



GARVI GUJARAT

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Use of AI should aim to bridge social, economic, technological divides: Prez Murmu

(Gns). President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday launched the #SkilltheNation challenge under the SOAR (Skilling for AI Readiness) initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) at a function held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre.

She also virtually inaugurated the IGNOU Regional Centre and Skill Centre at Rairangpur, Odisha, on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, the President said Artificial Intelligence is reshaping economies and societies worldwide.

"It is transforming how we learn, how we work, how we access modern

services, and how we address humanity's greatest challenges. For a young nation like India, AI is not just a technology but a tremendous opportunity for positive change," she said.

The President said India's approach has always been that technology should empower people, promote inclusion, and expand opportunities for all.

"The use of AI should aim to bridge social, economic, and technological divides. It is essential to ensure that its benefits reach people of all backgrounds and ages, especially those from marginalised communities," she said.

The President was happy to note that students

are preparing themselves for a future full of possibilities and opportunities.

She urged them to remember that technology, their knowledge and skills

pleted AI learning modules. She said that by learning about emerging technologies themselves, they have set an example of leadership through learning.



should be used to serve society, find solutions to challenges, and empower others.

The President appreciated the Members of Parliament who have com-

employment, and overall productivity. Skills such as data science, AI engineering, and data analytics will play a crucial role in developing the country's AI talent pool," she said.

The President said the government, in collabora-

tion with various institutions, industry partners, and academia, is ensuring that India not only adopts technology but also shapes a responsible future through it.

She urged all to work together with commitment

to build a developed India. "We should contribute to making India a knowledge superpower in line with the National Education Policy and to building a tech-driven, inclusive, and prosperous India," the President said.

This event, being organised by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, is part of the continued commitment of the government towards preparing India's workforce for an AI-driven future.

Cigarettes, tobacco to be costlier from Feb 1 as Centre imposes additional excise duty

(Gns).

The Central government on Wednesday notified a significant revision in excise duty on cigarettes and other tobacco products. According to the notification issued by the Ministry of Finance, an additional excise duty will be imposed on cigarettes in the range of Rs 2,050 to Rs 8,500 per 1,000 sticks, effective February 1, 2026.

The additional duty will be levied over and above the existing 40 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) on tobacco and similar products.

The move follows Parliament's recent passage of the Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025, which provides for an increase in excise duties on tobacco and allied products before GST. Compensation cess is reverting back to the Centre to be collected as excise duty, which will

GST compensation cess. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said in

Parliament that the revenue collected will be redistributed to the States at the 41 per cent allocated," she had said.



Cigarettes, tobacco to be costlier from Feb 1 as Centre imposes additional excise duty

ter added that even in India, tobacco taxes were increased regularly prior to the introduction of GST, primarily due to health considerations. "Higher prices or taxes were intended to act as a deterrent so that people would not get into the habit," Sitharaman said.

The government is bringing back the excise duty which existed priority to the GST system.

The minister said because of various initiatives taken by the government, acreage under tobacco cultivation of over 1.12 lakh acres (45,323 hectare) moved to other crops between 2018 to 2021-22. It has shifted to sugarcane, groundnut, oil palm, cotton, chilli, maize, onion, pulses, and turmeric, she had said.

Several countries revise tobacco taxes annually, while many link it with inflation, she noted. The minis-

Yogi Government Brings Fastpass System, Clears Small Building Plans in Minutes

(Gns).

Property owners in Uttar Pradesh now get a quicker way to build homes and shops. Under a new Fastpass system, many small house and commercial plans are cleared online within minutes. People will not need repeated visits to development authority offices for basic approvals.

Uttar Pradesh has launched a Fastpass system for quicker online approval of building plans, allowing instant clearance

for residential buildings up to 100 square metres and commercial constructions up to 30 square metres, with the process managed through the portal map.up.gov.in.

The Lucknow Development Authority has rolled out Fastpass under its new building bylaws. Using special software, owners of eligible plots can upload building

plans and receive instant approval. The Yogi government presents this as a New Year relief for upcoming home and shop builders.

Fastpass house plan approval online: eligibility and area limits

LDA vice-chairperson Prathamesh Kumar explained the limits for Fastpass clearance. Residential buildings up to 100 square

metres qualify. Commercial constructions up to 30 square metres also fall under this system. In each case, the property owner submits the map online and receives self-approved documents.

