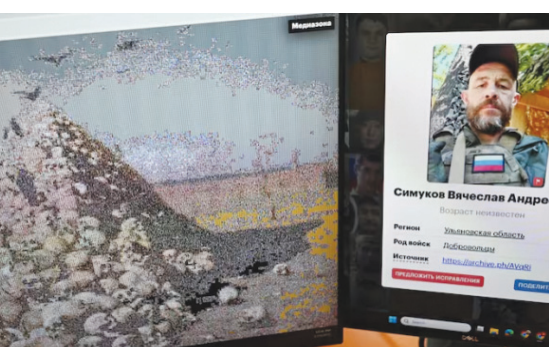


TRAPPED IN THE SAME CYCLE Bangladesh has a long history of military coups. While it was Waker who took charge after Hasina fled by helicopter to India on August 5, he also urged the people to back Nobel Prize-winning microfinance pioneer Muhammad Yunus. Yunus, 84, vows to institute far-reaching democratic reforms and hold general elections in late 2025 or in early 2026, and Waker has sworn in the interim government.

Russian news website claims 95,000 troops killed in Ukraine, Kremlin silent

Mediazona published on Monday, the third anniversary of the offensive, an infographic with images and official reports of the deaths of soldiers from various sources, including social media, news reports and obituaries.

thousands of photos of soldiers forming an image of a famous 1871 painting by Russian artist Vasily Vereshchagin called "The Apotheosis of War", depicting a huge pile of skulls. Each entry includes accessible information on the soldier, including age and date of death, region and unit and photograph in some cases.



convicted in absentia for allegedly distributing false information about the army. The platform puts the Russian death total so far this year at 393, while it lists 26,102 death reports for 2024. But it says the real number of Russian deaths in the offensive must be much higher, since not all deaths are reported publicly.

Moscow,UPDATED The Kremlin declined to comment Tuesday after Russian independent news site Mediazona in collaboration with the BBC Russian Service published details of over 95,000 Russian soldiers killed fighting Ukraine, based on open-access data.

The online list at 200.zona.media currently stands at 95,300. Mediazona and the BBC have been updating the list since the offensive began. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told AFP on Tuesday he was not aware of the publication and neither confirmed nor denied the toll.

soldiers had been killed in combat. At the end of 2024, then-US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin spoke of 700,000 Russian soldiers who were killed or wounded. Mediazona was founded by Russian opposition activist Pyotr Verzilov, who helped form the Pussy Riot punk group and has fought on the side of Ukraine. The site has been declared a "foreign agent" by Russia and Verzilov has been put on a list of extremists and

NEWS BOX

Jos Buttler takes a dig at India for only playing in Dubai: It's a unique tournament

New Delhi. England captain Jos Buttler has taken a sly dig at India's advantage in the ongoing ICC Champions Trophy 2025, who're playing all of their matches at the same venue in the tournament. After denying to travel to the host country, Pakistan, India are playing all of their matches at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, where the pitches are heavily favouring their spin-heavy attack. Recently, Buttler was asked about India's advantage in playing at one venue and the England captain called it a 'unique tournament' where one team is playing its matches outside of the official host country. He also said that he isn't worried too much about it and is only thinking about the game against Afghanistan. "Not really. I think it's a unique tournament already, isn't it, with being hosted here with one team playing in a different place but that's not something I'm sort of worried too much about at the moment. I've got all my focus on preparing well tonight and our game tomorrow," said Buttler in the pre-match press conference ahead of the Afghanistan game.

In two matches played so far, Indian spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel have picked up three wickets each, while Ravindra Jadeja



has claimed one scalp. Speedster Mohammad Shami is the leading wicket-taker with five wickets, followed by Harshit Rana (4 wickets) and Hardik Pandya (2 wickets). The Men in Blue have already qualified for the semi-finals of the tournament following clinical victories against Bangladesh and Pakistan by six wickets. They will face New Zealand in the third and final group fixture on March 2. India will play their semi-final on March 4 in Dubai and will also play the final of the competition in Dubai, provided they qualify for the same.

Meanwhile, England will face Afghanistan in a must-win encounter after losing their first match against Australia. The Hashmatullah Shahidi-led side stunned them with a defeat during the ODI World Cup 2023 and will hope for the same in the upcoming fixture as well.

