



# Kerala HC grants bail to YouTube journalist in case regarding video against CM:

**New Delhi, Agency:** The Kerala High Court has granted pre-arrest bail to the chief editor of a YouTube channel in a case accusing him of posting a video with sexually explicit content against Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, saying there was no obscene material in the visuals. Justice Kauser Edappagath granted the relief to T P Nandakumar on his plea claiming there was no sexually explicit content in the video to

attract the offences under the Information Technology (IT) Act. Nandakumar, in his plea, had contended that his video report was purely "a political and comparative analysis in the backdrop of the allegation of molestation by a young MLA against a woman and the double standard taken by the ruling party led by the chief minister when similar allegations arose against the leaders of their party. The prosecution



had opposed the plea claiming that the video was posted with the

intention of inciting public mutiny and tarnishing the reputation of the CM. Rejecting the prosecution's contentions, the court said that "by no stretch of imagination" can the video be characterized as sexually explicit or that its contents would deprave or corrupt the minds of the people who view it. "No case of publication or transmission of material containing sexually explicit act or conduct as provided

under section 67A of the IT Act has been prima facie made out against the applicant (Nandakumar)," the court said. It further said that the hard disk containing the alleged video has already been seized by the police and the investigation in the matter is almost over. The court also said that custodial interrogation of the petitioner was unnecessary. It directed that Nandakumar, if arrested, shall be released on

bail on executing a bond of Rs one lakh with two solvent sureties for the like sum. The court directed the petitioner to cooperate with the investigation, "including submitting himself to the deemed police custody for discovery, if any, as and when demanded". It also directed him to appear before the investigating officer between 10 am and 11 am every Saturday until further orders and also as and when required.

## Threat email received for Dera Ballan ahead of PM Modi's Punjab visit

**New Delhi(GNS):** Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to Dera Sachkhand Ballan in Jalandhar for Guru Ravidas Jayanti on Sunday, threatening emails were received by three to four schools in the city. Although the emails were sent to schools, they specifically mentioned a threat to Dera Ballan. One email reportedly stated: "Full respect for Guru Ravidas ji, but Modi is the enemy. We have no issues with Sant Niranjan Dass, but with Modi." The sender also hinted at avenging the killing of Hardeep Nijjar, who was shot dead in Canada in June 2023. All schools in Jalandhar are closed on Saturday due to the shobha yatra of Guru



Ravidas, and authorities have confirmed that students' safety is not at risk. Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav visited Dera Ballan yesterday to oversee security arrangements. Around 1,500 police personnel have been deployed in the city, with SPG teams present since last Tuesday. Security agencies are treating the threat seriously due to the high-profile nature of the Prime Minister's visit. Investigations are underway to trace the origin of the email, assess its credibility, and ensure the safety of the religious site and surrounding areas.

## Patna NEET aspirant death: CM Nitish Kumar writes to Centre, seeks CBI probe

**New Delhi(GNS):** The Bihar government recommended a CBI probe into the recent death of a female NEET aspirant in Patna, Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary said on Saturday. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Bihar police is investigating the case. The NEET aspirant, hailing from Jehanabad, was found unconscious in Shambhu Girls' hostel in Patna's Chitragupt Nagar earlier this month. She died at a private



hospital on January 11 after remaining in a coma for several days. Her family had alleged that she was sexually assaulted, accusing authorities of attempting a cover-up. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Jee has

parent and just manner," Choudhary said in a post on X. The deputy CM also holds the home portfolio. He said the state home department also issued a notification recommending a CBI probe into the case under the provisions of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, which governs the functioning of the country's premier investigation agency. The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) of the central government will issue a noti-

fication, which is a mandatory requirement for initiating a CBI probe in a state-related case, in this regard. As per the rules, prior approval of the state and the DoPT is required to investigate a crime outside the agency's jurisdiction, as law and order is a state subject. The parents of the NEET aspirant in Bihar on Saturday alleged that the state police were trying to hush up the matter by denying sexual assault and claiming that it was a case of suicide.

## Principal of government school held for "sexual abuse" of student:

**New Delhi, Agency:** The principal of a government school in Assam's Sonitpur district has been arrested for alleged sexual abuse of a female student, a police officer said on Saturday. The Class 9 student had alleged that the principal made lewd comments and

touched her inappropriately during Saraswati Puja celebrations on January 23. "The girl confined in her mother, as she was afraid to attend school after the incident. The family members filed a complaint at Missamari police station. Based on it, the principal was arrested on Thursday," the officer said. The accused, the principal of Missamari Higher Secondary School, is also the president of the All Assam Higher Secondary Schools Principals' Association.