Building type
Maximum area under Fastpass
Residential house
100 square metres
Commercial building
30 square metres
Fastpass house plan approval online: registration and fee payment

Mann Government's Digital Drive by 2025 Lets 1.85 Lakh People Access 437 Services From Home

(Gns).

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, the Punjab government has achieved a historic milestone by making the state's administrative structure completely digital and citizen-friendly by 2025. Punjab has today emerged as a state in the country where "government is run not from offices, but from people's homes." This wave of administrative reforms has not only ensured transparency and accountability in government functioning but has also uprooted the decades-old culture of "recommendations and delays."

Under Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, the Punjab government aims to digitize its administration by 2025, facilitating citizen-



friendly services. The Bhagwant Mann Sarkar Tuhade Dwar scheme provides over 1.85 lakh citizens with 437 different services at their doorsteps. This scheme not only saves time but has also emerged as a major support for the elderly and rural residents.

The greatest example of administrative efficiency has been seen in the Revenue Department, where over 12.46 lakh applications have been processed online by Patwaris. This incorporation of technology has simplified land and property-related tasks, which were once a hotbed of corruption and delays. The entire process is now

paperless, and QR-coded digital certificates have added a new dimension to security and authenticity. This eliminates the need for citizens to visit offices or resort to middlemen.

The key to this government's success is real-time monitoring through the "Digital Dashboard." Thanks to this state-of-the-art system, pendency (pending cases) across all departmental services has now dropped to a mere 0.33%, the lowest level in the state's administrative history. Minister Arman Arora clarified that Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has clearly directed that public work must be completed within timeframes without any hindrance. Today,

Addressing the gathering, the SP president also asked the workers to follow

stop SP from coming to power in 2027 in UP," he announced.

leading the country and society on the path of prosperity.

"In the new year, everyone must work together with new energy and determination. The negative BJP government must be removed in 2027, and it must be ousted from power. In this government, injustice, oppression, inflation, unemployment, and corruption are at their peak. The public is suffering. The removal of the BJP government in 2027 is certain," he added.

Akhilesh Yadav claimed that "the BJP has become weak, and when the BJP becomes weak, it becomes even more communal".

ers, labourers, and the poor benefit," he said.

"You all must dedicate yourselves to the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) so that no eligible

voters' names are deleted from the voters' list. BJP had already admitted that most of the deleted voters are supporters of BJP; hence, now no one can

the path shown by Baba Saheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia, and party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav, and work towards

constitutional identity based on "unity in diversity" and "sarva dharma sambhav" (equal respect for all religions), ensuring protection of life, property and faith for all citizens. According to her, only such an approach can lead to truly inclusive and equitable development, rather than widening the gap between the rich and the poor.

The BSP chief added that if India follows its constitutional principles sincerely, it can emerge as a global guide, benefiting Indians worldwide and improving relations with neighbouring countries, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for common people.

Take resolution on New Year to remove BJP govt in 2027 : Akhilesh Yadav

(Gns).

Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav extended New Year greetings and best wishes to everyone during a big gathering here on Thursday, with an appeal to party workers and leaders to take a resolution for 2026 to remove the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh in the 2027 assembly polls.

He announced that if the Samajwadi Party forms the government in UP, women will receive Rs 40,000 annually. "The Samajwadi Party fulfils its promises, and the public trusts that the SP keeps its promises. Only under a Samajwadi Party government will farm-

ers, labourers, and the poor benefit," he said.

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Editorial

Mumbai Decides

As Mumbai heads into another Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation election, the contest is being read not merely as a civic poll but as a referendum on the city's changing social contract. For decades, municipal politics here were anchored in a relatively stable demographic and economic reality: an industrial city with a strong Marathi-speaking working class that translated cultural assertion into political dominance. That Mumbai no longer exists. The city has undergone a slow but decisive demographic shift.

Linguistic pluralism is now the norm, not the exception. Marathi speakers remain a significant presence, but they no longer form an unquestioned majority. Hindi-speaking populations, Muslims, Gujaratis, and a wide range of smaller linguistic communities together shape the electorate. In such a landscape, appeals built primarily on a single, linguistic identity face natural limits, especially in a city where mobility ~ social, economic, and geographic ~ is constant. The upcoming BMC polls bring this reality into sharp focus. They test whether civic politics can still be driven by cultural consolidation or whether it must respond to a more fragmented, issue-driven electorate. The answer increasingly appears to be the latter.

