



# India to import apples from US at Rs 80 per kg, farmers fully protected: Piyush Goyal

**New Delhi(GNS):** India has granted a quota-based duty concession to the US on apples under the interim trade pact, while fully protecting domestic apple growers, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Saturday.

India has imposed a minimum import price (MIP) of Rs 80 per kg and an import duty of 25 per cent on apples from the US under the proposed India-US trade pact, which is expected to be signed by mid-March. This effectively means apples priced below Rs 100 per kg cannot be imported into the country from the US. At present, imported apples attract a 50 per cent import duty with an MIP of Rs 50 per kg, effectively barring

imports of apples priced below Rs 75 per kg. "Our apple farmers are fully protected, and there is no need to worry," Goyal told reporters here. India imports about six lakh tonnes of apples every year, including from the US. The country meets its requirements from imported apples. He also said that



several Indian goods, including agricultural products, will attract zero reciprocal tariffs in the US under the interim trade pact. Certain Indian fruits, vegetables, tea, and coffee will also have zero reciprocal tariff in the US, he said, adding India has not given any duty concessions on any dairy product, sugar, or millets to America.

Goyal added that the agreement will not hurt the interests of farmers, MSMEs, handicrafts, and handlooms "in any way". He further said India has granted duty concessions to the US in sectors like alcoholic beverages, cosmetics, and medical devices. India will also get zero reciprocal tariff in certain auto, aircraft parts in the US under the trade pact.

## Air Marshal holds talks with Singapore Armed forces officials in visit to Singapore Airshow 26



**New Delh(GNS):** Air Marshal Balakrishnan Manikantan, AOC-in-C, CAC, on Saturday held talks with Brigadier-General (BG) Ho Kum Luen, Chief of Staff-Air Staff, Republic of Singapore Air Force, and BG Chan Ching Hao, Chief of Staff-Joint Staff, Singapore Armed Forces, at Changi Exhibition Centre on the sidelines of the Singapore Airshow 26. In a post on X, the Indian Air Force stated, "On an official visit to Singapore, Air Marshal Balakrishnan Manikantan, AOC-in-C, CAC met Brigadier-General (BG) Ho Kum Luen, Chief of Staff- Air Staff, Republic of Singapore Air Force and BG Chan Ching Hao Chief of Staff - Joint Staff, Singapore Armed Forces at Changi Exhibition Centre on the sidelines of the Singapore Airshow 26. During the visit, he interacted with H.E. Dr. Shilpak Ambule, High Commissioner of India to Singapore, and the Sarang Helicopter Display Team that is participating in the Airshow. In a solemn ceremony he laid a wreath at the Kranji War Memorial, to honour the fallen soldiers of WW 2."

The show is to be held from February 7 to 8, with aerobatic flying teams as they take to the skies with adrenaline-pumping stunts and manoeuvres with speed and precision. With the latest commercial and military aircraft on display, the mascots will be Leo and Leonette, and there will be a vibrant line-up of activities designed for the whole family. India and Singapore, in a joint statement on September 4, 2025, adopted defence cooperation.

Encourage continued exchanges and engagement on defence and security cooperation at all levels, including regular meetings between the two Defence Ministers through the Defence Ministers' Dialogue and between senior Defence ministry officials through the Defence Policy Dialogue; \* Continue military cooperation and exchanges through the joint conduct of army, naval, and air force exercises in various formats, it said. Deepen defence technology cooperation in emerging areas such as Quantum Computing, AI, Automation and Unmanned Vessels.

## Not a deal, but surrender: Congress alleges Indo-U.S. trade pact 'betrayal' with India

**New Delh(GNS):** The Congress claimed on Saturday (February 7, 2026) that the Indo-US trade pact is "not a deal but a surrender" of the country's self-esteem and interests, and that it is a betrayal of India and its people. Addressing a press conference here, Congress's media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said India will soon become a dumping ground for American products that will hurt the interests of the farmers and small and medium industries here. This deal is a betrayal to all that India stands for and all that India stood for over the last 75 years. This is not a deal which is in our interest. This is a total surrender by none other than Narendra," Khera said. "India has been made into a dumping ground by this deal. I do not want to call it a deal, as a deal is amongst equals and you sit across the table and negotiate. A deal cannot be with a gun held on your head.... It is blackmail, it is a surrender," he said. The Opposition party's



attack came soon after Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal announced that India has not given any duty concessions on any dairy product and claimed that several Indian goods, including agricultural products, will attract zero reciprocal tariff in the United States. India and the U.S. announced on Saturday (February 7, 2026) that they have reached a framework for an interim trade agreement, under which both sides will reduce import duties on a number of goods to boost the two-way trade. Mr. Khera said this is not a pact with the U.S., but a "compromise with our self-esteem and the interests of our farmers, MSMEs and the middle-class". Noting that India has become a dumping ground for the U.S., and it has happened under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rule, he said, "With this deal, the back of farmers would be broken further, and the coming days will prove how farming in the country would be destroyed due to this deal."

## Govt's action against Maoists ended fear in Bastar, new dawn of development rising: President

**New Delh(GNS):** President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday said that decisive action by the government against Maoists had ended the atmosphere of fear and distrust in the Bastar region, and a new dawn of development was setting in. Speaking after inaugurating the three-day divisional-level Bastar Pandum festival in Jagdalpur, the headquarters of Bastar district, the President appealed to those who have renounced violence and joined the mainstream to trust the Constitution and democracy and not be misled by those seeking to divert them from the path of peace. "Bastar's natural beauty and rich cultural traditions have always attracted people, but the region unfortunately suffered for years due to the menace of Maoism," the President said. Noting that Naxalism caused the maximum damage to youth, tribals and Dalits, Murmu said that people associated with Maoist activities were now shunning violence, leading to

