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## India-EU FTA final draft approved, defense and security partnership agreement also signed

Agency, New Delhi



India and the 27-nation European Union on Tuesday here finalized the draft of what is considered the world's largest free trade agreement (FTA) and announced a comprehensive strategic agenda to work jointly for global prosperity and security from the Caribbean Sea to the Indo-Pacific region. The final approval of the FTA and the signing and exchange of the political document concluding the agreement took place at the 16th India-EU Summit held at Hyderabad House here between Prime Minister Narendra Modi, European Council President Antonio Luis Santos da Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. The two sides also exchanged documents for 13 agreements. These include the Joint India-EU Comprehensive Strategic

Agenda for 2030, a defense and security partnership, a comprehensive agreement on cooperation and its legal framework regarding the movement of human resources, and an agreement under the India-EU trilateral cooperation on digital innovation and skills hubs for women and youth, empowering women farmers in agriculture and food systems, solar-based solutions; early warning systems and four projects on solar-based sustainable energy transition in Africa, to be jointly implemented

in small island developing states in the Indo-Pacific and Caribbean regions. Prime Minister Modi, in a joint press statement with the visiting leaders, said, "Today, India has concluded the largest free trade agreement in its history. This is not just a trade agreement; it is a new blueprint for shared prosperity. In recent years, India-EU relations have witnessed remarkable progress. Based on shared democratic values, economic complementarities, and strong people-to-people ties, our partnership is reaching

### India-EU Agreement Sends a Clear Message to the World: President of the European Council

**New Delhi:** European Council President António Luis Santos da Costa on Tuesday described the conclusion of free trade agreement negotiations between India and the European Union as a clear message to the world. He said that at a time when the global order is fundamentally changing, the European Union and India stand together as strategic and reliable partners. At the 16th India-EU Summit held at Hyderabad House today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, European

Council President António Luis Santos da Costa, and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen reviewed the entire spectrum of relations and discussed ways to further strengthen the partnership. In a joint press statement with Prime Minister Modi, Costa said that trade is a crucial factor in bringing about geopolitical stability and is a fundamental source of economic growth. Trade agreements strengthen the rules-based economic order and promote shared prosperity.

new heights. Today marks another historic occasion, as two of the world's largest democracies are adding a decisive chapter to their relationship. The cooperation between India and the European Union is a partnership for global well-being." Modi added, "We are launching an ambitious and comprehensive strategic agenda for the next five years.

## Justice is only meaningful when it is equal and fair for all: Sanjay Singh

Agency, New Delhi

**Protests against the equality regulations took place outside the UGC, and opposition also intensified within the BJP**



rules is not limited to student politics but has also reached the administrative and political system. The UGC has made it mandatory for all higher education institutions to establish Equal Opportunity Centers, Equity Committees, and a 24-hour grievance helpline to handle discrimination complaints, especially for SC, ST, and OBC students. The UGC says that the aim of these rules is to ensure fairness and inclusion on campus. Some people are protesting against this rule.

The University Grants Commission's (UGC) new Equality Regulations for Higher Education Institutions, 2026, have sparked a political storm. Protests are underway in Delhi against the new rules. Students from upper-caste communities had announced a protest outside the University Grants Commission headquarters on Tuesday. Amidst the growing controversy, student groups, calling for unity, have appealed to their peers to gather in large numbers to register their protest against the new rules. Besides this, protests were also held in several places in Uttar Pradesh on Monday, and further demonstrations have been called for Tuesday. The gazette notification related to the rules was issued earlier this month. These rules mandate the creation

After the meeting, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) MP T.R. Baalu said, "We raised issues such as the problems of Tamil Nadu fishermen, the non-approval of the Hosur airport project, the demand for the return of Katchatheevu, US tariffs, and the Madurai and Coimbatore metro projects at the all-party meeting."

## The government is ready to discuss every issue, and passing the budget is also essential: Kiren Rijiju

Agency, New Delhi

Ahead of the Budget Session of Parliament, which begins on Wednesday, the government assured the opposition at an all-party meeting held on Tuesday that it was ready to discuss all issues. It also emphasized that this is the Budget Session and passing the budget is

essential for running the country. The meeting, held in the main committee room of Parliament House, was chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. After the meeting, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju told reporters, "In a parliamentary democracy, it is the duty of all MPs to raise the concerns of the

people and also to listen to each other. The government has never disregarded the rules and the Constitution, and the functioning of Parliament is entirely

in accordance with the Constitution. Responding to a question about the opposition raising the issue of the new UGC guidelines,

Rijiju said that the government does not want to limit itself to any single issue, but the main focus of the Budget Session will remain on discussing and passing the budget. In the all-party meeting, opposition parties also presented their demands and issues.

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Rijiju said that the government does not want to limit itself

# Nationwide Strike for Five-Day Banking Has Widespread Impact

Correspondent.DN

**Goddha:** The nationwide bank strike, called by the RRB Apex Union and the United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) in support of pending demands, including a five-day banking work system, had a widespread, organized, and effective impact in Godda district. The discipline, unity, and determination with which the bank employees, under the leadership of Nitesh Kumar Mishra, General Secretary of the Jharkhand State Rural Bank Employees Association, conducted the movement made this strike a powerful part of a nationwide mass movement, not just a local one. The striking employees started a massive rally from the regional office of Jharkhand Gramin Bank in Godda

with resounding slogans. The rally passed through the main streets of the city and reached near the Indian Bank, where strong slogans were raised against the policies of the central government and bank management. After this, the rally reached the State Bank of India, Bazaar branch, where the employees staged a sit-in protest and strongly presented their demands, including five-day banking. Finally, all the striking employees returned to the regional office of Jharkhand Gramin Bank, where the movement concluded with thunderous slogans. During this time, General Secretary Nitesh Kumar Mishra said, "Five-day banking is not a new or impractical demand. This system is already implemented in most of the country's financial and government institutions. Now it is necessary that

## Historic Demonstration Led by Nitesh Kumar Mishra



Delaying its implementation in banks for years is an injustice to the employees." General Secretary Nitesh Kumar Mishra further said, "Despite the continuously increasing workload, severe staff shortage, and mental pressure, bank employees are diligently managing the country's economy. Now it is necessary that

the government and management understand the real situation of the employees." In another statement, Nitesh Kumar Mishra clearly stated, "This strike is not just a one-day protest, but a decisive battle for the respect, health, and fair working conditions of bank employees. If a quick decision is not taken on

the pending demands, the movement will be made even more widespread." Impact on business worth approximately Rs. 100 crore in Godda district Due to the strike, all branches of Jharkhand Gramin Bank in Godda district remained completely closed. Along with this, normal banking operations were completely disrupted in all commercial banks and State Bank of India branches. Cash transactions, clearing, loan disbursements, government payments, pensions, DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer), and business transactions were severely affected. According to banking experts and local sources, the simultaneous complete

closure of all major banks in the district is estimated to have affected banking business worth approximately Rs. 100 crore in a single day. Clear Message This historic and disciplined demonstration has made it clear that bank employees will no longer be satisfied with mere assurances. This movement in Godda, led by Nitesh Kumar Mishra, General Secretary of the Jharkhand State Rural Bank Employees Union, has emerged as a strong link in the nationwide strike and indicates that if a quick decision is not taken on the pending demands, including the five-day banking week, the struggle of bank employees will become even more organized and decisive. Those present at the movement In this movement, employees of Jharkhand Gramin Bank as well as employees of other banks actively participated. Among the prominent colleagues present were — Kumar Gaurav, Sonam Kumari, Tabasi Priya, Meetu Kumari, Sarvottam Thakur, Kumar Suraj, Ravish Kumar Jha, Chandan Bharti, Nilesh Bharti, Prince Parashar, Subhash Kisku, Mithilesh Kumar, Jitendra Kumar, Sanjeev Kumar, Dayanand, Anupam Bhushan from Jharkhand Gramin Bank Employees Union; Sumit Kumar, Yogendra Yadav, Chandan Chauhan, Udis Kumar, Ghulam Mian, Mahesh Kumar Singh, Vijay Prasad, Mukesh Kumar Jha, Amit Kumar, Surendra Ram, Ranjit Mehra, Manish Kumar Jha, S. Anurag, Adinath Jha, Mukesh Kumar Jha, Kumar Sunny from Bank of India, along with a large number of bank employees.

# Commissioner reviews revenue-related work of Banka district

Correspondent.DN

**Bhagalpur:** A review meeting of revenue-related work of Banka district was held under the chairmanship of the Divisional Commissioner. The Additional Collector/District Auction Officer/District Land Acquisition Officer/District Settlement Officer/Deputy Collector, Land Reforms, Banka were present at the meeting. All Circle Officers of Banka district also participated through video conferencing. In the meeting, the Additional Collector, Banka was directed to ensure that the monitoring of court cases related to government land is done through the District Revenue Branch. In case of losing a case related to government land,



**A review meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner regarding the 2026 municipal elections, and instructions were given to all departments**

Correspondent.DN

**Dumka:** A review meeting was held under the chairmanship of the District Election Officer (Municipality) cum Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Abhijit Sinha, IAS, with the nodal officers of all departments regarding the Municipal (General) Elections – 2026. During the meeting, a detailed review was conducted of each department, including the senior officer of the Vehicle Department, Mr. Mrityunjay Kumar, the Personnel Department, Logistics Department, Material Training Department, Media Department, Accounts Department, MCC (Model Code of Election Commission.



Conduct) Department, and other departments. The preparedness of all departments was reviewed, and necessary instructions were given. The Deputy Commissioner directed that all tasks related to the election process be completed in a timely, fair, and smooth manner. He emphasized that all departments should work in coordination with each other and ensure strict adherence to the guidelines laid down by the State Election Commission.

## Meeting held in the confidential cell regarding the Municipal General Elections – 2026

Correspondent.DN

**Sahibganj:** Following the formal announcement of the Municipal General Elections – 2026, a crucial meeting was held in the confidential cell under the chairmanship of District Election Officer-cum-Deputy Commissioner Mr. Hemant Sati, IAS, to discuss various matters related to the municipal elections. Detailed discussions were held regarding election preparations, arrangements, and timely execution of tasks. The meeting was informed that the election schedule for the Municipal General Election – 2026 has been fixed as follows: Publication of Election Notification in Form-5 Date: January 28, 2026 (Wednesday), Time: 11:00 AM Date for Filing Nomination Papers



Date: January 29, 2026 (Thursday) to February 4, 2026 (Wednesday) Time: 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM Date for Scrutiny of Nomination Papers Date: February 5, 2026 (Thursday) Time: 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM Date for Withdrawal of Candidature Date: February 6, 2026 (Friday) Time: 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM Date for Allotment of Election Symbols Date: February 7, 2026 (Saturday) Time:

11:00 AM to 3:00 PM Date of Polling (if required) Date: February 23, 2026 (Monday) Time: 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM Date of Counting of Votes Date: February 27, 2026 During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner held detailed discussions on the formation of various committees, installation of CCTV cameras in the nomination room, videography arrangements, and other concerned officials.