Today's voters are less animated by questions of identity and more by the everyday pressures of urban life: transport bottlenecks, housing affordability, infrastructure fatigue, pollution, and the reliability of basic services. These concerns cut across language and region, reshaping how political legitimacy is earned. This shift has altered the grammar of Mumbai's politics. Infrastructure has become the dominant political idiom, not because it is universally loved, but because it speaks to a city stretched across suburbs, satellite towns, and long commutes. Large projects promise predictability in an otherwise chaotic urban experience.

In contrast, symbolic politics ~ once central to civic mobilisation ~ now struggles to generate sustained momentum beyond a core base. Equally telling is the persistent voter apathy that shadows Mumbai's elections. Turnout remains modest, particularly in affluent and commercial districts that wield outsized economic influence. This disengagement reflects a deeper change: the transformation of citizens into consumers of the city rather than participants in its governance. Municipal politics, despite the immense impact on daily life, no longer commands the urgency it once did.

The irony is that the BMC, one of India's richest civic bodies, presides over a city that often appears politically fatigued. Electoral contests are keenly watched by parties but unevenly engaged with by voters. The danger is not that Mumbai lacks political choice, but that it risks losing civic voice. The forthcoming BMC election will therefore be less about who controls the corporation and more about what kind of city Mumbai chooses to be. It is a test of whether politics can adapt to demographic reality without retreating into nostalgia ~ and whether governance can reconnect with a population that has grown diverse, mobile, and quietly disengaged.

Ahmedabad International Flower Show-2026

Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel inaugurates the 14th International Flower Show with the theme 'Bharat Ek Gatha'

Energy Minister Shri Rushikesh Patel and Minister of State for Urban Development Smt. Darshana Vaghela Graces the Event

The world's largest floral artwork honouring the contribution of the Iron Man Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel towards national unity prepared for the Guinness Book of World Records

The Chief Minister also unveiled a sculpture prepared on the theme of 'Women Empowerment'

A special creation based on 'Diwali - World Intangible Cultural Heritage' declared by UNESCO was presented

India's history, culture, achievements and emotions were presented on a single platform through the confluence of flowers, art and imagination

Flower Show Open for Visitors Till 22 January 2026

Gandhinagar, 1 January 2026: Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel today inaugurated the 'Ahmedabad International Flower Show 2026' at the Sabarmati Riverfront. The 14th edition of the show, themed 'Bharat Ek Gatha', celebrates India's rich and diverse culture and will remain open until 22 January. On this occasion, Energy Minister Shri Rushikesh Patel and Minister of State for Urban Development Smt. Darshana Vaghela were also present.

After the inauguration, the Chief Minister and dignitaries visited various zones of the flower show and viewed its key attractions, including floral sculptures. The Chief Minister

child care units, and food stalls will remain major attractions for visitors. The flower show has been organised with public participation, with active partnership from several inde-

The world-class Ahmedabad Flower Show-2026 beautifully blends Indian culture with the beauty of nature, drawing nature and culture enthusiasts from across the coun-

theme.

A special zone dedicated to various Indian festivals has also been prepared in the exhibition. Here, through floral art, the message of light and hope

grace of dance forms such as Kuchipudi, Bhangra, Garba and Kathakali. At the centre of this zone, the idol of Lord Nataraja will symbolise India's artistic richness, continuity of tradition and the universal language of rhythm.

The 'Achievements of India' zone highlights modern India's progress through floral displays depicting high-speed rail, renewable energy, sports achievements, space technology and excellence in education. The zone reflects a balanced development between India's rich heritage with future-focused innovation.

A major focal point of the exhibition will be the symbolic zone of national unity, featuring a magnificent floral mandala of 30-metre diameter and the world's largest floral artwork of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. This display, honouring the contribution of Sardar Patel, known as the Iron Man of India, towards national unity, has been prepared to set a Guinness World Record.

Under Flower Show-2026, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation has installed a sprinkling irrigation network system over an area of 10,524 sq. metres at the event ground on the Sabarmati Riverfront for the maintenance of seasonal plants installed for display, instead of traditional watering methods such as tractors or pipes.

Four special entry gates for visitor convenience

- Gate No. 1 - Flower Park, near Ellisbridge, Riverfront West

- From the Multilevel Car Parking Foot Over Bridge- Gate No. 4 - Event Centre, Riverfront West

- East Entry, East end of Atal Bridge, Riverfront East

Ticket rates and timings

For visitors, the entry fee from Monday to Friday will be Rs. 80/-, and on Saturday, Sunday and public holidays the entry fee will be Rs. 100/-. Further, free entry will be available on all days for divyans, soldiers, children aged 12 years or below, and students of schools run by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

Reacting to the developments, Trinamool Congress leader Kunal Ghosh remarked that such trusts had turned into "honey pots", leading to inevitable infighting. With Mahato's resignation, the credibility and future course of the Junior Doctors' Front now stand under a cloud, even as the demand for justice for Abhaya continues to resonate beyond organisational turmoil.

