



## PM Modi and CM Yogi to inaugurate 72nd Senior National Volleyball Championship

(Gns). The city of Kashi, renowned for its religion and culture, is ready to create a new history in the world of sports.

The grand 72nd Senior National Volleyball Championship will be held at the newly constructed Dr. Sampurnanand Sports Stadium in Srigra from January 4 to January 11, 2026.

Kashi will be bustling with approximately 1,250 top players from across the country.

This is the first time in the history of Kashi that a national championship of this magnitude is being organised.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually inaugurate this historic

competition, while Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be present to encourage the players.



Uttar Pradesh Volleyball Association President and Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak will be present as the special guest at the inaugural session. Preparations are being

finalised in high-level meetings of the organising committee. The chairman of the

organising committee and Mayor, Ashok Kumar Tiwari, is personally overseeing and monitoring the arrangements. On Friday, he convened a meeting of councillors and BJP workers to review the preparations. To make the event a grand success, councillors and BJP workers have been assigned different responsibilities. Ayush Mishra (Independent Charge) Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu', BJP Regional President Dilip Patel, MLC and BJP's District President Hansraj Vishwakarma, Metropolitan President Pradeep Aghari, Jagdish Tiwari, and others were present at the meeting. On the other hand, District Magistrate Satyendra Kumar, Municipal Commissioner Himanshu Nagpal, Police Commissioner Mohit Agarwal, along with several senior officers of the Municipal Corporation, district, and police administration, inspected the venue

and reviewed the preparations. Under the supervision of the chairman of the organising committee and being given an unprecedented makeover.

## Progressing Towards Viksit Gujarat@2047 Through The Holistic Development of Small Towns

Gandhinagar, 02 January 2026: To achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047 and accelerate the holistic development of every state, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has envisioned the strategic growth of Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities. Building on this vision, the Government of Gujarat, under the leadership of Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel, has decided to develop five towns of Gujarat as 'Satellite Towns' in October 2025. The state government has invited urban planners to prepare master plans for these cities and has initiated the process of appointing planners through tenders. By 2030, the state plans to equip these towns with metro-like facilities and strengthen their economic capacity, thereby reducing pressure on major cities.

To realise the mantra of 'Earning Well-Living Well' during the Urban Development Year 2025, the state government has decided to develop Sanand

(near Ahmedabad), Savli (near Vadodara), Kalol (near Gandhinagar), Bardoli (near Surat), and

These towns will be equipped with world-class infrastructure and citizen-centric facilities. The state



Hirasar (near Rajkot) as 'Satellite Towns'. The state government has invited urban planners with national and global expertise to submit proposals for preparing the master plans. Within the next 2 months, a consultant will be appointed to develop and finalise the master plans for these cities within a year.

A Satellite Town is a town located near a major city, reachable within an hour. The aim is to develop such towns into economically vibrant centres, reducing pressure on big cities while creating new employment opportunities locally.

government has decided to develop Sanand (near Ahmedabad), Savli (near Vadodara), Kalol (near Gandhinagar), Bardoli (near Surat), and Hirasar (near Rajkot) as 'Satellite Towns' in the initial phase. Each town will have modern facilities in transport, industry, tourism, education, and healthcare, along with holistic master town planning.

Facilities to be Developed in These Satellite Towns The towns will have state-of-the-art infrastructure, well-organised public transport with electric bus

services, advanced water supply and waste management systems, ring roads, urban forest parks, scenic lakes, model fire stations, and mixed-use infrastructure with offices, homes, and shops nearby. An approval and monitoring committee will oversee and ensure the swift implementation of these facilities.

Urban Area is the Growth Centre of India: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has stated that urban areas are the growth centres of India. To build Viksit Bharat, cities must become hubs of economic activity through clear targets and a focus on new products and high-quality work. Currently, over two lakh startups are functional across the country, with most from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, many led by women. Beyond education, the children of these cities are excelling in numerous fields, reflecting the vast development potential of small cities.

## "Sleeping Like Kumbhakarna": Rahul Gandhi Slams MP Govt Over Indore Contaminated Water Deaths

(Gns). A major water contamination crisis in Indore has left at least ten people dead and over 1,400 ill, exposing serious lapses in Madhya Pradesh's civic and health systems. The outbreak, centred in Bhagirathpura, has been linked to sewage mixing with drinking water, triggering a diarrhoea wave and sharp political attacks on the BJP government.

Health officials said a city medical college laboratory found the drinking water contaminated because of a leak in a main supply pipeline. The leak was detected near a police outpost in Bhagirathpura, at a spot where a toilet had been constructed. Officials stated that sewage entered

the line there, but full laboratory details have not yet

drinking water supply, leading to a diarrhoea outbreak



been shared publicly. In Indore, Madhya Pradesh, a water contamination crisis in Bhagirathpura has resulted in at least ten fatalities and over 1,400 illnesses, with sewage mixing into the

and political criticism. The incident has prompted interventions from the High Court, and significant criticism of the BJP government's handling of the crisis.

The tragedy quickly

turned into a flashpoint between Congress and BJP. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accused the state administration of ignoring repeated warnings from residents about foul-smelling supply. "In Indore, not water but poison was distributed, and the administration remained in deep sleep," Rahul Gandhi wrote on X, alleging grave negligence by authorities.

Rahul Gandhi said the case showed a wider governance breakdown in Madhya Pradesh, linking it with earlier deaths tied to cough syrup and alleged negligence in government hospitals. He blamed the BJP's "double engine" rule for what he termed a denial of basic rights.

## India is emerging as Knowledge Economy amid crisis of faith in politics and politicians: Rajnath Singh

(Gns). Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has expressed satisfaction over the emergence of India as a reliable Knowledge Economy in the world. He, however, expressed concern over the "crisis of faith and confidence" that was growing among some about the country's politics and politicians.

Delivering his speech at a function marking the 104th foundation day of the Bhupal Noble's University and the Institutions here Friday, the Defence Minister showered praise on the Indian universities, the academic institutions, and the ancient education system for the quality of the education and the research imparted by them in the glorious past as well as in the modern era. "Our universities and educational institutions have not only

been evolving the qualitatively skilled, efficient and adequately knowledgeable human resources which is earning fame, prestige and laurels from all over the

Innovation Index was 76 which in 2024 has improved to 39th slot".

Singh was also happy about the economic strides the country has taken,



world," he added.

Empowered by potentials and capabilities of her universities and education system, India has now been emerging as a "Knowledge Economy", he said, adding, "In 2014 India's rank in Global

asserting that by 2030, we would be the world's 3rd largest and fastest growing economy.

Nevertheless, the minister was worried about the crisis of confidence and credibility among the people in the country towards

India's politics and the politicians.

"I don't make promises, but only try to do what the people ask for. I feel that there is a big gap between making promises to people and doing the deals for them," he averred.

This gap has been growing in the form of a crisis of confidence and faith among the people for the entire India's politics and the politicians.

We are required to accept and face this crisis of credibility-reliability as a challenge the Defence Minister quipped.