# Grand organization of Road Safety Marathon and Cycle Race under the joint auspices of National Road Safety Month – 2026 and 16th National Voters' Day

Correspondent.DN

**Sahibganj:** On the occasion of National Road Safety Month – 2026 and the 16th National Voters' Day, the Sahibganj district administration organized a grand Road Safety Marathon and Cycle Race program with the objective of promoting public awareness of road safety and voter participation. Citizens, athletes, and officials of the district participated enthusiastically in this event. Under the National Road Safety Month – 2026, a road safety marathon, "The Zero Fatality Run," was organized



Deputy Development Commissioner Mr. Satish Chandra, administered the National Voters' Day pledge to the assembled crowd. The winning players of the cycle race were as follows: Boys'



Category: First – Deepak Mahto Second – Bhairav Murmu Third – Prince Murmu Girls' Category: First – Rakhi Kumari Second – Gayatri Kumari Third – Nandini Kumari The District

Transport Office, Sahibganj, under the leadership of District Transport Officer Mr. Mithilesh Kumar Chaudhary, administered the road safety pledge to all the players and officials. The winning participants of the road safety marathon were

also honored. Marathon Race Winners: Men's Category: First – Hopna Murmu Second – Ajay Yadav Third – Bhuvan Mandal Women's Category: First – Anokhi Kumari Second – Rashmi Third – Roshni Kumari On this occasion, Project Director ITDA Sanjay Kumar Das, Additional Collector Gautam Bhagat, Civil Surgeon Dr. Ramdev Paswan, Sub-Divisional Officer Amar Jan Aind, District Supply Officer Jhunu Mishra, Sub-Divisional Police Officer Kishore Tirkey, District Land Acquisition Officer Chhuteshwar Das, District Panchayat Officer Anil Kumar, District Education Officer Durganand Jha, District Education Superintendent Kumar Harsh, DIO Umesh Kumar, Executive Magistrate Pramod Anand, District Planning Officer Anup Kumar, Executive Officer Sahibganj Municipal Council Abhishek Kumar Singh, District Horticulture Officer, officers from various departments, public representatives, social workers, representatives of political parties, and other dignitaries were present. The success of the program was made possible by the commendable contributions of the staff of the District Transport Office, District Road Safety Manager Neeraj Kumar Sah, Road Safety Engineer Anuj Prasad, IT Assistant Rajhans, staff of the District Election Office, staff of the District Sports Office, and other personnel.

**Brief News****ABVP leader celebrates his birthday by donating blood**

**Khunti:** Prakash Tuti, a worker of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), celebrated his birthday as a service day by donating blood at the blood bank of the Sadar Hospital on Tuesday, sending a message of responsibility towards society. On this occasion, he presented an inspiring example to the youth by prioritizing humanitarian service over traditional celebrations. After donating blood, Prakash Tuti said that ABVP is an organization that fosters a sense of responsibility in national service, social service, and student life. He said that a birthday should not only be an occasion for personal happiness but also a day to give back to society. The life of an unknown person can be saved through blood donation. He informed that one unit of blood can save the lives of three people. He appealed to the youth and students to adopt blood donation as a humanitarian duty. The role of a sensitive, aware, and service-oriented young generation is crucial in building a new India.

**Externed Criminal Arrested During Saraswati Puja Immersion**

**East Singhbhum:** Police arrested Deepak Tiwari alias Kana, an extorted criminal, on Monday night for attempting to disrupt peace during the Saraswati Puja immersion in the Bagbera police station area. The arrest was made at DB Road Chowk in Bagbera while the immersion procession was underway and a large crowd was present in the area. According to information, the police received a tip-off that Deepak Tiwari was trying to create trouble and instigate a dispute during the puja immersion. Upon receiving the information, a police team led by Bagbera police station in-charge Gopal Krishna Yadav reached the spot and promptly took the accused into custody. The arrested accused, Deepak Tiwari, is a resident of Ramnagar Branch Maidan area of Bagbera. According to police records, he was extorted last month due to his criminal background and banned from entering the Bagbera police station area. Despite this, he was illegally residing in the area. Police say that Deepak Tiwari was hiding in Bagbera with the intention of committing a major crime. The police took his presence on the sensitive occasion of Saraswati Puja immersion seriously and averted a potential incident by taking timely action. The police are currently interrogating the accused.

**Body of Young Man Found in Suspicious Circumstances**

**East Singhbhum:** The body of a 33-year-old man, Akash, was found in suspicious circumstances in his room in Budhranji Basti under the Sonari police station area on Tuesday, causing a sensation in the area. Upon receiving information about the incident, a crowd of local people gathered at the spot, after which the police were informed. Family members said that Akash had a love marriage about five years ago and had been living separately from his family with his wife since the marriage. For some time, there had been continuous disputes between the husband and wife. It is being said that his wife had left him two days ago, after which Akash was under mental stress and living alone. The deceased's mother, Poonam, and sister-in-law, Pinky, have leveled serious allegations against Akash's wife. They claim that Akash had fallen into deep depression due to his wife's behavior and her leaving him, which led him to take his own life. The family members have demanded action, alleging that this was a case of abetment to suicide. Upon receiving the information, the Sonari police arrived at the scene, took the body into custody, and sent it to MGM Medical College Hospital for post-mortem examination. Police officials stated that the initial investigation did not reveal any direct evidence of murder. Currently, the case has been registered as a death under suspicious circumstances.

**Child marriage is unacceptable under any circumstances on the sacred land of Birsa Munda: Ram Surya Munda**

**Khunti:** A one-day district-level workshop was organized on Tuesday at the Birsa Football Stadium in Khunti district with the objective of creating a child marriage-free India. The program aimed to spread widespread awareness against the evil practice of child marriage in society and to sensitize people about children's rights, education, and safety. On this occasion, MLA Ram Surya Munda flagged off a child marriage-free awareness chariot from the District Collector's office. This awareness chariot will travel to various villages in the district, educating people about the ill effects of child marriage, related legal provisions, and children's rights. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said that the evil practice of child marriage cannot be accepted under any circumstances on the sacred land of Lord Birsa Munda. Our resolution is to make Khunti a child marriage-free district. He appealed to all sections of society to work together for the education, safety, and bright future of children. District administration officials, representatives from the Women and Child Development Department, Childline, NGOs, Panchayat representatives, Anganwadi workers, Sahiyas, teachers, and social workers were present at the program. Finally, all those present took a collective pledge to make Khunti a child marriage-free district.

**IAS Siddhant Kumar becomes the new administrator of Chaibasa Municipal Council**

**West Singhbhum:** Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer Siddhant Kumar has been appointed as the new administrator of Chaibasa Municipal Council in West Singhbhum district. He assumed office on Tuesday. He said that as administrator, he will work towards improving cleanliness, drinking water supply, roads, street lighting, and other civic amenities in the municipal area. Municipal council employees and local representatives welcomed his arrival. People hope that under his leadership, there will be increased transparency and efficiency in the functioning of the municipal council.

**A one-day training-cum-workshop was organized in Khunti on making Jharkhand child marriage-free**

**Khunti:** A one-day sub-division level training cum workshop was organized regarding state schemes under the Social Evils Prevention Scheme and a child marriage-free Jharkhand. The Deputy Commissioner jointly inaugurated the program by lighting a lamp. Child marriage is a curse for the dreams and future of our daughters. It is not only against the law but also against humanity. Public participation is essential in making Jharkhand and the district child marriage-free: Deputy Commissioner The District Social Welfare Department, Khunti, organized a one-day sub-division level training cum workshop regarding state schemes under the Social Evils Prevention Scheme and a child marriage-free Jharkhand at the Football Stadium (Bazar Tand), Khunti today. The program

was formally inaugurated by lighting the lamp jointly by the Chief Guest, Deputy Commissioner, Mrs. R. Ronita. Zila Parishad Chairperson, Mr. Masih Gudiyal, District Council Vice Chairperson, Mrs. Manju Devi, Deputy Development Commissioner, Mr. Alok Kumar, District Panchayati Raj Officer, Dr. Shishir Kumar Singh, DCLR, Mr. Arvind Kumar, Civil Surgeon, Dr. Nageshwar Manjhi, District Social Welfare Officer, Mrs. Anisha Kujur, all Block Development Officers, and other officials were present. The program included the CDPO, Block Head, Panchayat Mukhiya, Women Supervisor, CRP, Sevika, Sahayika, and a large number of citizens. District Social Welfare Officer, Mrs. Anisha Kujur, welcomed all guests and detailed the workshop's objectives. In her address, the Deputy

Commissioner stated that we have gathered through this workshop to pledge against social evils like child marriage and witch-hunting. Child marriage is a severe blow to the dreams and future of our daughters. These evils are not only against the law but also against humanity. Daughters are not a burden on society, but rather, they are the backbone of society. He said that there is a need to change not just laws but also the mindset of society. To enable our daughters to progress and fulfill their dreams, we need

to prevent child marriage and promote education, health, and equality. During this, the Deputy Commissioner administered an oath to those present to prevent child marriage and social evils. The Deputy Commissioner said that public participation is essential to making Jharkhand and the district child marriage-free. Together, you should raise awareness in rural areas to eradicate such evil practices from society. Girls should marry only after they turn 18 and boys after they turn 21, so they do not have to face physical and mental harassment. He further stated that the government is implementing several important schemes for women's empowerment. Take advantage of these schemes to secure your future and become financially strong. Under the Chief Minister's Maiya Samman Yojana, eligible women are given 2,500 per month. Additionally, under the Savitribai Phule Kishori Samriddhi Yojana, 40,000 is given in installments, and under the Chief Minister's Kanyadan Yojana, a lump sum of 30,000 is given. Under the Social Evil Prevention Scheme, a lump sum of 2,000 is given, and under the Scholarship Scheme, amounts are given according to class. Take advantage of government schemes and secure your future by getting educated. The District Council President and Vice President, Deputy Development Commissioner, and other officials present at the workshop also made important points in their addresses regarding the prevention of child marriage and the witch-hunting system. Important information was also provided regarding the One Stop Center, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, and Women's Helpline 181 under the Mission Shakti Yojana. Questions from those present at the workshop were answered, and some people shared their experiences with everyone about their efforts to end child marriage and witch-hunting in their areas.