Lakshya Sen's age fraud case explained: Here's what we know about controversy

New Delhi. Lakshya Sen has found himself at the centre of a court case accusing the badminton star of age fraud. Lakshya, who has been one of India's finest badminton players in recent times, along with his brother Chirag, parents and coach U. Vimal Kumar found themselves at the centre of the controversy.

The case, which dates back to 2022, quickly caught fire in recent days with the Karnataka High Court dismissing the petition from the badminton star and ordering further probe and investigation into the matter. Thankfully for Lakshya, the Supreme Court of India stepped in and ordered a stay on the order from the Karnataka High Court, meaning that no further investigation will be done into the matter. With a lot of details involved in the case, we have a look at some of the key points of the controversy.

What is the case all about?

A criminal case was registered against Lakshya, his brother Chirag Sen, their father Dharendra K. Sen, mother Nirmala D. Sen,



and coach U. Vimal Kumar for allegedly fabricating the birth certificates of the Sen brothers. It was alleged that the ages of Lakshya and Chirag were lowered by 2 and a half years to allow them to compete in junior tournaments.

Who filed the complaint against Lakshya?

The case against Lakshya was based on a private complaint filed by Nagaraja M.G., and this led to an FIR being registered in December 2022 following a directive from the metropolitan magistrate.

What was the evidence presented?

Nagaraja submitted the documents which he obtained through the Right To Information (RTI) act, which also included an inquiry report by the Ministry of Youth Affairs, which apparently found evidence of Lakshya's father committing forgery.

What was Lakshya Sen's petition?

In response to the allegations, Lakshya, along with his family and coach, claimed that the allegations were baseless and the case built on personal grievances rather than factual evidence.

AFG vs ENG: England, Afghanistan in deep water in race for semi-final

➔ **Afghanistan will face England on February 26**

➔ **There is a slight chance of rain on Wednesday**

➔ **Afghanistan are placed at the bottom of the table in Group B**

New Delhi. England and Afghanistan have found themselves in a rabbit hole ahead of their Group B clash in the Champions Trophy on Wednesday, February 26. On Tuesday, Rawalpindi witnessed its first washout of the tournament, with not a single ball bowled in the match between Steve Smith's Australia and Temba Bavuma's South Africa.

With the Aussies and Proteas now at three points each, they remain favourites to advance to the semi-finals from Group B. Following Wednesday's abandoned clash, England and Afghanistan find themselves in deep trouble, as the loser will crash out of the tournament. However, if rain prevents play,

both teams will still have a slim chance of qualifying for the semi-finals.

Champions Trophy: Full Coverage | Points Table

Lahore's weather on Wednesday isn't overly bad, but there is a slight chance of rain, with persistent cloud cover keeping the groundstaff on their toes. There's even a scenario where all four teams could end up with three points each at the end of the group stage. Can Afghanistan Repeat Their 2023 Heroics?

Hashmatullah Shahidi's Afghanistan entered the Champions Trophy as dark horses. After defeating the Proteas last year in a bilateral series in Sharjah, they were expected to perform strongly at Karachi's National Stadium. However, a 107-run loss left them at the bottom of the table with a net run rate of -2.140. Despite this setback, Afghanistan still has a decent chance to turn things around. Shahidi's men can draw inspiration from their stunning 69-run victory over England in the 2023 World Cup at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi. Back then, Rahmanullah Gurbaz smashed 80 runs, while Mujeeb Ur Rahman and Rashid Khan



picked up three wickets each.

During the ODI World Cup, Afghanistan defeated England after recovering from back-to-back losses to Bangladesh and India. Skipper Shahidi believes his team can repeat that feat against the Three Lions but acknowledges that England won't be an easy opponent. "I think we all know that England is one of the best teams, so it's a tough challenge for us. But we are ready for any challenge, and we worked hard to reach this level. We will take confidence from what happened in the 2023 World Cup, but at the same time, tomorrow is a new day, and we will try our best to beat them again," Shahidi

said in the pre-match press conference.

