



## China urges U.S. to drop zero-sum mentality



**Beijing:** China urges the United States to discard its zero-sum mentality, correct its wrongdoings, return to the correct path of the multilateral trading system, and work with other countries to address respective concerns through consultations on an equal footing, a Chinese Ministry of Commerce spokesperson said on Thursday.

Spokesperson He Yongqian made the remarks at a regular press conference when responding to a question on the U.S. tariff hikes on steel and aluminum imports.

The U.S. move is a typical manifestation of unilateralism and trade protectionism, He said, noting that many countries have clearly expressed their opposition, and there are also strong oppositions within the United States. In fact, a World Trade Organization (WTO) panel ruled as early as 2022 that the U.S. Section 232 tariffs violated WTO rules. However, the United States has not only maintained its existing Section 232 tariffs on steel and aluminum, but has also further increased tariffs on aluminum products, seriously harming the rights and interests of other countries, seriously undermining the rules-based multilateral trading system, and causing an impact on the global supply chain, according to the spokesperson.

# Cleanliness drive continues throughout night after Magh Purnima bath

**Prayagraj:** As a part of its unwavering commitment to cleanliness, the Maha Kumbh administration once again proved its efficiency by swiftly restoring the Sangam Ghats after the Magh Purnima bathing festival.



As soon as the sacred snan concluded, a dedicated team of cleaners launched a large-scale cleaning drive by the Wednesday evening itself. Their prompt and tireless efforts ensured that, by night, the Sangam Ghats were once again pristine and beautiful, ready to welcome the next influx of devotees.

On the occasion of Magh Purnima, more than 2 crore devotees took a holy dip in Sangam on Wednesday. As part of the ritual offerings, a large number of devotees left flowers, garlands, clothes, and food at the ghats and the extensive use of public toilets was observed.

Following the decrease in crowd density, the Mela administration launched an intensive cleaning drive,

restoring the ghats to their pristine condition by Thursday morning. To ensure prompt cleanliness, all sector magistrates were instructed to initiate a large-scale sanitation campaign as soon as

the crowd dispersed. In response, the administration swiftly disposed of solid waste left behind during the bathing festival.

Special cleaning vehicles were deployed to collect garbage

from the ghats and the fairgrounds, while cesspool operations were carried out to maintain hygiene in public toilets.

Sanitation in-charge of the

fair Anand Kumar Singh said that under the cleanliness drive, sanitation workers thoroughly swept and cleaned all roads. "Dustbins and liner bags placed throughout the fair area were emptied using tippers and compactors. The administration has been running these cleaning initiatives daily to uphold the vision of a Clean Maha Kumbh. However, on major bathing days, the campaign is intensified to ensure that pilgrims arriving the next day experience a holy and hygienic environment," he said.

The swift action of the fair administration left both devotees and locals highly impressed. Expressing their appreciation, many acknowledged the efforts of the Yogi government in ensuring a well-organized and spotless Maha Kumbh.

One devotee remarked that the administration's commitment to cleanliness has reaffirmed its dedication to making the Maha Kumbh a model of order and sanitation.

## Beijing launches satellite internet industrial park, key laboratories



**Beijing:** Beijing has officially unveiled a satellite internet industrial park and granted licenses to eight key laboratories in commercial space industry.

These happened at the Beijing Commercial Space High-quality Development Conference, which was held in the Beijing Economic-Technological Development Area, also known as Beijing E-Town, and concluded on Wednesday. The conference mainly focuses on implementing major projects and accelerating the high-quality growth of China's commercial space industry.

The satellite internet industrial park will leverage Beijing E-Town's advantages in aerospace industry and

strengths of new-type industries to develop satellite internet projects, building a complete industrial chain of satellite internet research and intelligent manufacturing.

The eight key laboratories focus on frontier fields, including aerospace vehicle design, satellite internet applications and satellite interconnection and control, among others. They aim to foster top talent and drive technological innovation in the industry.

Beijing E-Town hosts over 160 aerospace companies, including over 70 national high-tech firms, with 16 ranked among China's top 100 commercial space companies, said an official of E-Town.