On the demand of a Sainik School for Udaipur, Singh said, "The inspection reports for both of the Bhupal Noble's schools for upgrading as Sainik Schools are positive and I would do my best to fulfill the demand.

## Keep a close watch on SIR: Akhilesh Yadav to party workers, leaders

(Gns). Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav has asked his party workers and leaders to be involved in further strengthening the party at the booth level keeping a close watch on the SIR regarding the voter list.

"Include those whose names have not been included in the voter list. Everyone should be alert and careful. At the time, when the chief minister had said that four crore votes have been cut, he had given an indirect message



to the officials to be dishonest," he said.

Addressing the party workers here on Friday, he said this time, the Election

Commission and the officials have to prove their credibility when several questions were raised on SIR.

Hoping that the Election Commission, the mapping app, and the companies that are helping the Election Commission technically will be fair, Yadav asked, "If there is a difference in the figures on voters, the figures of the State Election Commission and the figures of the Central Election Commission are different, what is the meaning of the SIR. Is it not true that at the behest of the chief minister, preparations are being made to indulge in dishonesty."

## India Has Right to Defend Itself Against Neighbours Supporting Terrorism: Jaishankar

(Gns). The already tense India-Pakistan relationship worsened after Pakistan-backed terrorists killed several tourists in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam in April 2025. Following the massacre, New Delhi suspended the Indus Waters Treaty as part of a wider set of punitive steps against Islamabad, signalling a harder line on cross-border terrorism and longstanding bilateral arrangements.

Speaking against this backdrop at the Indian



Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar criticised Pakistan as a "bad

neighbour" that repeatedly supports terrorism. Jaishankar stressed that India would continue to protect

national security and interests without accepting outside advice on how to address terrorist violence directed from across the border.

In April 2025, following a terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty as a punitive measure against Pakistan, with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar criticizing Pakistan's support for terrorism at IIT Madras and asserting India's right to self-defense.

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## Editorial

### Path of Exhaustion

Wars often end not with a decisive victory but with exhaustion. In the Ukraine conflict, that exhaustion is now being carefully measured, counted, and paradoxically exploited. Recent patterns in battlefield deaths suggest that as diplomatic activity intensifies, the fighting has become deadlier rather than restrained. This contradiction exposes a brutal logic at work: casualties themselves have become a negotiating instrument. The surge in Russian losses is not accidental.

It reflects a strategic choice by the Kremlin under President Vladimir Putin to treat territory and momentum as leverage. When negotiations loom, pressure increases at the front. The message is simple ~ any settlement must account for “facts on the ground,” even if those facts are purchased at extraordinary human cost. War, in this framing, is not a failure of diplomacy but its extension by other means. What makes this phase of the conflict particularly grim is who is dying. A growing share of Russian casualties comes from men who had no military background when the war began: prisoners, indebted civilians, students, and those facing legal or economic coercion.

Many entered the battlefield believing the war was nearing its end, that a contract signed now would translate into freedom or financial security later. Instead, they found themselves trapped in an open-ended conflict where contracts renew automatically and exit is largely illusory. This system has allowed Moscow to avoid the political risks of mass mobilisation while sustaining an industrial scale of attrition. High pay-outs, selective pressure, and the targeting of socially marginal groups have kept dissent muted. But this is not resilience; it is deferred instability. A state that treats human lives as replenishable inputs may sustain war longer, but it also hollows out its social fabric in ways that no ceasefire can easily repair.

For the United States, the push for negotiations under President Donald Trump has introduced another distortion. The promise of a rapid deal has not reduced violence; it has reshaped incentives. Each diplomatic signal becomes a reason to fight harder now, before terms are frozen. Peace, when framed as imminent but undefined, can perversely raise the short-term value of escalation. Ukraine, under President Volodymyr Zelensky, faces its own attritional dilemma. While defending territory remains existential, prolonged fighting strains manpower, morale, and society.

The longer the war is framed as a test of endurance rather than strategy, the greater the risk that Ukraine's losses ~ less visible but no less real ~ become politically normalised abroad. The deeper truth is unsettling: diplomacy that rewards battlefield gains incentivises bloodshed. As long as negotiations are shaped by who advanced last and at what cost, violence will spike whenever talks approach. Ending the war will therefore require more than meetings and proposals. It will demand a shift in the underlying arithmetic ~ one where restraint, not escalation, improves a side's position. Until then, the path to peace will continue to be paved with

Every year, many of us bravely announce our resolutions for the new year. A glass of champagne on New Year's Eve might add to our confidence in our ability to do better in the coming year and save more, spend less, eat better, work out more, or binge-watch less. But most of our resolutions fail. Even within the first weeks after New Year's Eve, the majority of people have given up on them.

Yet, not all tales of failure are the same, because the way you talk about the failure matters for your own motivation and other people's confidence in your ability to try again. So what can we do after we've given up on our resolution? We've announced our good intentions to friends and family and now must admit failure. Research has shown the way you word your failed resolution can affect how people view it. And understanding the reasons most resolutions don't work out can help us see it through in the future. Indeed, you can talk about your resolutions in a way that will make your failure more understandable and will sustain your motivation

to keep going.

A constructive way to discuss your failed resolution is to focus on the controllability of the failure. Research shows that most resolutions will require some investment of time and of money. For example, getting in shape takes time for exercise and also normally requires money for a gym membership or for workout equipment. Because both of these resources are essential for pursuing our goals, many failed resolutions are due to the lack of either time or money, or both. When talking about a failed resolution in the past, I've showed in my own research that we should focus on how lack of money contributed to this failure, rather than lack of time. In my 2024 study, people read about fictional as well as real panel participants who failed either due to lack of money or lack of time.

Most participants felt the person whose failure was caused by lack of money would have more self-control going forward and was going to be more reliable at pursuing their goals. This effect occurred because lack of money is seen as

something that cannot be controlled very easily, so if this caused the failure, there wasn't very much the person who failed could have done about it. In this



research, most of the failed resolutions were related to weight loss, better eating, or working out in the gym. Participants felt the same whether the person who failed was a man or a woman, presumably because it's plausible that everyone needs some time and some money to pursue various goals regardless of gender or the specific resolution. The role of controllability takes a different form when it comes to thinking about how we can do better next time.

Research also shows the way we view time matters when it comes to failure. For the past, it's better to think about things outside of our control that can

motivation to try again because we're not victims of our busy schedules.

A study published in October 2025 that focused on how a lack of time contributed to failures showed that people can get back a sense of control by talking about “making time”, instead of “having time”. People who discussed their failures as an issue of not having made the time felt like they could do things differently in the future, and were more motivated to do so. This is because “making time” suggests active control over one's time and schedule, instead of “having time” that leaves us passive. For example, if you say you didn't make the time to work out, that means you can make the time in the future if you choose to do so.

In contrast, if you say you didn't have time to work out, it feels like this lack of time is outside of your control and could happen again, preventing you from pursuing your exercise goals. Another reason so many people struggle to keep to their new year resolution may be because they were too ambitious, or they neglected that joy and

pleasure keep us going. We need not only to have a goal in mind. Finding joy in the journey and belief in the ability to change is also important. For example, someone might want to get in better shape and work out more, but when they actually try to go to the gym, they lack the confidence to sign up for a class. Without some fun, it's hard to follow through on a resolution even if we really want to pursue the goal.