England Under Pressure

England, meanwhile, have struggled in recent matches. After a 0-3 series loss to India on Indian soil, Jos Buttler's men suffered a five-wicket defeat to Australia at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. Ben Duckett registered the highest individual score in Champions Trophy history with a stunning 145, guiding England to 315 for eight. However, Josh Inglis' unbeaten 120 off 86

balls—featuring eight fours and six sixes—powered Australia to the highest successful run chase in ICC ODI tournament history. England's pace trio of Mark Wood, Jofra Archer, and Brydon Carse conceded runs at an alarming rate. To make matters worse, Carse has been ruled out due to a recurring left toe issue, with Rehan Ahmed replacing him in the squad. Having lost four consecutive matches, England are in poor form, giving Afghanistan a real opportunity to capitalise. Shahidi's men have never reached the semi-finals of an ICC ODI event, but this is their chance to make history.

England greats accuse ICC of favouritism: India playing in Dubai 'undeniable advantage'

➔ **Nasser and Atherton believe India benefits from playing all matches in Dubai**

➔ **They highlighted India's travel-free advantage over other teams**

➔ **Pakistan travelled to Dubai for India clash, suffered six-wicket loss**

New Delhi. Former England cricketers Nasser Hussain and Michael Atherton believe that India holds a significant advantage in the ongoing Champions Trophy due to playing all their matches at a single venue in Dubai. Unlike other teams that must travel between Pakistan and Dubai, India has the luxury of consistency in conditions, a factor both Hussain and Atherton feel gives them an upper hand in the competition.

India's fixed venue resulted from the tournament's hybrid model, introduced after India refused to travel to Pakistan, the original sole host. The International Cricket

Council (ICC) responded by restructuring the schedule, ensuring all of India's games were played in Dubai. Speaking to Sky Sports, Hussain and Atherton highlighted how this eliminates the fatigue and logistical challenges that other teams face



while adjusting to different pitches and climates. "About the advantage India have in playing in Dubai, only in Dubai, which seems to me to be a hard-to-quantify advantage but an undeniable advantage...They are playing at just one venue. They do not have to travel between venues or, you know, between countries as a lot of other teams have to do," Atherton

said. "It is an advantage. For the best team in the tournament to have that advantage...I saw a tweet the other day: Pakistan - host nation, India - home advantage. That sort of sums it up, really...They are [India] in one place. They are in one hotel. There is no travel. They are in one dressing room. They know the pitch. They picked for that pitch. When they selected, they were very smart. Even in India's highly anticipated clash against arch-rivals Pakistan on February 23, the co-hosts had to fly to Dubai for the game, which they lost by six wickets. Hussain and Atherton pointed out that India's ability to build their team strategy solely based on Dubai's conditions has been a crucial advantage, allowing them to prepare without any travel-related disruptions.

India has already secured their place in the semi-finals after dominant victories over Bangladesh and Pakistan. Their final group-stage match against New Zealand on March 2 will decide their positioning, but their seamless run so far has only strengthened claims that playing in a single venue has worked in their favour.

Pakistan Cricket Board beefs up ground security after pitch invasion in Rawalpindi

New Delhi. Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has said that it's working on reinforcing the security at all the venues of the ongoing Champions Trophy 2025 after a fan invaded the pitch in Rawalpindi. A fan breached the security during Match 6 of the tournament between New Zealand and Bangladesh at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium as he came running onto the field to hug Rachin Ravindra. The fan went up close to the New Zealand batter and hugged him before the security personnel came onto the pitch and took him away. Following the incident, the PCB stressed upon ensuring the safety of players and match officials and stated that it has decided to reinforce their security around the field of play at all venues. "The PCB has taken serious note of the security breach that occurred yesterday when a spectator entered the field of play. Ensuring the safety of players and officials remains our top priority. As a responsible



organisation, we have engaged with local security agencies, who have committed to increasing security personnel around the field of play at all venues and strengthening access control measures," said the PCB in a media release. Furthermore, the PCB also revealed that the fan who invaded the pitch was arrested and presented before a court, and has been banned from entering any cricket venues in Pakistan. "The individual involved was arrested and

presented before a court of law today (Tuesday). In addition, he has been permanently banned from entering all cricket venues in Pakistan. To prevent such incidents in the future, the PCB is working closely with security agencies and venue authorities to review and reinforce security protocols," they added.