**Science and Islamic Exhibition Organized at Aksa Global School on Republic Day****Exhibition Helps Recognize Children's Talents: Afzal Ansari**

**Ratu, Ranchi:** A one-day Science and Islamic exhibition was organized at Aksa Global School in Ratu on January 26th, on the occasion of Republic Day. The children created impressive projects for the exhibition, which captivated the visitors. The program began with the chief guest hoisting the national flag. Following this, the school children displayed their projects in the exhibition, which captivated the visitors. The program began with the chief guest hoisting the national flag. Following this, the school children displayed their projects in the exhibition, which captivated the visitors. The projects were highly appreciated by the guardians and other attendees. On this occasion, the Director of Aksa Global School, Afzal Ansari Nadvi, said that such exhibitions help in recognizing the hidden talents of the children. The children worked diligently on their projects, conveying important information about science and Islam to the community, and their efforts deserve immense praise. In the exhibition, the children showcased projects including a swing boat, solar irrigation, layers of the atmosphere,



automatic water dispenser, and the digestive system, as well as the pillars of Hajj, the five pillars of Islam, the eight gates of Paradise, Paradise and Hell, and several historical monuments. The program was attended by Chief Guest Kamrul Haq, Abdul Quddus, Anjum Khan, Anisur Rahman, Ataullah Ansari, Riyazul Haq, Mukhtar Ansari, Ajmul Haq, Tajmul Ansari, Mubarak Ansari, along with all the school teachers, and a large number of parents and local residents.

**Path cleared for municipal elections in Jharkhand; High Court dismisses petition challenging classification**

Agency, Ranchi

The path has been cleared for the long-pending municipal elections in Jharkhand. The Jharkhand High Court has dismissed a petition challenging the state government's policy of dividing municipal corporations into two categories. On Tuesday, a division bench of Chief Justice M.S. Sonak and Justice Rajesh

Shankar delivered the verdict on the petition filed by Shantanu Kumar Chandra. The petitioner, Shantanu Kumar Chandra, had challenged the government's policy under which the post of Mayor in Dhanbad Municipal Corporation was kept unreserved, while the post in Giridih Municipal Corporation was reserved for Scheduled Castes, based on population. The petitioner informed the court that

**Samsung India launches new Sound Tower with powerful sound, long battery life and portable design**

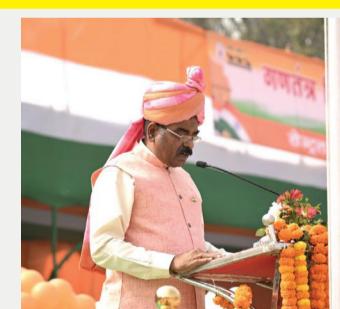
**Ranchi:** Samsung India has launched its new Sound Tower series for the year 2026 in the Indian market with the ST50F and ST40F models, offering powerful and balanced sound along with features such as a wide sound stage, Auracast group play, stereo play, party lights plus, karaoke, DJ booth and guitar input. On the occasion, Viplash Dang,

Senior Director and Head of Visual Display Business, Samsung India, said that the new Sound Tower series reflects Samsung's commitment to taking modern entertainment to the next level by combining powerful sound, dynamic lighting and easy portability, enabling consumers to create memorable experiences both indoors and outdoors. The ST50F model offers up to 18 hours of continuous playtime, while the ST40F model delivers up to 12 hours, and the water-resistant design makes them suitable for use in all kinds of environments. These new Sound Towers from Samsung will be available across markets nationwide, including Ranchi, starting at a price of 25,500.

**CCL Celebrates 77th Republic Day with Great Enthusiasm**

**Rapid development is only meaningful when it is environmentally safe, socially inclusive, and future-oriented: CMD, CCL**

Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) celebrated the 77th Republic Day with enthusiasm and dignity at the Mahatma Gandhi Stadium, CCL Gandhinagar. On this occasion, CCL Chairman-cum-Managing Director (CMD) Shri Nilendu Kumar Singh hoisted the national flag and extended Republic Day greetings to all and paid tribute to the framers of the country's constitution. He said that CCL is a strong pillar of India's energy security, and coal is not just a fuel, but the foundation of the country's industrial development. In the year 2025-26, CCL has continuously improved its production and dispatch, and with the dedication of its employees and workers, the organization is strongly meeting the energy needs. Shri Singh informed that CCL has made significant progress in the development of new mines and the revival of closed mines. Production has already started in the Kotre-Basantpur-Pachmo Open Cast Project (5 million tonnes per annum capacity) since November 2025. The Chandragupta Open Cast Project, also present as special guests. The program began with the release of colorful balloons into the sky, symbolizing peace and progress. In his address, CMD Shri Singh extended Republic Day greetings to all and paid tribute to the framers of the country's constitution. He said that CCL is a strong pillar of India's energy security, and coal is not just a fuel, but the foundation of the country's industrial development. In the year 2025-26, CCL has continuously improved its production and dispatch, and with the dedication of its employees and workers, the organization is strongly meeting the energy needs. Shri Singh informed that CCL has made significant progress in the development of new mines and the revival of closed mines. Production has already started in the Kotre-Basantpur-Pachmo Open Cast Project (5 million tonnes per annum capacity) since November 2025. The Chandragupta Open Cast Project,



with a capacity of 15 million tonnes, is ready to commence production after obtaining all statutory clearances. Work has commenced on the incline driveways at the Piparwar Phase-1 underground project, and coal production has started this month at the Rajhara open-cast project. Emphasizing environmental protection and sustainable development, he said that CCL is moving beyond traditional mining towards sustainable mining practices. So far, approximately 11 million saplings have been planted on 5,720 hectares of land. To

control air pollution, 28 trolley-mounted and 21 truck-mounted fog cannons, 141 mobile water tankers, and a 26-kilometer-long wind barrier have been installed. Under the net-zero target, CCL will install a total of 425 MW of solar power plants, with a current installed capacity of 26.7 MW. The 20 MW solar plant at Piparwar is generating approximately 2.8 million units of electricity per month, resulting in monthly savings of around Rs. 1.1 crore. He further added that CCL is continuously investing in its CSR activities for the inclusive development of society. By December of the financial year 2025-26, CCL had spent over Rs. 50 crore on CSR. In the healthcare sector, under the "Nanha Sa Dil" project, more than 28,000 children have been screened, and 75 children have undergone heart surgery. CCL's efforts in the fields of education, livelihood, and sports are also bringing positive changes to the lives of thousands of people. On the occasion of Republic Day, Director (Human Resources) Shri Harsh Nath Mishra hoisted the national flag at CCL Headquarters, Darbhanga House, and Gandhi Nagar Central Hospital. In his address, he extended his best wishes to the officers, workers, and dignitaries present, saying, "Republic Day is not just a festival, but an opportunity to express the dignity of our Constitution and our commitment to democracy." CCL, through its actions and initiatives, is not only playing a leading role in the industry but is also contributing to the economic and social upliftment of society. Students from DAV Gandhinagar, Gyanodaya School, and Kendriya Vidyalaya presented captivating cultural performances at the ceremony. The CMD and the directors present awarded prizes to the participants who performed exceptionally well in the parade. A CCL security guard was also felicitated by the dignitaries for his outstanding service.

# Vande Mataram front and centre at Republic Day

**NEW DELHI, Agency:** Soft flute notes rendering Vande Mataram kicked off Republic Day parade and 2,500 artistes drawn from every state and UT performing to a specially composed version of the national song marked its closure, as the celebration of its 150th anniversary, assiduously promoted by governing NDA to project itself as the true inheritor of its cultural legacy and to corner its opponents, took centre stage at the annual event.

Mamata Banerjee-led TMC govt could not be unaware of the backdrop of the national song being sought to be put on a higher pedestal when it chose for its tableau a theme that highlighted the state's association with the song, car-



rying statues of not only its author Bankim Chandra Chatterjee but also iconic

Bengali figures like Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore and Subhas Chandra

Bose.

As the state heads for the assembly poll, BJP has

stepped up its attack on TMC, accusing the party of turning away from Bengal's Hindu ethos associated with Chatterjee in pursuit of its alleged vote bank politics. TMC, in turn, has called BJP a party run by outsiders disconnected with the state's cultural impulses.

The "150 years of Vande Mataram" was main theme of this year's parade at Kartavya Path which saw PM Narendra Modi often getting up to explain to the two chief guests, European Council president Antonio Costa and European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen, the intricacies of the military parade and the procession of tableaux that were a part of the spectacle.

Portraits of Chatterjee were displayed at the venue, and several tableaux, including those of BJP-governed Gujarat and Chhattisgarh, paid homage to the song, deeply ingrained in the cultural agenda of BJP and Sangh Parivar.

The culture ministry, in its tableau, foregrounded some of its evocative lines, a rallying cry of freedom fighters, and played its two versions, carrying a statue of "Bharat Mata". The CPWD's echoed a similar theme. Prints of 1923 paintings from an album on Vande Mataram by Tejendra Kumar Mitra were displayed in and around the venue to bring alive the spirit of patriotism and culture associated with the national song.

## India carries Asia's heaviest lung disease burden, Lancet study finds

**NEW DELHI, Agency:**

India accounts for more than 43% of Asia's chronic respiratory disease-related disability, the highest share in the region, according to a new analysis published in The Lancet Respiratory Medicine on Wednesday. The study identifies air pollution as a major factor behind India's persistently high lung disease burden.

The study, based on estimates from the Global Burden of Disease 2023, found that Asia as a whole contributed nearly 67% of global disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) due to chronic respiratory diseases in 2023. India alone accounted for 43.3% of Asia's DALYs, while China contributed 27.8%, together making up over 70% of the regional burden, largely driven by population size and sustained exposure to risk factors.

In 2023, India's age-standardised DALY rate from chronic respiratory



diseases remained above 2,040 per 100,000 population, among the highest in Asia, reflecting a substantial burden of disability and premature mortality linked to respiratory conditions, despite a gradual decline since 1990.

Explaining what this translates to on the ground, Dr G.C. Khilnani, pulmonologist and Chairman, PSRI Institute of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine, said respiratory illnesses such as pneumonia, asthma and

COPD are now among the most common conditions seen in clinical practice, with children and the elderly particularly vulnerable. He said delayed diagnosis worsens outcomes, while air pollution has emerged as a major driver-accounting for nearly half of COPD cases and a growing share of lung cancers, including among non-smokers.