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## What are the key directions of SC on menstrual hygiene in schools:

**New Delhi(GNS):** Following are the key directions and observations of the Supreme Court in a case on Friday, which asked all states and Union Territories to ensure that girl students in private and government schools are provided biodegradable menstrual sanitary pads for free, while underscoring that the right to menstrual health is a part of the fundamental right to life enshrined in the Constitution. Regarding the toilet and washing facilities, all states and UTs have to ensure that every school, whether government-run or privately managed, in both urban and rural areas, has to be provided with functional, gender-segregated toilets with usable water connectivity. All the existing and newly constructed toilets in schools

have to be designed, constructed and maintained to ensure privacy and accessibility, including by catering to the needs of children with disabilities. All school toilets to be equipped with functional handwashing facilities, with soap and water available at all times. Regarding the availability of menstrual absorbents, all schools have been directed to provide oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins manufactured in compliance with the ASTM D-6954 (standard guide for testing plastics that degrade in the environment via oxidation and biodegradation) standards, free of cost. Such sanitary napkins have to be made readily accessible to girl students, preferably within the toilet premises through sanitary nap-



kin vending machines or, where such installation was not immediately feasible, at a designated place or with a designated authority within the school. Every school has to establish Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) corners. Such MHM corners have to be equipped with, including but not limited to, spare inner-wear, spare uniforms, disposable bags and other necessary materials to address menstruation-related exigencies. Regarding disposal of sanitary waste, all schools have been directed to be equipped with a safe, hygienic and environmentally compliant mechanism for the disposal of sanitary napkins in accordance with the Solid Waste Management Rules. Each toilet unit has to be equipped with a covered waste bin for the collection of sanitary material, and cleanliness and

regular maintenance of such bins has to be ensured at all times. Regarding the awareness and training about menstrual health and puberty, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and state councils have been directed to incorporate gender responsive curricula, particularly on menstruation, puberty and other related health concerns (PCOS, PCOD, etc.), with a view to breaking stigma and taboo associated with menstrual health and hygiene. All teachers have to be adequately trained and sensitised on menstrual hygiene, including appropriate ways of supporting and assisting menstruating students. Information regarding the availability of Jan Aushadhi Suvidha

Oxo-Biodegradable Sanitary Napkin has to be widely disseminated through in social media, print media, radio, TV, cinema and outdoor publicity like bus queue shelter branding, bus branding, auto wrapping and wall paintings. The child helpline set up by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) has to be disseminated through various methods, such as social media, print media, radio, TV and cinema. The District Education Officer (DEO) has to conduct periodic inspections, preferably once a year, of school infrastructure, particularly about toilet and washing facilities, availability of menstrual absorbents, sanitary waste disposal mechanisms and training or

awareness measures undertaken by the concerned school. While conducting such periodic inspections, the DEO has to mandatorily obtain anonymous feedback via a tailored survey from the students and ensure that any further action taken pursuant to such a periodic inspection provides due regard to the responses received. The NCPDR or the state commissions have to oversee the implementation of the directions, and in case of non-compliance, they have to take necessary steps as provided under the provisions of the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act. The apex court observed that inaccessibility of menstrual hygiene management measures strips away the right to participate on equal terms in school. The domino effect of the absence of education is the inability to participate in all walks of life later.

expression in conditions that enable individuals to live without humiliation, exclusion or avoidable suffering. It said the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution includes the right to menstrual health. Access to safe, effective and affordable menstrual hygiene management measures helps a girl child attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health, and the right to a healthy reproductive life embraces the right to access education and information about sexual health. The Supreme Court said that the inaccessibility of menstrual hygiene management measures strips away the right to participate on equal terms in school. The domino effect of the absence of education is the inability to participate in all walks of life later.

# From Economic Survey to Budget: Searching for the Future of India

Lalit Garg

The Budget, presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament, is not merely an annual statement of income and expenditure, but a reflection of the country's economic direction, social priorities, and future prospects. Today, as India, on the one hand, strengthens its presence on the world stage as a rapidly emerging economy, and on the other, grapples with the challenges of global uncertainties, geopolitical tensions, the climate crisis, and technological change, this Budget assumes even greater significance. From individual citizens to businesses, industrialists, farmers, workers, youth, and the middle class, everyone is keenly watching this Budget, as it offers not only a glimpse into the current year's economic landscape but also a glimpse

into the "India of the future."

The Economic Survey presented before the budget provided several indications of the government's thinking and policy vision. It emphasizes expanding opportunities, inclusive growth, and long-term sustainability, not just limiting development to mere statistical growth. It acknowledges that India's economy faces challenges, but they offer greater potential. This approach should be the underlying tone of this budget—a bold effort to transform challenges into opportunities.

The first and foremost expectation is to increase the purchasing power of the lower classes. The true strength of any economy comes only when even those at the lowest rung can live a dignified life and participate in consumption. If the income of the lower income group increases and they gain access to



affordable and accessible services, it directly impacts demand, and this increased demand boosts production, investment, and employment. Therefore, this budget requires concrete measures for employment gener-

ation, along with direct cash transfers, spending on food security, health, and education. Strengthening programs like MNREGA, similar schemes for the urban poor, and social security for workers in the unorganized sector

could be important steps in this direction. Urban development should be another major focus of this budget. India is rapidly urbanizing, and cities are facing increasing pressure from population, housing, transportation, water, sanitation, and the environment. Relying solely on large metropolises is no longer viable. The idea of urban decentralization, suggested by World Bank President Ajay Banga, is extremely relevant in today's context. Making small and medium-sized cities hubs of economic activity, encouraging industries and services there, will not only reduce the burden on metropolises but also reduce regional imbalances. If the budget includes special urban infrastructure packages, transportation networks, digital connectivity, and skill development schemes for Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, it could lay the foundation for far-reaching change.