India, New Zealand qualify for semi-finals

It was the first such incident of a security breach during the ongoing Champions Trophy 2025. Meanwhile, the tournament has confirmed its first two semi-finalists following New Zealand's clinical five-wicket win over Bangladesh courtesy of a match-winning century by Rachin Ravindra. Following their win, New Zealand for the semi-final from Group A along with India, who've also won both of their matches so far.

Champions Trophy: Dysfunctional Pakistan need counselling, not surgery

➔ **Pakistan have been knocked out of the Champions Trophy**

➔ **The team seems to be playing an outdated template of cricket**

➔ **Pakistan needs to stop hack jobs in the name of surgery**

New Delhi. Our performance is at its lowest. Improving the team's performance is our biggest challenge," said Mohsin Naqvi after Pakistan lost their group-stage match against India in the T20 World Cup 2024. The Pakistan Cricket Board chairman had bold words reserved for the side right after the marquee clash. Naqvi said that he would do major surgery on the cricketing ecosystem of the country and get the side back on pace in international cricket. Eight months later, after those bold remarks, Pakistan has once again

lost to India in yet another ICC tournament. What's worse is that, at least in 2024, Pakistan at least looked competitive, but in 2025, there wasn't a speck of fire in the Mohammad Rizwan-led side.

The notable difference between the two matches? This time, Mohsin Naqvi kept quiet. Champions Trophy: Full Coverage | Points Table Pakistan's recent loss against India once again puts the focus on their team and the cricket board, who have refused to change with the pace of the game. In T20Is, Pakistan plays run-a-ball cricket, like they should in ODIs. In ODIs, they bat like a Test side, at a time when 330-350 runs have become par in the 50-over game. And in Tests, oh yes, let's talk about Tests. In Tests, Pakistan decided to make rank-turners after overseas sides kept hammering them in red-ball cricket. The decision spectacularly backfired against Bangladesh (0-2) and West Indies (1-1), who beat them at home on

**Hiring and firing attitude**

ADVERTISEMENT Since the ODI World Cup 2023, which essentially started the downfall of Pakistan cricket, they have changed coaches thrice. After Mickey Arthur's exit, Mohammed

Hafeez was handed the reins of the team. Hafeez was sacked before the T20 World Cup, and Pakistan brought in World Cup-winning coach Gary Kirsten, along with former Australia fast bowler Jason Gillespie, who had done well in the Australian domestic circuit. Kirsten, who won the ODI World Cup in 2011 with India and the Indian Premier League 2022 as a mentor, was forced out of the side without coaching in a single ODI game. Kirsten left amidst growing differences with the PCB after he was not allowed to select his preferred set of players for the ODI and T20I teams. Gillespie met the same fate, less than a year into his appointment as the coach of the Test team. "You want to be able to have clear communication with all stakeholders, with selectors, for instance, knowing what the team is as head coach well before the game, or at least a day before the game," said Gillespie on the ABC Grandstand show.



was due to be involved with The Hundred at the beginning of the competition so it's great to finally be able to make it to Wales," Smith said. New Zealand's left-arm speedster Trent Boult has also secured a contract, joining Birmingham Phoenix, further boosting their pace attack. The men's competition saw several other high-profile signings, with Marcus Stoinis heading to Trent Rockets and Kane Williamson joining London Spirit, adding both experience and stability to their respective sides. The Hundred's women's competition also saw major signings, with Australian legend Meg Lanning set to don the Oval Invincibles jersey. South African batting powerhouse and skipper Laura Wolvaardt will be turning out for Southern Brave Women, while New Zealand all-rounder Amelia Kerr has been snapped up by Manchester Originals Women, ensuring the tournament is packed with top-tier international talent. While The Hundred continues to attract global superstars, Stokes' absence is notable, especially considering his leadership role in English cricket.



Parineeti Chopra

Makes Netflix Debut With Thriller Series, Starts Shooting

Parineeti Chopra starts filming her Netflix debut, a thriller series in Shimla, produced by Siddharth P Malhotra and directed by Rensil D'Silva, featuring Tahir Raj Bhasin, Anup Soni, and Jennifer Winget.

Bollywood's favourite girl-next-door, Parineeti Chopra, is all set to bring her charm to the world of streaming. The actress has officially begun shooting for her Netflix debut, and guess what? It's not a rom-com but a thriller series. Netflix has now announced its upcoming compelling Mystery Thriller set amidst the picturesque hills of Shimla.