South Asia, driven largely by India, recorded the highest age-standardised prevalence of chronic obstructive pulmonary dis-

ease (COPD) in Asia at 3,044 cases per 100,000 population. While prevalence across Asian regions was broadly similar, the analysis found that disability and deaths were significantly higher in lower-income regions, pointing to poorer outcomes rather than higher disease occurrence. Dr Ujjwal Parakh, Senior Consultant in Chest Medicine at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, said chronic respiratory diseases-particularly COPD-are steadily increasing in India and are often diagnosed late due to low awareness and limited access to spirometry. With air pollution damaging lungs much like tobacco smoke, he said controlling pollution and improving early detection are critical.

The study identified ambient particulate matter pollution and household air pollution from solid fuels as major contributors to India's respiratory disease burden.

## UGC anti-discrimination rules 2026: A bid for inclusion or risk of bias? Explained



**New Delhi, Agency:** When the University Grants Commission (UGC), the statutory body under the Union education ministry that regulates universities and colleges, notified its Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions Regulations, 2026, it introduced a new set of rules that will apply across campuses nationwide.

The regulations govern how colleges and universities must prevent, identify, and respond to discrimination involving students, teachers, and staff.

On paper, the objective sounds straightforward. It seeks to ensure that no student, teacher, or staff member is denied dignity or opportunity in higher education because of identity.

In practice, however, the new regulations reach deep into the everyday functioning of campuses, shaping everything from admissions and hostels to classrooms, committees, and corridors.

The 2026 framework replaces the UGC's earlier equity rules and shifts the burden of compliance squarely onto institutions and their leadership.

Heads of universities and colleges are no longer just administrators; they are now the first line of accountability in preventing and responding to discrimination. New structures, new reporting mechanisms, and strict timelines are written into the rulebook, backed by the threat of serious penalties for non-compliance.

Yet, as has often been the case with regulations aimed at correcting long-standing social inequities, the real questions lie beneath the stated intent.

How wide is the definition of discrimination? How much discretion do institutional committees enjoy? What happens when complaints are contested, or when the process itself causes harm? And how prepared are campuses to balance speed, sensitivity, and fairness? And is it discriminatory against the non-reserved General Class students?

What the regulations aim to do

The objective clause sets the tone for the entire framework. It seeks to eradicate discrimination only on specified grounds like religion, race, caste, gender, place of birth, and disability.

The word "only" is significant, as it confines the scope of the regulations to discrimination based on specified identity grounds, excluding general grievances or academic disputes.

At the same time, the regulations explicitly prioritise certain groups, including:

Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs)  
Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (EBC)  
Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)

Persons with disabilities

This prioritisation reflects a remedial approach, focusing on historically disadvantaged communities, while formally keeping the protection available to all stakeholders.

How the law frames discrimination and equityThe definitions section is one of the most consequential parts of the regulations.

"Discrimination" is defined broadly to include not only explicit acts but also implicit, indirect, or structural forms of

## Is an archaeological marvel hiding near Chandigarh?

**Chandigarh, Agency:** Walk down the narrow lanes of this small town - located about 45km southwest of Chandigarh - and you'd find it hard to believe that Chinese scholar Hiuen Tsang trod these very paths some 1,300 years ago. Or that north Indian ruler Prithviraj Chauhan had once passed this way at the head of his army.

It's as if history no longer felt welcome here and moved out, mournful and uncared for. But there was a time when history ebbed and flowed through its narrow lanes. Sirhind - or Sar-i-Hind, the crown of India - was, after all, the last major outpost before invaders reached the Yamuna. Temples of the Hindu Shahis - who made Sirhind their capital, with its grandeur said to be second only to Lahore's - still stand south of Islamabad, the oldest surviving temples in Pakistan.

But monuments and structures that are often eloquent narrators of past glories stand in Sirhind as mute spectators, listlessly dotting farmlands and alleyways. In many cases,



they exist - plastered, painted over, forgotten - as bricks that were repurposed as construction material to build nameless walls of homes that have sprung up in recent decades.

The town, which forms a twin city with the adjacent Fatehgarh Sahib, has not only shrunk in size and significance, it has also gone missing from Punjab's landscape and its cultural discourse. It is where Humayun defeated the Suris to re-establish Mughal rule and where Guru Gobind Singh's sons were so cruelly bricked up alive.

Sirhind is said by some to go back to the time of the Mahabharata, a melting pot of lore and legend. But, then, how did history itself become a

victim in historic Sirhind?

Dr Daljit Singh, professor of history at Punjabi University, Patiala, told media that Sirhind is a treasure trove for archaeologists, but it hasn't got its due. Encroachments are gobbling up what should be protected spaces. The sense one gets on talking to locals is that every brick and old structure here can tell its own history. The only tough part is to actually find and identify them for what they really are.

There is little evidence of any sustained effort by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to explore the historical importance of the area. Despite its rich past as a major provincial centre, there has not been a survey in years to identify historical remains that may lie buried beneath the ground.

Some sites, like Gurudwara Shri Fatehgarh Sahib, Rauza Sharif Shrine and a Jain Mandir, are well maintained. But many historical places like Jahazi Haveli of Diwan Todar Mal - not to be confused with Raja Todar Mal of Akbar's Navratna fame - Aam Khas Bagh and Sadna Kasai Masjid have remained neglected for long.

## In Republic Day messages, Trump hails historic bond, Xi talks of dragon-elephant tango

**NEW DELHI, Agency:** US President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping were among the global leaders who extended greetings to the Indian govt and people on Republic Day. While Trump underlined the significance of ties between the world's oldest and largest democracies, Xi said in a message to President Droupadi Murmu that India and China were "good neighbours, friends and partners" and a dragon-elephant dance was the right choice for both countries.

"On behalf of the people of



the United States, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the govt and people of India as you celebrate your 77th Republic Day. The United States and India share a historic bond as the world's oldest and largest democracies,"

said Trump, according to a post on X by the US embassy.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio, too, put out a congratulatory message, saying the two countries shared a historic bond. "From our close cooperation on defence, ener-

gy, critical minerals, and emerging technologies to our multi-layered engagement through the Quad, the US-India relationship delivers real results for our two countries and for the Indo-Pacific region," he said.

Thrilled to see US-made aircraft in Indian skies, symbolises strength of our ties: Gor US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said he was looking forward to working with India to "advance our shared objectives in the year ahead". US ambassador Sergio Gor said he was thrilled to see US-made air-

craft soaring in the Indian sky and called it a powerful symbol of the strength of the US-India strategic partnership.

In his message, Xi said that India-China relations have continued to improve and develop, aligning with the fundamental interests of both the countries and their people, and are of great significance for maintaining and promoting world peace and prosperity.

Xi stressed that China has always believed that being good neighbours, friends and partners who help each other succeed, and achieving

the "dragon and the elephant dancing together", is the right choice for both China and India, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. The Chinese president expressed hope that both sides will adhere to the important consensus that China and India are "partners for cooperation and opportunities for development", strengthen strategic communication, expand exchanges and cooperation, address each other's concerns, and promote the healthy and stable development of China-India relations.

## EDITORIAL

## Trump's Gaza 'Board of Peace' undermines the UN

United States President Donald Trump is bent upon resetting the world order to establish America's hegemony and replacing multilateralism with transactional deal-making. Bullying, weaponising tariff systems, and coercive diplomacy are the strategic tools he uses to achieve his stated goals. His impulsive ways have pretty much become the new normal in international diplomacy. The latest in a series of shenanigans that have come to define Trump's persona is the idea of the Gaza 'Board of Peace'. The proposal is a mockery of the United Nations and the time-tested instruments of multilateralism. The maverick move is in sync with Trump's propensity for deal-making outside traditional multilateral frameworks. Projected as a pragmatic, business-like mechanism to stabilise Gaza, the concept implicitly challenges the relevance of international institutions in managing one of the world's most intractable conflicts. At its core, the proposal demonstrates Trump's scepticism about the UN, which he has repeatedly criticised as inefficient, biased, and overly bureaucratic. The 'Board of Peace', especially if it is dominated by select regional powers or US-aligned actors, would signal a shift from universal multilateralism to ad hoc governance. A swift pushback to this preposterous idea is a welcome development. Two permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) — China and France — have rejected Trump's invitation to be on the Board of Peace. They have rightly pledged their continued allegiance to the spirit of multilateralism and the principles of the UN Charter. India too had received an invitation from Trump but is yet to respond.

India should outright reject the idea instead of taking cover under diplomatic niceties. On the other hand, Pakistan, which loses no opportunity to display its obsequiousness to please the Trump administration, has accepted the invitation to join the board. Any credible peace effort in the war-ravaged Gaza must grapple with realities Trump often sidesteps: international law, civilian protection, and the need for inclusive governance. If the Gaza initiative prioritises optics over substance, it risks becoming another plan that collapses under the weight of ground reality. Peace imposed without legitimacy, consent, and accountability rarely survives. Traditionally, New Delhi has supported a two-state solution while balancing strong ties with Israel and the Arab world. A weakened UN system complicates India's diplomatic calculus, as New Delhi often relies on multilateral forums to promote stability without direct intervention. Trump's latest brainwave on Gaza looks less like a diplomatic initiative and more like a real estate advertisement for a distressed asset. Fresh from a brazen operation to extract Nicolás Maduro from Venezuela to 'secure the oil,' and amid the renewed attempt to capture Greenland, Trump has now turned his gaze to the rubble of the war in West Asia. His 'Board of Peace' is designed to manage the reconstruction not through aid grants, but through investment tranches.

## World reorders through issue-based power and partnerships

What appears today as global uncertainty is, in reality, the loud and often confused reaction to a structural transformation that has been underway for decades. The current noise, amplified by sharp political rhetoric, executive orders, and dramatic leadership statements, particularly from the United States, does not signal chaos. Instead, it reveals what was long concealed beneath layers of managed narratives: the gradual collapse of the single-superpower world order and the exposure of false dependencies built around it.

The idea of a stable, US-led global order rested heavily on assumptions rather than sustainable realities. Transatlantic unity, for instance, was often presented as a natural alliance of shared values. In truth, it was sustained by Europe's over-reliance on American strategic protection and decision-making, even in areas where Europe should have exercised independent judgment.

The recent acknowledgments by European and Canadian leadership of ruptured transatlantic relations did not create the rupture; they merely admitted its existence. The illusion of unconditional US support had already begun to fray.

Similarly, what was once promoted as "multilateralism" often functioned as a carefully managed grouping of middle powers operating within frameworks designed or approved by the dominant superpower and its economic institutions. This model is now breaking down.