So, try to think of ways you can make the goal more enjoyable to work on and remind yourself you are capable. The trend for new year resolutions isn't a bad thing in itself. Although it might seem a bit paradoxical to start virtuous habits right after a big night with alcohol and overeating, research shows that we can indeed benefit from the “fresh-start” effect in which a new beginning in the calendar can provide a clean slate to start better habits. But we don't have to wait for the calendar to give us a fresh start. We can choose to make our own resolution (maybe a Valentine's or Easter resolution?) to boost the motivation to pursue our goals.

## Deregulation must be Odisha's 2026 mantra

(Gns). Odisha enters 2026 with a rare opportunity. The state's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is projected at Rs 10.63 lakh crore, with a growth rate of nearly 12 per cent – among the fastest in India. Yet, beneath this headline figure lies a familiar problem: regulatory bottlenecks that choke enterprise, delay projects, and reduce the vibrancy of its start-up ecosystem.

The solution is clear and urgent: a De-Regulation Cell dedicated to deregula-

tion and compliance reform. Odia Asmita must evolve beyond nostalgic rhetoric (ad nauseum moralisers) into a living force that empowers the youth to shape Odisha's future.

True pride in identity cannot be sustained by endlessly rehearsing, read repeating and over killing, century-old traditions; it must be anchored in meaningful work, innovation, and reform. Establishing a Regulation (Deregulation) Cell in 2026 would embody this shift – cutting through archaic compliances, liberating entrepreneurial energy, and positioning Odisha as a hub for startups and sectoral growth. Such a move would transform Odia Asmita from a hollow slogan into a dynamic ethos of progress, where cultural pride is inseparable from economic vitality.

By aligning with Prime Minister Modi's reform vision, Odisha can gift itself a new year of renewal – where Asmita is not just remembered, but lived through courage, creativity, and collective advancement. The Prime Minister, at the 5th National Conference of Chief Secretaries (Dec 2025), urged states to set up deregulation cells to accelerate reforms and improve ease of living. He reminded the nation that India has boarded the “Reform Express,” powered by its young workforce. Odisha must seize this moment. Worldwide, deregulation has been the lever for growth.

Bangladesh's garment sector, after trade simplifications, now contributes over 11 per cent of GDP. India's telecom deregulation in the 1990s transformed it into the world's second-largest mobile market. Indonesia's mining deregulation attracted billions in FDI, boosting exports. Odisha, with its mineral wealth, fertile plains, and coastline, mirrors these economies. A Deregulation Cell can replicate such success by cutting redundant compliances and speeding approvals.

Odisha's economy rests on four dominant pillars, each with immense potential waiting to be unlocked through deregulation. The first and most visible pillar is mines and minerals. Odisha contributes nearly 20 per cent of India's total mineral output, making it one of the country's richest resource states. Yet, the sector is often slowed by clearance delays and over-

lapping compliances. A Deregulation Cell could streamline approvals, attract foreign direct investment, and accelerate exports, turning Odisha into a global mineral hub. The second pillar is agriculture, which remains the backbone of the state, employing close to 60 per cent of the population.

Despite significant allocations in irrigation and rural support, farmers continue to face challenges in accessing markets and modern technology. Deregulation – particularly through initiatives like AgriStack for smart supply chains and market linkages – can simplify land-use permissions, reduce middlemen, and directly raise farmer incomes. While these funds and awards highlight Odisha's rising profile in agriculture, the real challenge lies in deploying resources wisely.

Investments must prioritize farmer-centric outcomes: improved productivity, sustainable practices, and resilience against climate risks. Funds should strengthen digital infrastructure and last-mile delivery, ensuring that technology translates into tangible benefits for small and marginal farmers. Transparent monitoring and accountability will be crucial to prevent inefficiency or misallocation. In this way, Odisha can transform recognition into lasting impact, making agriculture not just a sector of survival but a driver of pride and prosperity – an authentic expression of Odia Asmita. The third pillar is the blue economy, encompassing ports, fisheries, and coastal trade.

With a capital outlay of Rs 65,012 crore in 2025-26, Odisha has already begun investing in maritime infrastructure. However, logistics bottlenecks and regulatory hurdles limit its potential. A deregulated framework for coastal trade and fisheries could transform Odisha into a maritime hub, boosting exports and employment along its 574.7-kilometer coastline. Finally, the services sector – including tourism, healthcare, and education – remains underdeveloped compared to its potential. In 2025-26, Odisha allocated Rs 41,273 crore to education (3.9 per cent of GSDP) and Rs 23,635 crore to health (2.2 per cent of

GSDP), signalling intent.

Yet, private investment is constrained by licensing complexities and slow PPP approvals. Deregulation



here could open doors for world-class universities, hospitals, and tourism ventures, positioning Odisha as a services powerhouse alongside its traditional strengths. Together, these four pillars – minerals, agriculture, blue economy, and services – form the foundation of Odisha's economic health. A Deregulation Cell in 2026 would act as the lever to unlock each of them, ensuring that growth is not just projected but realized. Leading pharma companies in India have begun approaching the Odisha government to adopt specific regions of the state for targeted interventions in child and maternal health.

These partnerships aim to deploy innovative healthcare models – combining medical expertise, technology, and community outreach – to address persistent gaps in nutrition, prenatal care, and early childhood development. The

state should actively encourage such approaches, as they not only bring private-sector efficiency and resources but also align with Odisha's broader vision of inclusive growth and social transformation. Odisha's startup ecosystem is struggling. Despite policy support, the state has only 3,211 active start-ups as of 2025.

Between Jan-Mar 2025, just 85 new start-ups were recognized and 26 incubated at O-Hub. Compared to Karnataka or Maharashtra, this is modest. The truth is stark: Odisha's start-up story has been reduced to tokenism. A Deregulation Cell can change this by streamlining compliance, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and creating a transparent environment for investors. Without it, Odisha risks losing entrepreneurial talent to other states. PM Modi's emphasis on human capital, ease of doing business, and next-generation reforms directly resonates with Odisha's needs. His call for deregulation cells is not abstract – it is a blueprint for states. For Odisha, this must become the single-point agenda in 2026.

Unlocking All Sectors: From mines to services, deregulation will cut red tape and unleash productivity. Human Capital Development: By reducing compliance burdens, resources can be redirected to skill-building and

innovation. Global Competitiveness

: Odisha can position itself as a deregulation-driven hub for minerals, agriculture exports, and maritime trade. Odisha stands at a crossroads. With strong GSDP growth but weak entrepreneurial momentum, the state risks stagnation if regulatory bottlenecks persist.

A Deregulation Cell in 2026 would be the Great New Year gift to ourselves – a bold institutional reform that can revive start-ups, accelerate sectoral growth, and align Odisha with the Prime Minister's vision of Viksit Bharat. The dawn of 2026 brings Odisha not just a new calendar year, but a new Chief Secretary – an opportunity to demonstrate decisive leadership. This is the moment to break free from Secretariat-led complexities and initiate the Deregulation Cell.