Produced by the acclaimed Siddharth P Malhotra, director of Maharaj and Sapna Malhotra of Alchemy Productions and written and directed by the visionary writer Rensil D'Silva of Rang De Basanti and Ungli fame, the currently untitled series promises a gripping blend of intrigue and suspense.

The series boasts an ensemble cast including Tahir Raj Bhasin, Anup Soni, Jennifer Winget, Chaitannya Choudhry, Harleen Sethi, and Soni Razdan.

Parineeti shared a post on X and wrote, "Some mysteries don't just unfold—they pull you in, keep you guessing, and refuse to let go." We've got a lead on this case. A new mystery thriller series is in the making! Shooting has begun, can't wait for you all to see this labor of love from team Netflix and us when it's ready! Making my series OTT debut (sic)."

Speaking to the exciting new series and cast, the creators Siddharth Malhotra and Rensil D'Silva shared, "We are thrilled to collaborate on this Noir Mystery Thriller with Netflix, a platform that celebrates storytelling in its most diverse and compelling forms. Working with Netflix has allowed us the creative freedom to push boundaries and bring a unique narrative to life. With a cast as talented as this and Parineeti choosing to foray into series with our production, we are excited for what lies ahead and cannot wait for the world to watch the mystery unfold."

Tanya Bami, Series Head, Netflix India, added, "Some mysteries don't just unfold—they pull you in, keep you guessing, and refuse to let go. Set against the misty hills of Shimla, this gripping thriller unravels secrets, emotions, and the depths of human nature with unmatched intensity. With the creative vision of Rensil D'Silva and Siddharth P. Malhotra, and a powerhouse cast featuring Tahir Raj Bhasin, Anup Soni, and Harleen Sethi, the series captivates from the very first scene. We are delighted to welcome Parineeti Chopra back to Netflix following her stellar performance in Amar Singh Chamkila—now in her first-ever series and we're equally excited to have Jennifer Winget join us: Prepare for a journey that will keep you on the edge of your seat, hooked and guessing until the very end."

This thriller series marks Parineeti Chopra's fourth outing with Netflix. She previously teamed up with the platform for Ribhu Dasgupta's mystery drama The Girl on the Train, Imtiaz Ali's biographical film Amar Singh Chamkila alongside Diljit Dosanjh, and an upcoming romantic comedy directed by Dhruv Tripathi. With each project spanning a different genre, Parineeti is proving she's here to conquer every corner of the OTT world!

Jyotika On Facing Sexism For Being Married To 'Superstar' Suriya: 'You May Have Identity Crisis'



After 26 years, Jyotika returned to Hindi films with Srikanth in 2024. And now, she's gearing up for the release of her next Hindi project, Dabba Cartel, a series that chronicles the story of five ordinary women, who accidentally become involved in a high-stakes drug cartel. The film sees Jyotika playing a housewife of a business tycoon, who has put her own high-profile career on hold to focus on her family. Incidentally, in real life, she too took a hiatus from the movies after her marriage to south star Suriya in 2006.

Dabba Cartel, apart from narrating a gripping investigative tale, also touches upon the theme of casual sexism. Now, in an exclusive chat with News18 Showsha, Jyotika reveals that despite spending so many decades in the film industry, she often faces discrimination for being a woman and a large part of the same stems from being Suriya's wife. "It seems like an everyday thing. I'm married to a superstar. So, I face it every now and then, till date. I see it happening even during interviews," she tells us.

Explaining her stance further, she says, "If I say that I feel lucky to have married Suriya, people say that he's a really nice guy. If he says that he feels lucky to have married a nice woman, it suddenly becomes something like Suriya is such a nice guy that he's thinking of his wife. You experience casual sexism even when it comes to materialistic things. I may buy a car but someone else is supposed to press the button and check the features out. It's now a part of daily life. There are hundreds of instances that I can point out."

And this discrimination just doesn't end here. According to Jyotika, it often makes her question her own identity. "Sometimes, it reaches a level where you may have an identity crisis. A woman's search for her identity also nudges one to take a lot of decisions and make choices on their own. That's also how I chose my career path," she states. For the unversed, Jyotika and Suriya had first met on the sets of the 1999 Tamil film, Poovellam Kettuppar. After dating for a few years, they finally got married that led her to shift base from Mumbai to Chennai.