As economic capacities,



technological strengths, and supply-chain dominance are distributed across regions and countries, no single power can dictate outcomes across all domains. The fragmentation of economic influence has made centralized control not only ineffective but counterproductive.

A critical turning point in this process was the failure of global leadership, particularly American leadership, to confront China's monopolistic trade practices and its growing control over global supply chains. Ironically, this dominance was enabled by the very philosophy that encouraged outsourcing manufacturing to China in pursuit of short-term profits. Once that compromise was made, reversing it became

nearly impossible. No middle power can now expect another dominant actor to restrain China on its behalf. Each must find its own balance.

This reality marks the end of classical multilateralism and the rise of a more pragmatic, issue-based bilateralism. Countries are increasingly aligning not through permanent blocs, but through flexible partnerships based on specific interests—security, technology, energy, or trade. This is not a retreat from cooperation, but a redefinition of it. The expectation that security, economic stability, or diplomatic leverage can be outsourced indefinitely to a single umbrella power has proven unsustainable.

Europe's current strategic

recalibration illustrates this shift. Having ceded much of its strategic autonomy to the United States while becoming economically intertwined with China, Europe now faces the task of rebuilding balance. Developments—from debates over Greenland to internal EU security initiatives—have served as wake-up calls. While corrective announcements have been made, much of the damage to trust and structure has already occurred. The European Union's collective effort to find an independent equilibrium reflects a broader global trend.

In this changing landscape, India stands out as a country increasingly appreciated for its strategic consistency. India's experience demonstrates that resilience comes from

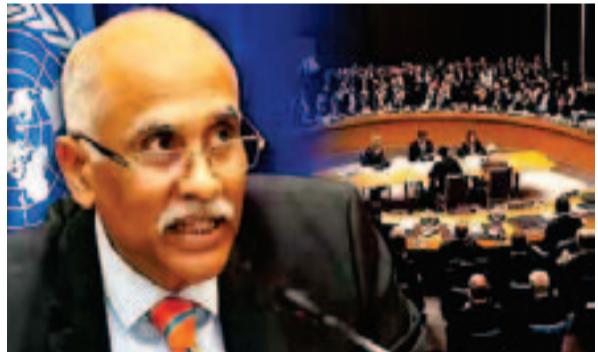
maintaining autonomy, resisting external pressure, and anchoring policy in domestic strengths—particularly a large, consumption-driven economy. Export-dependent economies remain more vulnerable to external shocks and coercion, whereas economies with strong internal demand possess greater strategic flexibility.

The emerging global order will likely be characterized by smaller, resilient supply chains aligned with regional security and trust networks. This necessitates renewed emphasis on good-neighborly relations and regional cooperation. Economic survival and employment stability will depend less on distant guarantees and more on local and regional equilibrium.

At a societal level, this transition also exposes the costs of excessive materialism and over-dependence—whether on global systems or technology. Even artificial intelligence, while transformative, may reveal social and economic fractures rather than mask them. Technology should enhance the quality of life, not replace human agency or values. A return to value-based living, balanced with innovation, may be one of the quietest but deeper consequences of this global shift.

Finally, the fear of large-scale global war is often overstated. Prolonged conflicts have proven economically and politically unsustainable, even for the strongest powers, as seen in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The coming years may witness localised conflicts and strategic tensions, but major global wars or territorial takeovers are increasingly unaffordable.

## India cautions against delays in UN reforms



consensus, dialogue, and coordinate positions on global issues like human rights, environment, and sustainable development.

WEOG—the Western European and Other States Group—is composed of 28 member states. Most of these are in Western Europe, but the group also includes countries of North America, the Eastern Mediterranean and Oceania.)

India's suggestion came a day after US President Donald Trump slammed the UN in a press conference at the White House, saying the UN had never lived up to its potential. He was justifying the setting up of the 'Board of Peace,' which, many believe, weakens the UN. 'Had the United Nations done more, there would have been no need for a Board of Peace... I wish the United Nations could do more, I wish we didn't need a Board of Peace,' he said, adding that the UN just hadn't been very helpful and had never lived up to its potential.

Ambassador Harish said the need for reforming the UNSC is getting more pronounced by the day, and further delays in implementing timely reforms would result in more human suffering and misery.

He said the ongoing conflicts come at a high cost—countless innocent lives are lost daily.

India has cautioned against delays in implementing timely reforms of the UN Security Council (UNSC) and suggested increasing the number of seats from 15 to 25 or 26 in both permanent and non-permanent categories by giving adequate representation to the African region and the Asia Pacific.

India's Permanent Representative at the UN, Ambassador P Harish, making statement on behalf of G-4 (India, Brazil, Germany and Japan) in New York, said a reformed UNSC must have balanced geographic representation by enhancing the presence of unrepresented and underrepresented regions.

There must be six new permanent members from two of the African region, two from the Asia Pacific, one from GRULAC, and one from WEOG, and 4

## London: Protest demanding justice for Bangladeshi Hindus sees overwhelming turnout



than an ethnic cleansing happening in Bangladesh and assured their full support to the diaspora in bringing the matter to the UK government. As per the statement, a spokesperson of the event highlighted quite a few issues that the minority communities of Bangladesh are suffering. These include long-standing patterns of discrimination, targeted violence, killings and demographic decline suffered by the minority communities in Bangladesh and first-hand testimonies from families of victims, underscoring the human cost. Grave concerns over the arrest of interfaith religious voice Chinmaya Prabhu and the public lynching of Dipu Das, followed by 15 Hindus killed in a planned genocide. Social media platforms buzzed with photos and livestreams from the demonstration, amplifying reach beyond London and garnering support from global audiences, the statement said. It further noted that the organisers had the following 4-point demands, and regarding this, a memorandum was also submitted to PM Keir Starmer. These included immediate suspension of UK aid and trade with Bangladesh till it takes necessary action against the perpetrators; formal Parliamentary Action by issuing an urgent Ministerial Statement and enabling full parliamentary debate and scrutiny; targeted international accountability by pursuing international scrutiny and applying targeted sanctions against perpetrators.

## POEMS

## Expression

The dilemma is one of expression.

My expression, my cough, speaks for me.

What I want to express is very little.

I must express it over and over again.

My cough, my expression, speaks for me. A little blot of phlegm in the mind.

I must express it over and over again. When my cough is productive, it shakes

a little blot of phlegm from my mind, an idea from the back of the throat.

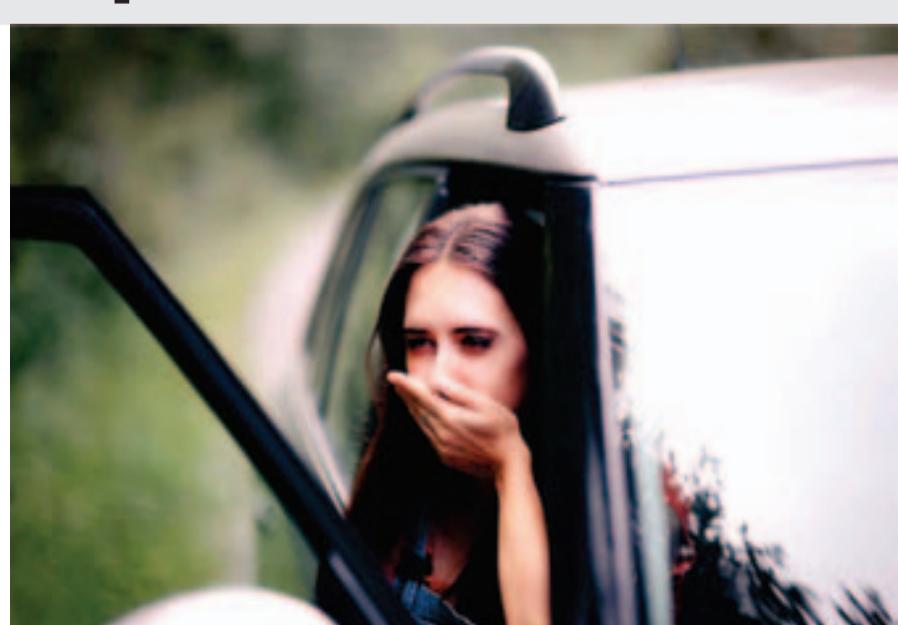
When it is unproductive, it wakes me, a compulsion without the clarity

of compulsion, an idea in the back of the throat. My dilemma is expression

without clarity, compulsory to me as my cough. What I want to express is very little.

By Jane Huffman

## Study finds a unique sound which alleviates motion sickness



A research group has discovered that using a device that stimulates the inner ear with a specific wavelength of sound reduces motion sickness. Even a single minute of stimulation with a unique sound, called 'sound spice,' reduced the staggering and discomfort felt by people that were asked to read a document in a moving vehicle. Their findings suggest a simple and effective way to alleviate this common disorder. A research group led by Takumi Kagawa and Masashi Kato at Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine.

"Our study demonstrated that short-term stimulation using a unique sound called 'sound spice®' alleviates symptoms of motion sickness, such as nausea and dizziness," Kagawa said. "The effective sound level falls within the range of everyday environmental noise exposure, suggesting that the sound technology is both effective and safe," added Kagawa. This discovery is an important expansion of recent findings about sound and its effect on the inner ear.

Increasing evidence has suggested that stimulating the part of the inner ear associated

with balance using a unique sound can

potentially improve balance. Using a mouse

unique sound at 100 Hz as being the optimal frequency.

"Vibrations at the unique sound stimulate the otolithic organs in the inner ear, which detect linear acceleration and gravity," Kato explained. "This suggests that a unique sound stimulation can broadly activate the vestibular system, which is responsible for maintaining balance and spatial orientation" added Kato. To test the effectiveness of the devices, they recruited voluntary participants who were exposed to the unique sound. Following the stimulation, motion sickness was induced by

a swing, a driving simulator, or riding in a car.

The researchers used postural control, ECG readings, and Motion Sickness Assessment Questionnaire results to assess the stimulation's effectiveness.

The researchers found symptoms such as "lightheadedness" and "nausea," which are often seen with motion sickness, were alleviated. "These results suggest that activation of sympathetic nerves, which are often dysregulated in motion sickness, was objectively improved by the unique sound

exposure," Kato said. "The health risk of short-term exposure to our unique sound is minimal," Kagawa said. "Given that the stimulus level is well below workplace noise safety standards, this stimulation is expected to be safe when used properly." Their results suggest a safe and effective way to improve motion sickness, potentially offering help to millions of sufferers. The researchers plan to further develop the technology with the aim of practical application for a variety of travel situations including air and sea travel.

