

OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

29-01-2026

Total pilgrims: 61,315

Tonsures: 22,076

Hundi kanukalu: 476 Cr

Waiting Compartments: 31

Approx. Darshan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens): 8 H

TO BOOK YOUR ADS CALL

99484 80279, 73307 78889

SWATI PEARLS & JEWELLERS

NAMPALLY:
Opp. Public Garden, Beside Hero Show Room,
Chappel Road, Ph: 9949971337/23200048

GACHIBOWLI:
Near Telecom Nagar, Beside Cafe Coffee Day,
Ph: 9849026916/23002992

BANJARA HILLS:
Road No. 10,
Ph: 9848910502/23550896

www.swatipearls.in

IN BRIFS

AMC TO SHIFT 1200 STRAY DOGS TO SHELTER HOUSE

Agartala: Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC) has announced plans to implement Supreme Court directives regarding the welfare of stray dogs, marking a significant step towards humane animal management. This decision comes in response to growing concerns about public safety and the well-being of street animals in the city. Mayor Dipak Majumder highlighted that the Supreme Court, in conjunction with the Animal Welfare Board of India, has issued clear guidelines for the management of stray dogs, with Urban Local Bodies being responsible for ensuring humane treatment while safeguarding public safety.

CRIME BRANCH BUSTS MAJOR COUNTERFEIT SHOE MANUFACTURING UNIT IN NE DELHI

New Delhi: Crime Branch has unearthed a large-scale manufacturing unit producing fake shoes of top international brands, including Nike, Adidas, New Balance, and Skechers, an official said on Friday. The owner of the unit, Sandeep Singh, 44, a resident of Ambey Enclave, Chauhan Patti, Sonia Vihar, has been arrested, the police said. The operation was conducted by the team of the Anti-Extortion & Kidnapping Cell (AEKC) of the Crime Branch, which was followed by a tip-off regarding the illegal production of branded footwear in Northeast Delhi.

Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra may take oath as Deputy CM on Sat

NCP MERGER TALKS ON BACKBURNER



MUMBAI / PUNE (TSIT): Sunetra Pawar, Rajya Sabha MP and the wife of deceased NCP chief Ajit Pawar, is likely to be sworn in as Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister on Saturday, party sources said. She would be the first woman to hold the post in the state. Following the death of Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar in an air crash in Baramati on

Sunetra, Ajit Pawar's wife, is currently not a member of either House of the Maharashtra legislature

Wednesday, a section of Nationalist Congress Party leaders had demanded that she should get the post. "Tomorrow, a parliamentary board meeting of the party will take place in Mumbai, where Sunetra Pawar will be elected as the leader of the legislature party," said a source. "It is likely that she will be sworn in as Deputy Chief Minister by

tomorrow evening," said the source, privy to the developments.

Until the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Sunetra Pawar had kept a low profile. In the General Election that year, she stood from Baramati as the candidate of her husband's party, but was defeated by her sister-in-law and incumbent NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule in the prestige battle.

Sunetra was subsequently elected to the Rajya Sabha.

The legislature wing of the NCP in Maharashtra will hold a meeting in Mumbai on January 31 where she would be named as its leader, state minister and senior party leader Chhagan Bhujbal said earlier on Friday.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had conveyed that he had no issue if her swearing-in ceremony as Deputy CM



Telangana Governor, DCM Bhatti pay tributes at Bapu Ghat

Hyderabad (TSIT) : Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma and Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka paid tributes to the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary on Friday. They offered floral tributes at Bapu Ghat at Langer Houz here, where the ashes of Mahatma Gandhi were immersed at the confluence of Musi and Esi rivers. Transport Minister

00 Telangana and Andhra Pradesh leaders, including Governor Jishnu Dev Varma, Deputy CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, CM A. Revanth Reddy, and others, paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary, honoring his ideals of truth, non-violence, and selfless service.

Ponnam Prabhakar, Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President Mahesh Kumar Goud, senior Congress leader and former MP V. Hanumanth Rao and other Congress leaders also paid tributes. They paid their respects at the memorial and later showered petals on the statue of the Father of the Nation. The leaders also participated in an all-religion prayer meeting.

CM Naidu Highlights Innovation and Future Technologies at Agastya Academy

Chittoor (TSIT) Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh recently met students at the Agastya Academy Auditorium, where representatives of the Academy showcased a video highlighting the various programs and training provided in science and technology. The Chief Minister viewed the presentation while seated among the students.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister recalled, "The chairman of Agastya Academy told me 25 years ago that he would start a good innovation center, and I agreed. This academy has been running effectively for 25 years and has become a leading center in India." He appreciated the clean and forward-looking environment in which the Academy was established and stated that its policies reflect the future



direction of Andhra Pradesh.

Highlighting the importance of keeping pace with global developments, the Chief Minister urged students to embrace emerging technologies like artificial intelligence. "It is because of early acceptance of IT that Telugu people have made a mark worldwide. I promoted IT then, and now I am saying everyone should

think about AI. We need to change the mindset of students — the future is ours," he said. He announced the establishment of the Ratan Tata Innovation Hub to provide opportunities for new innovations and startup companies, while also citing initiatives such as drones, Space City, and technology-driven electricity reforms that reduce energy costs.

Telangana Speaker begins hearing on disqualification petitions

Hyderabad (TSIT) : Telangana Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar on Friday began hearing on the petitions for disqualification of MLA Danam Nagender who was elected on a Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) ticket but allegedly shifted loyalties to the ruling Congress party.

The Speaker will hear arguments by the counsels of BRS MLA Kaushik Reddy and BJP floor leader in the Assembly A. Maheshwar Reddy and record the evidence. He will later hear the arguments by the counsel of Nagender. The MLA said that he has not yet received any notice from the Speaker for appearance before him.



The Speaker took up hearing on Nagender's petition following recent directive from the Supreme Court, which gave him two weeks to decide on the petitions for disqualification of the remaining MLAs. The Speaker has also already dismissed the petitions to disqualify seven out of 10 BRS MLAs who had allegedly defected to the Congress in 2024. He ruled

that the petitioners failed to provide evidence that the MLAs defected to the Congress. He said all the MLAs are technically still in the BRS.

The Speaker last year completed the hearing on the petitions for the disqualification of eight MLAs and reserved the orders. The Speaker is yet to pronounce the order on the plea for the disqualification of MLA Sanjay Kumar. The hearing on the disqualification of two other MLAs, Danam Nagender and Kadiyam Srihari could not be taken up as they had not submitted their replies to the notices served on them.

Has your bank account become inoperative?

Contact the bank

Update your KYC to activate the account.

» Bank account becomes inoperative if there is no transaction for more than two years.

» Get your KYC updated at any branch of your bank or through video KYC.

For more details, give a missed call to 14440 or visit <https://rbikehtahai.rbi.org.in/ia>

For feedback, write to rbikehtahai@rbi.org.in

Issued in public interest by भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक RESERVE BANK OF INDIA www.rbi.org.in

Maharashtra bids a tearful adieu to Ajit Pawar

BARAMATI: Chants of "Ajit Dada Amar Rahe" (Ajit Dada is immortal) rent the air on Thursday as Maharashtra bid a final and tearful farewell to Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar.

The 66-year-old NCP chief, popularly known as 'Dada' (elder brother) in Baramati, was cremated with full state honours at the Vidya Pratishthan college ground here, a day after he along with four others died when the chartered plane carrying them crashed on Wednesday. The college has been founded by the Pawar family.

As thousands gathered to pay their last respects, Pawar's sons, Parth and Jay, lit the funeral pyre in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president Nitin Nabin, and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Sharad Pawar, the patriarch and uncle of the departed deputy chief minister, sat quietly watching a legacy he helped build become a memory.

Thousands of mourners gathered for Ajit Pawar's last rites chanted "Ajit Dada amar rahe", when his



mortal remains, draped in the national flag, were brought from his village Katewadi to the Vidya Pratishthan ground, located 100 km from Pune.

Ajit Pawar's cousin Supriya Sule, the NCP (SP) Lok Sabha member from Baramati, stood with his wife Sunetra Pawar, who is a Rajya Sabha member, to console her as she paid tributes to her late husband.

NCP working president and for-

mer Union minister Praful Patel was also present.

Announcements over loudspeakers urged people to maintain silence and discipline, and to pay their respects to the late leader from their seats, calling it the greatest tribute to Ajit Pawar, known for his strict sense of discipline.

Shah, Gadkari, Nabin, Fadnavis, Union minister Ramdas Athawale, Goa CM Pramod Sawant,

Maharashtra Deputy CM Eknath Shinde, state assembly speaker Rahul Narwekar, former Union minister Sushilkumar Shinde, and Andhra Pradesh minister Nara Lokesh were among the leaders who placed floral wreaths on Pawar's mortal remains.

Ajit Pawar's younger brother Shrinivas Pawar, sisters and other family members, including cousin Abhijit Pawar, also paid tributes to their late brother.

Former CM Ashok Chavan, state Congress president Harshwardhan Sapkal, party leader Manikrao Thakare and actor Riteish Deshmukh also paid homage.

Earlier, Shiv Sena (UBT) head and former CM Uddhav Thackeray and MNS chief Raj Thackeray offered floral tributes at Ajit Pawar's residence in Katewadi.

On Thursday morning, the mortal remains of Ajit Pawar were taken from the Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Hospital in Baramati, where they were kept overnight, to his village. Pawar and four other persons on board the aircraft were killed after it crashed barely 200 metres from the edge of the table-

top airstrip.

The others killed in the tragedy were Captain Sumit Kapoor, who had a flying experience of 15,000 hours, co-pilot Capt Shambhavi Pathak, with 1,500 hours of flying experience, Personal Security Officer Vidip Jadhav and flight attendant Pinky Mali.

Their mortal remains have been handed over to their families.

Police have registered an accidental death report (ADR) case in connection with the plane crash, an official said.

The government on Wednesday released a statement detailing the sequence of events that led to the crash and Ajit Pawar's death.

The aircraft was cleared for landing after a go-around due to poor visibility, but having finally received a clearance, it did not give any read-back to the ATC, and moments later burst into flames near the edge of the airstrip.

The Civil Aviation Ministry on Thursday said the 'black box' (comprising the Flight Data Recorder and Cockpit Voice Recorder) of the Learjet aircraft has been recovered.

India monitoring reports of incidents of attacks against minorities in B'desh: Govt to RS



NEW DELHI: India continues to monitor reports of incidents of attacks against minorities in Bangladesh including on their homes and places of worship, and New Delhi has "consistently raised" the issue with the authorities in Dhaka, the government informed Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

In a written response to a query, Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh also said it is the expectation of India that the interim government of Bangladesh will discharge its responsibilities by "thoroughly investigating" these incidents and "bring all perpetrators of killings, arson and violence against minorities to justice without excuses".

CPI(M) member John Brittas asked the Ministry of External Affairs whether the government has taken cognisance of reports of attacks, killings, arson and intimidation targeting minorities in Bangladesh and the deterioration of law and order; and details of formal representations made by India to the government of Bangladesh on protection of minorities during the last two years.

"The government of India continues to monitor reports of incidents of attacks against minorities in Bangladesh, including on their homes, properties, businesses and places of worship. India has consistently raised the matter of safety and security of the minorities with the authorities in Bangladesh, at both political and diplomatic

levels on several occasions," Singh said in his response.

"The issue was raised by the prime minister during his meeting with Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus on April 4, 2025, and by the external affairs minister during his meeting with Foreign Advisor Touhid Hossain on February 16, 2025," he said.

The issue has also been discussed during relevant discussions with other foreign interlocutors, the minister said.

"It is the expectation of the government of India that the interim government of Bangladesh will discharge its responsibilities by 'thoroughly investigating' these incidents and 'bring all perpetrators of killings, arson and violence against minorities to justice without excuses'.