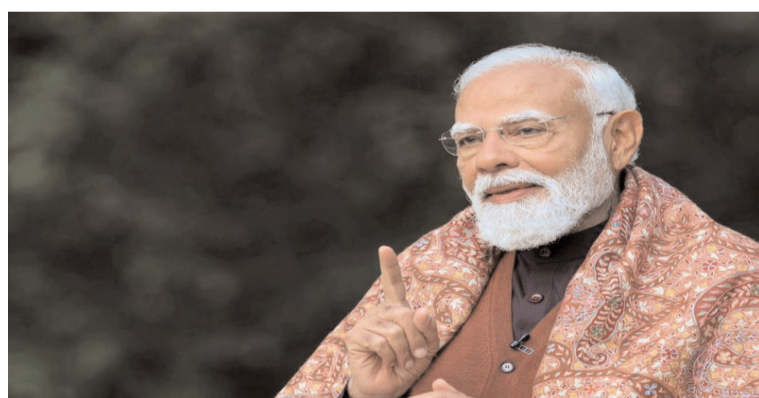


the return of peace in the region. "Government of India's decisive action against Maoists resulted in bringing an end to the atmosphere of fear and distrust", she added. The President said she had been informed that a large number of Naxalites had surrendered and that the government was ensuring those who returned to the mainstream were able to lead a normal and dignified life. "With the government's efforts and the cooperation of the people, a new dawn of development is rising in Bastar," Murmu said. She urged people to have faith in the system and move forward with hard work and

dedication, describing democracy as a source of strength. "I appeal to those who have renounced violence and joined the mainstream to have faith in the Constitution and democracy, and not be misled by those who seek to divert them," the President added. Referring to her own journey to the top Constitutional post, Murmu said it reflected the strength of Indian democracy that a daughter from a small village in Odisha was today addressing people as the President. "You have even greater courage and strength. The government is dedicated to you," she said. The President said the government was committed to the welfare of the poor, deprived and backward sections of society, stressing that their upliftment remained a top priority. Rejecting the notion that Chhattisgarh is a backward state, President Murmu highlighted the state's grandeur and cultural heritage.

## '25 abhi baaki hai': What PM Modi said on turning 75

**New Delh(GNS):** During the ninth edition of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' on Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the recurring debate regarding his age and political future. While interacting with students, the leader recounted a telephone call he received on his 75th birthday last September. He noted that when a leader reminded him he had completed 75 years, he responded, "25 are still remaining". "I do not



count what has passed. I count what remains," the Prime Minister told the audience. He urged the youth to avoid focusing on the past and instead focus on the years that lie ahead. The remarks have

revitalized discussions surrounding an informal BJP practice where senior leaders typically step aside upon reaching the age of 75. While opposition parties have cited the examples of veterans like L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi to question if this principle would apply to the current leadership, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other senior party figures have clarified that the party constitution contains no such retirement provision.

## Namibian cheetah Aasha gives birth to five cubs, India's Cheetah count rises to 35 Cheetah cubs

**New Delh(GNS):** Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav on Saturday announced that Aasha, the Namibian cheetah under the Project Cheetah, has given birth to five cubs, increasing the surviving cubs count to 24 and the total number of Cheetahs to 35 in India. Taking it to X, Yadav stated that Aasha gave birth to the five cubs at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh. "Kuno Welcomes the Birth of FIVE Cubs. Aasha's legacy leaps forward--India welcomes her five adorable cubs! A moment of immense pride and joy for Project Cheetah as Aasha, the Namibian cheetah and a proud second-time mother, gave birth to five cubs on 7th February 2026 at Kuno National Park."

## Indian Coast Guard busts international oil cargo smuggling racket in mid-sea operation

The Indian Coast Guard on Saturday said it has busted an international oil smuggling racket by apprehending a set of vessels linked to it, about 100 nautical miles west of the coast of Mumbai as part of a mid-sea operation. The vessels involved had devised a method to smuggle large volumes of cheap oil and oil-based cargo from the "conflict-ridden countries and profit by mid-sea trans-

fer to motor tankers in international waters", the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) said. The "daring mid-sea operation", initiated through digital surveillance and enforced through the ever-expanding maritime presence of the Indian Coast Guard, once again establishes India as a "net provider of maritime safety and enforcer of the international rules-based order", the ICG said in a statement.



Three vessels were intercepted by ICG ships, about 100 nautical miles west of Mumbai, on February 5, and through sustained rummaging, corroboration of electronic data onboard the suspect vessels and verification of documents and interrogation of crew, the ICG's specialist boarding team established the chain of incidents and the modus operandi of the criminals," the Coast Guard said.

# Questions raised by the controversy surrounding the film "Braskhor Pandit"

Dr. Mayank Chaturvedi

The myth that Indian cinema and OTT are entertainment should now be shattered. The truth is that these platforms are today deciding who is a criminal in society. Although the film makers have decided to remove promotional material after objections and FIRs were lodged against the film "Ghoskhor Pandit" from not only the Brahmin community but also from BSP chief Mayawati to the leaders of other castes and communities across the country. However, the negative efforts being made in this direction have once again shown how ideological attacks can be carried out in the name of art to divide Hindu society, create animosity on the basis of caste, and impose someone's identity.

Neeraj Pandey and Manoj Bajpayee's film "Ghuskhor Pandit" should not be limited to just a film title; it is an extension of a long-standing and systematic narrative that positions a class and an identity within Indian society as a symbol of crime, decadence, and moral degradation. For decades, Indian audiences have witnessed a strange double standard. When terrorism or violence is depicted, the repeated argument is that "terrorism has no religion." In films and web series, the religious identity of terrorists is deliberately obscured, names are changed, and backgrounds are concealed to avoid hurting the sentiments of any particular community. However, as soon as the topic of corruption, exploitation, or abuse of power arises, the camera suddenly focuses on the sacred thread,

tilak, rituals, and surname. This selective sensitivity raises serious questions.