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For students of schools other than AMC schools, the entry fee will be Rs. 10/- from Monday to Friday between 9:00 am and 1:00 pm. Additionally, for visitors, a prime time slot entry fee of Rs. 500/- will apply from 8 to 9 am and from 10 to 11 pm.



also unveiled a sculpture themed on Women Empowerment, while the world's largest floral artwork honouring Iron Man Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's contribution to national unity has been created for the Guinness Book of World Records and a special creation on Diwali, recognised by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, emerged as major highlights. Notably, the exhibition zones showcase different facets of India, from ancient knowledge and vibrant festivals to artistic excellence and modern development, allowing visitors to experience India's journey from the past to the present and the spirit of 'Unity in Diversity'. Additionally, special audio guides have been developed. By scanning QR codes placed at various locations in the flower show, visitors can obtain information about the flowers, sculptures, and zones. Besides this, souvenir shops, nurseries, pendent corporate and government entities.

On this occasion, Ahmedabad Mayor Smt. Pratibha Jain; MLAs of Ahmedabad Shri Amit Thakar, Shri Jitu Patel, and Shri Harshad Patel; Deputy Mayor Shri Jatin Patel; Standing Committee Chairman Shri Devang Dani; Municipal Commissioner Shri Banchanidhi Pani; along with office-bearers and officials of the Municipal Corporation, representatives of corporate entities, and a large number of citizens were present.

Key attractions of the International Flower Show-2026

- The Shashvat Bharat Zone highlighting India's mythological heritage and the 30-metre-wide floral mandala are key attractions of the flower show.

- Achievements in high-speed rail, renewable energy, sports, space technology, and education have been showcased through floral displays.

The flower show jour-

ney begins at a grand entrance, where two large floral lions welcome visitors, symbolising India's courage, pride and indomitable spirit. At the entrance zone, a lotus fountain decorated with flowers artistically reflects national pride and sets the tone for the exhibition.

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In August 2024, a woman doctor was raped and murdered inside a seminar room at RG Kar Hospital. Junior doctors launched a sustained agitation demanding justice. The Central Bureau of Investigation later took over the probe and concluded the trial within a relatively short span. Civic volunteer Sanjay Roy was

convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. However, the verdict failed to satisfy the victim's family, relatives and friends, who alleged that key aspects of the crime were concealed and that the judicial process shielded certain individuals.

As a result, the legal fight has continued in the Supreme Court, with the family seeking a more comprehensive probe.

It was to support this

legal battle that the 'Abhaya Fund' was created.

But allegations of financial

impropriety and claims that

the Front's movement was

losing direction intensified

internal discord. Mahato, in

his letter, also referred to

of Diwali, the colours and joy of Holi, the traditional grace of Onam and the rhythmic celebrations of Bihu will be brought to life.

This zone will highlight India's cultural diversity and further strengthen the spirit of unity. Along with this, a special colourful and joyful zone has also been created for children, where a world of entertainment and imagination will be created for them through cartoon characters.

The 'Shashvat Bharat' zone showcasing India's mythological heritage will also be a major attraction of the flower show. In this spiritually rich zone, mythological episodes such as Samudra Manthan, Gita Saar, Govardhan Leela, descent of Ganga and Ram Setu have been artistically recreated through floral sculptures, connecting visitors with India's ancient cultural narratives.

Along with this, a zone dedicated to Indian classical and folk dance traditions will present the

protests he had led earlier against the transfer of himself, Debasish Haldar and Asfakulla Naiya, under-scoring his continued commitment to the cause despite growing differences.

Reacting to the developments, Trinamool Congress leader Kunal Ghosh remarked that such trusts had turned into "honey pots", leading to inevitable infighting. With Mahato's resignation, the credibility and future course of the Junior Doctors' Front now stand under a cloud, even as the demand for justice for Abhaya continues to resonate beyond organisational turmoil.