"The primary responsibility for the protection of life and liberty of all citizens of Bangladesh, including minorities, rests with the government of Bangladesh," Singh said.

In another query, the MEA was asked how the Indian government looks at the recent statement made by the chief adviser of the interim government of Bangladesh over the attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh.

"The troubling tendency by the interim government to attribute attacks on minorities to personal rivalries, political differences, or other extraneous reasons only emboldens the extremists and the perpetrators of such crimes, and deepens.

Govt says 2.22 crore people provided jobs at 18,000 job fairs across country in past year

NEW DELHI: A total of 2.22 crore people across the country were provided jobs in over 18,000 job fairs during the past year, Minister of Labour and Employment Mansukh Mandaviya informed the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

The minister also said that employment generation is growing and unemployment rate (3.2 per cent) is reducing in the country.

Replying to supplementaries during Question Hour, the minister informed the Upper House that the government has created a National Career Service Portal as a single platform for providing employment.

"Overall during the last one year, 18,000 job fairs were organised all over the country and in all a total of 2.22 crore people were given jobs during the period across the country," Mandaviya said.

He said that the central government has so far organised 18 job melas and provided 11.49 jobs in the government sector.

The minister said the National Career Service (NCS) portal has become robust in the last one decade and as many as 55 lakh companies are linked to it and all state government platforms are also linked.

A total of over 6 crore job-seeking youth have registered on the portal in the last 10 years, he said.

"I am happy to inform you that the NCS portal has been linked to e-migrate portal, Yuva-Bharat and Skill development platforms to create a single window for jobs," the minister said.

On the portal, as many as 53 lakh people registered in Bihar and 39.8 lakh



were shortlisted and job opportunities created for them.

"In all 4.5 lakh youth participated in job fairs, of which 90,000 people were shortlisted and 43,000 people given jobs by companies of both central and state levels," he said.

In his written reply to the question, the minister said, "Job fair is one of the steps towards fulfilment of the commitment of the government to accord highest priority to employment generation amongst youth. Regular job fairs are being organized under various schemes by state governments/ministries/departments."

He said job fairs are primarily intended to facilitate linkage between jobseekers and local employers, so as to address local employment requirements. Such fairs focus on employment opportunities aligned with local labour market demand.

Additionally, he said, Ministry of Labour and Employment, is running the NCS portal which is a one-stop solution for providing career related services including job search & matching, information on online & offline job fairs, career counselling, vocational guidance, information on skill development courses, skill/training pro-

grammes through it.

"Till 20.01.2026, a total of 3280 job fairs have been organized in Bihar under the NCS project, in which 8,492 employers have participated. Notifying final hiring figures is not a mandatory requirement on NCS portal.

In response to another question, the minister told the House that in 2024, as per published RBI data, the Centre provided 17 crore jobs in the last decade.

The RBI data also shows that in one decade from 2004-2014 a total of 2.9 crore employment generation was done, from 44.23 crore employment in 2003-04 to 47.15 crore employment opportunities in 2013-14. The 2024 data shows 64.33 crore employment opportunities were provided. "India's unemployment rate is 3.2 per cent, which is less than even developed countries," he informed the House.

To another supplementary on gig workers, Mandaviya said it is a new concept and several people are getting employment opportunities in the country. It is estimated that a total of around 2 crore gig workers are working and the new Labour Codes would help ensure social security and health security to them, he said.

Ajit Pawar plane crash: Black Box of Learjet 45 aircraft recovered

MUMBAI: The Black Box of the Learjet 45 aircraft that crashed near the Baramati airstrip on Wednesday has been recovered, the Civil Aviation Ministry said.

A Black Box is a small device that records information about an aircraft during its flight. It helps in the investigation of aviation accidents.

The ministry said that the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) investigation into the plane crash, which killed Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar and four others, is progressing expeditiously.

AAIB has the mandate to investigate all accidents and serious incidents involving aircraft with a

gross weight of 2,250 kg and more or turbojet aircraft.

On Wednesday, AAIB was asked to probe the plane crash.

"The investigation is progressing expeditiously, and the Black Box of the ill-fated aircraft has been recovered," the Civil Aviation Ministry said in a post on X.

Five people, including Pawar, his personal security officer and attendant, as well as two cockpit crew -- pilot-in-command Sumit Kapur and first officer Shambhavi Pathak -- were killed when the Learjet 45 aircraft, operated by Delhi-based VSR Ventures Pvt Ltd, crashed during its sec-

ond attempt to land at Baramati table-top airstrip.

"Ensuring a thorough, transparent, and time-bound inquiry remains a top priority," the ministry said, adding that all requisite response and investigative mechanisms were activated immediately following the unfortunate aircraft accident near Baramati.

A team of three officers from AAIB, Delhi, and another team of three officers from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Mumbai Regional Office, reached the crash site on January 28. The Director General, AAIB, also arrived at the site the same day, the ministry said.

Toll rises to 21 in Bengal fire, 28 still missing; prohibitory orders imposed

KOLKATA: The toll in the fire near Kolkata on January 26 has risen to 21 with 13 more bodies found from gutted buildings, while 28 people are still missing, raising fears that the number of fatalities are likely to increase, the police said on Thursday.

The authorities imposed prohibitory orders in the area, restricting public movement ahead of the proposed visit by Leader of the Opposition Suvedu Adhikari and other BJP leaders.

The devastating fire reduced to ashes two godowns and a manufacturing unit of a momo company at Anandapur in South 24 Parganas district, close to the city.

"Given the nature of the incident and the extent of damage, the possibility of the toll going up cannot be ruled out," a senior police officer

said.

In view of the situation and ahead of a proposed visit by BJP leaders, prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita were imposed in the area from Wednesday midnight.

"A prohibitory order has been imposed to maintain law and order and to facilitate rescue and identification work," the police officer said.

Adhikari has moved the Calcutta High Court seeking permission to visit the site and to take out a march from a nearby temple to the spot. The matter is likely to be heard by Justice Shubra Ghosh on Thursday, a source in the court said.

The Sunday night blaze reduced warehouses and a manufacturing unit to rubble, leaving behind charred buildings and bodies of workers.

42 kg heroin, 4 hand grenades seized in Amritsar, links to cross-border networks suspected

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Police recovered 42.9 kg of heroin, four hand grenades and other ammunition in Amritsar, which could be linked to cross-border narco-terror networks, police here said on Thursday.

The operation is a direct outcome of actionable and credible intelligence generated through the Village Defence Committees (VDCs), a flagship initiative of the state government, aimed at institutionalising community participation in internal security and anti-drug efforts, they said.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the recovered narcotics, arms, and explosives were dropped via drones from across the international border, indicating the involvement

of an organised cross-border narco-terror network, Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav said in a statement.

The DGP said the subsequent investigation led to the detention of two individuals, both residents of Amritsar and further investigation is underway to trace the absconding accused and uncover the wider conspiracy.

Police said it recovered 42.98 kg of heroin, four hand grenades, a pistol, 46 live .30 bore cartridges and an abandoned motorcycle. Sharing operational details, Deputy Inspector General of Police (Border Range) Sandeep Goel said that acting swiftly on the inputs received through the VDC network, they in-

tercepted a motorcycle in Oothian village.

On sensing police presence, the suspects abandoned the motorcycle and the consignment and fled towards the adjoining fields which was hidden due to darkness, Goel said.

The police teams immediately launched a search and area domination exercise in the surrounding fields, resulting in the recovery of narcotics, arms and explosives consignment.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Amritsar Rural, Suhail Qasim Mir said that an intensive investigation is underway to identify and apprehend the remaining accused, trace forward and backward linkages, and dismantle the entire network.

Guwahati Refinery solely supplied smokeless fuel to Indian Army during Ops Sindoor: Official

GUWAHATI: The Guwahati Refinery, owned by Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), on Thursday said it exclusively supplied 19 thousand metric tonnes (TMT) of smokeless fuel to Indian armed forces during Operation Sindoor.

In an interaction with senior journalists, Guwahati Refinery (GR) executive director Sunil Kanti said the unit is one of the very few in the country which can produce Low Sulphur Low Aromatics SKO (LSLA SKO), and it was the sole unit to provide the specialised fuel to the army during Operation Sindoor.

"The Indian Army had requested us sometime back to produce a special fuel, which would not emit smoke. They wanted it to keep our soldiers warm in extreme cold conditions. Usually, all types of fuels emit smoke when it is burnt," he said.

Kanti said that the research and development wing of Guwahati Refinery then developed LSLA SKO for the armed forces stationed in high-altitude locations.

"During Operation Sindoor, only our refinery produced and supplied 19 TMT of LSLA SKO within record time. The product was transported to Misamari, Siliguri and Agra for further transportation to Army bases in cold border areas," he added.

From Misamari, the LSLA was sent to Arunachal Pradesh, while the product supplied to Siliguri was further transported to Sikkim, the ED-cum-Refinery Head said.

"The LSLA we had sent to Agra was given to the Indian Army stationed in Ladakh region. This is a matter of pride that Guwahati Refinery played an important role during the country's defence

mechanism in Operation Sindoor," he added.

The LSLA contains approximately 1 parts per million (ppm) of sulphur against a permissible limit of 10 ppm, 2-3 per cent aromatics against 4 per cent upper limit and 30 mm smoke point.

The Guwahati Refinery is the country's first public sector unit, inaugurated in January 1962 with a capacity of 0.75 million metric tonne per annum (MMTPA).

The capacity was enhanced to 1.2 MMTPA in 2023. Currently, the crude requirement of the refinery is distributed between those from Assam and imported ones. Assam crude constitutes around 40 per cent of GR's input, while 60 per cent are imported, Kanti said.

"Earlier, we used to get fully Assam crude. But after Numaligarh Refinery came into existence,

our share reduced and there is no fixed amount. Assam crude's first priority is Digboi and Numaligarh refineries. So, we are dependent on imported crude, coming from Paradip via Barauni," he added.

The senior official also said that GR is constructing a Catalytic Reforming unit (CRU), which is expected to be commissioned by May this year.

"We at present do not have the facility to produce reformate, which is a low-sulfur and high-octane-number gasoline blend component from Naptha. This stream is required for the production of gasoline and is currently imported from other refineries," he added.

Kanti said that the upcoming 90 KTPA CRU will enable Guwahati Refinery to be self-sufficient to produce gasoline in the future.

NEW DELHI: Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Thursday met party president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi for redressal of his grievances, after which he said "all is good" and "we are all on the same page", signalling a rapprochement with his party ahead of the crucial Kerala Assembly polls.

The meeting in Kharge's chamber in the Parliament House complex lasted for over an hour and forty-five minutes.

"We had a discussion with my two party leaders, the LoP and the Congress president. We had a very good, constructive, positive discussion," Tharoor said. "All is good and we are moving together on the same page. What more can I say," he told reporters in Parliament premises after the meeting.

Asked if the issue of chief ministerial face for Kerala polls was discussed, Tharoor said that was never the issue.

"I am not interested in being the candidate for anything. At the moment I am already



an MP, I have the trust of my voters from Thiruvananthapuram. I have their interest to look after in Parliament, that is my job," he said.

Tharoor said he was very satisfied with his meeting with the top Congress brass.

In a post on X, Tharoor said, "Thanks to @INCIndia President @kharge ji and LS LoP @RahulGandhi ji for a warm and constructive discussion today on a wide range of subjects. We are all on the same page as we move forward in the service of the people of India." He also posted a picture from the meeting in which the

three of them are seen smiling and posing for a picture at Kharge's chamber in Parliament House complex.

Sources said it was a "comprehensive" meeting during which a wide array of subjects were covered. Kharge and Gandhi made "the time necessary for a thorough discussion", a source close to Tharoor said, adding that all were on the "same page" and resolved to move forward together.

Tharoor had been upset over the treatment meted out to him at a Kochi event recently and attempts by some leaders to sideline him in Kerala.

Congress sources said the "proof of the pudding will be in the eating" and the next few weeks will demonstrate how well everything works in practice.