The title "Ghuskhor Pandit" makes it clear that bribery is being presented as an identity characteristic rather than a personal deformity. This is where the argument for artistic freedom falls flat. Can any filmmaker dare to use titles like "Bribery Maulana" or "Scammer Priest"? If the answer is no, it means this isn't freedom, but a strategy to choose safe targets.

This trend in Indian cinema didn't emerge suddenly. For decades, characters have been constructed based on their surnames and caste identities. A Brahmin or Pandit was often portrayed as greedy, cunning, scheming, or clinging to power. A Rajput or Thakur was reduced to the role of a tyrannical landlord, while

their historical contributions, sacrifices, and role in national defense were marginalized. The tradition of portraying Baniya characters as usurious and inhuman is also no secret. Today, this has become a repeated pattern, one that is gradually being ingrained into society's subconscious.

The portrayal of religious symbols also reflects this imbalance. Temples are often depicted as centers of superstition, hypocrisy, and conspiracy, while mosques or dargahs are presented as symbols of peace, compassion, and spirituality. This comparison automatically creates an ideological bias in the viewer's mind. It's not difficult to say that this is not a natural evolution of art, but an attempt to shape thinking in a particular mental direction. The portrayal of upper caste characters in many web

series as mentally deranged, born criminals, or morally bankrupt points in this direction. This is the creation of a civil conflict narrative.

This narrative is not limited to the screen. On university campuses, especially in institutions like JNU and Jadavpur, the use of the words "Brahmin" or "Pandit" as a symbol of abuse and crime is an extension of this mentality. This is an experiment in which an attempt is being made to weaken Hindu society not through an external enemy, but through internal divisions. The worrying aspect is that the people who themselves come from this society play a major role in this process. In the race for global recognition, awards, and ideological certifications, it has become a dangerous trend to criticize one's own roots.

## Editorial

### Distressing regularity: On Meghalaya's rat-hole mines

The explosion in an illegal rat-hole mine in Meghalaya on February 5, killing at least 18 workers, is a grim reminder that court supervision cannot substitute governance. Illegal coal mining in India is a long-running problem, but the northeast, especially Meghalaya's coal belt, has a distinct ecosystem — of small privately or community-owned landholdings, thin coal seams, weak local enforcement, and supply chains — that can launder illegal coal into legitimate markets through intermediaries. Rat-hole mining is the norm (for illegal setups), and they are prone to collapsing because they lack engineered roofs and side-wall protections. The National Green Tribunal ordered its cessation in 2014, but illegal mines have continued due to a high local dependence on income from coal, fragmented ownership and contractorships that spread accountability and patronage. Operators of illegal mines also underreport accidents and keep workers off formal records; and while workers' deaths hit the headlines, injuries — due to polluted water, acid drains, unstable landscapes, and degraded roads — and child labour use do not.

Illegal coal is currently not easy to separate from legacy or auctioned coal once it has entered the supply chain. But the expected cost of illegal extraction and transport needs to go up. Meghalaya already has a framework to prevent illegal mining, transport, and storage under the MMDR Act. Using technology to reduce the cost of detection, it should add mandatory GPS tracking for all coal carriers, invalidate consignments that deviate from a specific route, and integrate satellite and drone patrol data with control rooms. Illegal mining should also become socially expensive, perhaps through community monitoring, incentivised by sharing penalties with local bodies. Conversely, the State should pressure intermediaries with seizure, cancelled licences, prosecution, and blacklisting from auctions. Next, bans fail sans alternatives, so the State should displace illegal mining as an income source by setting up credit and market linkages for horticulture, construction, small manufacturing and tourism, and refitting public works to absorb mining labour.

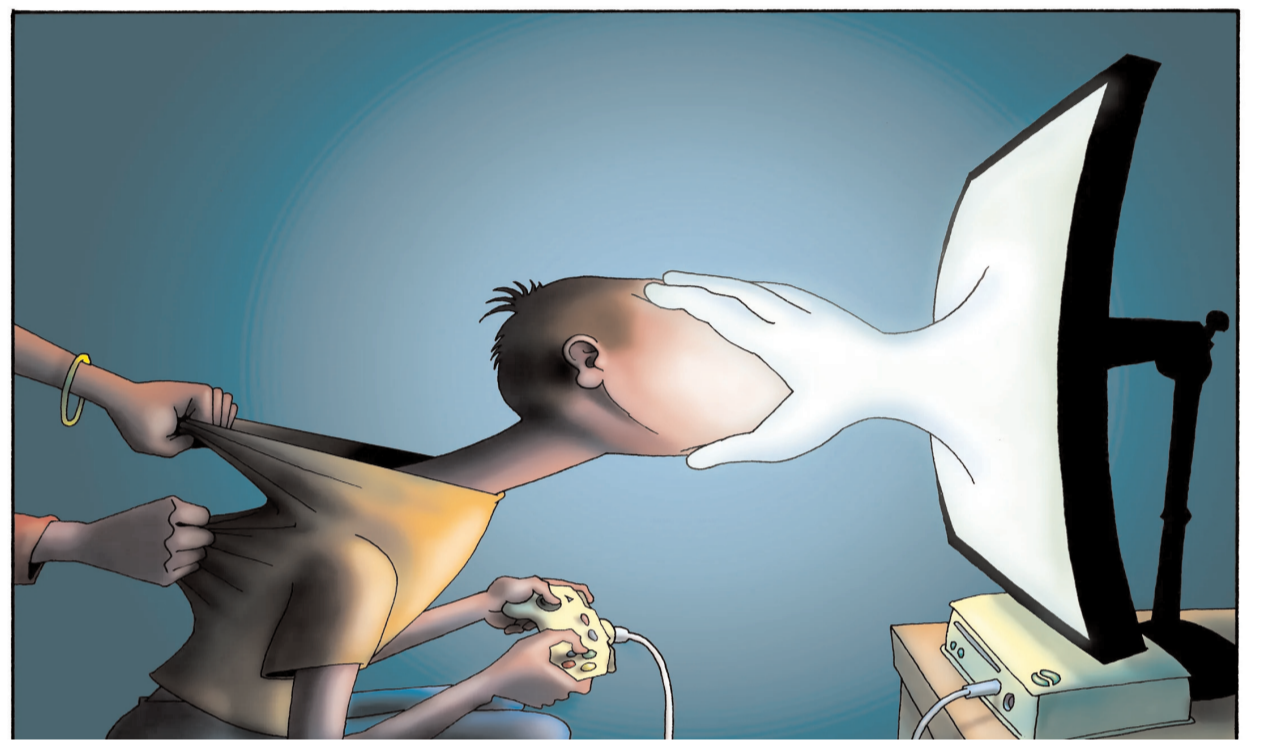
# Gaming addiction and the ruined lives of children