## Editorial

### A job well done: On the Economic Survey 2025-26

Through his Economic Survey 2025-26, Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V. Anantha Nageswaran has once again shown the value of level-headed analysis while eschewing sensationalism. With the global economy in flux and the Indian economy displaying stability, the need of the day is pointed analysis of current data for future policy. In this, the Survey has delivered. It has charted out a broad framework for a medium-term economic and governance strategy, highlighting the concept of an 'entrepreneurial state' that is more risk-taking, agile, and willing to experiment. The CEA is pushing for a forward-looking dynamic shift to policymaking that is willing to fail and learn in the quest for much-needed growth acceleration. Now past the turbulent COVID-19 pandemic, it is time to look ahead with policy filling the economy's sails. The Survey acknowledges that this will not be easy. Indeed, it assigns a 10%-20% probability to the global economy, in 2026, descending into a crisis worse than that in 2008. Even its best-case scenario is a worsening of conditions as they were in 2025. Yet, the Survey does paint a favourable picture of India's economy, backed with facts and figures. It also does not shy away from pointing out some emerging risks and developing problems.

At the macro level, it points out that the falling rupee does not reflect India's economic fundamentals, and the depreciation is due in large part to capital flowing to countries with more developed AI industries and to safe-haven assets. A weak rupee is good for exporters, but India predominantly depends on imports — and those have become more expensive. If trade negotiations have revealed anything, it is that India is not strategically vital to any merchandise supply chain. To address this and other structural weaknesses, the Survey outlines an ambitious plan to focus on strategic resilience and, eventually, develop "strategic indispensability". It also argues for greater fiscal flexibility for the Centre to address geopolitical and goeconomic uncertainties, but, simultaneously, cautions States against fiscal populism. The reasoning is clear: while the Centre has managed to more than halve its fiscal deficit ratio in five years, an increasing number of States have fallen into revenue deficits in this period.

## When will the fire in Manipur be extinguished?: The fearful nights incomplete peace and burning questions of the prodigy Ching Leikai

**Koutruk Ching Leikai, a small village in Manipur's Imphal West district, still lives with a fear rarely experienced in the rest of the country. Located just 25 kilometers from the capital, Imphal, it is the last settlement on the border between the valley and the mountains. Beyond this, the mountains begin, and this is where Manipur's most complex and dangerous story unfolds. During the ethnic violence that erupted in May 2023, the village was among the worst affected, but even two and a half years later, the situation has not fully returned to normal. There are no bullets being fired, no bombs being dropped, but a peaceful sleep remains a dream for the people.**

Kantilal Mandot

The villagers say that every night strange sounds come from the hills. Sometimes animal-like screams, sometimes collective noises. It is alleged that Kuki militants use these sounds to spread terror in the village so that people become mentally broken and are forced to leave the village. Savina Taima, associated with the BA Pathi organization, who lives in the village, says that the village has a population of about 300, in which 57 families live. Any incident that happens in any corner, its impact is felt first in our village. Fear has become a permanent guest here.

Koutruk Ching Leikai holds no less strategic importance. The village is located very close to the national highway, providing easy access to the mountainous region. Locals allege that this is why Kuki militants keep an eye on the area. Minia, a young village woman, explains that security forces are present, but the fear persists. Every night, attempts are made to provoke the situation, using the pretext of a retaliatory strike.

While government statistics and statements suggest that the situation in Manipur is gradually returning to normal, the reality on the ground tells a different story. Incidents in September 2023 and again in March 2024 left several people injured, and one woman even died. One villager recounted how a bullet grazed his right leg

while he was working in the fields. He underwent months of treatment. Bombs may not be falling, but courage has not fully returned. People continue to live in fear.

The violence in Manipur isn't just a story of a single village or district. It's the result of a deep social and political conflict that has been simmering for decades and exploded in 2023. The Meitei community, which constitutes a large portion of the state's population, lives in the valley regions, while the Kukis and other tribal communities reside in the hilly areas. This geographical division is at the root of this conflict.

The Meitei community's primary demand is Scheduled Tribe status. They argue that approximately 90 percent of the state's area is hilly, where they cannot purchase land. The valleys comprise only 10 percent of the state's land area, and the growing population is placing increasing pressure on land, employment, and resources. The Meitei community also believes that illegal opium cultivation and drug trafficking have destabilized Manipur, a significant part of which is linked to the hills. They are also extremely sensitive to the state's territorial integrity and strongly oppose any separate administration or division.

On the other hand, the Kuki community feels increasingly marginalized. They claim that the state government and administration, dominated by the

Meitei community, are unbiased. During the violence, hundreds of homes, churches, and farmhouses were burned in Kuki-dominated areas. Thousands of people were displaced and forced to live in relief camps. Following this experience, Kuki organizations have raised demands for a separate administration or a union territory. For them, this is not just a political demand, but a question of security and survival.

The most worrying aspect is that whenever there are talks of peace talks or improvement in the situation, violence erupts again in some part of the country shortly thereafter. This raises the question of why unrest still occurs even after peace. The answer lies not just in ethnic tensions, but in forces whose interests are linked to instability.

Manipur has long been a hotbed of armed militant activities. Active in both the valley and the hills, these groups view peace as a threat to their existence. Their hold remains strong only in an environment of violence. Furthermore, Manipur is located near the Golden Triangle, where a major network of drug, arms, and illegal trade operates. Instability proves to be a fertile ground for this entire network.