The meeting comes ahead of the Kerala Assembly polls which are very crucial for the Congress as it seeks to wrest power from the Left after 10 years in the opposition and is going all out to secure a victory in the southern state.

Last week, Tharoor had skipped a key strategy meeting of the party for the upcoming Kerala polls as he was believed to be upset over Rahul Gandhi not properly acknowledging his presence at a recent event and repeated attempts by state leaders to "sideline" him.

Sources close to him had then said that while a series of events had led to Tharoor's disappointment with the treatment meted out to him, the tipping point was Gandhi not acknowledging him at the 'Maha Panchayath' held in Kochi on January 19 to felicitate the local body poll winners.

EDITORIAL

TRUMP, XI, PUTIN - IN THE AGE OF STRONGMEN, THE PERIL FOR 'MIDDLE POWERS'

In most of his speeches and social media posts, Donald Trump makes two points, directly or indirectly. First, he is the greatest President of the United States, almost a god's gift to humanity. Second, that he doesn't receive enough recognition for what he has achieved in such a short period. No Nobel Prize, even after resolving at least eight global conflicts. No praise for strengthening the US economy through his tariffs. Facts don't matter much to him; what he feels is more important.

So, Trump should no longer be committed to peace, and the US should get Greenland at any cost because Norway didn't give him the Nobel Prize. India should have extra tariffs for its exports to the US because New Delhi didn't acknowledge Trump's role in ending last May's four-day military conflict with Pakistan and failed to nominate him for the Nobel Peace Prize. In the last 12 months, Trump has abandoned the rules-based global order that the US helped create after the Second World War and embraced a foreign policy based on his whims and preferences, weaponised tariffs and made the US unreliable to its partners. "I don't need international law," Trump told The New York Times earlier this month. When asked if there were limits on his global power, he said: "My own morality. My own mind,"

The Donroe Doctrine

The raid on Venezuela and abduction of its leader, Nicolas Maduro, at the beginning of this month was done without any consultation with the US allies or even the Congress. He called it in line with what he called the Donroe Doctrine, his version of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, to secure the Western Hemisphere from Russian and Chinese influence. Trump's Deputy Chief of Staff, Stephen Miller, minced no words to defend the move. "We are back to a world," Miller declared, "that is governed by strength, that is governed by force, that is governed by power." What Miller meant was that the US under Trump had reverted to the pre-War era, when big powers could seize territory or foreign property by force. In his much-applauded speech at Davos, Canada's Prime Minister, Mark Carney, declared that a rules-based global order was over and that "we are living in the midst of a rupture, not a transition". Quoting ancient Greek historian Thucydides, Carney said the world was entering a period in which "the strong can do what they can and the weak must suffer what they must". He warned, "Middle powers must act together because if we're not at the table, we're on the menu."

A Slow Death

Trump began to weaken the rules-based multilateral order during his first term. He withdrew from UN bodies, including the Human Rights Council, UNESCO, UNRWA, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Trump also stopped funding for the World Health Organization (WHO) during Covid-19 and weakened the security guarantees associated with NATO and undercut the WTO. His second term has been the most devastating for multilateral institutions, particularly the United Nations. In his speech to the UN in September, Trump attacked what he called the anti-woke notions in the UN system for the "globalist scam" of climate change and accompanying green policies. Under Trump, the US is not paying dues of even 22% after an 84% reduction in US foreign aid last May. Earlier this month, Trump withdrew the US from 66 international bodies, nearly half of which are UN organisations. Last week, the US pulled out of the WHO. The withdrawal of the US, which has been the organisation's largest funder, could cripple the body and its numerous global health projects.

Edit

In Trump's World, Wikipedia's Lesson On Collaboration

January 2026 has felt like one long stress test for the global order. The US administration parading Venezuela's President in handcuffs in New York City, renewed tensions over Greenland that rattled transatlantic trust, Trump openly alienating the European Union, and the rollout of an almost farcical Board of Peace for Gaza. In short, a new year reminding us that the world's stabilising institutions are either faltering or being reinvented on the fly. The headlines are heavy, the rhetoric sharper, the alliances thinner. And yet, in the midst of this unease, it is worth paying attention to a figure who has spent the last quarter-century quietly disproving the idea that large-scale cooperation is impossible: Jimmy Wales. This author spent an afternoon chatting with the 59-year-old founder of Wikipedia, who does not speak the language of geopolitics. His life's work rests, however, on a proposition that feels almost subversive in 2026: that most people, given the right framework, want to collaborate in good faith. And that optimism, even when it is not fully rational, can be a productive force. He calls himself a "pathological optimist", and he means it. When Wikipedia launched 25 years ago, there was no guarantee it would succeed. It emerged from the failure of Nupedia, a more rigid, expert-driven project that collapsed under the weight of its own seriousness. Wikipedia, by contrast, was built on something lighter but more powerful: fun, openness, and trust in a self-organising community. It worked not because humans are flawless, but because they are persistent. That distinction matters now. A Persistent Loss Of Faith The geopolitical turbulence of early 2026 has been fuelled in part by a loss of faith: in alliances, in norms, in institutions that once seemed unshakable. When the United States openly flirts with transactional diplomacy toward Europe, when territorial rhetoric reenters mainstream discourse, when peace initiatives are announced with more spectacle than consensus, cynicism becomes the default posture. It feels safer to assume bad faith than good intentions. Jimmy Wales offers a counterexample - not a naïve one, but a



grounded one. Wikipedia has never pretended that people are angels. It has policies, moderation, and guardrails precisely because conflict is inevitable. But it also begins from a crucial assumption that most contributors are there because they care about knowledge, accuracy, and something larger than themselves. That assumption has scaled across cultures, languages, and political systems. Wikipedia now exists in over 300 languages, many maintained by communities Wales himself will never meet. This matters because the crises of January 2026 are not just about power; they are about trust. Venezuela's uncertain transition has left citizens hopeful about economic relief but wary of democratic backsliding. Europe's reaction to US unpredictability has been less about outrage and more about recalibration - how much strategic autonomy is necessary when trust erodes? Even the Gaza Peace Board, however controversial, reflects a hunger for frameworks that might restore some measure of faith in diplomacy, however fragile. Serving Knowledge Wales would likely argue that the problem is not ambition but orientation. Wikipedia never set out to "create" knowledge. It set out to serve it. Its neutrality is not passive; it is worked on, debated, enforced, and constantly renegotiated. That

process - messy, slow, human - is precisely what many global institutions now lack the patience for. One of Wales's most striking observations is that Wikipedia's community would continue its work even if the outside world stopped paying attention. That is an extraordinary statement in an era obsessed with metrics, influence, and visibility. It suggests a form of faith that is not performative. Contrast that with the current global mood. Nations posture for leverage. Leaders speak to domestic audiences while quietly fraying international ties. Online spaces amplify hostility until it feels representative, even when it is not. Wales has long warned about this distortion. He says, "Spend too much time in the wrong corners of the internet, and you begin to believe that people are irredeemably angry and irrational. Step back into real communities - festivals, classrooms, collaborative projects - and a different picture emerges". The danger of 2026 is not only instability, but resignation. The idea that fragmentation is inevitable, that cooperation is obsolete, that hope itself is unserious. Wales's life's work argues the opposite. Hope, in his framing, is not blind optimism; it is sustained effort in the absence of guarantees. Wikipedia is not perfect. It has biases, disputes, and ongoing battles

over representation and accuracy. But it has endured because it treats those flaws as reasons to improve, not excuses to abandon the project. Their ethos of incremental progress, anchored in shared values, is precisely what the world needs more of as geopolitical certainties wobble. Truth Is Communal In an age of artificial intelligence, Wales remains stubbornly focused on human-created knowledge. Not because technology is dangerous, but because meaning is communal. Trust is communal. Truth, when it lasts, is negotiated collectively. These are not technological problems but social ones. January 2026 has reminded us how quickly systems can strain under pressure. It has also reminded us how much we depend on invisible forms of cooperation to keep the world intelligible. Jimmy Wales did not set out to build a metaphor for global resilience. He set out to build an encyclopedia. But in doing so, he offered something more enduring. Wikipedia is proof that faith in people, when paired with structure and humility, can scale. That lesson may not resolve conflicts or stabilise markets overnight. But in unsettled times, it offers something just as vital: a reason to believe that cooperation is not a relic of a calmer past, but a tool we can still choose - again and again - if we are willing to do the work.

Listen to the Call of the Canals: When Faith Communicates with the Environment



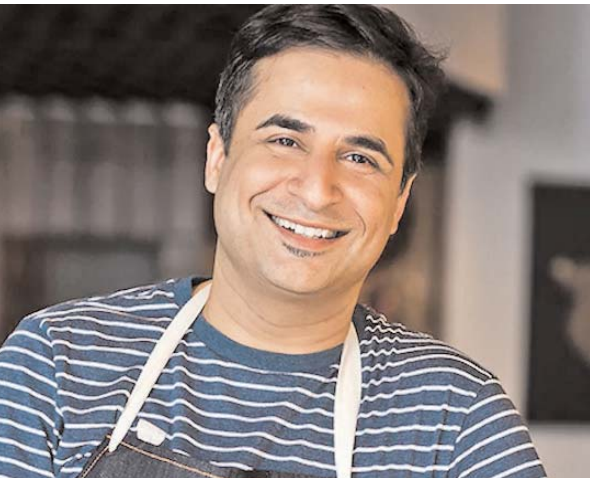
“The true form of faith is that we respect nature, keep the canals clean and give the gift of clean water to the coming generations.” Today, when we talk about worship, tradition, and faith, we often forget that the fundamental purpose of religion is to preserve life—not destroy it. When water, the very foundation of life, becomes defiled in the name of our faith, it becomes a matter for introspection. “Listen to the Call of the Canals” is one such public awareness campaign, which confronts us with our own mistakes and reveals true worship. Canals aren't just a conduit for water. They're the arteries of green fields, the thirst of animals, and the culture and civilization of villages. It's through these canals that farmers grow crops, animals thrive, and the rural economy thrives. But today, these very lifelines are groaning under our carelessness and blind traditions. The materials left after worship—idols, flowers, clothing, plastic, vermilion, incense sticks, coconuts, and even dead pets—are thrown into the canals. Acts performed in the name of devotion have become crimes against nature. This pain and concern gave birth to the “Listen to the Call of the Canals” campaign. It began with the efforts of Dr. Jasmer Singh Hooda (convener) in Rohtak and the Honorable Bhupendra Singh Godara in Hisar. This is not a one-day event, but the result of years of hard work and sustained awareness. This campaign is not for political

gain or organizational fame. Its purpose is simply one: to free the canals from pollution and to change society's mindset. Master Bhupendra Godara, born in the village of Gurera, resolved to spread this campaign to the masses. He was joined by many conscious comrades—Subedar Major Dalip Singh, Tekchand Bagri, Mr. Dalveer Potliya, retired Acharya Vijendra Singh, Krishna Kumar, Principal Ajit Singh, Nihal Singh Godara, Mr. Pawan Kumar, and many other dedicated social workers. They all firmly believe that until society changes its habits, the souls of the canals will never find peace. Laws and regulations are in place, but real change will only come when the public awakens. Even during the horrific times of the coronavirus, this caravan remained unstoppable. Be it Sunday or holiday, festival or rain, the team was seen standing on the banks of canals holding placards in their hands. The words written on the placards were not just slogans, but a dialogue with society. “If there is water, there is tomorrow”, “Do not pollute the canals”, “If there is faith, there should be cleanliness too”. Social workers like Himmat Singh, Ram Murti, Narendra Kulhadiya, Praveen Vakil, Surendra Godara, Sandeep, Sitaram, Sher Singh, Vikas Godara, and Rambhagat Punia strengthened this voice. The active participation of women like Suman Godara, Santosh Godara, Rachna, Pushpa, Kamala, Sunita, Sheela, Tara Devi, and Sudesh Dhanda gave the campaign social depth. Inspector Udaybhan Godara from Gurera also appealed to the people that until this message reaches every street and every home, change will remain incomplete. When plastic, chemicals, and organic waste dissolve into life-giving water, that very water becomes toxic. This toxic water flows into the fields, polluting the soil, reducing the quality of crops, and ultimately entering our food. This crisis isn't limited to agriculture. Animals, birds, and other creatures