**Just last week, the only son of a businessman in Bhopal's Chhatrasal Colony, a student in the eighth grade, committed suicide after being addicted to gaming. While the incident was being discussed, another similar incident occurred in Ghaziabad. Similar cases are continuously coming to light. In the past 24 months, approximately 180 such incidents have been reported across the country. The rapid increase in NCRB data over the past five years is certainly shocking. What strategies should be adopted to encourage children to break free from the clutches of gaming and return to traditional indigenous sports?**

Dr. Ramesh Thakur

Indeed, this need has become even more pressing after the suicide of three sisters in Ghaziabad. Why are modern children abandoning outdoor sports and becoming addicted to mobile gaming? Every segment of society should collectively seek answers to such questions. Gaming addiction has become a deadly disease among teenagers, a recent example of which is evident. Under the guise of Korean gaming, three minor sisters from Ghaziabad, trapped themselves in a "lover game task," and embraced death. News of their suicide spread like wildfire in society. The horrific manner in which the three sisters embraced death has deeply shocked their parents. The deceased wrote a letter to their father, explaining the reason for their deaths. In the eight-page suicide note, they detailed their unfulfilled desires. Their reasons have prompted a profound reflection on society.

Initial investigations into the incident reveal that the three sisters were so engulfed in the game that they were unable to escape, despite numerous failed attempts. However, they were so entangled in the quagmire that escape became impossible. Ultimately, they decided to end their lives by jumping from the ninth floor. Police are investigating the incident. As the case progresses, new surprising facts are emerging. Some are even difficult to believe. According to the police theory and neighbors, the three girls were engrossed in games 24 hours a day. All three were determined to marry Korean men. Through gaming, they had so deeply ingrained Korean culture in



their hearts and minds that they believed life without Korea was meaningless. Their actions had troubled and worried their family for the past two years. Their father had even taken away their mobile phones, leading to fights. Furthermore, the girls had been pressuring their family to take them to Korea daily. In their suicide note, the three sisters also created sad emojis, writing "Sorry, Papa" to their father, Chetan Kumar, and finally writing "Goodbye." It has now been proven that most games are promoting psychological addiction. Children need to be given a greater sense of belonging. Once caught in their grip, they cannot easily escape. Considering this shocking incident, it's important to understand why Korean culture continues to attract teenagers. Indeed, Korean culture has certain distinctive features. Their modern dramas and K-pop, combined with love and family sentiments, attract people.

Their sense of belonging easily connects with them. Korea's modern and traditional lifestyle, K-food, fashion, and K-beauty also appeal to young people. Korean films, dramas, serials, and movies are currently being widely popular on OTT platforms in India. Above all, their gaming sector is having a significant impact on the youth. Protecting the emerging generation from the profound psychological impact of online gaming is a major challenge. Incidents like the one in Ghaziabad, leading to the untimely deaths of minors, deeply traumatize parents. The modern images of this changing era are certainly frightening. Grounds, parks, and playgrounds are deserted, devoid of children. Children have abandoned them, engrossed in their mobile phones. After returning from school, they pounce on their mobile phones. We all need to learn from this tragic incident. The incident occurred on February 4th at

around 2:15 a.m. in Ghaziabad's Bharat City Society. Father Chetan had married twice, with two daughters from his first wife. However, desiring a son, Chetan married his sister-in-law, who also had a daughter. The three were only 16, 14, and 12 years old. They spent most of their time together in the same room. After COVID, they stopped going to school for some reason. They then reportedly fell under the influence of a mobile gaming app. This in itself raises questions. How could children lose so many years of education without any intervention? Did they have any problems? Did they have learning difficulties or mental health issues? Was there any social isolation or other problems that the family overlooked? These questions need to be investigated thoroughly, because the sudden departure of all three due to gaming addiction is unacceptable.

# Are frequent earthquakes and intense storms caused by natural imbalance?

Dr. Hidayat Ahmed Khan

The repercussions of the ruthless destruction of nature's lush forests and mountain ranges in the name of development are now becoming apparent. Humans have destroyed forests to create concrete jungles, leveled numerous mountains, and, by extracting underground water and various mineral resources, have hollowed out the Earth from within. These are the natural elements that maintain the Earth's balance. When they become unbalanced, nature will inevitably restore its own balance. Therefore, in the past few years, reports of earthquakes, intense storms, heavy rains, floods, and the activation of dormant volcanoes have been coming from various parts of the world. These events can-

not be considered mere coincidences. In fact, they point to the Earth's geological activities and the rapidly deteriorating natural balance. Nature, as if, is signaling that it is in the process of releasing the pressure accumulated within itself, which, in scientific terms, is linked to the movement of tectonic plates and climate change. In geological terms, earthquakes result from the collision, sliding, or rupture of Earth's inner plates. The Pacific Ocean's "Ring of Fire" region is a prime example, accounting for approximately 90 percent of the world's earthquakes and housing numerous active volcanoes. This region has long been geologically sensitive, but its activity has increased in recent years. Additionally, unusual seismic activi-

ty is being observed in regions such as Europe, Asia, and the Americas, which could be considered a sign of growing imbalances within the Earth.