# MagickHome Opens Its Largest Experience Hub in Bangalore; Inaugurated by Rukmini Vasanth

**Bangluru, Agency:** MagickHome, a modular home interior brand unveiled its flagship Interiors Experience Hub in HSR Layout, Bangalore, inaugurated by acclaimed Kannada film actress Rukmini Vasanth. Spanning 6,200 sq ft across two floors, the hub is MagickHome's largest and most immersive destination, designed to completely reimagine how homeowners discover, experience, and choose interiors.

Adding star power and strong cultural resonance to the occasion, Rukmini inaugurated the space, celebrating the growing intersection of design, lifestyle, and modern urban living in Bangalore.

Walking into the Experience Hub feels like stepping into a real home. Visitors can explore a full-scale 2BHK mock-up, moving seamlessly from an award-winning island kitchen to a thoughtfully integrated

living and study area, a guest bedroom with a sliding wardrobe and sofa bed, and a master bedroom lined with floor-to-ceiling wardrobes.

The space also showcases MagickHome's patented, child-safe PU finishes, premium acrylics, and a wide range of laminations, opening up over 50,000 design permutations for personalised interiors.

Elevating the experience further is the Design Experience Zone, featuring the Pivoting Panel Matrix and Fabric Library, where customers can touch, compare, and visualise materials in real scale and lighting - turning complex choices into confident decisions.

Speaking about the launch, Indrakumar Pathmanathan, Chairman, MagickHome, said,

"MagickHome has always believed that great interiors begin with great understanding. This



Experience Hub is a physical expression of that belief. It brings together design, materials, and real-life spaces under one roof, so customers can truly see, touch, and feel what their future home can be. Bangalore felt like the most natural city for this next chapter. It appreciates design, values quality, and is constantly evolving."

On the customer experience and business vision, Ganesen Viswanathan, Vice President, MagickHome, added, "Today's customer does not want to be overwhelmed by choices. They want guidance, transparency, and an engaging process.

This store is built to do exactly that. From our 2BHK mockup to the

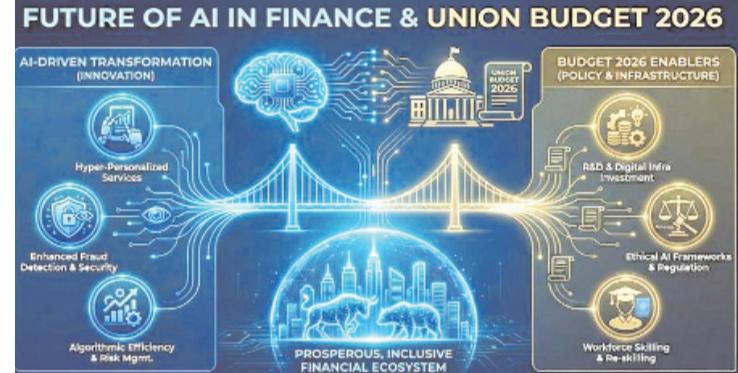
Design Experience Zone, every element is designed to simplify decision-making while elevating the experience. Bangalore is a mature, design-aware market, and this hub allows us to serve it at scale while setting the foundation for our future growth."

Speaking about the hub, Rukmini Vasanth, Indian actress, said, "What I loved about this space is how real it feels. You're not just looking at samples and displays but actually walking through a home, understanding how the designs fit in everyday lives. It makes the process of planning your home feel simple, personal and very exciting."

With this launch, MagickHome positions Bangalore not just as a market, but as a partner in its design journey. The hub blends thoughtful design, global quality standards, and a deeply human approach to home-making.

## Future of AI in Finance and the Union Budget 2026 By Mr Prateek Kitha, Independent Research Analyst

**New Delhi, Agency:** As India approaches the Union Budget 2026, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a defining force in the evolution of the financial sector. According to Mr Prateek Kitha, AI is no longer an experimental technology in finance but a structural shift influencing how institutions manage risk, capital, and long-term strategy. Mr Prateek Kitha notes that the role of AI has expanded well beyond automation. Financial institutions today are deploying advanced AI systems for real-time forecasting, compliance monitoring, fraud detection, and scenario-based financial planning. This shift is transforming finance teams from operational units into strategic



decision-making partners.

**AI Reshaping Financial Decision-Making** The growing use of predictive analytics and machine learning is enabling financial institutions to move away from static annual planning cycles. Continuous forecasting models now allow businesses and banks to respond dynamically to

market volatility. As highlighted by Prateek Kitha, such capabilities are particularly critical in an environment marked by global uncertainty and rapid economic change.

AI-driven compliance and fraud detection systems are also becoming essential. These tools can analyze massive volumes of transac-

tions, identify suspicious patterns, and adapt to emerging risks far faster than traditional systems. Mr Prateek Kitha emphasizes that this not only improves efficiency but also strengthens trust and transparency across the financial ecosystem. Key Challenges in Adoption Despite increasing investments, AI adoption in finance faces notable challenges.

Data quality remains inconsistent across institutions, limiting the effectiveness of intelligent systems. Skill shortages within finance and risk teams further slow implementation. Regulatory clarity around AI accountability and explainability also remains a concern.

## Agoda Launches Open-Source API Agent to Simplify MCP Server Integrations



**Singapore, Agency:** Digital travel platform Agoda today announced the open-source release of its API Agent, a universal Model Context Protocol (MCP) server designed to help developers connect MCP clients to GraphQL and REST services using natural language, without building separate integrations for each service. Operating a large-scale travel platform requires coordinating hundreds of internal

services, each with its own schema and interface. While MCP has made it easier to connect language models to external systems, Agoda teams have made it even simpler to manage dozens of services without individual MCP servers for each initiative with its new, open-source API Agent. API Agent enables developers to configure a target service, ask questions in natural language, and receive structured results.

## Swan Defence and Heavy Industries Limited Secures Chemical Tanker Order from Europe's Rederiet Stenersen AS

**Mumbai, Agency:** Marking a major milestone, Swan Defence and Heavy Industries Limited (SDHI) announced the signing of its first newbuild contract for six (6) IMO Type II chemical tankers, each of 18,000 DWT, to be constructed at its revitalized shipyard in Gujarat, India.

Valued at USD 227 million, the contract from leading European shipowner Rederiet Stenersen AS, the first and the largest chemical tanker order awarded to an Indian shipyard, reaffirming SDHI's capabilities in delivering complex, world-class commercial vessels.

The agreement includes an option for an additional six sister vessels. The first vessel is scheduled for delivery within 33 months, with subsequent deliveries planned at regular intervals.

This agreement is not only a significant achievement for SDHI but also a strong endorsement of India's growing commercial shipbuilding ecosystem.

## "India's manufacturing will get big boost from FTA with EU": PM Modi

**New Delhi, Agency:** As India and the European Union ink the historic Free Trade Agreement, popularly dubbed the 'mother of all deals', Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the deal saying that this would give a major boost for manufacturing in India. He also said that the services sector will also expand post this Free Trade Agreement with the European Council.

"Manufacturing will get a huge boost from this trade deal with the EU, and the services sector will also expand. The Free Trade Agreement will boost the confidence of every investor and businessman to invest in India," the PM said as he inaugurated the India Energy Week being held in Goa.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday hailed the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA) as a perfect example of a partnership between two major economies of the world, noting that the landmark deal will create major opportunities for people, businesses and investors in both regions.

Referring to the recently signed agreement, PM Modi also said the deal has already drawn global attention and is being described as the "mother of all



deals".

"Yesterday a big agreement was signed between the European Union and India. People are calling this the mother of all deals. This agreement will bring major opportunities for the public in India and Europe. This is a perfect example of a partnership between two major economies of the world," the Prime Minister said.

"This agreement empowers our shared commitment towards democracy and rule of law. This Free Trade Agreement with the European Union will also complement Britain and EFTA's agreements...I congratulate the people of the nation for this," he added.

India and the EU together represent almost one-fifth of global trade and around 25 per cent of the global population, highlighting the growing economic and strategic weight of the partnership. The EU and India are close partners working to promote economic prosperity, a rules-based international order and sustainable development.

Trade and investment remain central pillars of this relationship. In trade in goods, the EU is India's second-largest trading partner, right after China and ahead of the United States, accounting for 11.5 per cent of India's total goods trade.

As per official data, in 2024, EU-India trade in goods was valued at over Euro 120 billion. This included Euro 71.4 billion worth of EU imports from India and Euro 48.8 billion in EU exports to India. Over the last decade, bilateral trade in goods has doubled. During this period, EU imports from India grew by 140 per cent, while EU exports to India increased by 58 per cent, showing the steady expansion of commercial ties. The main goods exported by the EU to India include machinery and appliances, transport equipment and chemicals.

## Aligning Capital with Vision: SmartHomes Infrastructure Strengthens the Dholera-Lothal-Ahmedabad Growth Story

**Dholera Agency:** Growing investor confidence is increasingly converging around Dholera as the starting point of Gujarat's next phase of urban and economic transformation, with the Dholera-Lothal-Ahmedabad growth corridor emerging as a natural extension of this vision. Recent engagements with investors reflected strong conviction in Dholera's strategic positioning as the nucleus of infrastructure-led development, global connectivity, and employment generation.

SmartHomes Infrastructure's vision remains firmly anchored in Dholera. While the company's footprint and outlook extend towards Lothal and Ahmedabad, Dholera continues to be the central focus--driving planning, execution, and

long-term ecosystem development. This Dholera-first approach has resonated strongly with investors seeking clarity, scale, and sustained value creation.

The momentum is further supported by Ahmedabad's rising prominence on the national and global stage. The evolving narrative of "Ahmedabad nu Dasko" reflects a decade defined by infrastructure readiness, global ambition, and international visibility. With preparations underway for major sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games and India's long-term Olympic aspirations, sports tourism is expected to emerge as a powerful growth catalyst--driving demand for hotels, hospitality infrastructure, and destination-led development



across the Dholera-Lothal-Ahmedabad belt.

In this context, Dholera International Airport is set to play a pivotal role. As global sporting

events attract international athletes, delegations, media, and visitors, the airport will act as a critical gateway--supporting passenger movement, logistics, and hospitality consumption. The convergence of large-scale events, rising global footfall, and improved air connectivity is expected to significantly boost demand for premium hotels, branded residences, and long-stay accommodation, particularly in and around Dholera Smart City. The impact of this hospitality-led growth is already visible. SmartHomes Infrastructure has recently strengthened its ecosystem through strategic hospitality associations with Sarovar Premier and Marriott Hotels. These partnerships serve as credibility anchors--enhancing destination appeal and reinforcing confidence in long-term hospitality consumption, while remaining aligned with the company's broader Dholera-centric vision.