that drink canal water become sick. The risk of waterborne diseases, skin conditions, digestive problems, and long-term serious illnesses is increasing. Scientists are increasingly warning that water pollution has become a silent disaster for human health. The core message of the “Listen to the Call of the Canals” campaign is simple and clear—religion means protecting nature. If God is omnipresent, then He is also present in rivers, canals, trees, and living beings. Then, what kind of faith is it to pollute these very elements in the name of worship? Pouring worship materials into canals is not religion, but unrighteousness. Master Bhupendra Godara's question speaks directly to society—“O Lord, why are people so disrespectful of nature in your name? What kind of devotion is this, filling life-giving canals with poison?” This question is the heart of this movement. No movement is successful unless the public becomes a part of it. The biggest achievement of this campaign is that it has changed the thinking of thousands of people. Now, in many places, instead of throwing puja materials into canals, people are burying them in the soil, placing them under plants, or turning to organic fertilizer. These small steps may seem simple, but they are the source of big changes. Culture changes only when habits change. “Listen to the Call of the Canals” is not just a warning, but a collective prayer—keep the canals clean, keep life safe. If the canals survive, fields will remain green, animals and birds will be protected, and future generations will enjoy the gift of clean water. This campaign reminds us that water is life, and protecting it is not the responsibility of any one individual or organization, but of all of us together. It's time we understand the difference between faith and superstition. True faith is that which saves life—not endangers it. "Listen to the call of the rivers" is actually the call of our conscience. The only

'Tell My Mother I Like Boys': Chef Suvir Saran Tells His Boldest Story Yet

In his new memoir, Tell My Mother I Like Boys, Michelin-starred chef Suvir Saran trades the precision of a professional kitchen for something far riskier: emotional nakedness. The result is a book that reads less like a celebrity memoir and more like a long, unflinching exhale, the kind you can only take once you have lived through enough fire, enough reinvention, enough heartbreak to stop being afraid of your own truth. Saran begins at the beginning, not with triumph, but with hesitation. He describes his birth as an "unsummoned third", a child kept almost by accident, raised in a Delhi where plurality was an instinct rather than a slogan. These early chapters are among the book's strongest: the rituals with his grandfather, the mixed faith prayer room, the quiet resilience of his mother. Saran approaches memory the way a chef approaches flavour: he lets it simmer, he layers it, he gives it time. And he refuses to simplify anything just because it is painful. Cooking As Memory The first act of the memoir, his childhood in Delhi, Nagpur, and back to Delhi, is told with striking sensory detail. Food is everywhere: laddoos being shaped in Panditji's kitchen, the bitter-sweet ritual of feeding birds as a form of remembrance, the scent of Nagpur oranges, the eggplant pickle from an upstairs neighbour that will later travel with him across continents. But this is not a "chef memoir" in the conventional sense. Cooking is not treated as destiny; it is treated as memory, inheritance,



and sometimes refuge. Saran writes of kitchens the way some people write of prayer halls. What gives the memoir its edge, however, is not nostalgia but confrontation. Saran does not gloss over cruelty, particularly the cruelty children inflict on each other. His descriptions of teasing, shame, and internal panic are direct without being self-pitying. The passages about being dressed up by cousins, the confusion that followed, and the quiet fear of not fitting into the masculine mould expected of him remain some of the most affecting sections of the book. He writes about queerness as a lifelong negotiation, a truth he understood long before he had the language for it. The memoir's second act, Manhattan, is where the book shifts gears. The city is painted as both tormentor and liberator. Saran writes candidly about ambition, love, betrayal, infidelity, illness, and the brutal loneliness of a life that looks glamorous from the outside. The Michelin star is mentioned, of course, but never glamorised. If anything,

Saran questions the very culture that once applauded him. He admits mistakes, he admits vanity, he admits selfishness. That honesty is precisely what strengthens the book. Readers expecting a glossy narrative about culinary success might be startled by how much space Saran devotes to his emotional interior life: relationships that shaped him, relationships that broke him, and the grief that followed him across continents. His reflections on caregiving - both the caregiving he received from friends, and the caregiving he had to offer in times of loss - are some of the memoir's most assured lines. Confession, Observation But the memoir's deepest emotional anchor is his mother. Every few chapters, the narrative returns to her, her pragmatism, her quiet endurance, her refusal to flinch even when the world around her did. In one of the book's early chapters, he recalls her comforting him after he fails a dictation test, turning pain into possibility with nothing more than tenderness and

chhola bhatura. These recurring portraits of his mother are crafted with restraint, not sentimentality. She is not idealised; she is honoured. The writing style is surprisingly literary. At times, almost too lyrical, but Saran generally knows when to pull back. His voice moves between the confessional and the observational with a natural ease, and the book's emotional honesty feels earned rather than performed. There are a few moments where the metaphors crowd each other, but the narrative never loses clarity. The last quarter, his fall, his illness, and his return to India, is the book's emotional core. When he writes about coming home "not in triumph but in tremor", the line lands with the weight of lived experience. And when he writes of India healing him, holding him, and giving him a second life, it is not a nationalistic flourish; it is gratitude, raw and grounded. Tell My Mother I Like Boys is not a typical chef memoir. It is not a coming-out manifesto. It is not a voyeuristic celebrity tell-all. It is something far more intimate: a life examined honestly. A narrative built on vulnerability rather than victory laps. A story that refuses to tidy up the messiness of identity, love, culture, and family. It is also a reminder that some of the most compelling memoirs come from people who have lived several lives in one, and are finally ready to tell the truth about all of them. Saran does exactly that. It is a brave book. A generous book. And a deeply human one.

Building on Customer Trust and Momentum, Xiaomi Expands Premium Service Centres to 15 New Cities

Visakhapatnam, January 30th 2026: Xiaomi, a global technology leader, today announced the strategic expansion of its Premium Service Centre network in India with the launch of centres across 15 new cities. This marks the second phase of Xiaomi's plan to establish 100 Premium Service Centres across the country. The expansion strengthens Xiaomi's value-for-experience strategy, with a clear focus on delivering a more accessible, reliable, and experience-led after-sales ownership journey for customers. Today, new centers are being launched in Visakhapatnam, Surat, and Lucknow. Two more stores in Ludhiana and Indore respectively, were launched on January 29. By the first quarter (Q1) of 2026, these Premium Service Centers will be available in a total of 15 cities. The new-generation Premium Service Centres are designed to go beyond traditional repairs, offering a more holistic, elevated service experience. Customers can expect faster turn-around times, access to dedicated technical expertise, hands-on product interaction zones, and enhanced convenience features, all thoughtfully designed to make the service experience simpler, more transparent, and more reassuring. Not just that, the centres are envisioned as more than just service points; they serve as holistic experience hubs. Customers can explore and purchase



Xiaomi products, enjoy paperless operations across touchpoints in line with the brand's sustainability focus, and participate in community-building initiatives. One such initiative is Xiaomi Days, which will be held every Wednesday, offering exclusive benefits. Speaking on this, Sudhin Mathur, Chief Operating Officer, Xiaomi India said "The strong response to our first 10 Premium Service Centres reaffirmed that customers increasingly value faster, more dependable, and experience-led after-sales support. As part of Xiaomi's value-for-experience strategy for 2026, the expansion into 15 additional cities is a natural next

step in extending this service model to more users across India. As customers hold on to their devices for longer, reliable service becomes essential. Through our Premium Service Centres, we are helping customers maintain their devices and get more value over time, reinforcing our commitment to long-term ownership support." The new centres also introduce a range of enhanced customer benefits aimed at making premium after-sales support more inclusive and rewarding. Women customers will be eligible for special 30-day service discounts, while defence personnel and persons with disabilities can avail lifetime waivers on

service charges. Customers will also benefit from limited-period offers, including up to 50% discounts on select spare parts and complimentary screen protectors for select devices, subject to availability. Together, these initiatives are designed to make high-quality after-sales care more accessible, while encouraging customers to extend the longevity of their devices through trusted service support. As smartphone replacement cycles continue to lengthen, reliable after-sales service is becoming an integral part of the ownership experience. Xiaomi devices are engineered for durability and supported by years of software and security updates. Through its expanding premium service network, Xiaomi is further strengthening its role as a long-term partner, helping users maintain, protect, and derive greater value from their devices as part of a more sustainable and responsible ownership journey. Xiaomi has seen a strong and encouraging customer response to the first 10 Premium Service Centres launched in 2025, consistently delivering on its service commitments. Nearly 95% of devices were repaired and delivered within 24 hours, repeat visits were kept below 1%, and customer escalations remained under 0.5%, reflecting high service efficiency, quality resolution, and strong customer confidence in the premium service model.

CREDAI HYDERABAD ON ECONOMIC SURVEY 2025–26

Hyderabad: January 30th, 2026: CREDAI Hyderabad welcomes the Economic Survey 2025–26, which reaffirms Hyderabad's role as a key driver of India's urban and economic growth. The Survey projects 7.4% GDP growth for FY26, supported by strong Gross Fixed Capital Formation nearing 30% of GDP, a resilient services sector growing at 9.1%, and credible fiscal consolidation with the fiscal deficit at around 4.8% of GDP. Hyderabad's growth stands out for its simultaneous urban densification and rapid peripheral expansion, reflecting sustained demand for high-density residential and commercial development. This pattern highlights the need for possibility-oriented urbanism, where infrastructure, mobility, and utilities keep pace with city expansion. The Survey highlights strong sectoral performance, with the Financial, Real Estate and Professional Services sector growing by 9.9% in H1 FY26, while construction recorded 7.4% growth, underscoring the multiplier impact of public capital expenditure on housing, jobs, and infrastructure. Commenting on the Economic Survey, Mr. Jagannath Rao Bandari, President-elect, CREDAI Hyderabad, said: "The Economic Survey captures Hyderabad's unique growth trajectory, with both core densification and peripheral expansion progressing together. To sustain this momentum, it is critical to address constraints in land, mobility, and infrastructure through predictable regulations, contextual compliance, and trust-based governance." CREDAI Hyderabad aligns with the Survey's assessment that the high cost of capital remains a key constraint and calls for risk-mitigation tools, partial credit guarantees, and improved access to long-term finance to support housing



supply across segments. Looking ahead to the Union Budget 2026, CREDAI Hyderabad expects continued emphasis on infrastructure funding and public capex to sustain 7–8% construction growth, along with expanded support for PMAY 2.0, single-window clearances, and viability gap funding for affordable housing. On taxation for homebuyers, CREDAI Hyderabad urges further reforms including higher income-tax deductions on home loans, NPS-like tax benefits linked to housing finance, and rationalisation of stamp duties, which will enhance affordability and boost middle-class homeownership. CREDAI Hyderabad reiterates its commitment to reform-led growth, affordable housing, and sustainable urban development, and looks forward to policies that strengthen Hyderabad's contribution to India's \$5 trillion economy.