On the other hand, weather-related disasters are also part of this chain. Recently, Storm Leonardo wreaked havoc on the Iberian Peninsula of Europe. Torrential rains and strong winds in Spain and Portugal caused rivers to overflow, creating flood-like conditions, and forcing thousands of people to flee their homes. More than 11,000 people were evacuated in Spain's Andalusia region alone, while a state of emergency was declared in several Portuguese cities. The severity of the situation can be gauged by the fact that even after Leonardo's passage, the danger has not abated. The

Meteorological Department has warned that Hurricane Marta could hit the coast, with winds of up to 100 kilometers per hour. Due to continuous rainfall, the ground is already saturated with water and no longer has the capacity to hold any more. This is directly impacting the water levels of rivers, dams, and reservoirs, increasing the risk of large-scale flooding and landslides. In the Andalusian province of Córdoba, the Guadalquivir River reached dangerous levels, forcing the evacuation of residential areas and blocking traffic on the historic Roman Bridge. The situation is even more concerning in the mountainous region of Garzalema, where rocks are dissolving when they absorb excessive water. This creates the risk of landslides, posing a serious threat to the

safety of homes and roads. The situation in Portugal is no different. A large part of the city of Alcácer, located on the banks of the Sado River, has been submerged for several days. Reports indicate that people are left with nothing but the clothes they are wearing, and thousands of citizens are in need of immediate assistance. Six major rivers, including the Tagus River, have been placed on red alert. The government has decided to extend the state of disaster in 69 municipalities until mid-February, reflecting the scale of the crisis. It is generally believed that climate change plays a major role in all these events. Rising global temperatures, uncontrolled urbanization, deforestation, and the reckless exploitation of natural resources are disrupting the weather cycle.

# A "Khedut Samvad Programme" was organized in Keshod in the special presence of AAP MLA Gopal Italia and Frontal Organization State President Pravin Ram

## If you put one Pravinbhai in jail, 500 Pravinbhais will be ready: Gopal Italia

Ahmedabad/Junagadh/Surendranagar/Botad/Rajkot/Amreli/Devbhumi Dwaraka/Gir Somnath/Porbandar/Gujarat

AAP's farmer leader and Frontal Organization State President Pravin Ram has come out after 108 days of imprisonment and is ready to raise a strong voice for farmers and people across Gujarat. Along with Visavadar MLA Gopal Italia, farmer leader Pravin Ram participated today in the "Khedut Samvad" programme in Keshod. A very large number of local people, farmers, Aam Aadmi Party office-bearers, and workers were present at this programme. Addressing the gathering, MLA Gopal Italia stated that when the

freedom struggle was going on, the British too must have thought like BJP leaders think today—that "if we put those who are talking about freedom into jail, the talk of freedom itself will stop." Thinking like this, the British jailed many great personalities and freedom fighters of our country, yet freedom still came. BJP leaders are also under the illusion that if Aam Aadmi Party leaders are put in jail, BJP will continue to rule Gujarat, but that is not going to happen. Because if you put one Pravin Ram in jail, then 500 Pravin Rams will emerge; if you put one Raju Karpada in jail, then 500 Raju Karpadas will be ready.

Further, MLA Gopal Italia stated that till now



BJP and Congress leaders were working for each other and were switching parties internally, because of which no work of the public was getting done. They never listened to the voice of the common people of Gujarat, especially farmers. But now Aam Aadmi Party has emerged in Gujarat and the

country—Isudanbhai came from one side, Pravinbhai came from another side, Chaitarbhai came from another side—and in this way many people joined Aam Aadmi Party, and with God's blessings, strong work of Aam Aadmi Party has taken place in Gujarat.

Therefore, the hope and trust of the entire Gujarat is now placed on Aam Aadmi Party. Till now there was no one to challenge BJP, but for the first time youths have come forward to challenge BJP, and because of this BJP people are now in trouble. And if the people of Gujarat continue to give

their blessings, BJP people will not even be able to show their faces.

Thereafter, Aam Aadmi Party's farmer leader Pravin Ram, while delivering his speech, said that during his 108 days of imprisonment, the support that he and his family received from the people of Keshod and the entire Gujarat—I thank all those people. The false cases filed against us have not been linked by the farmers of Gujarat. I was not put in jail because of any personal fight, but because I fight for the eco-zone issue, I fight for the Ghed issue, and I raise the voice of farmers, that is why I was put in jail. They thought that by putting us in jail they would weaken us, but I want to tell everyone that by putting us in jail, you

have only made us stronger, and may God bless you to live a hundred years.

Thereafter, farmer leader Pravin Ram spoke about the incident that took place in Haddad village, I completed my speech and Rajubhai Karpada also completed his speech, and the programme was about to end. At that time, the police arrived and I asked the farmers to sit down and also appealed for peace. But when the police were leaving and then returned again after a minute, once again we appealed to people to sit. When the police came back for the third time, they came with helmets and batons. After that, the police entered the crowd. So where did the discretion of the senior

police officers present there go?

Did the police not provoke the situation? The more serious matter is that some people sent by them indulged in stone-pelting, and BJP people were also among them. After this entire incident, police complaints were filed against 85 people, but not a single one of them was throwing stones. The police did not have a single video showing these 85 people throwing stones, so then how did the police arrest them? Another shocking fact is that not a single police complaint has been filed against those who are seen throwing stones in the videos. This clearly shows that this was a conspiracy carried out by BJP.

## Turkman Gate case: Court hears bail pleas of four more accused

**New Delhi(GNS):** A Delhi court on Friday heard bail arguments of four more accused in the Turkman Gate stone-pelting case. The court also reserved its order on the bail pleas of seven accused in the case.