A lack of political will is also fueling this fire. Instead of decisive and impartial decisions, policies of procrastination or manipulation are often adopted. This deepens distrust. A lack of uniformity

is also evident at the administrative level. Different security measures and regulations for different communities within the same state create a sense of discrimination.

Civilians have suffered the most in this conflict. Women and children continue to live in relief camps. Children's education has been affected, agriculture and trade have come to a standstill, and the social fabric has been torn apart. In villages like Koutruk Ching Leikai, people neither feel completely safe nor are they able to decide to leave.

Mere deployment of security forces or temporary peace will not be enough to extinguish the fire in Manipur. What is needed is the restoration of trust, impartial dialogue, and the political courage to listen to the concerns of both communities and provide a balanced solution. Until the wall of trust between the valley and the mountains crumbles, villages like Koutruk will continue to spend their nights in fear.

Today, Manipur is asking one question: is peace merely the silence of guns or a return of peace to the hearts of the people? Until people can sleep peacefully, to assume that normalcy has returned to Manipur would be tantamount to turning a blind eye to reality. The fire in Manipur hasn't been extinguished; it's merely smoldering, and if appropriate steps aren't taken in time, this spark could flare up again.

## Air travel is becoming a daily cause of death!

Dr. Shrigopal Narsan

Not only ordinary people, but many prominent leaders have also been lost forever in plane or helicopter accidents, not just from politics but from the world itself. From Congress leader Sanjay Gandhi to Madhavrao Scindia, YS Rajasekhara Reddy, GMC Balayogi, former Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Dorjee Khandu, and most recently, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, the deaths of all these figures have shocked the nation. From 1950 to 2026, at least nine such high-profile political figures have died in air crashes. Now, the death of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar in a plane crash has shocked everyone. A private plane crashed near Baramati. This

was the same private plane in which Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar was travelling. A total of five people were on board the plane. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has confirmed the deaths of all five people in the accident. There is a long and tragic list of sudden deaths during air travel, especially of leaders who, at the peak of their careers, had begun to shape public politics. But their lives ended mid-air, traveling by plane or helicopter. Among these was the death of a rising face of the Congress party, on June 23, 1980.

Sanjay Gandhi, considered the most powerful figure in the Congress party after Indira Gandhi, was killed in a plane crash near Delhi's Safdarjung Airport. His death changed the course of not

only the Congress party but also the country's politics.

On September 30, 2001, Madhavrao Scindia's Beechcraft plane crashed near Patna, killing him. Scindia was rapidly rising in national politics at the time, and his influence in the ministries was deepening. His sudden death dealt a significant blow to the Congress party. On March 3, 2002, Lok Sabha Speaker G.M.C. Balayogi and

The helicopter of the Telugu Desam Party leader crashed into the pond and Balayogi died on the spot.

Similarly, on March 8, 2005, Haryana Minister O.P. Jindal's King Cobra helicopter crashed in Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh, killing Jindal. Jindal was a prominent figure in the industrial sector and a rising figure in politics. This accident

shook Haryana politics.

On September 2, 2009, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy's helicopter crashed in the Nallamala Forest due to bad weather, resulting in his death. He was considered a prominent leader in South India at the time. Similarly, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Dorjee Khandu's Pawan Hans helicopter crashed near the China border on April 30, 2011.

It crashed and they died. India's first Army Chief, Star General Bipin Rawat

On December 8, 2021, the helicopter he was traveling in crashed in Coonoor, Tamil Nadu, killing Rawat, his wife, and 11 other soldiers. This accident was the biggest blow to the national security infra-

structure. Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani was the victim of an Air India plane crash near Ahmedabad in June 2025. Rupani was a prominent figure in the BJP and had a strong hold in organizational politics. The plane of NCP leader and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar crashed while it was about to land in Baramati. Plane accidents occur most often during landing and take-off, considered the most crucial time for a flight. The Ahmedabad plane crash also occurred during takeoff. Why do most plane accidents occur during landing and takeoff? Several technical and human factors are responsible for accidents during this time. This time is also considered crucial because the pilot has very little time to respond to the situation.

# Foul air causing deaths in India? 'Yes', 'can't say': 2 govt arms take differing stands

**NEW DELHI(GNS):** Is air pollution directly causing deaths in India? The ministry of environment, forest and climate change (MOEFCC) and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) under health ministry have offered starkly different answers to this question, exposing a policy contradiction at the heart of the govt's public health and environment response.

On Thursday, MOEFCC told Parliament there was "no conclusive data in the country to establish direct correlation of deaths exclusively due to air pollution". Two days earlier, ICMR said in an RTI response that 12.4 lakh deaths in India in 2017, 12.5% of all deaths that year, were caused



by air pollution.

Replying to an RS question about National Clean Air Programme, deaths caused by chronic pulmonary diseases and whether air pollution was a national health crisis, MOEFCC said there was no relation between deaths and pollution, adding that PM10 levels had dipped in several

cities after implementation of the clean air programme.

Earlier this week, ICMR responded to an RTI filed by environment activist Amit Gupta, saying air pollution was responsible for lakhs of deaths in the country, basing the answer on a 2017 study.