If legislators are excluded from the category of persons in authority under child protection laws, Parliament ~ not just the judiciary ~ must confront that gap. Democracies rest on the principle that greater power entails greater responsibility. Any legal framework that weakens this principle corrodes public trust. The Supreme Court's intervention restores, at least temporarily, a sense that the justice system remains alert to this moral calculus. Whether that vigilance translates into durable legal clarity will determine how future survivors perceive the law ~ not as a maze of loopholes, but as a shield capable of standing up to power.

Abhaya fund row: Doctors' front president Aniket Mahato quits

(Gns).

A rift has surfaced within the Junior Doctors' Front (JDF), a platform formed to pursue legal justice for Abhaya, the young woman doctor, who was brutally raped and murdered at RG Kar Hospital, over financial irregularities linked to the 'Abhaya Fund'.

The controversy culminated on the first day of the New Year, when JDF president Aniket Mahato resigned from his post, citing deep differences and what he described as "undemocratic functioning" of the organisation. The Junior Doctors' Front was set up by a section of Abhaya's batchmates to

keep alive the demand for justice and to support the continuing legal battle. Junior doctors Aniket Mahato, Debasish Haldar and Asfakulla Naiya were among those who initiated the 'Abhaya Fund' to collect money for legal expenses.

However, within months, allegations began to surface that funds were being misused, triggering unease within the forum and among supporters of the movement.

In his resignation letter, Aniket Mahato did not conceal his dissatisfaction. He stated that the manner in which

the front was functioning had deviated from democratic norms and was no longer aligned with the core objective of securing jus-

repeated attempts to raise concerns internally, he claimed his objections were ignored by the leadership. Mahato added that continu-

ing circumstances would amount to compromising the very principles on which the movement was founded. The case that

sparked the movement continues to evoke strong emotions.

In August 2024, a woman doctor was raped and murdered inside a seminar room at RG Kar Hospital. Junior doctors launched a sustained agitation demanding justice.

The Central Bureau of Investigation later took over the probe and concluded the trial within a relatively short span. Civic volunteer Sanjay Roy was

convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. However, the verdict failed to satisfy the victim's family, relatives and friends, who alleged that key aspects of the crime were concealed and that the judicial process shielded certain individuals.

As a result, the legal fight has continued in the Supreme Court, with the family seeking a more comprehensive probe.

It was to support this legal battle that the 'Abhaya Fund' was created.

But allegations of financial impropriety and claims that the Front's movement was

losing direction intensified internal discord. Mahato, in

his letter, also referred to

Neither victorious, nor vanquished

(Gns).

As the first quarter of the 21st century gently folds into history, humanity finds itself pausing not out of leisure, but out of necessity. Time, which once seemed abundant at the dawn of the new millennium, has moved with astonishing haste. The years since 2000 have not unfolded evenly; they have surged, collided, and reshaped the world with a force few could have anticipated.

Looking back at the past twenty-five years is like surveying a vast landscape marked by dazzling achievements, deep fractures, silent revolutions, and unresolved questions. It is a period that has tested human intelligence, ethics, resilience, and imagination like few others before it. The century opened with an air of confident optimism. The Cold War had ended, ideological binaries appeared exhausted, and globalisation promised a borderless world driven by free markets, technological innovation, and shared

how people learned, worked, loved, protested, and governed.

Emails replaced letters, video calls bridged continents, and digital platforms created new economies while dismantling older ones. Yet, with every door technology opened, it also revealed shadows ~ surveillance, data exploitation, addiction to screens, and the erosion of privacy. The illusion of a peaceful global order was abruptly shattered in September 2001. The terrorist attacks on the

United States did more than destroy buildings; they reshaped the world's political psyche. Fear became a dominant currency, security a consuming obsession. Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq followed, altering the geopolitics of West Asia and exposing the long-term consequences of interventionist policies. Terrorism evolved into a decentralized, ideological menace, while counterterrorism measures often strained civil liberties.

Over time, the nature of conflict itself transformed ~ moving away from declared wars to proxy battles, cyberattacks, economic coercion, and narrative manipulation. The global economy, meanwhile, experienced dramatic highs and devastating lows. The early years of the century celebrated unrestrained growth and financial innovation, only to be humbled by the global financial crisis of 2008. The collapse of financial institutions sent

shockwaves across continents, wiping out livelihoods and revealing how deeply interconnected ~ and vulnerable ~ the world had become. Recovery was slow and uneven, leaving scars that reshaped public trust in institutions.