PhysicsWallah Announces Free Doubt Resolution Support and Mock Preboards for Class 10 CBSE Students across India

Education company PhysicsWallah (PW) announced a student support initiative aimed at assisting aspirants appearing for the Class 10 CBSE Board Exams in 2026. Students across the country can avail free doubt resolution and expert guidance. This initiative is not only open for PW students but any Class 10 student across the country. The initiative is designed to help reduce academic pressure during the exam season. PW will also facilitate offline preboards in Science and Mathematics nationwide in an attempt to strengthen student readiness. These examinations will be conducted at PW's physical centres like Vidyapeeth, Pathshala, and Tuition Centres to simulate real board exam conditions and help students improve proficiency and time-management skills under exam-day con-

straints. Ankit Gupta, CEO of Vidyapeeth-Offline of PhysicsWallah (PW), said, "Education should never be restricted by boundaries, especially when a student is preparing for a defining moment like the Board Exams. Many students lack immediate access to quality exam support and we know even a single unresolved doubt can cause stress. By opening our Vidyapeeth, Pathshala and Tuition centres to every student, regardless of whether they are enrolled with us or not, we are simply doing what is right for the student community. We want aspirants to feel supported, confident, and ready to perform to their full potential." Students across India can visit their nearest PW Vidyapeeth, Pathshala or Tuition Centre to obtain a Doubt Buster Pass, valid till the board exams, and book a slot for

doubt resolution. Experienced faculty members will address specific queries, explain complex topics, and offer strategic guidance on answer-writing techniques. Students can clarify doubts across subjects including Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology, and also receive revision cards for the CBSE Class 10 syllabus to support their preparation. Students can book a slot at their nearest centre for the Science exam scheduled on 1 February 2026 and the Mathematics exam scheduled on 8 February 2026 through the PW app. The initiative is being rolled out through PhysicsWallah's network of 192 tech-enabled Vidyapeeth and Pathshala centres located across 132 cities in India as of 30th September 2025.

About PhysicsWallah
PhysicsWallah Limited

(PW), an education platform, was founded in 2020 by Alakh Pandey and Prateek Maheshwari. Headquartered in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, PW aims to facilitate education through online, offline and hybrid platforms. Initially launched as a YouTube channel in 2014, PW now offers education to students through its native app, tech-enabled offline and hybrid centres, and YouTube channels. PW's offerings span various educational segments, including test preparation, a skilling vertical, coaching for higher education, and facilitating education abroad, with programmes available in multiple vernacular languages. PhysicsWallah Limited was listed on the National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE) and BSE Limited (Bombay Stock Exchange) on November 18, 2025.

BrahMos MD & CEO J.R. Joshi Inaugurates Manappuram Foundation's 'Digital Dementia' Programme

Hyderabad, January 30th 2026: Manappuram Foundation organised the fourth edition of its mental health awareness programme on 'Digital Dementia' at ITC Kakatiya Hotel, Hyderabad. The programme was inaugurated by Dr Jaiteerth R. Joshi, Managing Director and CEO of BrahMos Aerospace. In his inaugural address, Dr Joshi highlighted the alarming growth of digital dependency among youngsters and teenagers and stressed the need to address its serious psychological impacts. He emphasised that mental health protection and psychological safety must be accorded equal importance alongside technological advancement. Eminent de-addiction expert on technology dependence, Dr Manoj Sharma, who is also a Professor at NIMHANS, Bengaluru, led the programme. Dr Sharma delineated various mental ailments that people are developing due to



overdependence on digital technology. He also emphasised the judicious use of digital technology and the need to stay healthy by keeping away from digital devices for fixed durations. The programme, organised by Manappuram Finance Ltd, received an encouraging response and appreciation from various sections of society. On the occasion, Mr V. P. Nandakumar, Chairman and Managing

Director of Manappuram Finance Ltd, honoured Dr Joshi in recognition of his valuable contributions to the defence technology sector. "Under Dr Joshi's leadership, BrahMos Aerospace continues to scale new heights by achieving significant technological breakthroughs, global recognition and large commercial orders," said Mr Nandakumar. BrahMos, the world-class supersonic cruise missile jointly developed by Russia and India, has

emerged as a symbol of India's technological prowess, with its unmatched speed, precision and multi-platform launch capability. Around 200 leading businesspersons and professionals from various fields participated in the programme. Mr K. M. Asharaf, Senior PRO of Manappuram Finance, welcomed the dignitaries, while Lion's Club International leader Mr Saju Antony Pathadan proposed the vote of thanks.

HCLTech and Guardian Partner to Accelerate AI-driven Technology Transformation Journey



NOIDA, India, Jan 28, 2026 — HCLTech, a leading global technology company, has been selected by The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America® (Guardian), one of the largest U.S. life insurers and a major provider of employee benefits, to accelerate Guardian's AI-driven technology transformation journey and deliver seamless customer experience. The multi-year partnership reflects a broader shift toward long-term technology modernization at Guardian, with an emphasis on AI-led transformation and streamlined IT operations. As part of the partnership, Guardian will leverage HCLTech's GenAI service

transformation platform, AI Force, to support ongoing enterprise-wide technology innovation. This partnership will enhance Guardian's operational efficiencies, improve engineering outcomes and accelerate time-to-market across application development, support, testing and infrastructure management. "Partnering with HCLTech is a key step in our long-term strategy to harness data and AI, consolidate services with a single strategic partner and modernize our core technology foundations," said Steve Rullo, chief digital and technology officer at Guardian. "This partnership allows us to accelerate customer facing digi-

tal innovation, improve efficiency across our operations, and deliver a more seamless experience for the customers and policyholders who trust Guardian." "Partnering with one of the largest insurers in the U.S. underscores HCLTech's leadership in financial services, driven by our AI expertise and deep industry experience," said Srinivasan Seshadri, chief growth officer and global head of financial services at HCLTech. "It is an exciting time to be a part of Guardian's business growth as we leverage our tech transformation experience and global footprint to help the company realize its business goals."

FUJIFILM India Introduces Advance Imaging and Healthcare IT Solutions to Support India's Preventive Healthcare Ambition

Hyderabad, January 30, 2026: India's radiology and diagnostic imaging ecosystem is entering a new phase of growth, driven by rising life expectancy, increasing health awareness, and the expanding reach of public healthcare initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat, which are fueling demand for timely, accurate, and accessible diagnostics across the country.

As imaging volumes grow across preventive, acute, and chronic care, there is a parallel need for advanced, scalable technologies that can support high-quality diagnosis while strengthening healthcare delivery beyond metro cities. Responding to these evolving needs, FUJIFILM India, a leader in advanced diagnostic imaging solutions, today announced the launch of Four new diagnostic imaging and healthcare IT solutions at the Indian Radiological and Imaging Association (IRIA) 2026, underscoring its commitment to strengthening India's diagnostic imaging ecosystem through advanced,



clinically validated, and workflow-centric technologies that enable diagnostic confidence, operational efficiency, and broader access across diverse clinical environments. At the center of the showcase is FCT iStream, Fujifilm's latest CT scan system, built on a "Less is More" design philosophy. FCT iStream combines high-definition imaging, dose optimization, and AI-enabled workflow automation powered by the Synergy-Drive

workflow suite and REILI Medical AI technologies. "The CT scanner automates key steps across the imaging process, from patient positioning & scan planning to image reconstruction & seamless integration with SYNAPSE 3D Workstation for advanced visualization, helping radiology departments to manage rising patient volumes with greater efficiency and consistency. Advanced reconstruction and Organ-based dose modulation

technologies further enable high diagnostic confidence at significantly reduced radiation doses, supporting a wide range of clinical applications including oncology, cardiology, neurology, trauma, and preventive health screening. Complementing its CT offerings, FUJIFILM India also highlighted its women's health imaging portfolio, led by advanced full-field digital mammography systems, including AMULET SOPHINITY and AI Designed with a

strong focus on patient comfort and diagnostic precision, these mammography machines support early breast cancer detection through high-resolution imaging, AI-assisted positioning, tomosynthesis, and contrast-enhanced mammography capabilities.

Together, they reinforce FUJIFILM India's continued emphasis on preventive healthcare and improved screening outcomes, particularly in women's health. The portfolio further includes digital radiography (X-ray) systems, such as the FDR Smart X Essential series, engineered for reliability, flexibility, and efficient workflows in high-throughput clinical environments. Designed for deployment across tertiary hospitals, diagnostic centres, and space-constrained facilities, these X-ray systems combine consistent image quality with space-efficient configurations and streamlined operations, supporting broader access to essential radiography services across urban and non-metro settings.

Trump says 'it would be great' if US 'didn't have to use' military force on Iran

Donald Trump says he has told Iran it has to do "two things" to avoid military action, as the US builds up its forces in the Gulf. "Number one, no nuclear. And number two, stop killing protesters," the US president said, adding that "they are killing them by the thousands". "We have a lot of very big, very powerful ships sailing to Iran right now, and it would be great if we didn't have to use them." His latest remarks follow weeks of pressure on Iran to negotiate a deal on its nuclear programme. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has said armed forces were ready "with their fingers on the trigger" to "immediately and powerfully respond" to any aggression. Araghchi arrived in Istanbul on Friday for talks expected to focus on averting the threat of any military action by the US. Later, in a call with his Iranian counterpart



Masoud Pezeshkian, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Turkey was willing to help "de-escalate" tensions between Tehran and Washington, his office said. Trump made his latest comments at the premiere of a documentary about his wife Melania. Earlier this

week, Trump wrote on Truth Social: "Hopefully Iran will quickly 'Come to the Table' and negotiate a fair and equitable deal - NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS." He warned that a "massive Armada is heading to Iran", and it was "ready, willing, and able to rapidly fulfil its

mission, with speed and violence, if necessary". In response, Araghchi said: "Iran has always welcomed a mutually beneficial, fair and equitable NUCLEAR DEAL - on equal footing, and free from coercion, threats, and intimidation - which ensures Iran's rights

to PEACEFUL nuclear technology, and guarantees NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS." "Such weapons have no place in our security calculations and we have NEVER sought to acquire them," he added.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said that no negotiations with the US were currently under way, despite "exchanges of messages". Earlier this month, Trump said that the US would come to the "rescue" of Iranian protesters if authorities used violence against them. Demonstrations began in late December after a sharp fall in the value of the Iranian currency, but swiftly evolved into a crisis of legitimacy for the country's clerical leadership. Tehran locals told the BBC that the crackdown on protestors was unlike anything that they had witnessed before.

Though Trump initially promised that "help is on the way", he later said that he had been told on good authority that the execution of demonstrators had stopped. The US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (Hrana) says it has so far confirmed the killing of at least 6,479 people since the unrest began, including 6,092 protesters, 118 children and 214 people affiliated with the government. It is also investigating approximately 17,000 more reported deaths. Iranian authorities said last week that more than 3,100 people had been killed, but that the majority were security personnel or bystanders attacked by "rioters". The European Union has since added Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to its terrorist list, in addition to placing new sanctions on six entities and 15 individuals in Iran.

BURKINA FASO JUNTA ANNOUNCES BAN ON ALL POLITICAL PARTIES



Burkina Faso's junta has announced a ban on all political parties, whose activities have been suspended since the military seized power in 2022. Junta leader Captain Ibrahim Traoré has been criticised for suppressing dissent and the move will be seen as the latest move to tighten control. According to Burkina Faso's Interior Minister Emile Zerbo, the ban is part of plans to "rebuild the state" after what he said were "numerous abuses" in the country's multiparty system. Zerbo said the system had been

"promoting division among citizens and weakening the social fabric". Parties were previously banned from holding public gatherings but the new decree stops them from operating altogether. All the assets of the dissolved parties would be transferred to the state, Zerbo said, adding that a draft law would be sent to the Transitional Legislative Assembly "as soon as possible". The country had more than 100 registered political parties before the coup, with 15 represented in parliament after the 2020 general election.