The RTI response clarified the death estimates were not anecdotal but derived from

modelling-based research, developed in collaboration with the Public Health Foundation of India and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. The findings were published in 2018 in international medical journal, The Lancet, as part of the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study. "ICMR partnered with PHFI & IHME and developed estimates based on modelling. Research findings titled "The impact of air pollution on deaths, disease burden, and life expectancy across the states of India: the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017" were published in The Lancet Planetary Health 2018 on 6 Dec 2018 ([www.thelancet.com/planetaryhealth](http://www.thelancet.com/planetaryhealth)).

## No Stay On Bail For B'deshi Immigrant

**NEW DELHI(GNS):** A Delhi court has recently refused to cancel the bail granted to an illegal Bangladeshi immigrant, Bilal Hosen, holding that an accused "cannot be kept in custody indefinitely" merely for being an illegal immigrant.



Additional sessions judge Gaurav Gupta dismissed Delhi Police's plea challenging the bail granted to Hosen by a magistrate court, observing that there was "no misuse of liberty" or violation of any bail condition. The court clarified that "the mere fact that the accused is an illegal immigrant cannot be the sole ground for keeping him in custody indefinitely," adding that no grounds were made out at this stage to cancel the bail.

Hosen is an accused in an FIR registered at Fatehpur Beri Police Station in 2024. He was arrested on Dec 28, 2024, and was granted bail

by the magistrate court in Nov 2025. The prosecution subsequently moved an application seeking cancellation of bail, which was rejected by the sessions court in its order dated Jan 28.

The court further noted that there was nothing on record to suggest that Hosen had "misused the liberty" granted to him. However, it clarified that if any new facts come to light or fresh evidence is collected by the investigating agency warranting detention, the prosecution would be at liberty to move a fresh application in accordance with law.

## Delhi man critical after taking HIV preventive drugs on AI advice

**NEW DELHI(GNS):** A 45-year-old Delhi man is critically ill with a rare drug reaction after he took HIV post-exposure medicines bought without prescription, after taking advice from an AI chat platform.

The man developed Stevens-Johnson syndrome, a rare but potentially life-threatening reaction from the drugs he self-administered after a high-risk sexual contact.

Post-exposure drugs are taken to prevent infection after possible HIV exposure, usually through sex or sharing needles. It must be started within 72 hours of exposure and stopped if the source person tests HIV-negative.

Doctors treating the patient at Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital said the man bought a full 28-day course of HIV post-exposure prophylaxis directly from a local chemist without any prescription, based on AI-generated advice.



Doctors said the patient took the medicine for 7 days before developing rashes. He then approached multiple hospitals for treatment for eye and other complications before finally being admitted to RML Hospital. The patient was diagnosed with Stevens-Johnson syndrome, a condition that can cause extensive skin and mucosal damage and requires intensive care.

"The patient is critical. Our immediate priority is to manage the drug reaction," a senior doctor involved in the treatment said.

## When their deaths failed to raise a stink

### Negligence kills two migrant workers in Delhi's sewer

**NEW DELHI(GNS):** Vijay Mochi came from Begusarai to Delhi with his wife, Ruby, hoping to build a better future. Instead, an act of shocking negligence cost him his life and left his family shattered. On Feb 21 last year, Vijay (35), who had no prior experience in cleaning sewers, was asked to enter a sewer chamber near an apartment complex in Narela along with another worker, Nandram.

The two dutifully climbed down. Several minutes passed in silence. Supervisor Anil Kumar, standing outside, called them many times. Receiving no response, he entered the chamber. The toxic fumes overwhelmed him, too, and he passed out. Panic ensued. Other workers used ropes to pull



out the unconscious men and rushed them to hospital, where Vijay and Nandram were declared dead.

It's been nearly a year, and Ruby (30) has since left Delhi and returned to Bihar, her dreams of a better tomorrow gone along with her husband.

Before that fateful day, Vijay and Ruby used to work as labourers at the

construction site of a private company. His primary job was cutting iron rods. According to Vicky, his brother-in-law, neither was Vijay trained in cleaning sewers nor was he given any protective gear by the company. The family received 14 lakh as compensation, but got no update regarding the case, Vicky says. Raj Kumar Das, another relative of Vijay,

says the latter used to send most of his earnings home to support his parents. "He was calm, composed and hardworking. It was not an accident, negligence killed him," Das says. Nandram, the other deceased worker, was a native of MP's Tikamgarh. His brother, Gyasiram, says he had been working in Delhi for 12 years and that both he and his wife were employed at the same site. "All he wanted was to educate his two children," Gyasiram says. Delhi

Development Authority had termed the deaths unfortunate and painful. "The site was being developed by the private company, which was also responsible for maintaining a sewage treatment plant and the adjoining sewer system.

## Couple found dead in separate rooms at Delhi's home in suspected suicide pact; note hints at financial distress

**NEW DELHI(GNS):** A 55-year-old man and his wife were found dead at their residence in north-east Delhi's Jyoti Nagar on Thursday, in what police suspect is a case of suicide by the couple.

A note found at their home hinted at financial distress, brought by the burden of mounting loans, police said. Their two sons were not at home when the couple died. "The sons, aged 25-26, went out for dinner, and when they came back after an hour, they found the parents unconscious and called the cops," a police source said.