Other states are already bracing for reform, and in the age of competing federalism, growth will not wait for those who hesitate. India is growing and will continue to grow; the question is whether Odisha chooses to be part of this momentum or wallow in its past glory. The new Chief Secretary must convene an inter-departmental meeting immediately in January 2026, followed by the constitution of a Task Force to establish the Deregulation Cell.

## Unbuilt Cities

planning, staffing, budgets, and even minor operational decisions remains concentrated in state capitals. City governments exist, but largely as implementers, not decision-makers. The

India's cities today reveal a contradiction that can no longer be brushed aside as a passing phase of growth. Flyovers gleam, metro lines stretch across skylines, and terminals resemble global showcases. Yet, at street level, daily life is increasingly marked by toxic air, broken roads, overflowing drains, and the quiet normalisation of civic disorder. The problem is not that Indian cities are short of money or ambition. It is that they are structurally incapable of governing themselves.

Urban India has expanded at a pace the Constitution never anticipated. Towns have morphed into megacities, and villages into dense urban corridors, without a corresponding evolution in political authority. Power over



result is a permanent mismatch between responsibility and authority: cities are blamed for failure but denied the tools to succeed. This imbalance explains why headline infrastructure projects coexist with collapsing basics. Waste management fails not because technology is unavailable, but because municipal bodies lack control over land, contracts, and long-term

financing.

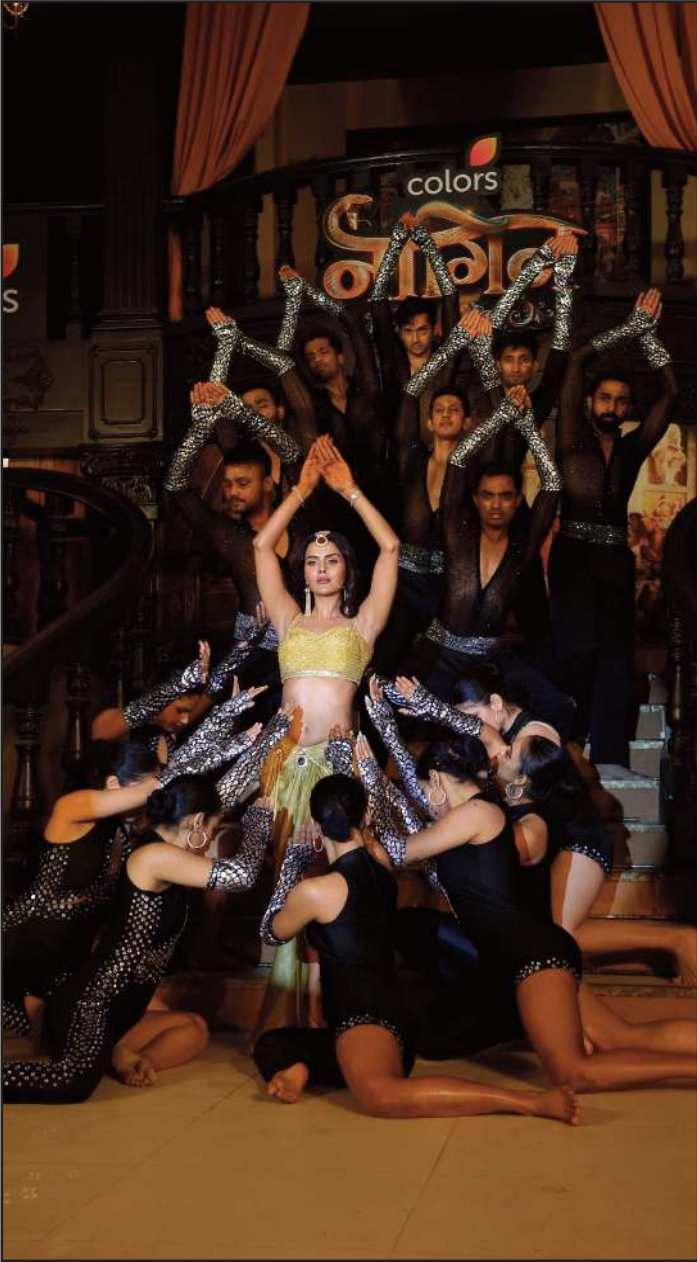
Roads disintegrate because utilities dig them up without coordination, or concern for public expenditure. Flooding recurs because drainage planning

is fragmented across agencies that answer to different political masters. No single office is truly accountable, and therefore none is compelled to fix the system end-to-end. India's urban challenge is often framed as a capacity problem. In fact, it is a power problem. Mayors are weak, councils are underfunded, and city administrations are staffed by officials whose incentives are shaped by state-level career paths, not urban outcomes. Leadership becomes episodic, dependent on individual bureaucrats rather than durable institutions. When those individuals move on, reform moves with them.

### "Kudos to the OG Naagin Mouni Roy," says Priyanka Chahar Choudhary on carrying forward the legacy in COLORS' 'Naagin 7'

What a blockbuster weekend indeed! The mythological fantasy of the year, COLORS' Naagin 7, starring Priyanka Chahar Choudhary (as Purvi), Namik Paul (as Aryamaan), and Eisha Singh (as Ananta), has taken audiences by storm with its spectacular return, reaffirming that THE Naagin is back and reigniting the magic of India's most beloved fantasy franchise. Set against the backdrop of the Mahakumbh, this season raises the stakes by blending mythology, high-octane drama, and cutting-edge VFX into a cinematic spectacle. From the very first episode, Priyanka's portrayal of Purvi has struck a chord with viewers nationwide. What makes her performance particularly compelling is the duality she brings to the character, Purvi, who is introduced as an innocent, awkward girl trying to navigate life and achieve her dreams.

For Priyanka, stepping into the world of Naagin means carrying forward a legacy built over six successful seasons. Opening up about her journey and inspirations, Priyanka shared, "The moment I was offered Naagin 7, I felt an immense sense of responsibility because Naagin is a legacy that spans years. From Mouni Roy in Season 1 to Tejasswi Prakash in Season 6, each actor has donned the avatar of the Naagin with utmost dedication, and each of them has maintained and added to the legacy of this beloved franchise. I've taken inspiration from all the earlier Naagins, studying how they brought their own strengths and interpretations to the role. Of course, kudos to the OG Naagin, Mouni Roy, who set the benchmark and turned it into a true cultural phenomenon. I've received



immense support from all the previous Naagins, which has been incredibly encouraging. My goal is to take the legacy of Naagin forward while paying homage to all the previous Naagins and adding my own twist to it. I want audiences to see the essence of what made the earlier seasons iconic, but also discover something fresh and new in Purvi, a character who carries her innocence and strength in equal measure, and who fights not just for revenge but for something much bigger."

In the current track, Purvi remains blissfully unaware of her true identity as the Serpent Queen. As deadly challenges emerge and mysterious forces close in, her hidden powers begin to awaken. With danger at every turn and her destiny unfolding, audiences are left on the edge of their seats with one burning question: Will Purvi discover her real identity before it's too late?