Ukraine sees quieter night as Trump says Putin will not attack its cities



Ukraine has seen a relatively quiet night after Donald Trump said his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin had agreed not to attack Kyiv and "various towns" during a cold snap. The Kremlin confirmed it had received the US president's request, but declined to give specifics about what was agreed. While Trump did not say when the pause could begin, air raid alerts sounded in just eight Ukrainian regions overnight into Friday, with two minor injuries recorded in Zaporizhzhia. Temperatures in the capital, Kyiv, are due to plummet to -24C (-11F) over the coming days. Russia has recently intensified attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, as it has during cold periods since its invasion began. Kyiv has previously seen periods without aerial attacks, so it is unclear whether a quieter night in the capital was a result of any agreement between Trump and Putin. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on

Friday that Putin had received a personal request from Trump to halt strikes on Kyiv until 1 February, to create favourable conditions for peace talks, but declined to comment further. Ukrainian officials had been expecting a major attack this weekend ahead of the current cold spell - if that does not take place, it could mark a significant step in US-led efforts to bring the war to a close. Ukraine's air force said more than 100 drones and a ballistic missile were fired at regions near the front line overnight. But, as of Friday morning, there have been no fresh attacks on electricity or heating infrastructure crucial for keeping people warm. Trump told a televised cabinet meeting in Washington DC on Thursday: "I personally asked President Putin not to fire into Kyiv and the various towns for a week, and he agreed to do that." He added: "It was very nice. A lot of people said, 'Don't waste the call, you're not going to get that.'"

Music legend Fela Kuti becomes first African to get Grammys Lifetime Achievement Award



Long crowned by his legion of fans as the king of Afrobeat, the late Fela Kuti is finally being recognised by the global music industry. The Nigerian star will posthumously receive a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Grammys - almost three decades after his death at the age of 58. "Fela has been in the hearts of the people for such a long time. Now the Grammys have acknowledged it, and

it's a double victory," his musician son Seun Kuti tells the BBC. "It's bringing balance to a Fela story," he adds. Rikki Stein, a long-time friend and manager of the late musician, says the recognition by the Grammys is "better late than never". "Africa hasn't in the past rated very highly in their interests. I think that's changing quite a bit of late," Stein tells the BBC. Following the global success of Afrobeats, a genre inspired by Fela's sound, the Grammys introduced the category of Best African Performance in 2024. This year, Nigerian superstar Burna Boy also has a nomination in the Best Global Music Album category. But Fela Kuti will be the first African to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Paytm Delivers Third Straight Profitable Quarter as PAT Rises to 225 Crore; Revenue Increases to 2,194 Crore in Q3 FY 2026

Paytm (One 97 Communications Limited), India's full stack merchant payments leader serving MSMEs and enterprises, and a leading financial services distribution company, and the pioneer of mobile payments, QR codes, and Soundbox, today announced its financial results for the quarter ending December 2025 (Q3 FY26) reporting its third consecutive profitable quarter, driven by strong monetisation, higher payments GMV, merchant subscriptions, and distribution of financial services revenue. In the December quarter, Paytm reported a profit after tax (PAT) of 225 crore, an improvement of 433 crore year-on-year. EBITDA for the quarter improved to 156 crore with an EBITDA margin of 7%, reflecting an improvement of 379 crore

YoY driven by revenue growth and continued operating leverage. Contribution profit stood at 1,249 crore, up 30% YoY with a contribution margin of 57%, an improvement of 5 percentage points YoY. Paytm UPI continued to gain market share for the third consecutive quarter. Paytm's consumer UPI GMV grew 35% in the last nine months versus industry GMV growth of 16%. In Q3 FY26, operating revenue grew 20% YoY to 2,194 crore, led by higher payments GMV, increase in merchant subscriptions and growth in distribution of financial services. On a like-for-like basis, revenue growth was approximately 25%. Paytm said that there was an insignificant impact on revenue from industry stoppage of rent payments through credit card (PA PG guidelines, Sep

2025) and Real Money Gaming (RMG) Act, Aug 2025, as the company has taken proactive compliance measures over the past few years. Payments services revenue (including other operating revenue) grew 21% YoY to 1,284 crore. Net payment revenue increased by 25% YoY to 613 crore, due to improved payment processing margin and increase in merchant subscriptions which grew by 27 lakh YoY to reach 1.44 crore. Payments GMV grew 24% YoY to 6.2 lakh crore. In Q3 FY 2026, distribution of financial services revenue grew 34% YoY to 672 Cr, driven by continued growth in distribution of merchant loans and wealth products. This is despite lower volumes under the Default Loss Guarantee (DLG) program, which leads to lower revenue and lower

other direct costs. Indirect expenses declined 8% YoY to 1,092 crore, driven by lower employee costs (including ESOP costs) and lower Provisions for Doubtful Debt (PDD). Cash balance stood at 12,882 crore as of the quarter ending December 2025, providing continued capital flexibility to expand business. During the quarter, the offline merchant business was transferred to Payments Services Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of the company, in line with regulatory guidelines. Payments Services Limited received final approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as an Online Payment Aggregator. Further, the RBI authorised PPSL to operate as a Payment Aggregator for offline and cross-border payments.

SYRIAN GOVERNMENT REACHES DEAL WITH KURDISH-LED FORCES

Syria's government has reached a deal with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) militia alliance that would see the gradual integration of Kurdish forces and institutions into the state. This comes after weeks of clashes which saw Syrian troops reclaim large swathes of territory in the north-east that had been under SDF control for more than a decade. US envoy Tom Barrack called it "a profound and historic milestone in Syria's journey toward national reconciliation, unity, and enduring stability". Earlier this month - and after its major territorial losses - the SDF



agreed to a ceasefire that saw much of its hold brought under government control, but reports of clashes continued. Much like that 14-point agreement, Friday's deal would see SDF withdraw from points of contact, its members join the Syrian army and government, and the

integration of its administrative and civil bodies into those of the state. The SDF said the agreement also includes the formation of a military division consisting of three brigades made of its members. The statement on X added that an agreement on the civil and education-

al rights for Kurdish people was also reached, as well as a guarantee that those displaced would be allowed to return to their homes. Part of the deal saw the transfer of prisons, oil and gas fields - which were under SDF control - to Damascus. Syrian troops seized control of the Omar facility, the country's largest oilfield, after the SDF pulled back. Earlier, the army took the strategic Tabqa dam on the Euphrates river. The Kurds previously controlled nearly a third of Syria's territory with the support of the US after it helped defeat the Islamic State (IS) group.

Panama voids Hong Kong-based firm's canal port contracts



Panama's Supreme Court has annulled contracts allowing a Hong Kong-based company to operate container ports on the Panama Canal. The ruling comes a year after US President Donald Trump claimed China was "operating the Panama Canal" - the main shipping link between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans - in his inaugural speech. CK Hutchison Holding, through its subsidiary the Panama Ports Company (PPC), has operated two of the five ports since the 1990s. It had previously agreed to sell them to a group led by a US investment firm under a wider deal. The court found that laws allowing the firm to operate the ports were "unconstitutional", but PPC said the ruling "lacks legal basis". Trump has made repeated claims that the Central American canal is under Chinese control. During his address last January, he said: "China is operating the Panama Canal and we didn't give it to China. We gave it to Panama and we're taking it back." The following month, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio also

demanding that Panama make "immediate changes" to what he called the "influence and control" of China over the canal. Panama has previously rejected the US government's claims and President Jose Raul Mulino has said the canal "is and will remain" in his country's hands. There is no public evidence to suggest China exercises control over the canal, though Chinese companies have a significant presence there. CK Hutchison, founded by Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-shing, is not owned by the Chinese government. But Beijing's tighter political control over Hong Kong in recent years has changed how the company is viewed internationally. Its global assets - which include ports and logistics hubs - are now often seen through the lens of wider concerns about China's influence. Against a backdrop of rivalry between the US and China over global trade routes, as well as the Trump administration's focus on US dominance over the western hemisphere, the ruling on Thursday is likely to be seen as a victory for Washington.

TRUMP NOMINATES FEDERAL RESERVE CRITIC KEVIN WARSH TO RUN US CENTRAL BANK

US President Donald Trump says Kevin Hassett, who had been seen as a frontrunner for the Fed role, would have made "a great Chairman" but that he couldn't afford to spare him. Hassett is a long-time conservative economist and key Trump economic adviser. Taking to Truth Social in the last few minutes, Trump says Hassett is "highly respected" and "is doing such an outstanding job". "I just didn't want to let him go. Kevin is indescribably good so, as the expression goes, "if you can't do better, don't try to fix it!" In our next post, we'll bring you more on who Kevin Hassett is. Kevin Warsh has been at the top of Trump's list of favourites to lead the Federal Reserve since the president's

first term in office. The fact it took Trump this long to name him is down to one problem: that Warsh has for years been seen as a voice for higher interest rates. That's at odds with Trump - a self-described "low interest rate guy" of longstanding, who has put unprecedented public pressure on the Fed to slash borrowing costs. Since Trump's election, Warsh has taken steps to shed his reputation in media appearances and opinion columns. But Trump has remained uneasy, openly worrying about whether candidates would say one thing while jockeying for the job but do another once it was secured. But he also needs his pick to pass muster in Congress and on Wall Street, where the



potential for an independent streak is seen as a plus. For now, Warsh seems to have satisfied the president's concerns. But Trump's swift turn on his last pick for Fed chair - Powell - should serve as a cautionary tale for anyone taking the job. Trump said Kevin Warsh was from "central casting" - and in many ways he is a fairly typ-

ical central banker, as a former Federal Reserve governor and adviser to the Bank of England. Hence the markets' reaction to rumours of his appointment. Gold prices had been soaring to record highs. This was partly driven by fears that Trump would choose a Fed chairman who would cave in to his demands to cut interest

rates, leading to a falling dollar and rising inflation. Buying gold is a strategy to protect against those things. Compared to other candidates, Warsh is seen as a "relatively safe choice", in the words of Capital Economics' analyst Stephen Brown, and less likely to "morph into a full-blown Trump stooge". Gold slumped as reports of his impending appointment emerged, even falling below \$5000 an ounce at one stage this morning. Kevin Warsh, a Wall Street veteran and a former Federal Reserve member, faces one of the world's most coveted policy-making jobs - but perhaps also one of the trickiest. This selection process has not just been about who gets to be the world's most powerful

banker - but also the future of the central bank's independence. Kevin Warsh is a rare candidate who appears to appease both the president and investors. Warsh believes that rates should be lower and that the AI revolution can help contain inflationary pressures - aligning with the president. Meanwhile, some investors believe Warsh's track record on taking a tough line on inflation during his previous stint as Fed Chair hints at a pragmatic approach. He now undergoes a Senate confirmation, where there is resistance to appointing a new chair while an investigation into the present chair is ongoing. And then, once in post, he will need to prove his credibility to markets.

Australian Open semi-finals: Djokovic leads Sinner by break in fourth set

Serbian tennis star Novak Djokovic takes on Italy's Jannik Sinner in the second semi-final of the Australian Open 2026. Djokovic, currently ranked No. 4 in the world, was two sets down against Lorenzo Musetti in the quarters, but entered the semis after Musetti was forced to retire due to injury. On the other hand, Sinner has been in imperious form. Apart from a short third round scare against Eliot Spizzirri, Sinner is yet to drop a set in any other match. When will the Novak Djokovic vs Jannik Sinner, Australian Open 2026 semi-final match take place? The Novak Djokovic vs Jannik Sinner, Australian Open 2026 semi-final match will take place on Friday, January 30 (IST). Where will the Novak Djokovic vs Jannik Sinner, Australian Open 2026 semi-final match be held? The Novak Djokovic vs Jannik Sinner, Australian Open 2026 semi-final match at the Rod



Laver Arena in Melbourne, Australia. What time will the Novak Djokovic vs Jannik Sinner, Australian Open 2026 semi-final match start? The Novak Djokovic vs Jannik Sinner, Australian Open 2026 semi-final match is expected to start from 2:00 PM IST. Which TV channels will show the live telecast of the Novak Djokovic vs Jannik Sinner, Australian Open 2026 semi-final match? The Novak



Djokovic vs Jannik Sinner, Australian Open 2026 semi-final match will be televised live on the Sony Sports network. Where to follow the live streaming of the Novak Djokovic vs Jannik Sinner, Australian Open 2026 semi-final match? The Novak Djokovic vs Jannik Sinner, Australian Open 2026 semi-final match will be live streamed on the FanCode app and website. Ten-time

Australian Open winner Novak Djokovic has broken reigning champion Jannik Sinner, taking a 5-4 lead in the fourth set of the Australian Open 2026 semi-final at the Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne on Friday. World No. 2 Sinner leads World No. 4 Djokovic two sets to one, having won the third set 6-4. Sinner won the first set 6-3, having broken Djokovic at the first time of asking.