Additional sessions judge Bhupinder Singh heard submissions on behalf of accused Kaif, Kashif, Sameer and Ubaidullah, while the remaining bail arguments are scheduled to be heard on Monday.

The defence argued that no further custodial interrogation was required and that the investigation could proceed based on digital evidence. Opposing the pleas, the prosecution cited pending MLC reports due to the chief medical officer's absence, with additional public prosecutor Atul Shrivastav submitting that the accused's continued presence was therefore necessary.

Defence counsel relied on mul-



iple video clips to challenge the prosecution. For Kaif and Kashif, the defence submitted CCTV footage purportedly showing Kaif at home from 7pm on Jan 6 till 3am the following day, contradicting the investigating officer's claim that the brothers were apprehended at 2.30am. The counsel argued that the two were forced to step out of their house - located close to the site of the alleged violence - only after tear gas entered their residence.

## India's worst air? No surprises here as Ghaziabad leads, Delhi and Noida follow

**New Delhi, (GNS):** India's winter air pollution crisis showed no signs of easing in Jan and NCR dominated the pollution rankings.

Nearly half of the country's monitored cities have recorded PM2.5 levels above the national safety standards.

According to an analysis by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), Ghaziabad has emerged as India's most polluted city in Jan, followed by Delhi, then Noida, Gurgaon and Greater Noida.

With a staggering monthly average PM2.5 concentration of 184 g/m<sup>3</sup> - three times over the national limit - Ghaziabad, which is consistently among the most polluted pockets of NCR, breached daily standards on every single day of the month. Delhi followed closely at 169 g/m<sup>3</sup>, recording 27 days of very poor or severe air quality. Other cities in the top 10 most polluted list included Dharuhera in sixth place, Singrauli, Bhiwadi,



Narnaul and Gangtok. Uttar Pradesh and Haryana alone accounted for six of these 10 cities.

Of the 248 cities with reliable air quality data, 123 breached India's National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for fine particulate matter. Not a single city met the World Health Organization's (WHO) daily safe guideline, underlining the scale of the public health challenge posed by polluted air.

The problem cuts across both National Clean Air Programme

(NCAAP) cities and those outside it. Among the 97 NCAAP cities with sufficient data, 46 exceeded India's daily PM2.5 standards. A similar trend was seen in non-NCAAP cities, where 77 crossed the national limit and all 151 exceeded the global benchmark.

At the state level, Rajasthan topped the list, with 23 of its 34 monitored cities exceeding the PM2.5 standard. Haryana, Bihar, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh also reported widespread non-compliance. Nationally, air quality remained skewed towards unhealthy scores. Only 21 cities recorded good air, 103 fell under satisfactory and 92 under moderate. Another 32 cities were classified as poor or very poor. Damoh in Madhya Pradesh has emerged as the cleanest city, with an average PM2.5 level of 17 g/m<sup>3</sup>. Five of the 10 cleanest cities are in Karnataka. Among megacities, Delhi and Kolk-ata exceeded national limits, while Chennai, Mumbai, and Bengaluru stayed within them.

## Police deny brother and friends' claim they didn't get timely help

**New Delhi, (GNS):** Relatives and friends of Kamal Dhyani alleged they did not get timely support from police or authorities during their night-long search for him. Police, though, refuted the claim, detailed measures they took to trace him and said they provided his near and dear ones with all possible help.

Kamal's twin brother, Karan, and friend Mayank also raised suspicions of foul play, noting that they had inspected all pits along a stretch of Joginder Singh Marg they had zeroed in on and spotted no one, barely hours before his body was found in one of the pits. Police said there were looking into unconfirmed reports of a fight involving Kamal. The bereaved relatives had reportedly sought CCTV footage from the



area, but claimed police told them the cameras didn't have recording or playback mechanisms and could show only live feed.

They also alleged that police didn't provide them with the exact location of Kamal's phone and wondered why it was not tracked to the end, which

they believe could have helped trace him earlier.

"We went to Janakpuri police station and told the cops that Kamal's phone was still switched on. They gave us a location radius of 200 metres but not the exact place where we could find him. As a result, we were in the dark and wasted

time looking for him also in nearby parks," Karan said, adding that the search party found no one while scanning all the pits within this 200m radius with flashlights.

Safety measures like deploying police and putting up barricades around the pit where Kamal's body was later found were in place only on Friday morning, Mayank said, adding had these steps been taken earlier, his friend might still have been alive.

Police said Karan and some of Kamal's friends had visited Vikaspuri police station at 1.35 am in search of him. They were informed that neither was there any record of a road accident involving him nor a medico-legal certificate in his name. His bike was also not reported missing.

## 'Paid' social media hype about missing persons in Delhi: Police launch probe

**New Delhi, (GNS):** Delhi Police on Friday said they have initiated legal action and begun an investigation into the "sudden hype" and amplified social media chatter around missing persons—particularly girls—in the capital. An initial technical inquiry found that a surge of posts on X and Instagram was being pushed through paid promotions allegedly linked to an upcoming movie. Sources said an FIR was being registered in connection with the incident.

"Creating panic for monetary gains will not be tolerated, and strict action will be taken against such individuals," Delhi Police said in a statement. "After following a few leads, we discovered that the hype around the surge in missing girls in Delhi is being pushed through paid promotion," it added.

Delhi Police PRO Sanjay Tyagi



urged people not to fall for motivated rumours. "There is no need to fear or panic regarding missing persons in Delhi, especially children. Compared to last year, there is no increase in reporting. In fact, in Jan 2026, cases have dropped," he said. He added that Delhi Police follow a policy of fair and transparent crime reporting. Missing persons can be reported at police stations, online or through Emergency Response Support System 112. "Under our SOP, cases of missing children are prioritised.

## Countdown to the count: April 15 kickoff for census

**New Delhi, (GNS):** The first phase of Census 2027, under which houselisting operations will be carried out across 13 revenue districts of Delhi, is likely to begin from April 15 in New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and Delhi Cantonment areas.