A call regarding a suspected suicide reached police around 12.05 am on Friday. A team rushed to the house in West Jyoti



Nagar, where the bodies were found in separate rooms.

"A husband and his wife were found dead in separate rooms in their house," a senior police officer said. The crime and forensic teams have collected evidence. There was no sign of

forced entry or foul play that the investigators noticed. The bodies were sent to GTB Hospital for post-mortem.

Police said that in the alleged suicide note, the couple mentioned the loans they had taken and their inability to cope with the

financial instability that followed. The contents of the note are being verified, the officer added. Police said that the couple used to run a small factory earlier, but that was shut down, leaving them without any stable source of income. Their children were also engaged in small jobs to support the household, but the family continued to struggle financially.

Proceedings under Section 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) were initiated in the case. Section 194 deals with suicide investigation and reporting.

Police said further investigation was under way, and the statements of family members and neighbours were being recorded.

## Finance dept seeks inputs for Economic Survey 2025-26

**NEW DELHI(GNS):** After a gap of a year, Delhi govt is likely to table the Economic Survey in the assembly with preparations for it now formally underway.

In an official communication on Jan 29, the finance department directed its various divisions and allied offices to furnish chapter-wise information on growth trends, achievements and key indicators related to Delhi's economic, social and financial sectors. The offices were asked to submit the required inputs so that the consolidated material could be forwarded to the planning department for compilation of the 2025-26 survey. The communication, issued by deputy secretary (finance) Mangej Singh, was marked "urgent" and circulated to several senior officers.

Breaking a long-standing con-



vention, the Economic Survey 2024-25 was not tabled in Delhi Assembly before presentation of the budget in March last year. Traditionally, it is presented a day or two days before the annual budget.

The survey plays a critical role in evidence-based policymaking. It provides the analytical foundation for budgetary decisions, helps assess the impact of previous policies, and flags emerging risks and opportunities.

## Undone by lack of funds, Chandni Chowk stretch reverts to type

**NEW DELHI(GNS):** Barely a month after a comprehensive cleaning and maintenance drive, the 1.3km Chandni Chowk stretch facing Red Fort has once again slipped into civic neglect after the specialised agency engaged for the task had stopped working due to the alleged lack of funds.

Public Works Department (PWD) hired the agency in mid-Nov to carry out deep cleaning of the common corridor, granite flooring and bollards, along with regular waste collection, to maintain the aesthetic appeal of the redeveloped heritage stretch. However, the work came to a



halt after Dec 15. While the decision to engage the agency was taken in a meeting of S h a h j a n a b a d

Redevelopment Corporation (SRDC) held in Oct 2025, and on the direction of chief minister Rekha Gupta, the

process was accelerated in view of two events in the area - Shaheed Samagam in Nov and a Unesco programme in Dec, said Sanjeev Bhargava, president of Chandni Chowk Sarv Vyapaar Mandal. "Once the work stopped, the area began accumulating dust again," he alleged.

PWD officials said the agency was engaged after receiving an assurance of funding from SRDC. "In the absence of a formal financial sanction even after a month, we had to discontinue the arrangement. We understand that SRDC is working on a proposal," an official said.

A senior SRDC official

claimed that clear-cut directions were given to PWD to continue deep cleaning. "There is no ambiguity in the sanctioning of funds. The process was delayed because the appointment of the SRDC chairman is pending. As soon as the process is completed, a proposal will be placed before the board, which has the power to give financial sanction to any project. PWD was given in-principle approval to go ahead with the project," he pointed out.

Municipal Corporation of Delhi said that it had intensified cleaning efforts in addition to regular sweeping and waste removal. Local council-

lor Suman Gupta maintained that sanitation work was being carried out regularly. "Sweeping is done twice daily and rubbish is lifted routinely. All bins are cleaned every day," Gupta claimed. "While we do not have specialised equipment to clean stonework and bollards, we will explore procuring it if required."

Residents and traders, however, alleged that the area was rapidly reverting to its pre-Nov state of neglect and routine sanitation measures were inadequate. A recent visit to the area revealed encroachment, rubbish packets and paan stains at several locations.

## Akali leaders attending weddings of gangsters' families: Sukhbir Badal wants to come back to power with help of gangsters: Dhaliwal

**Chandigarh (GNS):** Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal, Chief Spokesperson of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Punjab and MLA from the Ajnala constituency, raised serious questions over the participation of Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal, SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhali, and other Akali leaders in wedding functions of gangsters' families. He said that while Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann's government is fighting a major battle against gangsterism and the drug mafia, the Akali Dal is building relationships with gangsters.

MLA Dhaliwal displayed photographs showing the presence of Sukhbir Singh Badal, Virsa Singh Valtaha, Ganieve



Kaur Majithia, Ravinder Singh Brahmputra, and SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhali at the wedding ceremony of the sister of Amritpal Singh Bath in Amritsar. He said these photographs raise serious questions about the intentions and priorities of the Badal-led Akali Dal. He said this participation shows that when the

Mann government wants to eliminate gangsters, the Akali Dal is nurturing gangsters and building relationships with their families.