However, Djokovic roared back to clinch the second set 6-3. Djokovic has not beaten Sinner in more than two years, but is gunning for his 11th Australian Open final. The winner of the match will take on World No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz in the final, who battled through injury to beat Alexander Zverev in a five-set thriller. Jannik Sinner has now smashed 21 aces today, making it his career best in a single match! He takes the ninth game to keep the set alive at 5-4, but Djokovic will win the set if he holds serve next time out. Djokovic bounces back, cancels Sinner's advantage and then goes on and wins the game to hold serve. Make that 5-3 to Djokovic in the fourth set. The crowd continues to chant "Novak, Novak". Sinner will now serve to stay in the set. Enthralling game between Sinner and Djokovic. Sinner threatens to break and takes a 30-40 lead, but Djokovic fights back to pull it to deuce. "

THE CURIOUS CASE OF VIRAT KOHLI'S INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT DISAPPEARING FOR HOURS

In a move that sent shockwaves through the digital world, Indian cricket legend Virat Kohli's Instagram account suddenly vanished on Friday morning. The profile, boasting over 274 million followers, left millions of fans in a state of confusion and panic as it appeared to be deactivated without warning. The disappearance was first noticed in the early hours of Friday. Users attempting to access the handle @virat.kohli were met with the standard error messages: "This page isn't available" or "The link may be broken." However, the anxious fans were able to catch their breath hours later when Kohli's Instagram account was reactivated, just hours later after its disappearance. The timing was particularly baffling given Kohli's red-hot form. He recently reclaimed the No. 1 ICC ODI batting ranking, though for a short interval, after a masterful 124-run knock against New Zealand earlier this month. As his Instagram went dark,



his profile on X (formerly Twitter) remained active, though the "King" offered no immediate explanation. With Virat silent, fans turned to the next best source: his wife, actor Anushka Sharma. Her recent posts were quickly repurposed as a community helpdesk, with comments ranging from the desperate to the hilarious. Here are some of the comments left on Anushka's Instagram by fans: It's 2 AM man and Kohli FC has started spamming under Instagram's official handle. Anushka maintained the

couple's trademark privacy, leaving the queries unanswered while fans speculated about everything from a high-level hack to a voluntary "digital detox." What Really Happened? As of Friday morning, the mystery has reached a semi-conclusion: Virat Kohli's account has officially returned to Instagram. While neither Meta nor Kohli's management team has released a statement, the "Nihilist Penguin" meme trend, which shows a penguin walking off into the distance, became the internet's favourite explanation for his brief exit.

Sri Lanka Breaks Silence On ICC-Bangladesh T20 World Cup 2026 Row

The Bangladesh vs International Cricket Council (ICC) T20 World Cup row continued for over three weeks before the apex cricket board gave its final verdict on the issue. Bangladesh had requested the board to shift their T20 World Cup 2026 matches out of India. They were set to play four matches in Kolkata and Mumbai in the initial stage of the tournament. Bangladesh wanted their games to be moved to Sri Lanka, citing security concerns in India. This request had arrived in the wake of Mustafizur Rahman's exit from the Indian Premier League. While the ICC rejected Bangladesh's request, it gave the side a 24-hour



deadline to make a final decision. As Bangladesh stayed firm on its stance, the apex cricket board eliminated the side and replaced it with Scotland, the top-ranked nation among those failed to qualify for the tournament. Several reports are suggesting that Pakistan may also boycott the event



in solidarity with Bangladesh or decide not to play their matches against India. While so much drama is taking place all around, Sri Lanka stayed silent for a long time. Given they are the co-hosts of the tournament alongside India, there was a lot of attention on their reticence.

The country has finally spoken up on the issue. Cricket Secretary Bandula Dissanayake told AFP that Colombo wanted to avoid being drawn into regional disputes. "In these disputes among India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, we are remaining neutral; all of these are friendly nations," he said. The official, however, added that Sri Lanka would be willing to host future tournaments for any of the countries if asked. Notably, Pakistan and India now play their matches at neutral venues due to deteriorating political tensions. As a result, Pakistan will be playing their T20 World Cup 2026 games in Sri Lanka, including the one against India.

"Passports Warm":

Uganda Offer ICC To Replace Pakistan In T20 World Cup After Iceland 'Withdraw' Proposal

The suspense surrounding the development is reaching a crescendo. Pakistan Cricket Board chief Mohsin Naqvi met the country's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and later posted that a decision on the "ICC matter" will be taken by Friday or Monday (February 2). Bangladesh has already been replaced by Scotland after the former's refusal to play its matches in India. If Pakistan also withdraws, there will be a big gap for the ICC to fill. In these circumstances, Uganda has offered its candidature if "a T20 World Cup seat opens." "Dear @ICC, If a T20 World



Cup seat opens, Uganda is ready - packed and padded. Passports warm (not ice). No bakers leaving ovens or ships U-turning. Heat, noise, pressure? We'll bring the bold kit," Cricket Uganda posted on X. Uganda's hilarious post

was in direct reference to what Iceland Cricket had posted a while back. They first offered to replace Pakistan and then "withdrew" as well. "It is with a heavy heart that we now announce our unavailability to replace Pakistan in the

upcoming T20 World Cup," they wrote, before adding: "Our loss is likely Uganda's gain. We wish them well." Amid the "threat," the Pakistan Cricket Board has already scheduled its T20 World Cup squad to depart for Colombo early on February 2, virtually ruling out any possibility of boycotting either the tournament or the marquee clash against India on February 15, sources close to the board told news agency PTL. "The PCB has already made travel arrangements for the World Cup squad to leave early morning on February 2 for Colombo," the source said.

MAVERICKS TEENAGER FLAGG BREAKS 46-YEAR NBA RECORD



Dallas Mavericks' Cooper Flagg became the first teenager to score 49 points in an NBA game as they lost 123-121 against the Charlotte Hornets at American Airlines Center. The 19-year-old beat Clifford Robinson's previous record of 45 points set in 1980 when playing for the New Jersey Nets against the Detroit Pistons. Flagg, making his 43rd appearance of the season, also became the youngest player to score at least 40 points and 10 rebounds. The Hornets' Kon Knueppel, who was roommates with Flagg at Duke University, also posted

impressive numbers. The 20-year-old scored a career-high 34 points and was successful with eight of his 12 three-pointer attempts - setting a rookie record for Charlotte. Their combined 83 points was the highest of any opposing rookies in more than 50 years, and they were the first pair of opposing rookies from the same college to each score 30-plus points in the same game. The Dallas Mavericks sit 12th in the Western Conference after falling to four successive defeats, while the Charlotte Hornets have won five in a row and are 11th in the Eastern Conference.

Sarfaraz Khan Wears Mask On Field As Pollution Row Strikes Ranji Trophy Match

The Ranji Trophy match between Mumbai and Delhi at the Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) Ground on Thursday saw an unexpected controversy over pollution erupt, with players seen wearing masks on the field as play continued. While news about air quality causing discomfort to athletes usually makes headlines in Delhi, it was unexpectedly Mumbai where players complained of breathing difficulties this time. The Air Quality Index (AQI) during the first day's play on 29 January was around 160, which falls into the 'unhealthy' category. However, the AQI at the MCG-BKC Ground was likely higher due to nearby construction work, which caused the air quality to deteriorate rapidly. Despite the condi-



tions, the players had no option but to continue. India international Sarfaraz Khan, his brother Musheer Khan, and several other cricketers were seen wearing surgical masks. While these masks offer limited protection against filtering PM 2.5 pollutants, the players utilised whatever resources they had

at their disposal. "...new (building) construction work is being carried out here, and because of that, the players were feeling the pollution and having issues in breathing, so they put those on," Mumbai pacer Mohit Avasthi said on Day 1. According to a report in the Times of India, the Mumbai

team has lodged a formal complaint with the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA), urging them to take up the matter of the construction dust with the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB). A Mumbai team source told the TOI: "Mumbai's team management has written to the MCA regarding the pollution caused by the under-construction building nearby, which has led to a significant amount of dust on the ground. Players and support staff sitting outside the dressing room were also forced to wear masks. In fact, a few players from the Delhi team even requested masks from us. Running on the field is incredibly difficult in such conditions."

Suresh Raina's Clear Stance On Sanju Samson's Form, Picks India's Top 4 For T20 World Cup 2026

As the 2026 T20 World Cup approaches, former India stalwart and World Cup-winner Suresh Raina has thrown his weight behind Sanju Samson, calling for the team management to show the same level of patience with the Kerala wicketkeeper-batter as they once did with captain Suryakumar Yadav. Despite Samson's recent lean patch - averaging less than 20 since January 2025 - Raina believes the wicket-keeper batter's "class" and ability to handle both pace and spin make him an indispensable asset for the defending champions. Raina drew a direct parallel between Samson's current struggles and the period where Suryakumar



Yadav faced scrutiny over his consistency. "He hasn't scored runs in almost one year. But still, the captain and coach were backing him," Raina noted during a chat with NDTV on the sidelines of World Legends Pro T20 League, referring to Surya. "I think it's the same story with Sanju. If he gets a

chance, he'll definitely do well." Raina emphasized that Samson's experience and past performances, particularly his centuries in South Africa, prove he belongs at the highest level. He argued that the "top four" will be the engine room that determines whether India posts daunting totals of 190 or 210.

Suresh Raina on India's Top 4 A significant portion of Raina's analysis focused on the "Top 4" structure, which he believes will dictate India's success. He argued that the engine room of the batting order determines whether India posts par scores or unreachable totals of 210. Raina is particularly keen on the Abhishek Sharma and Ishan Kishan partnership. He praised their "fearless" intent, noting that they are capable of chasing 150 in just 10 overs. "The way Ishan and Abhishek are playing... they show intent from the first ball," Raina remarked. Raina highlighted the tactical advantage of having a left-right combination at the top.

FULHAM SIGN MAN CITY WINGER BOBB FOR £27M



Fulham have signed Norway winger Oscar Bobb from Manchester City for £27m. Bobb, 22, has agreed a five-and-a-half-year contract at Craven Cottage and will wear the number 14 shirt. "It feels great to be here. I had a great day meeting everyone and I'm very excited," Bobb said. He added that he consulted Fulham midfielder Sander Berge, his Norway teammate, before agreeing to the move. "I spoke to Sander, my good friend, and I spoke to the manager, and he explained what the system's like, and how the lads are, and how the club is," Bobb said. "He seemed lovely, so it was an easy decision basically." Bobb is a graduate of Manchester City's academy and made 61 appearances for the senior side, scoring 13 and assisting 27 across all competitions. Sources say City will retain a 20% sell-on clause, as well as matching rights for any future bids received by the Cottagers. An example of this being exercised by City came in the summer when they resigned goalkeeper James Trafford from Burnley after they also accepted a

bid from Newcastle. Bobb has fallen down the pecking order at City after the January arrival of Antoine Semenyo from Bournemouth. "I know there are rumours, I know there are talks," manager Pep Guardiola said on Saturday after City's win over Wolves. Asked if Bobb wants to leave the club, Guardiola replied: "I think so." Bobb, who has also had interest from Bundesliga side Borussia Dortmund, has featured 15 times for City this season without scoring. He last played on 17 December against Brentford in the Carabao Cup, when he hobbled off injured inside the opening 20 minutes. Fulham have lost only one of their last seven Premier League games under Silva and sit seventh in the table following their 2-1 win over Brighton on Saturday. Bobb has featured six times for Norway this year, helping them qualify for this summer's World Cup, and would unite with compatriot Sander Berge at Craven Cottage. He missed almost the whole of last season after fracturing a bone in his leg during training in August 2024.