It will start from May 15 in municipal corporation areas. The formal schedule will be notified by Delhi govt weeks before the exercise starts, officials said.

Govt has stepped up ground-level preparations. A group of 17 master trainers is scheduled to undergo comprehensive training on house-listing from Feb 11 to 13. The

number of master trainers varies from district to district; for example, West district has two master trainers, while South has only one.

"The master trainers include tehsildars, lecturers, postgraduate teachers, district informatics officers and statistical officers. Informatics officers have been specifically engaged because the upcoming census will be conducted in a completely digital format. All data will be captured on mobile phones by enumerators, making it essential that master trainers are well-versed in digital data handling," said an official. Govt will follow a cascade



training model under which master trainers will train supervisory staff and enumerators on census procedures and data collection methods.

An official said that, for Lutyens' Delhi, the ADM, chief engineer and engineers were also made charge officers because the houselisting would include the residences of the President of India, PM and other VIPs as well.

In Delhi, the census will be overseen by the director of census operations, with district magistrates acting as principal officers at the district level. At the ward level, charge officers—mainly principals and revenue officials—will supervise teams of 40-50 enumerators, including teachers and govt staff, conducting the exercise on the ground. Once it begins, the first phase of the

census will be wrapped up in 30 days. To avoid operational bottlenecks in the city, which is currently estimated to have around 50 lakh households spread across 250 wards (excluding Lutyens' Delhi and Delhi Cantonment areas), authorities planned a staggered rollout.

"As per the plan under discussion, the census will first begin in NDMC areas and Delhi Cantonment, which have very low population density as compared to other areas. Once these areas are covered, the exercise will expand to the 250 MCD zones," said the official.

Around 260 charge officers

will supervise the operation across the city. NDMC areas will have nine charge officers, mainly from the revenue and engineering departments, while Delhi Cantonment will have one dedicated officer. The remaining 250 charge officers—mostly school principals—will oversee census work in MCD wards, with one officer assigned to each ward.

When the houselisting begins, enumerators will use mobile applications to list and geo-tag buildings with the help of satellite imagery. Data entered during household visits will be uploaded in real time and cross-checked to minimise errors.

# Delhi Govt moves to create unified transport authority

**New Delhi, (GNS):** In a major step toward overhauling the Capital's transport governance, the Delhi Government has initiated the process of drafting a comprehensive law for the creation of the Delhi Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (DUMTA) and a dedicated Delhi Urban Transport Fund (DUTF), aiming to bring Delhi's fragmented transport system under a single, integrated and sustainable planning framework.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has constituted a high-level task force under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary to prepare the draft Bill at the earliest.



The task force includes senior officials from key departments such as transport, urban development, finance,

planning, public works and Delhi Police as well as representatives from agencies like Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC), Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), Delhi Development Authority (DDA), NCRTC and the Indian Railways. The Chief Minister has also suggested coopting renowned urban transport experts to incorporate global best practices.

Explaining the rationale behind the initiative, CM Rekha Gupta said Delhi's transport agencies had historically worked in silos, leading to overlapping jurisdictions, poor coordination and inefficiencies in planning and serv-

ice delivery. She said DUMTA would bring all modes of transport, including Metro, buses, regional rail and feeder services, under a single planning framework to ensure better coordination and citizen-centric mobility solutions.

The Chief Minister stressed that the move is central to Delhi's long-term strategy to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution by strengthening public transport and improving last-mile connectivity. She said vehicular emissions remain a major source of pollution in Delhi, and an integrated transport authority is crucial to encouraging people to shift from private vehicles to reliable public transport.

## 72 missing persons traced in Southwest District in Delhi

**New Delhi, (GNS):** As many as 72 missing persons were traced in Southeast district here in the month of January, according to police data.

It revealed that 138 missing person/kidnapping complaints, with 53 being men and 85 women, were registered in the district last month. Out of this, 72 persons - 33 male and 39 females - were reunited under Operation Milap.

The data also revealed that 1,691 missing or kidnapping complaints were reported in the district in 2025. Of this, 1,200 were worked out.

Meanwhile, the police have warned of strict action against those using "paid promotion" to create "hype"



over reports of missing girls, saying attempts to create panic for monetary gains won't be tolerated.

In a post on X, the Delhi police said, "After following a few leads, they discovered that the hype around the surge in missing girls in Delhi was pushed through paid promotion. Creating panic for monetary gains won't be tolerated, and we'll take strict action against such individuals."

## New 6-bed ICU brings specialised lung care for children to RML Hospital



**New Delhi, (GNS):** A 6-bed intensive care unit dedicated to children with serious lung and breathing problems opened at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Medical Sciences & Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, offering specialised treatment that was not available earlier in Delhi's govt hospitals.

The ICU was inaugurated on Friday by hospital director Dr Ashok Kumar in the presence of medical superintendent Dr Vivek Diwan and senior doctors.

Officials said this was the first time a Delhi govt hospital had a separate ICU focused only on paediatric lung diseases.

Dr Dinesh Kumar, HOD Pediatrics, explained that children with genetic, congenital and severe respiratory conditions often need close monitoring, ventilator support and advanced tests. Until now, such children were treated in general paediatric ICUs. The new 6-bed unit will allow doctors to provide focused care under 1 roof.

## Rs 24,000 cr decongestion plan to ease traffic, cut pollution in Delhi: Minister

**New Delhi, (GNS):** The government has rolled out an ambitious Rs 24,000-crore decongestion plan for Delhi aimed at easing chronic traffic congestion, reducing vehicular pollution and improving overall urban mobility in the national capital, said Minister of State for Road and Transport and Highways Harsh Malhotra on Friday.