Watch "Naagin 7" every Saturday-Sunday at 8:00 PM only on COLORS and JioHotstar.

# Trump’s “Locked and Loaded” Warning Raises Stakes With Iran

(Gns). Donald Trump warned Iran against using lethal force on protesters as demonstrations over economic collapse spread nationwide. Trump said the United States was "locked and loaded and ready to go" if peaceful demonstrators were shot, raising pressure on Tehran while reports of deaths and arrests continued to emerge from several provinces.

Iran was hit by its latest protests in three years, with unrest fuelled by a steep fall in the rial and soaring prices. Demonstrations began with shopkeepers and traders and then widened to cities across the country, where clashes, detentions and at least several deaths were reported by state media and rights groups.

Donald Trump warned Iran against using lethal force on protesters amid nationwide demonstrations over economic issues like the falling rial and rising prices, mentioning that the U.S. was ready to intervene; protests spread to several cities and provinces, with casualties reported in Lorestan province, and led to the resignation of Iran's central bank head.

strict hijab rules. Now, discontent centred on living costs and currency collapse, though slogans and anger again targeted authorities in multiple cities and provinces.

Iranian outlets and advocates reported deaths in several regions, though figures were still unclear. Reuters said it could not immediately verify those claims. The semi-official Fars news agency reported that three protesters were killed and 17 injured in Lorestan province after a crowd attacked a police station and set vehicles on fire during clashes with officers.

Earlier, Fars and rights group Hengaw reported fatalities in Lordegan city in Charmahal and Bakhtiari province. Officials confirmed one person died in the western city of Kuhdasht. Hengaw separately reported another death in the central province of Isfahan and said a protester was shot dead there on Wednesday, adding to the sense of spreading unrest.

A separate demonstration on Wednesday night reportedly led to the death of a 21-year-old Basij volunteer from the Revolutionary Guard's force. State-run IRNA confirmed the Guard member's death but did not share further details. Student News Network, which is viewed as close to the Basij, blamed protesters, citing comments by Saeed Pourali, a deputy governor in Lorestan province.

The city of Kouhdasht, about 400 kilometres southwest of Tehran, saw intense unrest. According to the judiciary's Mizan news agency, local prosecutor Kazem Nazari said 20 people were arrested there. Nazari added that calm had returned after the arrests, though reports from activists suggested tension remained high in parts of the region.



Trump delivered the warning in a post on Truth Social. Trump wrote: "If Iran shoots and violently kills peaceful protesters, which is their custom, the United States of America will come to their rescue. We are locked and loaded and ready to go. Thank you for your attention to this matter!" President DONALD J TRUMP." The message followed days of rising violence.

The protests recalled the 2022 nationwide unrest after the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Jina Amini in police custody. Then, outrage grew over actions by Iran's morality police and

# Punjab Education Revolution: 1,700+ Students to Receive Free IIT, NIT, AIIMS Coaching

(Gns). Punjab's brightest government school students soaked in knowledge at Winter Residential Coaching Camps organised under Punjab Academic Coaching for Excellence (PACE) program. Over 1700 students benefited from the transformative program designed to democratise access to high-quality competitive exam coaching, informed Punjab's Education Minister S. Harjot Singh Bains.

Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains informed that these camps, aimed at preparing government school students for the India's top professional education institutions like IITs, NITs and AIIMS, saw 1728 students participation across three centres: Bathinda (601 students comprising 359 Girls, 242 Boys), Ludhiana (573 students: 327 Girls, 246 Boys) and SAS Nagar (Mohali) (554 students: 367 Girls, 187 Boys).

Under the Punjab Academic Coaching for Excellence (PACE) program, over 1700 government school students participated in Winter Residential Coaching Camps across Bathinda, Ludhiana, and Mohali, preparing them for competitive exams like JEE and NEET, as informed by Education Minister S. Harjot Singh Bains; the initiative, led by Chief Minister

Bhagwant Singh Mann, included comprehensive arrangements, expert faculty, and a focus on inclusivity. The initiative highlights Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann led Punjab Government's unwavering commitment to level the playing field for students from all socio-economic backgrounds. "The overwhelming response to PACE Winter Camps highlights the immense potential in our government schools. This initiative empowers youth, instills confidence and gives deserving students, irrespective of their circumstances, a fair shot at top institutions. We are building a robust ecosystem of excellence and equity," said the Education Minister.

S. Harjot Singh Bains said that the winter camps were one of the most extensive drives being undertaken by the department, with a rigorous selection process. "Participants were chosen through a rigorous multi-stage selection process evaluating performance in standardized mock tests, conceptual clarity, academic consistency and teacher recommendations, ensuring that only the most dedicated aspirants made the cut form the cohort. The program is committed to inclusivity, reserving 20% seats at each centre for students from other government schools and drop-year aspirants, extending benefits beyond Schools of Eminence and Residential Schools for Meritorious Students," he added.

The Education Minister said that the camps offered a comprehensive learning experience, led by expert faculty from top coaching organisations like Physics Wallah, Vidya Mandir and Avanti Fellows. "A structured curriculum focuses on concept strengthening and advanced problem-solving aligned with JEE and NEET patterns. Daily doubt-clearing sessions, one-on-one mentoring and holistic development modules on stress management, career guidance and recreational activities ensured the student's well-being. Secure, fully residential facilities provided a conducive, distraction-free environment to the students," he highlighted.

He expressed confidence that the Winter Residential Coaching Camps would significantly enhance competitive exams outcome by providing critical early exposure to Class 11th students and boost the final preparation of Class 12th aspirants. "Last year, 265 government school students cleared JEE Mains, 45 cracked JEE Advanced and 847 cleared NEET, proving the state government schools are now premier launchpads for the country's top professional careers," he highlighted.

The Punjab Government, through the Department of School Education, put in place comprehensive administrative and academic arrangements to ensure the success of the Winter Residential Coaching Camps 2025 under the PACE programme. Conducted across three fully residential centres in Ludhiana, Bathinda and Mohali, the camps were designed as one of the largest competitive exam support initiatives for government school students, with standardised academic planning, centralised monitoring.



# Chief Secretary stresses mission-mode push for Pashmina trade in Ladakh

(Gns). Ladakh's Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra on Friday directed that the pashmina trade be taken up in project mode, with a complete value-chain and mission-mode approach, involving local entrepreneurs to maximise economic benefits for the region.

A day after taking charge of the post, Kundra reviewed the functioning of the School Education, Higher Education, Technical Education, and Skill Development Departments to assess progress, challenges, and future roadmaps for strengthening the education and skill ecosystem in the Union Territory (UT).

He laid strong emphasis on developing end-to-end entrepreneurship models in Ladakh. He instructed the departments to ensure registration with Startup India and to organise a large-scale startup conclave to promote innovation and enterprise.

Stressing the importance of future-ready skills, he called for the introduction of advanced skill courses by engaging experts from outside, including focused training in artificial intelligence, noting that technology adoption today is easier and significantly enhances employability.

Kundra also highlighted the need for specialised training relevant to Ladakh's unique context, such as high-altitude skill development and hotel management.