## Who is even more dangerous than Abhishek Sharma? Aakash Chopra named a big name

Agency, New Delhi



Abhishek Sharma is currently considered one of the most dangerous batsmen in world cricket. In the third T20 match against New Zealand, he completed his half-century in just 14 balls and showcased his explosive batting by scoring 68 runs off 20 balls. His strike rate in that innings was 340, which stunned the cricketing world. After Abhishek's whirlwind innings, he is being called the most dangerous batsman of the current era. However, former Indian Test opener and current cricket commentator Aakash Chopra did not seem

to completely agree with this opinion. In a recent video, Aakash Chopra named a batsman who he believes is even more dangerous than Abhishek Sharma. In the video, Aakash Chopra was asked to name a batsman who he thinks is more explosive than Abhishek Sharma, or remain silent. During this, names of legendary batsmen like Mitchell Marsh, Finn Allen, Suresh Raina, Faf du Plessis, David Warner, Nicholas Pooran, Heinrich Klaasen, Travis Head, Suryakumar Yadav, Adam Gilchrist, Virender Sehwag, Rohit Sharma, AB de Villiers, and Chris Gayle were mentioned. Aakash Chopra remained silent on all these names, but as soon as Chris Gayle's name came up, he broke his silence. Aakash Chopra called Chris Gayle a more dangerous and fearless batsman than Abhishek Sharma.

He said that the 'Universe Boss' Chris Gayle has done this for a very long time, perhaps for more than a decade. According to Aakash, Abhishek Sharma might surpass Chris Gayle in the future, but in the current comparison, Gayle's impact and the fear he instilled were far greater. Chris Gayle may no longer be active in international or professional cricket, but there was a time when he single-handedly changed the course of a match. Bowlers looked helpless against his batting, and the pressure on the opposing team was clearly visible. There was probably no more dangerous batsman than him in T20 cricket at that time. As for Abhishek Sharma, he was dismissed on the very first ball in the previous match while attempting to hit a six, but this didn't deter him from maintaining his aggressive approach.

## Sri Lanka Women's Cricket Team to Tour West Indies for Six-Match White-Ball Series

Agency, Colombo

The Sri Lanka women's cricket team will tour the West Indies from the end of February to the beginning of March, where the two teams will play a six-match white-ball series. The tour includes three One Day Internationals (ODIs) and three T20 Internationals (T20Is), which will be held from February 20 to March 3. All matches of the series will be played at the National Stadium in Grenada. The ODI series will begin on February 20, while the remaining two matches will be played on February 22 and 25. The T20 International matches will then commence on February 28, with the second and third T20 matches being played on March 1 and 3 respectively. The T20 series holds particular significance as both teams will be looking to fine-tune their preparations for the 2026 Women's T20 World Cup to be held in England later this year. West Indies and Sri Lanka are placed in Group 2, along with England, New Zealand, and two qualifying teams. Sri Lanka Cricket



(SLC) said in its official statement, "The Sri Lanka national women's team will tour the West Indies during February–March 2026, where they will play a three-match ODI series and a three-match T20 International series. The tour will begin with the ODI series, followed by the T20 matches, all to be held in Grenada." The Sri Lankan team will be looking to end their winless streak in T20 Internationals since the 2024 Asia Cup. The host West Indies, on the other hand, are confident after their recent home performances, having won T20 series against Bangladesh and South Africa in their previous tours. The two teams last met in the Caribbean in 2024, where Sri Lanka swept the ODI series 3-0, while West Indies won the T20 series 2-1.

## T20 matches should be played during the day: Ashwin

Agency, Chennai



Former Indian spinner R Ashwin has said that T20 cricket matches should be played during the day. Currently, these matches are played at night. Ashwin said that holding matches during the day in the future will also help bowlers, maintaining a balance between bat and ball. Ashwin said that currently, with matches being played at night, batsmen dominate and even chase down big targets. He said that in the second T20 against New Zealand, the Indian team chased down a target of over 200 runs with five overs to spare. This shows how difficult it is to bowl during dew. In such a situation, there is nothing left for the bowlers

in the match. Ashwin said that due to the dew, it becomes almost impossible for bowlers to make an impact. Ashwin said, "The

New Zealand bowlers looked frustrated during India's batting. It is not right to send teams to play in such dew conditions. In such situations, cricket skills are not even needed." He added, "If matches were played on these same pitches in the afternoon, even 150 to 170 runs would be difficult to score." According to Ashwin, due to the dew, runs are scored even on good balls. Therefore, it is necessary to remove this kind of imbalance. There is a huge difference in the wicket between day and night.

## Jos Buttler becomes the second English player to play 400 international matches

Agency, Colombo



England's experienced wicketkeeper-batsman Jos Buttler has achieved a major milestone. He has become only the second English player to play 400 matches in international cricket. The right-handed batsman achieved this feat during the third ODI against Sri Lanka at the R. Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on Tuesday. The 35-year-old Buttler is now only behind legendary fast bowler James Anderson in this regard. Anderson has played a total of 401 international matches for England across all three formats and is the country's most capped player. Anderson, considered one of the greatest seamers in world cricket, has taken a total of 991 wickets in his career. Talking about Jos Buttler's international career, he has scored 12,291 runs so far, including 14 centuries. In Test cricket, Buttler has scored 2,907 runs in 100 innings of 57 matches. His average in this format is 31.94, including two centuries and 18 half-centuries. In ODI cricket, Buttler has scored 5,515 runs in 171 innings of 198 matches. During this

time, his average has been 39.11, and he has hit 11 centuries and 29 half-centuries. In T20 International cricket, Buttler has scored 3,869 runs in 132 innings of 144 matches. His average in this format is 35.49, including one century and 28 half-centuries. Jos Buttler, a two-time ICC white-ball title winner, is also part of the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, which will begin on February 7 in India and Sri Lanka. England has announced its squad for this tournament, with star batsman Harry Brook named as captain.

## Brief

### Fast bowler Kane Richardson retires from professional cricket

Melbourne

Australian veteran fast bowler and Big Bash League (BBL) legend Kane Richardson has announced his retirement from professional cricket. Richardson bid farewell to cricket after a glorious 17-year career. He made the announcement on Monday via his Instagram account. Kane Richardson has been one of the most successful bowlers in the history of the Big Bash League. He ends his career as the fifth-highest wicket-taker among male bowlers in the BBL, with 142 wickets in 15 seasons. He achieved this feat while playing for the Adelaide Strikers, Melbourne Renegades, and Sydney Sixers. Internationally, Richardson played 25 ODIs and 36 T20 Internationals for Australia. He was also part of the Australian team that won the 2021 T20 World Cup. Additionally, he played a crucial role in Melbourne Renegades' title win in BBL 8. Richardson began his T20 career in 2009 for South Australia when the Big Bash was played as a state-based tournament. He later made his BBL debut in the very first match of the Adelaide Strikers in BBL 01. He played 36 matches for the Strikers over six seasons before joining the Melbourne Renegades in BBL 07.

## FIFA World Cup 2030 Final to be held in Spain: RFEF President Rafael Luján

Agency, Madrid



The final match of the 2030 FIFA World Cup will be played in Spain. This information was given by the President of the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF), Rafael Luján, on Monday. However, FIFA has not yet officially announced the venue for the final. Spain, Portugal, and Morocco will jointly host the 2030 World Cup, but there had been long-standing speculation regarding the venue of the final match. Speaking to the media, Rafael Luján clearly stated, "Spain will lead the World Cup and the final will be played here." However, he did not specify which city or stadium would host the final. Spanish media has long considered Real Madrid's Santiago Bernabéu Stadium as a potential venue for the final. This stadium has recently undergone renovations and is considered fully prepared to host major international matches. However, some reports had also suggested that Morocco could host the final. Morocco planned to hold the final at the under-construction Hassan II Stadium. This stadium is expected to be completed

by 2028 and will have a proposed capacity of 115,000 spectators, making it one of the largest football stadiums in the world. But the chaos during the Africa Cup of Nations final this month damaged Morocco's image, weakening its chances of hosting the World Cup final. In addition, Barcelona's Camp Nou stadium has also recently undergone renovations and could also be a contender to host the final match. It is noteworthy that the 2030 FIFA World Cup will be special, as it will also celebrate the 100th anniversary of the tournament. On this occasion, the Latin American countries of Uruguay, Argentina, and Paraguay will also host one match each.

## HIL Champions: Coach Jay Stacy says this title is a great example of the team's clear strategy

Agency, Bhubaneswar



Vedanta Kalinga Lancers have won the men's Hero Hockey India League 2025-26 title. In the final match played at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium on Monday, the Lancers defeated Ranchi Royals 3-2 to clinch the championship. This title run was a brilliant example of consistency, discipline, and a clear team strategy throughout the season. Vedanta Kalinga Lancers had secured the top spot in the league stage and then performed exceptionally well in both Qualifier-1 and the final, winning both matches under pressure. The foundation of the Lancers' success was their strong defensive strategy. The team conceded only 11 goals throughout the competition, which was the best defensive record in the league. The team's performance in penalty corners also proved decisive,

"The most pleasing aspect was the honesty within the team. The players understood that every role matters and that discipline without the ball is just as important as creativity with the ball. This title is the result of habits built over weeks, not just one performance in the final." Reacting to the title win, Vedanta Aluminium CEO Rajiv Kumar said, "This championship is a result of a clear vision and consistent execution. From the start of the season, our goal was to build a team that could perform consistently. The credit goes to the players, the support staff, and everyone who worked hard behind the scenes to make this success possible." He further added, "For me, it's not just the result, but also the way the team conducted itself throughout the campaign that stands out. The sense of accountability, resilience, and collective responsibility was

evident. Winning the Hero HIL title at our home ground in Bhubaneswar, in front of our supporters, makes this moment even more special." Team captain Arthur Van Doren highlighted the team's mental fortitude in the crucial matches. He said, "In knockout matches, small moments decide the outcome, and we handled those moments better. Even when the matches became chaotic, we remained calm, trusted the structure we had built throughout the season, and maintained constant communication." Alexander Hendrickx also attributed the success to the team effort. He said, "I'm happy that I could contribute to the team when needed, but none of this would have been possible without the hard work of the entire group. From winning penalty corners to creating pressure, everything starts with the collective effort of the team."