Addressing a press conference here, Malhotra said one of the major initiatives under this plan is a five km tunnel from Shiv Murti to Nelson Mandela Marg. At present, it takes around 45-50 minutes to cover this stretch from Gurgaon to Delhi due to heavy congestion near Shiv Murti. Once the tunnel is complete, it is expected to cut travel time on this stretch to just 15 minutes.

Highlighting key infrastructure initiatives, he said several critical road stretches connecting Delhi with neighbouring regions had been taken over by the National Highways



Authority of India (NHAI) to ensure faster execution and better traffic management.

The minister said key road stretches, including Ashram to Badarpur, Punjabi Bagh to Tikri Border, and Mehrauli-Gurugram stretch, which had been taken over by the NHAI, will

significantly enhance traffic flow. The three stretches - Mathura Road from Ashram to Badarpur Border, Old Delhi-Rohtak Road - Punjabi Bagh to Tikri Border, and Mehrauli-Gurugram Road - Mehrauli to Gurugram city, are the critical links between Delhi and neighbouring areas, the Minister said.

Malhotra said environmental sustainability for Delhi is another priority and cited government commitment towards eliminating the three major landfills at Bhalswa, Ghazipur and Okhla. Legacy and current waste will be segregated for commercial use under the Prime Minister's Waste to Wealth vision. Inert waste has already been utilised in road construction projects such as UER-II and Dwarka Expressway, demonstrating innovative resource management.

Further, a new water treatment plant in Chandrawal for which approx Rs 380 crore has been allocated will ensure that the vision of "Nal Se Jal" reaches every household in Delhi.

## Another unguarded excavation pit in central Delhi, but eyes wide shut Anatomy of Delhi death trap

**New Delhi, (GNS):** An unguarded pit in west Delhi's Janakpuri took a life on Friday morning. In central Delhi, another massive, unbaricaded excavation pit at Central Square-DCM Flatted Factory Complex may also pose danger, with residents warning that the site could "claim a life at any moment" if urgent action is not taken.

The pit, estimated to spread over nearly seven acres at Bara Hindu Rao, was dug over a decade ago for the Plaza 4 commercial project. It still remains open and largely unsecured - long stretches along internal roads have no fencing, warning signage or lighting, despite daily movement of people inside the complex.

The excavated area is surrounded by dense, overgrown vegetation as con-



struction activity was halted long ago. Trees and shrubs have grown unchecked inside and around the pit, while stagnant greenish water has collected at the bottom. Garbage, debris and soil have been dumped along the edges, concealing the depth of the pit.

While more than 400 labourers, along with their

families, live in temporary shelters close to the site, a few offices operate from the premises. "The pit is so dangerous that even a small mistake can take someone's life. We don't know when or how an accident may happen," said the owner of an office at the complex, adding that the site has become increasingly threat-

ening over the years.

Jagdish Singh, who had booked a shop years ago, said fear among local people had grown following a recent accident involving an open pit in Noida. "This place has remained unsafe for years and nothing has changed," the 71-year-old rued. Labourers pointed out that they negotiated the narrow lanes inside the complex every day. "Our children also use them. There is no safety, no barricade. This is a decade-old issue and it can take lives any time," one of them said.

The pit is visible from metro trains, claimed locals. "It looks like a river from a distance. We have been flagging the issue with authorities for years, but no action has been taken," an office-owner said.

**Open killer pit where biker died, big enough to swallow car; multiple safety lapses**

**New Delhi, (GNS):** The killer pit - 20 feet long, 14 feet deep and 13 feet wide - in which Kamal Dhyani's body was found is bang on Joginder Singh Marg in Janakpuri, a stretch dotted with at least four other pits, just as gaping. Like this one - large enough to swallow a four-wheeler - they have been dug by Delhi Jal Board (DJB) for underground sewer work. A spot inspection of the stretch by Media revealed multiple safety lapses.

Before Friday morning, just two brown barricades had been placed near the traffic light at the start of this stretch, leaving wide gaps on the sides and between them. These gaps, locals said, are



routinely used by two-wheelers to enter and exit the road, particularly because there are no barricades further ahead.

On Friday morning, though, the site looked markedly different. Green safety nets had been strung around the killer pit, a divider and some concrete pipes meant to be used to lay sewer lines. A crane parked nearby blocked off the area.

## Prostitution racket busted, 5 minors among 11 trafficked women rescued from Dwarka

**New Delhi, (GNS):** What appeared to be an ordinary house from outside in southwest Delhi's Dwarka was in fact operating a well-organised prostitution racket inside, from where the police rescued 11 women, including five minors, officials said on Friday.

The action was taken following a tip-off from an NGO, Association for Voluntary Action (AVA), at the Dabri police station. Following this, a raid was conducted at the house, leading to the rescue of 11 women, including five minor girls. Eight customers and two suspected brothel operators were arrested from

the spot. A case was also registered under Section 143(3) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. What the police found inside the house was disturbing. The premises was locked from all sides and seven dogs were kept inside the house.

Officers were left shocked when they opened an almirah and found a minor girl hiding inside. She was visibly shaken, scared and trembling when rescued.

During counselling, girls revealed that they had been kept under strict surveillance, not allowed to leave the house and subjected to



constant monitoring and control. According to the police, the victims were trafficked from states such as West Bengal, Assam and Uttar Pradesh. They were lured with false employment promise and better opportunities, only to be forced into bonded conditions after reaching Delhi.

To verify the information, NGO members posed as decoy customers and interacted with suspected pimps. During the conversations, photographs of the girls were shared with them for 'selection', which con-

firmed the presence of an organised trafficking and prostitution racket. The NGO immediately alerted the Deputy Commissioner of Police, South West District, and the Special Police Unit for Women and Children, leading to the raid. "Children are lured from neighbouring states, trafficked and pushed into such conditions," said Manish Sharma, Senior Director of AVA.

AVA is a partner of Just Rights for Children, a national child rights network with over 250 NGO partners working across 450 districts to combat child abuse, exploitation and trafficking.