The Chief Secretary further directed that all developmental and educational initiatives undertaken by the administration be properly documented and visualised for record-keeping and institutional memory, underlining their long-term importance.

To improve classroom practices and learning outcomes, he suggested organising district-wise teachers' conferences with structured presentations aimed at promoting effective teaching methodologies.

Emphasising accountability and ground-level monitoring, Kundra instructed that Tehsildars, SDMs, and other officers must mandatorily inspect remote schools to assess their condition, with the findings reflected in their Annual Confidential Reports, to ensure sustained improvement in school education across the UT.



# Mumbai Ahmedabad Bullet Train Gets Boost as Longest Mountain Tunnel Nears Completion

(Gns). India's first bullet train project has crossed a major construction milestone with the completion of a key mountain tunnel in Maharashtra's Palghar district. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw confirmed that Mountain Tunnel 5 of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train corridor has been successfully completed, bringing the project closer to reality.

The Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail project includes seven mountain tunnels and one undersea tunnel, making it one of the most technically complex railway projects ever undertaken in India. The Palghar tunnel is the longest and first completed mountain tunnel among the seven planned in Maharashtra.

India's Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project has completed a key mountain tunnel in Maharashtra's Palghar district; the 508-kilometer route includes seven mountain tunnels and an undersea tunnel, with 326 kilometers of viaduct construction completed so far.

The bullet train corridor will cover a total distance of 508 kilometres. Out of this, 156 kilometres lie in Maharashtra, while 352 kilometres pass through Gujarat and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

Tunnels account for 27.4 kilometres of the route. Around 21 kilometres are underground, while 6.4 kilometres are surface tunnels. Maharashtra alone has seven mountain tunnels, with a combined length of just over 6 kilometres.

Details of the Palghar



# Air India Pilot Held at Vancouver Airport Over Drinking Suspicions Before Flight

(Gns). On December 23, an Air India pilot was detained at Vancouver airport due to concerns about his fitness for duty, causing a delay for a Delhi-bound flight (AI186); he was later replaced, and is now off flying duties pending an inquiry, while the DGCA issued a show-cause notice to another crew for compliance lapses.

The incident occurred on December 23, days before Christmas, and resulted in the pilot being removed from duty while an alternate crew member was arranged to operate the flight.

What happened at Vancouver airport According to reports, a staff member at the airport's duty-free store alerted authorities after either seeing the pilot consume alcohol or noticing the smell while he was making a purchase. Canadian officials then subjected the pilot to a breath analyser test, which he reportedly failed, following which he was detained for further inquiry.

The pilot was scheduled to operate a flight from Vancouver to Delhi, and the intervention came shortly before boarding, disrupting the departure schedule.

Air India's response and official statement In its statement, Air India said the action was taken after local authorities questioned the pilot's fitness for duty.

"Flight AI186 from Vancouver to Delhi on 23 December 2025 experienced a last-minute delay after one of the cockpit crew members was offloaded prior to departure. Canadian authorities raised concerns regarding the pilot's fitness for duty, following which the crew member was taken for further inquiry. In accordance with safety protocols, an alternate pilot was rostered to operate the flight, resulting in the delay," the airline said.

It added, "Air India regrets the inconvenience caused to its passengers and is fully cooperating with the local authorities. The pilot has been taken off flying duties during the process of the enquiry. Air India maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards any violation of applicable rules and regulations. Pending the outcome of the investigation, any confirmed violation will attract strict disciplinary action in line with company policy. Safety remains Air India's highest priority at all times."



# National Textiles Ministers' conference in Guwahati next week

(Gns). The Inaugural Session on 8 January will be attended by Union Minister of Textiles Giriraj Singh, Chief Minister of Assam Himanta Biswa Sarma, Minister of State for Textiles Pabitra Margherita, along with other dignitaries.

The two-day conference aims to bring together Union and State Ministers of Textiles, senior officials of Union & State Governments to deliberate on a coordinated national strategy for positioning India as a global textiles manufacturing hub. The deliberations align with the national vision of developing a USD 350 billion textile industry and achieving USD 100 billion in textile exports by 2030.

The National Textiles Ministers' Conference will be held in Guwahati on 8–9 January.

The conference will be held under the theme "India's Textiles: Weaving Growth, Heritage & Innovation."

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Exports, Raw Materials & Fibres, New Frontiers, including technical textiles, research & development, Revitalising Traditional Textiles, with emphasis on handloom and handicrafts for modern markets

Ministers and officials from different states and union territories are expected to participate and share best practices, challenges, and policy suggestions aimed at strengthening the textile value chain across regions and districts.

A conclave on "Strengthening Textiles Empowering the Textiles Sector of the North-Eastern Region of India" will also be held on 8 January, with the participation of the Union Minister of Textiles, the Minister of State for Textiles, State Ministers from all North-Eastern States, Members of Parliament and senior officials.

The conclave will focus on silk, handloom and bamboo-based textiles, promotion of women-led enterprises, and branding "Textiles from North-East", aimed at unlocking the region's unique textile strengths and integrating them with national and global value chains.

A special exhibition of Indian handlooms and handicrafts from across the nation is also being organised by the office of DC Handlooms and Handicrafts.



# CM's office constantly interfering to obstruct Sabarimala gold loot investigation: VD Satheesan

(Gns). Opposition leader in the Kerala Assembly, V D Satheesan, on Friday, said that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's claim that the Chief Minister's Office did not interfere in the Sabarimala gold loot investigation and did not obstruct the investigation is untrue.

Speaking to media persons in Kochi, Satheesan alleged that the Chief Minister's Office is constantly trying to obstruct the Special Investigation Team's (SIT's) investigation in the Sabarimala gold loot case and is putting pressure on the investigation team. "An attempt is being made to infiltrate the SIT with the help of police officers with CPM links and leak investigation secrets to the CPM. The government is trying to protect CPM leaders," he alleged.

"The investigation in Sabarimala is being conducted under the supervision of the High Court. The opposition has faith in that investigation. But the government is deliberately trying to save the CPM leaders," Satheesan claimed.

Satheesan said the details of the series of thefts committed in the Sabarimala temple since 2019 came to light before the organisers of the International Ayyappa Sangamam at Pampa reached Thiruvananthapuram. If the court had not noticed the theft, they would have stolen even the gold idol of Ayyappa, he said.

Responding to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's statement on Thursday that the main accused in the Sabarimala gold robbery case, Unnikrishnan Potti, never entered the house of Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, Satheesan said the SIT is not probing who the accused took a photo with. If so, the Chief Minister himself should explain the picture in which he is seen with the accused," he said.

"No one knows whether former Devaswam Minister Kadakampally Surendran was questioned or appeared before the SIT. Will Adoor Prakash be accused of taking a picture with Potti? If so, then Pinarayi Vijayan should also be accused. He should be questioned by the SIT. Pinarayi Vijayan is the one who knows more about Unnikrishnan Potti. It was Pinarayi's colleagues who stole Ayyappa's gold along with Unnikrishnan Potti. Is that why the Chief Minister stood with the same Potti? We do not blame the Chief Minister for standing with Potti. But, if Adoor Prakash is being questioned, then Pinarayi Vijayan should also be questioned," said Satheesan.