Inequality widened both within nations and between them, turning economic disparity into a central moral and political issue of our time. India's story during these twenty-five years stands as a study in transformation layered with contradiction. Entering the century as a developing nation burdened by poverty yet rich in potential, India steadily redefined itself. Economic reforms matured, industries expanded, and a vast middle class emerged. The information technology and services sectors propelled India into global relevance, making Indian talent indispensable to the world economy. Simultaneously, digital governance initiatives revolutionized daily life ~ banking became mobile, welfare delivery more targeted.

The argument that political office does not automatically entail such authority may be technically defensible in isolation, but it collapses when placed against India's lived political reality. Legislators wield influence not merely through statute but through networks of control ~ over police, local administration, and social hierarchies ~ especially in rural and semi-urban India. To pretend otherwise is to ignore how power functions on the ground. In India, where caste, gender, and political

more targeted. This case starkly illustrates that imbalance. The survivor was a minor when she alleged prolonged sexual assault. Her attempts to seek redress were met with indifference, intimidation, and tragedy. Members of her family died in circumstances that raised serious questions. Her father died in custody. Even years later, the possibility of the convict's release triggered public fear and protest, not

because of sentiment alone but because of precedent. The Delhi High Court's decision to suspend the sentence, on the basis that the aggravated provisions of child protection law did not apply, reflected a judicial approach overly

adapt when the convict's history includes patterns of coercion, violence, and interference with justice. The law does not operate in a vacuum; it operates within society. Where a survivor credibly fears retaliation, courts cannot treat bail as a neutral administrative step. The broader implication extends beyond one individual.

If legislators are excluded from the category of persons in authority under child protection laws, Parliament ~ not just the judiciary ~ must confront that gap. Democracies rest on the principle that greater power entails greater responsibility. Any legal framework that weakens this principle corrodes public trust. The Supreme Court's intervention restores, at least temporarily, a sense that the justice system remains alert to this moral calculus. Whether that vigilance translates into durable legal clarity will determine how future survivors perceive the law ~ not as a maze of loopholes, but as a shield capable of standing up to power.

Power on Trial

(Gns).

The Supreme Court's decision to halt the suspension of the life sentence awarded to Kuldeep Singh Sengar is more than a procedural intervention. It is a reminder that justice in cases of sexual violence cannot be reduced to narrow textual interpretations divorced from power, context, and consequence. At the heart of the controversy lies a troubling legal question: whether an elected legislator occupies a position of trust or authority under child protection law.

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What Is Happening in Indore That Caused Seven Deaths as Kailash Vijayvargiya's Comment Comes Under Spotlight?

(Gns).

In Indore, Madhya Pradesh, at least seven people have died and 149 have been hospitalized after consuming contaminated drinking water, causing the state government to take disciplinary action and launch a high-level inquiry; the water contamination is believed to be caused by a leak in a water pipeline. The Chief Minister announced compensation for the families of the deceased, and the Madhya Pradesh High Court has ordered free treatment for affected people and a status report by January 2.

Switch To Shorts

The state government has swung into emergency mode following mounting criticism, with disciplinary action taken against civic officials and a high-level inquiry ordered into the

Chief medical and

What is happening in Indore?

Seven deaths linked to contaminated water have been reported in Indore since December, city mayor Pushyamitra Bhargava told news agency PTI.

Bhargava said that while the health department officially recorded three deaths, four more patients who were admitted to hospitals with similar symptoms later died.

District Magistrate Shivam Verma said doctors had confirmed four deaths due to the outbreak so far. According to official data, 149 people have been admitted across 27 hospitals in the city.

Chief medical and

health officer Madhav Prasad Hasani said the deaths were caused by diarrhoea triggered by contaminated drinking water.

"The patients said they



suffered from vomiting, diarrhoea, and dehydration after drinking contaminated water," he said.

Officials stated that contamination likely occurred due to a leak in the main water pipeline that ran beneath a toilet. A leakage was detected in the primary supply line in Bhagirthpura, where a toilet had been constructed above the

pipeline, allowing sewage to mix with potable water.

The issue surfaced after local residents complained of an unusual smell in their water supply on December 25, local councillor Kamal Baghela said. While residents had been facing water-related problems for several days, the situation worsened sharply on that date.

Following reports of the outbreak, the health department surveyed 2,703 households and medically examined nearly 12,000 people in affected areas, according to officials.

Zonal officer Shaligram Shitole and in-charge assistant engineer Yogesh Joshi have been suspended, while deputy engineer Shubham Srivastava has been sacked in connection with the incident.