A while ago, Suriya had revealed that post the pandemic, they shifted back to Mumbai as a family to help revive Jyotika's career and give a regular lifestyle to their children. Earlier, in an interview with us, Jyotika spoke about her strong relationship with Suriya and said, "My husband is my best friend. He was the first guy I met in the industry and I did my first film with him. We remained friends for a long time. Since we've lasted this long and continue to, I'm imagining that it's because of the friendship we share."

John Abraham Calls Entourage Costs 'Mental', Urges Actors To Cut Down Fees: 'We Are Suffering'



John Abraham recently expressed his take on why the film industry is suffering. He called out actors demanding a hefty fee and loading a film with their entourage costs. He introspected the dire condition of the film industry, stating that it is "bleeding". The Satyameva Jayate actor also suggested that actors accept a pay cut and work on a film from the backend.

"It's already hurting Hindi cinema," John Abraham told The Hollywood Reporter. He added, "At this point of time, we shouldn't be paying people to act in films because we don't justify those huge budgets. The huge fees that we get paid, and we can't load a film with entourage costs as well. It's ridiculous. Don't know if actors are thinking this way or is it their agent making them think differently. I understand you are put in a bubble, but you can't be so daft. You need to see the real world. If people are blowing sunshine from your backside, you need to wake up and smell the coffee. As an industry, we are really suffering."

The actor said that stylists these days charge Rs 2 lakh per day, which is "mental". He called this one of the reasons why the film industry is not able to rake in money. "First thing to make amends is by cutting your personal cost. When a director tells you that you aren't worth that much, you need to take that in cognizance. We don't have that thought yet. We compare ourselves to other actors, and we want to broadcast our fees, and that's the worst thing to do," explained John. The Jism star further expressed his concern for the industry and said that it's time actors realise the "deep black hole" they are steadily seeping into. He felt artists should go to the backend to work on a film. He further added that actors' profit-making from films should be dependant on the film's box office business. "How much more will you suck the system dry?", a concerned John said.

Govinda's Wife Sunita Ahuja

Lived Separately, She Feared He Was Cheating: 'Never Trust A Man'

Govinda and Sunita Ahuja may divorce after 37 years. Sunita hinted at worries about Govinda cheating and revealed they lived separately amid unconfirmed disagreements.



In the latest shocking development, Govinda and his wife Sunita Ahuja may be heading for divorce after 37 years of marriage, according to reports. However, it has to be noted that the couple has not confirmed or denied the news yet. According to unverified sources, ongoing disagreements and differing lifestyles have led to frequent arguments between them.

This reminds us of a recent interview that Sunita gave wherein she hinted at her worries about Govinda cheating on her. She had made some startling revelations about their marriage including the fact that they lived separately.

Sunita had revealed that she was the one who initiated their relationship, as Govinda "was even scared to touch women." However, she added that Govinda is not the romantic type, at least not in real life. "Now, I don't know if he has become like that. You never

know what people do behind your back. Never trust a man. People change colours like a chameleon. It's been 37 years since we got married. Where would he go? Earlier he never went anywhere, now I don't know..." she said in an interview with Hindi Rush.

Sunita also shared that they mostly lived in separate houses, with Govinda often staying at his bungalow. "We have two houses, we have a bungalow opposite our apartment. I have my temple and my kids in the flat. We live in the flat whereas he gets late after his meetings. He loves talking so he'll gather 10 people and sit chatting with them. Whereas me, my son and my daughter live together, but we hardly talk because I feel if you end up wasting your energy by talking too much," she explained.

When asked about Govinda's romantic nature, Sunita said, "I have told him that in my next life, he should not be my husband. He doesn't go on holidays. I am a person who wants to go out with her husband and eat pani-puri on the streets. He spent too much time working... I don't recall a single instance when we both went out to watch a movie."

Sunita also shared that she used to feel secure in her marriage earlier but it's not the case anymore. "I used to be very secure earlier on in our marriage, now I am not," she said with a laugh. "Kya hai na saath (60) ke baad log sathiya bhi jaate hai na... (After 60, people even lose their senses) He has crossed 60, you never know what he does..." she added.

News18 Showsha contacted Sunita Ahuja and daughter Tina Ahuja for a comment, but they had not responded at the time of publication.