# Nepali woman killed by elephants in Katarniaghat forest area

(Gns). A tragic incident has come to light in the Katarniaghat forest area bordering Nepal in the Bahrach district of Uttar Pradesh, when a Nepali woman was killed in a brutal elephant attack. The 47-year-old Balika Sen, a resident of Karmohni Rajapur village, Ward No. 10 in Nepal, had gone to work in the fields on Wednesday. She was attacked and killed by a herd of elephants while returning home. According to eyewitnesses, some women were working in the fields with other women. In the evening, as they were returning when a herd of elephants suddenly emerged from the forest. As they crossed the bushes they were surrounded by the elephants. While the other women managed to escape to safety, the tuskers grabbed Balika Sen in their trunks and repeatedly slammed her to the ground. After killing the woman, the herd moved on. There



are fears that a wild animal may have carried away the woman's body in the darkness of the night. Based on information from the women who were working with her, villagers Department has denied this. According to forest officials here, no tiger footprints were found at the scene. It is suspected that after the tusker attack, (DFO) of Katarniaghat, said there is constant movement of wildlife in the Katarniaghat forest. The movement of elephants is being closely monitored, and villagers have been advised not to venture into the forest. Sujouli Police Station in-charge Prakash Chandra Sharma said since the incident occurred in Nepalese territory, the body has been taken into custody by the Nepalese Police. According to the Forest Department, the searched extensively in the night but could not find any trace of her. The Forest Department and the police were also informed. The next morning, the severely mutilated body of the woman was recovered from the Katarniaghat forest area on the Nepali side of the border. The woman's face was missing, one arm was gone, and she was naked. The condition of the body caused panic among the villagers, who suspected a tiger attack, although the Forest

another wild animal may have scavenged the body. It is noteworthy here that elephant attacks have been frequently reported in the Katarniaghat area recently. A few days ago, Shambhu Kumar, a resident of Ambedkar Nagar village, was attacked by an elephant and is currently under treatment at the district hospital. Earlier, Ram Bahadur, a resident of Chaukhara village, was trampled to death by an elephant. Suraj Kumar, the Divisional Forest Officer

Majhrai and Palia ranges of the buffer zone are the most affected by elephant herds. The elephants have damaged more than 40 acres of sugarcane crops so far. More than 45 farmers have been affected, but they have not yet received any compensation. For the past two weeks, Nepalese elephants have been causing havoc in the border areas of Bahrach and Lakhimpur Kheri, creating an atmosphere of fear among the villagers.

# Mathura: Two criminals arrested with half a dozen stolen bikes

Mathura. The police had been active for a long time on the continuously increasing incidents of bike theft in Raya police station area. Raya police station in-charge Inspector Ravibhushan Sharma was on patrol with the police team near Baldev Cut on Jaipur-Bareilly Highway, when two youths riding an Apache bike going from Raya towards Baldev appeared suspicious. When stopped by the police, they could not show the documents of the bike, after which strict interrogation revealed the entire case of bike theft. Police



CO Mahavan Sanjeev Gautam giving information arrested Amit son of Girwar Vikas son of Veerpai resident of Gayyra and resident of Jogpura from the

spot. A total of six stolen motorcycles have been recovered on their notice. One of the recovered bikes was related to a theft case already registered in Raya police station, which was stolen by the same accused. CO Mahavan Sanjeev Gautam told in the Police Line Auditorium that the arrested thieves used to steal bikes, collect them at one place and then sell them in rural areas. The police are also interrogating the accused in connection with other theft incidents and the search for other members of their gang is on

# ARTO held a meeting with taxi drivers regarding National Road Safety Month

Mathura. Senior Assistant Divisional Transport Officer Enforcement Rajesh Rajput has informed that in compliance with the instructions given by the Honorable Chief Minister, National Road Safety Month is being organized from 01 January 26 to 31 January 26. Instructions have been given to celebrate the said month as Zero Fatality Month. In continuation of the above, a meeting was called today in the office of the Assistant Divisional Transport Officer, in which a meeting was called with all the bus/truck/auto/e-rickshaw and taxi drivers and their union officials for zero fatality, in which all the bus/truck operators should



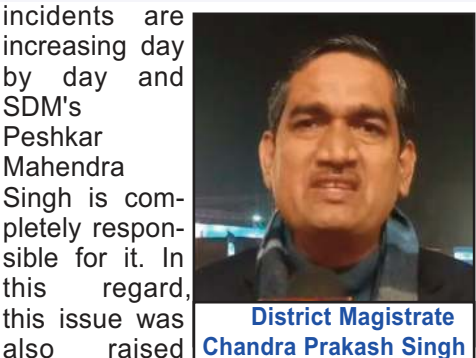
Senior Assistant Divisional Transport Officer Enforcement Rajesh Rajput explaining the rules during the meeting.

be informed about the brake system, clutch before the standard, to cover the vehicles with permits, to vehicle. A driver should be employed only for 08 hours in a day. All bus/truck/auto/e-rickshaw and taxi drivers should ensure to keep first aid boxes in their vehicles. All buses must be fitted with an emergency window, and it was also informed that the emergency window should be installed at such a place where it can be easily used in case of emergency. Drive your vehicle at slow speed in fog. For safety reasons, install red retroreflective tape on the back of your personal vehicle. Under the Motor Vehicles Act, commercial vehicles were directed to install white retroreflective tape at the front and red at the rear

relieved of his duties, Peshkar Mahendra Singh Govardhan was busy handling the work of SDM in Mahavan, about which when some lawyers came to inform the District Magistrate today, he got furious. He immediately ordered his suspension and ordered ADM (Administration) Amresh Kumar Maurya to investigate his assets. Apart from this, DM CP Singh has also summoned clarification from SDM Mahavan in this matter

# District Magistrate suspended the petition, sought clarification from Mahavan SDM

Mathura. On charges of negligence and irresponsible behavior in government work, the District Magistrate has suspended Mahavan Deputy District Magistrate Mahendra Singh, who was transferred about one and a half months ago, with immediate effect. Apart from this, the District Magistrate has also issued a show cause notice to SDM Mahavan. Lawyers were complaining for a long time about corruption in Tehsil Mahavan SDM office. The



District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh

incidents are increasing day by day and SDM's Peshkar Mahendra Singh is completely responsible for it. In this regard, this issue was also raised before the District Officer in a meeting held with Mathura Bar Association. After that, the District Magistrate had issued orders to make the

time. When the DM came to know about this, he strictly warned the SDM and he was relieved of his duty. „Even after being