## Svitolina defeats Gauff at the Australian Open, faces Sabalenka in the semifinals

Agency, Melbourne

American player Coco Gauff's weak serve was evident. She committed five double faults and lost her serve four times, which Svitolina fully capitalized on, playing aggressively and quickly winning the first set. With her advancement to the semifinals, Svitolina's return to the top 10 is also considered certain. After the match, Svitolina said, "I am very happy with my performance in the tournament so far." She added, "Returning to the top 10 after maternity leave has always been my dream. It means a lot to me and it motivates me to keep going."



## Indian team aims to maintain winning momentum in the fourth T20

Agency, Visakhapatnam



Ravi Bishnoi might play in this match. Bishnoi took two wickets for 18 runs in the last match. If all-rounder Axar Patel, who is returning to the team, plays in this match, his fitness will also be under scrutiny. He was out of the last two matches due to a finger injury. The Indian team will want its spinners to also find their rhythm in this match, while the batting department remains strong. India's batting has been aggressive in both the previous matches. They scored runs at a rapid pace and secured victories in the second and third T20 Internationals. The same story is likely to unfold in this match as well. In this series, only Samson has failed to perform. He has scored only 16 runs in three matches at an average of 5.33, raising questions about his place in the team. However, with Tilak Varma being unavailable, he is expected to retain his place in this match. On the other hand, the New Zealand team has not been able to compete with the Indian team in this series so far.

## T20 matches should be played during the day: Ashwin

Agency, Chennai



Former Indian spinner R Ashwin has said that T20 cricket matches should be played during the day. Currently, these matches are played at night. Ashwin said that holding matches during the day in the future will also help bowlers, maintaining a balance between bat and ball. Ashwin said that currently, with matches being played at night, batsmen dominate and even chase down big targets. He said that in the second T20 against New Zealand, the Indian team chased down a target of over 200 runs with five overs to spare. This shows how difficult it is to bowl during dew. In such a situation, there is nothing left for the bowlers

in the match. Ashwin said that due to the dew, it becomes almost impossible for bowlers to make an impact. Ashwin said, "The

New Zealand bowlers looked frustrated during India's batting. It is not right to send teams to play in such dew conditions. In such situations, cricket skills are not even needed." He added, "If matches were played on these same pitches in the afternoon, even 150 to 170 runs would be difficult to score." According to Ashwin, due to the dew, runs are scored even on good balls. Therefore, it is necessary to remove this kind of imbalance. There is a huge difference in the wicket between day and night.

## Pro Wrestling League 2026: Haryana Thunders on Top Under Captain Yui Susaki's Leadership

Agency, Noida



Captain Yui Susaki's strong leadership has emerged as the biggest reason behind Haryana Thunders' spectacular success in the Pro Wrestling League (PWL) 2026. The Japanese star wrestler has not only performed brilliantly on the mat but has also kept the team united as an inspiring captain, leading them to the top of the points table. In this fast-paced league with continuous matches, Susaki has fully embraced the challenge of regular competition. She believes that playing matches consistently helps maintain momentum, and this has been clearly reflected in her performance. In an official statement, Susaki said, "The Pro Wrestling League is a great experience for me because I get the opportunity to compete many times in this league." Her style on the mat has been precise and effective. In one match of the season, she secured a victory in less than a minute, showcasing her strength and technique. However, as a captain, her focus has been more on the team's success than on individual achievements. She said, "I am very excited to play in this league. I am playing for my team, the owners, and the coaches. It's not just for me, but for all of us." Haryana Thunders started the season with two consecutive wins.

Even after a loss in the third match, the team made a strong comeback, regained its momentum, and secured the top spot in the table. Throughout this journey, Susaki's calm and balanced leadership has been a strong support for the team. Regarding the team environment, Susaki said, "Our team is very strong, cheerful, and friendly. We have excellent coordination, which is visible on the field as well." Outside the arena, Susaki is also thoroughly enjoying her time in India. Praising Indian culture and cuisine, she said, "I am having a great time in India. I love Indian food, especially the curries."

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## Social Media Changed Mithila Palkar's Life, She Never Planned to Enter Films

Actress-singer Mithila Palkar, who is known for films and projects like Little Things, Karwaan, Chopsticks and others, is currently in the news for the film Happy Patel, produced under Aamir Khan's banner. Mithila has showcased her acting skills across films and OTT platforms. Now, speaking to IANS, she shared her film journey and revealed that she never really planned to pursue an acting career — instead, everything happened naturally.

Mithila said, "I

have always said that I moved forward in my professional life by responding to situations as they came. I embraced becoming an actress with both hands. I had no idea what the internet would do. Ten years ago, we were all just beginning to explore the internet. At that time, television, theatre, and films were the main platforms. Radio also had its own strong influence. So, we didn't know that the internet would grow to have such a massive impact. That's why I was experimenting on social media as well. I was ready to experiment with anything that could help me grow as an artist."

She further said, "I auditioned for everything. The way my life has moved forward, I don't think I could have planned it any better."



### Border 2 Creates a Box Office Storm

## Ameesha Patel Says She Is Very Excited to See Tara Singh on Screen

After its release in theatres, the film Border 2 is performing strongly at the box office. The sequel to the 1997 classic drama is not only earning well but is also winning the hearts of audiences. From the general public to the entertainment industry, everyone seems to be praising the film.

Recently, actress Ameesha Patel, while speaking to news agency IANS, praised the film. She said, "I am very excited to see Tara Singh on screen. I believe that all the actors, including Varun, Diljit, and Ahan, must have done a great job. I am really excited to relive the film and its songs."

Ameesha Patel also shared her views on comparisons. She said, "I

haven't watched Border 2 yet, but I have seen Border (1997). Still, the way people are loving it, it seems the team has done a wonderful job. Just like Gadar 2 was compared with Gadar, but after Gadar 2 became a hit, everyone accepted that it was a different and great film. So I feel comparisons should not be made, as they create a wrong impression." Directed by Anurag Singh, the film features new stories along with a new cast, including Varun Dhawan, Ahan Shetty, and Diljit Dosanjh, who are seen playing the roles of army soldiers.

## Dropped Out of Studies for Modeling Rebelled Against Family for Acting

### The Story of Punjab's Katrina Is No Less Than a Film Script

Every big dream comes with a price, and one has to go through many hardships to achieve it.

To make a name in the world of cinema, Punjab's Katrina also faced several struggles. Yes, we are talking about Shehnaaz Gill, who today needs no introduction. Shehnaaz quit her studies to pursue modeling and ran away from home to follow her acting dreams against her family's wishes. In her early days, she lost family support and had to battle loneliness, but her courage and dedication eventually brought her success.

The story of Shehnaaz Gill is one of struggle, rebellion against family, and success earned through hard work.

Shehnaaz Gill, who has created a distinct identity in Punjabi cinema and Bollywood, celebrates her birthday on January 27. Her life is no less than a film script. Quitting studies for modeling, conflicts with her father, running away from home to become an actress, and the fame she gained from Bigg Boss 13 earned her the title of "Punjab's Katrina."

Shehnaaz Gill was born in Jalandhar, Punjab. While studying at Dalhousie Hilltop School in Dalhousie, she developed an interest in modeling. During her school days, she began doing small modeling projects. After completing school, she enrolled in B.Com at Lovely Professional University, but her passion for modeling led her to quit her studies midway. This decision upset her family. To keep her away from modeling, her family even started discussing marriage, but Shehnaaz refused. Although she continued getting work, conflicts with her father kept increasing. Eventually, Shehnaaz left home and moved to Mumbai to pursue modeling and acting. She vowed to return home only after becoming famous.



### Was Akshaye Khanna's Cameo in Border 2 Added to Cash In on the Success of Dhurandhar? Bhushan Kumar Responds

The much-awaited film Border 2 was released in theatres on January 23, 2026, taking audiences back to the memories of the 1997 superhit film Border. J.P. Dutta's iconic film portrayed the bravery of Indian soldiers with great sensitivity and pride, and it still lives on in people's hearts today.

Border was not limited to war and the border alone, but also beautifully showcased the emotional connection between soldiers and their families. Carrying this nostalgia, audiences went to watch Border 2, where they were treated to a special surprise in the film's climax.

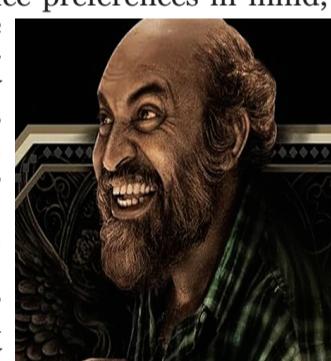
In the final part of the film, glimpses of Suniel Shetty, Sudesh Berry, Akshaye Khanna, and Puneet Issar are shown, which left audiences in theatres emotional. Following this, discussions began on social media, with questions being raised about whether this cameo was added after the success of the recently released film Dhurandhar.

In fact, Akshaye Khanna's powerful performance as Rahman Dakait in Dhurandhar was widely praised, which further fueled these speculations. However, the makers have now put all such rumors to rest.

## Stronger Suspense Than Drishyam Double the Thrill of Maharaja

### This South Psycho-Thriller's Climax Will Leave You Shocked

These days, filmmakers in both Bollywood and the South film industry are making movies keeping audience preferences in mind, and the thriller genre is among the most popular. It's not just an opinion — box office collections clearly show what kind of films audiences are enjoying. Over the past few years, action, thriller, and crime-based films have performed exceptionally well, including titles like Drishyam, Cold Case, U-Turn, and Ratsasan.



These films are not only loved in theatres but also receive strong response on digital platforms. So, if you are a fan of mystery thrillers and suspense-packed movies and are looking for something new to add to your watchlist this weekend, here's a film whose crime-thriller and suspense elements are so powerful that it could even outshine Drishyam and Maharaja. Let's find out which OTT platform this 2-hour-15-minute-long movie is available on, along with its name, star cast, and IMDb rating.

### Dhamaal 4 Release Date Changed: Not June 12, The Film Will Now Hit Theatres on This Day



Excitement is at its peak among audiences for the fourth installment of the popular comedy franchise Dhamaal. However, the release date of director Indra Kumar's Dhamaal 4 has once again been changed. The makers announced via social media that the film will no longer be released on June 12.

In Dhamaal 4, Ajay Devgn will be seen in the lead role. He will be joined by Sanjay Mishra, Esha Gupta, Sanjeeda Sheikh, Anjali Anand, Upendra Limaye, Vijay Patkar, and Ravi Kishan in important roles. Franchise regulars Riteish Deshmukh, Arshad Warsi, and Javed Jaffrey are also part of the film.