Speaking on the larger vision behind Litestyle, Dr. Saurabh Gadgil, Chairman

Zohran Mamdani Sworn In As New York City Mayor at Historic Subway Station

(Gns).

Zohran Mamdani became mayor of New York City just after midnight on Thursday, taking the oath of office at a historic, decommissioned subway station in Manhattan. Mamdani, a Democrat, was sworn in as the first Muslim leader of America's biggest city, placing his hand on a Quran as he took his oath.

"This is truly the honour and the privilege of a lifetime," Mamdani said. The ceremony, administered by New York Attorney General Letitia James, a political ally, took place at the old City Hall station, one of the city's original subway stops that is known for its stunning arched ceilings. He will be sworn in again, in

ceremony at City Hall at 1 pm by US Sen.

Zohran Mamdani, a Democrat, was sworn in as New York City's first Muslim, South Asian descent, and African-born mayor, as well as the youngest in generations, taking the oath at a historic subway station and will face challenges including high costs and political opposition.

Bernie Sanders, one of the mayor's political heroes. That will be followed by what the new administration is billing as a public block party on a stretch of Broadway known as the "Canyon of Heroes," famous for its ticker-tape parades.

Mamdani now begins one of the most unrelenting jobs in American politics as one of the country's most-watched politicians.

In addition to being the city's first Muslim mayor, Mamdani is also its first of South Asian descent and the first to be born in Africa. At 34, Mamdani is also the city's youngest mayor in generations. In a campaign that helped make "affordability" a buzzword across the political spectrum, the democratic socialist promised to bring transformative change with policies intended to lower

the cost of living in one of the world's most expensive cities.

His platform included free child care, free buses, a rent freeze for about 1 million households, and a pilot of city-run grocery stores. But he will also have to face other responsibilities: handling trash and snow and rats, while getting blamed for subway delays and potholes. Mamdani was born in Kampala, Uganda, the son of filmmaker Mira Nair and Mahmood Mamdani, an academic and author.

His family moved to New York City when he was 7, with Mamdani growing up in a post-9/11 city where Muslims didn't always feel welcome.

For border security, DGP Gaurav Yadav said that the Second Line of Defence will see 2,367 CCTV cameras installed at 585 locations along the International Border at a cost of ₹49.58 crores, which will be act as force multipliers.

The Anti-Drone System (ADS) fleet will be expanded from the current three operational systems to an additional six under procurement, with 10 more to be procured later in a phased manner, he said, while adding that Drone Response Teams (DRTs) have also been pressed into action, and will be greatly synergised with Village Defence Committees (VDC) members' involvement in the coming year.

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Ladakh administration to preserve ancient monasteries: LG Kavinder Gupta

(Gns). Lt Governor Kavinder Gupta on Thursday said that the Ladakh UT administration is firmly committed to the preservation, protection, and holistic development of ancient monasteries, ensuring conservation of their rich heritage, promotion of traditional art and architecture, and safeguarding these spiritual institutions for future generations.

To mark the beginning of New Year 2026, the Lieutenant Governor visited the iconic Hemis Monastery and the Maitri Geriatric Home at the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre (MIMC), Devachan Campus, Choglamsar. The visit was marked by prayers, interaction with senior citizens, and a message of peace, compassion

(Gns). Chhattisgarh took a significant step towards strengthening its healthcare workforce and expanding employment opportunities on Thursday with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Chhattisgarh State Skill Development Authority and the Sri Sathya Sai Health and Education Trust. The agreement was formalised at Mahanadi Bhawan in Nava Raipur in the presence of Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai.

The MoU aims to enhance skill development in the healthcare sector by introducing structured vocational training programmes tailored to the growing demands of modern medical services. Under the partnership, healthcare training centres will be established to equip young people with industry-relevant skills while creating a pool of trained professionals to support hospitals and emergency services

44 volunteers left for Lucknow for Aapda Mitra training, DM gave green signal

District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh sending off the green flag

Mathura. From 02 January 2026 to 13 January 2026, 44 volunteers of the district were sent for training for the Aapda Mitra training program organized by the State Disaster Response

Refinery celebrated New Year with school children

Mathuras Indian Oil has always given importance to the work of upliftment of the society by following its corporate value of "Care" "Conservation". Social welfare activities under Corporate Social Responsibility give a distinct and special identity to Indian Oil. In this sequence, Mathura Refinery has also been taking many commendable initiatives for social welfare since its inception. Following the corporate philosophy of "Conservation", Mathura Refinery started the New Year 2026 on a special note. On the first day of