Komalee Prasad Announces Powerful Female-Led Supernatural Crime Thriller 'Mandavetti', Directed by Saranraj Senthilkumar

Actress Komalee Prasad has announced her Tamil debut with Mandavetti, a powerful female-led supernatural crime thriller, marking a significant new chapter in her evolving cinematic journey. Sharing a heartfelt message seeking the love and blessings of her audience, Komalee described the project as one she and the team are deeply proud of, even as details are being kept under wra Produced by Tuskers Den Pictures and directed by Saranraj Senthilkumar, Mandavetti has officially gone on floors following a traditional pooja ceremony. Principal photography is currently underway in Usilampatti, Madurai district of Tamil Nadu, where the cast and crew have assembled to bring this performance-driven narrative to life. Komalee's announcement marks a new phase as she steps into a different language and cinematic space with Mandavetti. The film, a supernatural crime thriller, blends elements of mysticism with human emotion and is built around



a singular female perspective. Performance-centric in approach, the narrative explores themes of loss, identity, and survival, requiring both physical presence and emotional control from its lead, with

Komalee positioned firmly at the centre of the film's psychological and narrative core. Director Saranraj Senthilkumar, known for his work on Vella Kuthira, brings a cinematic sensibility rooted in atmosphere

and psychological tension. His approach to Mandavetti is mood-driven and unconventional, with a strong emphasis on restraint, texture, and character interiority. The supernatural elements function not as spectacle, but as extensions of the protagonist's inner landscape, reinforcing the film's emotional and thematic undercurrents. https://www.instagram.com/p/DS8F2XzE02P The supporting cast includes Thenappan, Gajaraj, and Amritha, each contributing to the film's layered emotional framework. The technical crew features cinematographer Prakash, editor Kuna, music director Deepak Venugopal, and stunt choreographer Gowtham, all collaborating to ensure the film's vision is realised with precision and craft. This Tamil debut marks a natural progression in Komalee Prasad's career, which has been defined by a preference for roles rooted in authenticity and emotional intelligence. Her filmography includes Telugu features such as

Napoleon, Rowdy Boys, Sebastian P.C. 524, HIT: The Second Case, HIT: The Third Case, and Sasivadane. She has also earned critical attention in the digital space with performances in Loser (ZEE5), Modern Love Hyderabad (Amazon Prime Video), and Touch Me Not (JioHotstar). Across mediums, Komalee's screen presence has consistently leaned toward inner life rather than surface display, earning recognition for her ability to carry narrative weight with restraint and honesty. With Mandavetti, she enters Tamil Cinéma not as a crossover gesture, but as a performer taking on a demanding, central role that reflects her evolving artistic choices. As production progresses, Mandavetti is shaping up to be a distinctive entry in contemporary Tamil genre cinema, one that foregrounds character, atmosphere, and a strong female point of view. Further announcements regarding the film's progress are expected in the coming months.

Grand Trailer Launch Event of ‘Sumathi Sathakam’ Held in Tirupati; Worldwide Release on February 6



‘Sumathi Shatakam’ to Release in Telugu States Through Mythri Movie Makers The trailer of the upcoming Telugu film ‘Sumathi Sathakam’ was launched in a grand manner in Tirupati. The film is set to be released across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana through Mythri Movie Makers. Produced by Sai Sudhakar Kommalapati under the Vision Movie Makers banner, Sumathi Sathakam is written and directed by MM Naidu. The film stars Amardeep Choudhary and Saylimchaudhri as the lead pair, with prominent roles played by Tasty Teja,

Mahesh Vitta, JDV Prasad, Akella Gopi Krishna, Kiran Vijay, Mirchi Kiran, Nellore Neeraja, Malakpet Shailaja, and others. The film has cinematography by S Halesh and editing by Naheed Mohammed. The previously released first look, teaser, and songs received a positive response from audiences. As part of the promotions ahead of the theatrical release on February 6, the trailer launch event was held today at Sri Ram Engineering College, Tirupati, in the presence of students and the film team. Director MM Naidu said: “I sincerely thank the man-

agement and students of Sri Ram Engineering College for hosting our trailer launch so grandly. Our producer Sai Sudhakar garu is the main strength of this film, who never compromised on quality. Hero Amardeep delivered an outstanding performance and completed the shoot despite a serious hand injury, showing great dedication. Tasty Teja plays an important role, and the film blends comedy, suspense, and devotional elements. Mahesh Vitta will be seen in a refreshing romantic role as a sarpanch, and Shaili impresses with her charm and performance.

Is Rakul Preet Singh quietly cutting ties with Hyderabad? Rumours fly

Hyderabad: Rakul Preet Singh is one of the most popular Indian actresses who enjoyed immense craze in South India, especially Tollywood. With her glamour, fitness appeal, and strong screen presence, Rakul quickly became a household name in

Telugu cinema. Rakul delivered several superhit Telugu films including Loukyam, Kick 2, Nannaku Prematho, Dhruva, and Rarandoi Veduka Chudham. At one point, she was among the most sought-after actresses in Telugu cinema, working with top heroes and major production houses. Rakul later shifted her focus to Bollywood and married Bollywood actor-producer Jackky Bhagnani. She currently has Hindi films like De De Pyaar De 2 and Mere Husband Ki Biwi in the pipeline.

Moving Away from Hyderabad?

As per reports, Rakul has largely stayed away from Hyderabad since 2023 and has not signed new Telugu films. Industry buzz suggests she may be scaling down her Hyderabad footprint.



Heroes Sundeep Kishan and Vishwak Sen release Hero Thiruveer’s “Bhagavanthudu” movie teaser

Young and talented hero Thiruveer's new film is titled “Bhagavanthudu”. Faria Abdullah is playing the female lead in this film, while Kannada actor Rishi will be seen in a crucial role. The movie is being presented by Asian Films Narayan Das Narang and Panasa Shankaraya Goud, and produced by successful producer Ravi Panasa under the Ravi Panasa Film Corporation banner as Production No. 1. With this film, G. G. Vihari is making his debut as a director. “Bhagavanthudu” is being made as a romantic period political action drama and is gearing up for a summer release. The teaser of the film was released today in Hyderabad by heroes Vishwak Sen and Sandeep Kishan. At the event: Producer Seven Hills Satish said: "Ravi Panasa is a good friend of mine. At one point, he used to tell me not to get into film production. Now he himself is producing a film. Ravi Panasa has been successful as a businessman, and I hope he scores a big hit as a producer with this film as well." Actor Krish said: "I played an important role in “Bhagavanthudu”. My makeover in the film will be something new. We have seen



the film from the making stage itself. This movie will become a big hit and will be remembered as a notable film in the Telugu industry." Actor Jabardasth Abhi said: "Watching the teaser of “Bhagavanthudu” gave me goosebumps. This is a very different film in my career. Some people may not even recognize me in the teaser. We often talk about Kantara, and after “Bhagavanthudu” releases, people will speak about this film in the same way." Actor Ravinder Vijay said: "Venu Udgula always encourages me. He promised to give me a good character, and he kept his word by get-

ting me a strong role in this film. I want to talk about this movie at the success meet of “Bhagavanthudu”." Actor Mime Madhu said: “Bhagavanthudu” will be a memorable film in my career. The way the characters are designed and how the director extracted performances is superb. We are not saying this, you will say the same after watching the film. Thanks to director Gopi Vihari and producer Ravi Panasa for giving me this opportunity." Music director KP said: "I am happy to be introduced to the Telugu audience as a music director with “Bhagavanthudu”.

Thanks to director Gopi Vihari and producer Ravi Panasa for this opportunity. The songs and background score will impress you. I hope everyone supports our film “Bhagavanthudu”." Director and producer Madhura Sridhar Reddy said: "I have known Ravi Panasa since 2005. We both started our journeys in the industry around the same time. Ravi Panasa has worked on many films along with us. When he said he wanted to produce films, I was the one who warned him about production risks. Seeing his dream come true after 20 years makes me very happy.

With Love' is a feel-good entertainer that everyone can connect with: Hero Rana Daggubati at the trailer launch event

'With Love' is a feel-good romantic entertainer starring Abhishan Jeevinth and Anaswara Rajan in the lead roles. Written and directed by Madan. The film is jointly produced by Soundarya Rajinikanth, Najarath Pasilian, and Mahesh Raj Pasilian under the banner of MRP Entertainment. 'With Love' is scheduled to release worldwide on February 6, 2026. Telugu theatrical distribution is handled by Suresh Productions. The makers recently held a trailer launch event. Speaking at the trailer launch event, hero Rana Daggubati said.. Hi everyone. Everyone here spoke very beautifully about unspeakable love. Everyone who saw the trailer also connected very



much. While watching it, it feels like this is our story. I wish Soundarya garu to do more films in Telugu. All the best to everyone. Thank you. Hero Abhishan Jeevinth said.. Greetings to

everyone. You all have given a great reception to the Tourist family. With Love is also a film with a very wonderful emotion. Everyone will connect with it. It will make us remem-

ber our memories. I definitely want everyone to watch this film and support it. This will be a favorite film of all of you. Rana garu has taken this film to a greater level. Thank you to

our directors and producers. I am very happy to come to Telugu with this film. Heroine Anaswara Rajan said.. Hello everyone. I am very happy that you all are correct after watching the trailer. The audience also corrects themselves when watching the movie. This is a very cute movie. I hope everyone will watch the movie in the theater and enjoy it. It is very happy to be back in Hyderabad once again. We made this movie with a lot of love. Thank you Rana garu. This movie will definitely entertain you all. Producer Soundarya Rajinikanth said.. Hello everyone. I am very happy to bring this film to Telugu. Rana is a childhood friend. I have many childhood memories with him. As

soon as I told him about this film, he brought it forward as his film. I am very happy that he is releasing this film. I am very happy to launch Abhishan as a hero. He gave a good success directly. He performed wonderfully in this film. Anaswara is already doing films in Telugu. I hope you all will definitely watch this film in theaters on February 6th. Producer Mahesh Raj said.. Greetings to everyone. Rana garu is very happy to release this film in Telugu. We made this film with a lot of love. I hope you will support this film like a tourist family. The film will be released on February 6. I hope you all will definitely support this film. I believe you all will enjoy this film.

Do you know how much Margot Robbie’s viral Taj Mahal necklace costs?



Hyderabad: Margot Robbie made a powerful style statement at the world premiere of Wuthering Heights held at the TCL Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles. The Australian actor arrived on the red carpet in a dramatic custom Schiaparelli couture gown, instantly catching the attention of fans and fashion lovers. But beyond the striking outfit, it was the jewellery around her neck that truly became the talking point of the evening.

her 40th birthday. The necklace is closely associated with their famous love story, which began during the filming of Cleopatra. Over the years, the piece has come to symbolise old Hollywood romance, luxury, and timeless glamour.

● The necklace’s deep Indian connection

What makes the necklace even more special is its strong connection to Indian history. The heart-shaped, table-cut diamond carries a Parsi inscription that reads “Love is Everlasting” and also has the name of Mughal empress Noor Jahan engraved on it. Historians believe the gem originally belonged to Mughal emperor Shah Jahangir, who gifted it to Nur Jahan. The diamond was later passed down to their son Shah Jahan. Some experts believe Shah Jahan then gifted the jewel to his wife Mumtaz.

● Everything about Margot Robbie’s necklace

Margot Robbie wore a legendary heart-shaped diamond necklace once owned by Hollywood icon Elizabeth Taylor. According to media reports, the necklace is valued at around eight million dollars, which is approximately Rs. 74 crore. The iconic jewel was gifted to Elizabeth Taylor by her fifth husband, actor Richard Burton, on