Dhaliwal said that on one hand Sukhbir Badal issues statements every second or third day saying that gangsterism is not ending. On the other hand, by attending weddings of gangsters' families, Sukhbir Badal is proving that his political battle rests on the shoulders of gangsters and that he wants to come to power in Punjab by using gangsters.

The AAP leader said that earlier the Akali Dal had pushed Punjab's youth into the furnace of terrorism. In the same way today, the Akali Dal wants to fulfill its lust for

power by turning Punjab's youth into gangsters. He said that while Congress was responsible for that dark period, the Akali Dal was equally responsible.

Appealing to Punjabis, Dhaliwal said that people should remain cautious and vigilant of these individuals. Earlier too, Congress and the Akalis had pushed Punjab into the furnace of fire, and now once again they are spoiling Punjab's atmosphere by nurturing gangsters.

MLA Dhaliwal said that no matter what these people do, the Aam Aadmi Party government's promise is that gangsterism and the drug mafia will definitely be eliminated from Punjab.

## When rain failed to wash away city's pollution pain

**NEW DELHI (GNS):** Despite receiving excess rainfall of 33%, Jan, this year was more polluted than last year. The average AQI in Jan 2026 was 307, compared to 305 in Jan last year, according to an analysis of Central Pollution Control Board's data.

Foul air causing deaths in India? 'Yes', 'can't say' - 2 govt arms take differing stands

Jan 2025 did not witness a single 'severe' day (an AQI above 400 on a scale of 500), this month saw a spell of severe days from Jan 17 to 19.

## WESTERN RAILWAY EXTENDS THE TRIPS OF A PAIR OF SPECIAL TRAIN BETWEEN BANDRA TERMINUS - BHUJ

**WR Press Release (GNS):** For the convenience of passengers and to clear extra rush of passengers, Western Railway has extended the trips of a pair of special Train between Bandra Terminus - Bhuj. According to a press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Shri Vineet Abhishek, Train No. 09037 Bandra Terminus - Bhuj Bi-Weekly Special has been extended upto 26th February, 2026. Similarly, Train No. 09038 Bhuj - Bandra Terminus Bi-Weekly Special has been extended upto 27th February, 2026. The booking for extended trips of Train No. 09037 and 09038 will open from 01.02.2026 at all PRS counters & on IRCTC website. For detailed information regarding timings of halts and composition, passengers may please visit [www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in](http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in).

## Delhi man kills 12-yr-old stepson with screwdriver, gouges his eyes out

**New Delhi (GNS):** A man allegedly killed his 12-year-old stepson in the Shahstri Park area of northeast Delhi. The accused allegedly picked up the child, a Class VII student, from his school, killed him with a screwdriver and gouged his eyes out. The accused later sent the photograph of the child to his wife and elder brother of the deceased, the police said.

The police said they received information about the incident around 9:50 am at the Shahstri Park police station. A team rushed to the spot and shifted the teenager to JPC Hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

A case under Section 103(1) (murder) of the BNS has been registered in this regard. A manhunt has been launched to nab the absconding accused, an official said.

The forensic team inspected the crime scene and collected evidence, the cop said. According to



the police, the boy was killed in a brutal manner using a screwdriver and his eyes were gouged out.

The accused, an e-rickshaw driver, had married Mumtaz, a widow and mother of two, in 2020. However, the accused did not like her children from previous husband. This could be the motive behind the murder, the source said.

The accused picked up the child from his school yesterday and took him to a forest area where he brutally killed him. The victim's brother, Aman, came to know about the incident after he received a photograph of the body from an unknown number, the source mentioned.

## Harjot Singh Bains and Manish Sisodia advocate vedic education to shape children's future

**Ludhiana (GNS):** Sanatan Seva Samiti Punjab and Ved Prachar Mandal Punjab on Saturday jointly organized an award ceremony at local BCM School to celebrate a year-long Vedic speech competition aimed at connecting students with ancient Vedic education.

Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains and former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister (AAP Punjab In-charge) Manish Sisodia graced the event as chief guests. President of Sanatan Seva Samiti Punjab Vijay Sharma and President of Ved Prachar Mandal Punjab Roshan Lal Arya were also present.

In his address, Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains emphasized that education is the sole



pathway to meaningful societal change. "If we wish to transform society, the only solution is to instill the very principles and values in the children through education", he added.

Drawing an analogy, Bains noted that a small plant can be shaped with due effort, just as young children can be molded through quality education.

He praised teachers for their excellent work in linking students to their cultural heritage and ethical principles, fostering good citizenship. He also lauded Manish Sisodia's transformative model in Delhi's government schools as a unique and inspiring example, even though AAP is no longer in power there.

Manish Sisodia, reflect-

ing on his 10 years in education and politics, described the program as rare and exceptional. He credited the organizing bodies, BCM School's principal, students, Roshan Lal Arya, Vijay Sharma, and participating school principals for their visionary approach to imparting knowledge from the Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, and Gita. He urged students to not only read and understand this ancient knowledge but also apply it in daily life, advocating its expansion beyond BCM School to all Punjab schools. Highlighting three students who spoke on the Vedas, he praised the 296 participants from 25 schools for their efforts—whether researching via YouTube or tools like ChatGPT—calling it a meaningful step.