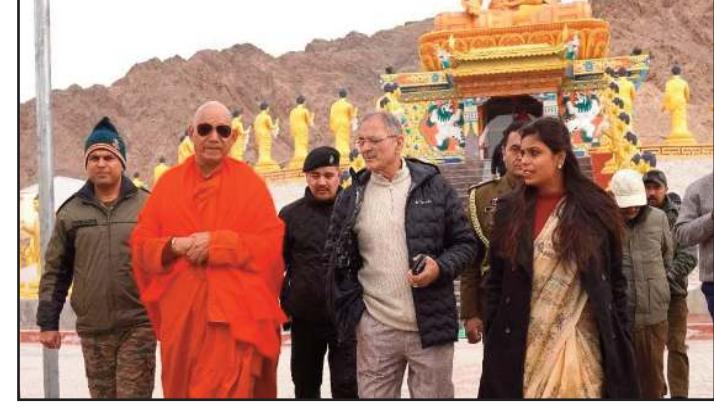
Outreach Program and spread happiness by distributing blankets, stationery kits and sweets. Mukul Aggarwal, Executive Director,

since January 1, 2022. Academy Director *Ashutosh Kumar (Sonu Modanwal)* extended New Year greetings to the students and highlighted the importance of cyber security in today's digital era. He also shared insights on the

growing relevance of computers and the future scope of *Artificial Intelligence (AI)*. On the occasion, Managing Director Ajay Pratap Singh, **Centre Manager Prabhat Kumar, and associate **Avadhesh

and inclusive development. At Hemis Monastery, founded in 1630 by Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa, an environmentalist leading

monastery headed by His Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa, an environmentalist leading



Staktsang Raspa Nawang Gyatso, Kavinder Gupta was warmly welcomed by Head Abbot Nawang Jigmet and Secretary Dr. Ishey Namgyal. He visited the Shrine rooms and sought blessings.

Dr. Namgyal and Chakzot briefed him on the

Monastery.

At Hemis Monastery, the Lieutenant Governor offered prayers and sought blessings for peace, prosperity, and the overall development of Ladakh and its people. Interacting with the monks and devotees, he highlighted Ladakh's rich spiritual heritage and its role in promoting harmony, mindfulness, and universal human values.

The Lieutenant Governor stated that the UT Administration is making sincere efforts to bring the sacred Buddha Relics to Ladakh for public Darshan, enabling devotees and people from across the region to receive spiritual inspiration and strengthen Ladakh's identity as a global centre of Buddhism and peace.

Naropa Fellowship, Druk Padma Karpo School, and Live to Rescue Animal Shelter initiatives in Ladakh. He sought the intervention of Lt Governor for constructing a Sarai in Srinagar exclusively for Ladakh patients on the land possessed by Hemis

across the state.

As per the agreement, training will be provided free of cost through both residential and non-residential programmes. Courses will cover key

rapid expansion.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Sai said skill development remains central to the state's development strategy. He noted that focused training in



healthcare disciplines, including Medical Laboratory Technology, Cardiology Technician, ECG Technician, Cardiac Care Technician, and Emergency Medical Technician. Officials said the initiative is designed to open sustainable career pathways for youth, particularly in a sector witnessing

social impact.

The Chief Minister added that trained professionals emerging from the programme would be able to contribute effectively to hospitals, diagnostic centres and emergency response systems, thereby improving access to quality healthcare across Chhattisgarh.

Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma, Cabinet Minister Gajendra Yadav, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Subodh Singh, and Sri Sathya Sai Health and Education Trust Chairman C Srinivas were among those present at the signing ceremony, along with senior officials of the Skill Development Department.

Officials said the collaboration reflects the state government's emphasis on linking skill development with public health priorities, positioning Chhattisgarh to meet future healthcare challenges with a trained and employment-ready workforce.

Force, Lucknow. During the training, each volunteer will be provided with an emergency responder kit as per the orders issued by the government and an insurance policy will also be issued. The District Magistrate congratulated all the volunteers and sent them off to Lucknow

healthcare would not only improve service delivery but also generate meaningful employment for young people. "A skilled workforce is essential for strengthening healthcare infrastructure, especially in remote and underserved areas," he said, expressing confidence that the initiative would have a long-term

Force, Lucknow. Everyone will be provided training by the State Disaster Response Force, Lucknow.

All the arrangements related to organizing/conducting the training like accommodation, food, training, related materials, expenses for transportation etc. will be made by the State Disaster Response

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