# Ramdev says his yoga movement is a national service mission, not just an organisation

(Gns). It did not begin with buildings or big budgets. It began with a belief. Yoga guru Baba Ramdev says the work he leads today is not just about yoga mats or herbal medicines. According to him, it is a people's movement. A mission, he says, that aims to make India strong from within. Not an organisation, but a national service Speaking about his work, Baba Ramdev described the entire effort as a "service ecosystem" created for the country. He stressed that the goal is not business or branding. Instead, it is about building self-reliance through health, education, research, social work. "This is not one institution," he said. "It is a mis-

sion of selfless service." Also Read: Tired of hair fall? Baba Ramdev shares easy home remedies using amla, yoga, and nail rubbing The real strength of this movement lies in people, not structures. Baba Ramdev shared that nearly 5 lakh karmayogis and over 1 crore yoga volunteers are actively working across India. These volunteers connect directly with communities, villages, towns, and cities spreading awareness about yoga, wellness, and healthy living. With close to 1 crore touchpoints, the movement reaches people at the grassroots level often



where healthcare awareness is limited. Tradition meets modern science Baba Ramdev made it clear that this mission does not depend only on ancient wisdom. He said modern science plays an equally important role. More than 5,000 doctors and around 500 senior scientists are involved in the work. Together, they aim to create a balance between Ayurveda and modern medicine. The goal is to

offer treatments that are effective, affordable, easy to access. This coordination, Ramdev said, helps bring traditional Indian knowledge into today's scientific world without losing its essence. Building infrastructure for public health The scale of the initiative is large. According to Baba Ramdev, over 5,000 centres are currently operating across the country. These centres focus on yoga, Ayurveda, research, and education. Running this vast system costs nearly ₹5,000 crore every year. Ramdev stressed that this money is not spent for profit. Instead, it is an investment in long-term nation-building, especially in strengthening public health.

# A conspiracy to burn the Constitution, democracy, and social justice! - Sudarshan

Lucknow/Samajwadi Party's National General Secretary of the Baba Saheb Ambedkar Vahini, Ram Babu Sudarshan, said that the burning of the picture of the architect of the Constitution, Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, is not only shameful but also clear proof of the BJP's anti-Dalit and anti-Constitution mindset. This incident is not just about

burning a picture, but a conspiracy to burn the Constitution, democracy, and social justice. Insulting the creator of the Constitution, which gave rights and respect to crores of deprived people, Dalits, backward classes, and minorities, is part of a well-planned conspiracy. This incident shows how emboldened the forces spreading hatred in the state and the country have become, and the govern-

ment's silence is giving them a free hand because they are receiving protection from those in power. Is the BJP government protecting those who insulted Baba Saheb? Mr. Sudarshan said that the BJP waves the book of the Constitution on its platforms, but on the ground, Baba Saheb's ideas and symbols are being insulted. This double standard has now been exposed before the country. The increasing

atrocities against Dalits, backward classes, and deprived communities, and now incidents like the burning of Baba Saheb's picture, expose the BJP's true mentality. The double-engine government should apologize to the people of the country. The insult to Baba Saheb will not be tolerated. To protect the Constitution, the Samajwadi Party will wage a decisive struggle against the BJP, from the streets to the Parliament.

# Touches of his South Asian heritage sparked at Mamdani's inauguration as New York Mayor

(Gns). Zohran Mamdani brought touches of his South Asian heritage to his formal inauguration as this multicultural city's Mayor on New Year's Day. While acknowledging his parents during his speech, he also gave a shout-out to relatives in Delhi. He is the son of Mira Nair, a movie director, and Mahmood Mamdani, a Columbia University Professor from Uganda, who claims Indian ancestry. "Thank you to my parents, Mama and Baba, for raising me, for teaching me how to be in this world, and for having brought me to this city," he said in his inaugural address on City Hall steps after being sworn in. "Thank you to my family – from Kampala to Delhi," he added. Two of the three Korans that he used to take the oath of office belonged to his grandfather and his

grandmother. Before his swearing-in, a Hindu, Arun Khosai, and a Sikh, Sandeep Kaur, stood by with Christian and Jewish religious leaders as an imam from New York invoked Allah in a prayer. Mamdani made a culinary reference to his heritage in his speech while talking about making the city work for workers like "those who feed us biryani". Another nod to his heritage came from singer Babbulicious, who sang 'Gaddi Red Challenger' in a mix of Punjabi and English during the inauguration ceremony. Babbu Singh, whose stage name is Babbulicious, is also a social media influencer, comedian, artist, and author of children's



books. Mamdani clapped in rhythm to Babbulicious' song as the singer wearing a pink turban jumped around the stage. "NEW YORK VICH MUNDA RENDAAAAA", Babbulicious posted on Instagram. Maamdani had a line in his speech, "Logon ke dil badal gaye hein", which he translated as "softness in people's hearts". He said a Pakistani Auntie named Samina told him that was how she per-

ceived the effect of his movement on the city. While Mamdani mentions his father's religion, which he has embraced as his own, he has been silent on the religion his mother was born into, Hinduism. Mamdani had a trifecta of firsts, as he became the 111th or 112th Mayor (the city is unable to count the number of Mayors before him, and he acknowledged that in his speech). He is the first Muslim, the first South Asian (as he is generally referred to), and the first born in Africa. He spent his first five years in Uganda, where he was born, and the next two in South Africa, where his father taught, before landing in New York at the age of seven when the professor joined Columbia University. He was given the middle name Kwame, after the late Ghanaian president, Kwame Nkrumah, showing his link to Africa.

# Daughter of North Korea's Kim pays tribute at family mausoleum for first time

(Gns). North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's teenage daughter Ju-ae has paid tribute at the family mausoleum for the first time, accompanied by her father, the North's state media images showed on Friday. Her first known attendance at the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun, where the North Korean leader's late father and grandfather lie in state, came amid growing speculation about her presence in the North Korean communist dynasty's potential succession. Kim, his wife and Ju-ae, as well as key party and government officials, visited the family mausoleum on New Year's Day. While the North's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) did not mention that Ju-ae visited the family mausoleum, state media photos showed

the Kim family standing in the front row. Ju-ae was spotted in the centre, with her parents standing on each side. It marked the first known visit to the family mausoleum by Ju-ae, who first appeared in North Korean state media in 2022. "All the visitors made a firm pledge to fulfill their responsibility and duty in the vanguard of accomplishing the sacred cause for the eternal prosperity and development of the great DPRK and the promotion of the people's well-being, true to the ideas and leadership of Kim Jong Un with single-minded loyalty," the KCNA reported, using the acronym of North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.



The mausoleum enshrines the embalmed bodies of the North's founder Kim Il-sung, grandfather of Kim, and Kim Jong-il, a former North Korean leader and Kim's father. Kim Jong-un last visited the family mausoleum on the occasion of New Year's Day in 2023. He paid respects to his father and grandfather on the first day of each year since taking power in 2012 but skipped such visits in 2018, 2024 and 2025, Yonhap news agency reported.

When asked about the significance of the visit, Seoul's unification ministry confirmed that it marked Kim's first visit to the family mausoleum with his daughter that was made public. "We are closely watching as it is the first such visit," Chang Yoon-jeong, deputy spokesperson at the ministry, told a regular press briefing on Friday. "We will continue to closely monitor activities by Chairman Kim Jong-un's daughter." On Thursday, Kim attended a large-scale celebratory performance marking the new year in Pyongyang, also accompanied by his wife and daughter. Video footage aired by the state-run Korean Central Television showed Ju-ae seated next to him during the event. Clad in a leather coat matching her father's, she was seen