## 'Inconsistent testimony, delayed FIR' NDMC plans major upgrade of Atal Adarsh Vidyalaya

### Court acquits man in 2020 riots case

**NEW DELHI (GNS):** A Delhi court has acquitted a man accused of torching a senior secondary school in northeast Delhi's Brijpuri during the Feb 2020 riots.

The court held that the prosecution's case suffered from serious infirmities, including an unexplained "delay in registering the FIR" and "inconsistent" testimony of the sole eyewitness, who happens to be a police constable.

Additional sessions judge Parveen Kumar Singh of Karkardooma court observed on Jan 28 that though the school was set ablaze on Feb 25, 2020, an FIR was registered only on March 5, without any explanation for the delay. He held that such a lapse assumed significance as the



prosecution case rested entirely on a single witness, making it "highly unsafe" to sustain a conviction and entitling the accused the benefit of doubt.

The case relates to the torching of Arun Modern Public Senior Secondary School, causing an estimat-

ed loss of Rs 1.25 crore. Three people - Mohd Kafil, Shamim Ahmad and Mohd Faizan - were named as accused. While the first two were acquitted in 2025, Faizan, who absconded in 2022 before being arrested in Aug 2025, has now been cleared.

At the core of the court's reasoning behind acquitting Faizan is the "contradictory testimony" of Constable Piyush, whose submissions formed the backbone of the prosecution's case. The judge noted that he had taken materially different stands in two separate trials - one involving Ahmad and Kafil, and another of Faizan - arising from the same incident. During the current trial, the constable submitted that it was "he who had identified" Faizan because the informer who tipped him off about the arson left the spot by the time he reached there. However, during the trial of Ahmad and Kafil, the cop had said that the informer identified the accused, and that he managed to "recall them as being a part of the rioters."

**New Delhi (GNS):** The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has set in motion a comprehensive plan to upgrade Atal Adarsh Vidyalaya, Mandir Marg, with the aim of developing it into a model institution that combines modern, future-ready education with the preservation of Delhi's architectural heritage.

NDMC Vice-Chairman Kuljeet Singh Chahal, along with senior officials from the Education, Civil, Electrical and allied departments, inspected the school on Friday to assess the existing facilities and chart out a roadmap for its upgrade.

During the inspection, Chahal said the NDMC runs 45 schools catering to nearly 30,000 students, and sustained efforts were being made to improve teaching standards, learning outcomes and overall educational levels in line with the Prime Minister's vision



for quality and future-oriented education. He stressed that the Mandir Marg school, given its heritage value, must be upgraded carefully without disturbing its original architectural character.

Highlighting the historical significance of the campus, Chahal said the building was originally designed as Municipal Boys High School by Russell, the then Chief Architect of the CPWD, in 1918 and completed in 1931.

## VIP Movement Strangles Rush-Hour Traffic At And Around ITO. Yet Again

**NEW DELHI (GNS):** The Friday morning rush-hour traffic slammed straight into a wall of red signals and a sea of brake lights near ITO as Martyr's Day restrictions brought vehicles on Vikas Marg and roads leading to Rajghat to a grinding halt. Commuters were stuck for hours with little information on diversions or relief.

Shreedhar, who travels from Noida to his office in ITO every day, remained stranded on ITO bridge from 10 am to 11.45 am. "People left their autos and taxis and started walking," he said.

Another commuter, stuck at the ITO intersection, said



the situation on the ground was chaotic. "I couldn't move an inch for two hours. I could have avoided the mess had the traffic constable guided me the other way. Instead, he directed me straight into the jam," he said. He made two calls to the police helpline, but that didn't yield clear updates. "They did not have a clue," he told media.

Delhi Traffic Police had issued an advisory only late at night on Thursday - at 10.20 pm - warning commuters that traffic would be affected in central Delhi on Friday due to a Martyr's Day event, set to be attended by several dignitaries, at Rajghat's Mahatma

Gandhi Smriti Sthal.

The advisory stated that traffic could be diverted at ITO Chowk, Delhi Gate, Guru Nanak Chowk, Shantivan Chowk, Rajghat DTC Depot and IP Flyover, and that restrictions might be imposed between 9 am and noon on multiple stretches, including Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, Asaf Ali Road, NS Marg and Ring Road bypass routes near Rajghat. Commuters were advised to use public transport as far as possible.

However, there was no further reminder for those who might have missed the late-night advisory. Neither

were follow-up alerts issued on Friday morning even as traffic volumes were peaking.

As congestion in central Delhi kept on worsening, traffic police updates followed largely in response to angry posts by commuters on X.

"When can we expect someone from your end to clear this mess at Rajghat?" one user wrote. Another posted, "Please send someone and resolve the traffic nuisance at Rajghat." A commuter stuck at ITO Bridge for over two hours posted, "No information on when it (traffic) will start moving. People desperate to catch trains and reach

offices are walking. Some bikers are on the kerbs to find a way out." Another user wrote that he already missed the 11.25 am Rajdhani Express to Dibrugarh because of "Delhi's famous jam". The congestion quickly spilled onto Shakarpur-Geeta Colony Road, Pushta Road, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, Tilak Bridge approaches, Geeta Colony Flyover, Yamuna bridge links, and 'secondary' areas like Daryaganj, Civil Lines, Pragati Maidan and Connaught Place. Despite the large number of VMS screens installed across the city, they are rarely used to highlight traffic restrictions.