## Acharya Satyendra Das given 'Jal Samadhi' in Saryu

**Ayodhya:** Chief priest of Shri Ramjanmabhoomi temple Acharya Satyendra Das was given Jal Samadhi in the Saryu river on Thursday.

The last procession of Acharya Das was taken out with pomp and show from his Satyagopal Dham temple at Ramghat. It passed through the roads of the city of Lord Ram and reached the cremation ground on the banks of the Saryu river where Satyendra Das was given Jal Samadhi.

The procession was taken out from Ram Mandir Gate to Hanuman Garhi, Lata Mangeshkar Chowk, in which the people of Ayodhya, along with saints and sages, Minister Satish Sharma, Mayor Mahant

Girishpati Tripathi, Jagatguru Ramanandacharya Swami Ramdineshcharya, former MP Ramvilas Das Vedanti, Shrimahant Dharmadas, Mahant Gaurishankar Das, Naka Hanumangarhi Mahant Ramdas, Ayodhya MLA Vedprakash Gupta, Mahant Raghvesh Das Vedanti and Mahant Bhushan Das, thousands of saints and Ram devotees participated.

The last rites were performed by his disciple priest Pradep Das. The Chief Priest died on Wednesday during treatment at PGI Hospital in Lucknow.

He was admitted to PGI on 3 February after a brain stroke where he breathed his last during treatment on 12 February. His

death spread a wave of mourning in the entire Ramnagari. Everyone was saddened by his death.

There was a stream of people expressing condolences at the priest's ashram. From saints-mahants to politicians, and common citizens, everyone paid their tributes and bid him a final farewell. Priest Satyendra Das' life was dedicated to Ram Lalla. He served Ramlala for about 32 years from 1992 till now. His contribution towards Shri Ram Janmabhoomi can never be forgotten. It will always be unforgettable. The saints of Ayodhya Dham have demanded the government to give him Padma Vibhushan.

## Traffic moves smoothly in Prayagraj

**Prayagraj:** The traffic system of Prayagraj is now running smoothly amidst the huge crowd of devotees on the bathing festival of Magh Purnima in Maha Kumbh, official sources said here on Thursday.

Sources said that Prayagraj's traffic remains smooth despite the massive Magh Purnima rush, as effective administrative arrangements ensure a hassle-free pilgrimage to the Sangam. "Traffic is moving smoothly on all major routes, including Malak Harhar (Lucknow), Mirzapur Road, Rewa Road, Sahson (Jaunpur), Phaphamau (Lucknow),



and Kaushambi," they said. Given Maha Kumbh, security forces and traffic police have been strategically deployed on all major routes to ensure devotees do not face any inconvenience. The traffic department has urged devotees to adhere to the instructions issued by the

administration and avoid unnecessary halts on any route. Despite the overwhelming crowd in Prayagraj, the well-coordinated efforts of the authorities have kept traffic under control, enabling devotees to reach Sangam effortlessly and perform their sacred rituals with ease.

## PM likely to visit Tripura next month to launch a slew of projects and flag off Vande Bharat Express

**Agartala:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Tripura next month to launch a slew of projects including flagging off Vande Bharat Express between Agartala and Guwahati from here.

The state government has already approached PMO seeking his availability after Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) issued a green signal for starting India's fastest train Vande Bharat connecting two important cities of Northeast daily.

The NFR has also almost completed the railway line electrification work in Tripura and South Assam to ensure super-fast train service from Tripura. Presently, premiere trains like Tejas Express to Delhi and Humsafar to Bengaluru have been operating from Agartala by Diesel engine, besides a few more express trains connecting important cities.



The proposed Vande Bharat Express is scheduled to complete a 571 km journey between Agartala and Guwahati in seven and a half hours stopping at Ambassa, Dharmanagar of Tripura, and New Karimganj, Badarpur Junction, and Hojai of Assam. The train will start at 6 AM every day and reach Guwahati at 1.30 PM and the return journey will start from

Guwahati at 2 PM and reach Agartala at 9.30 PM, sources said.

"At present trains take at least 12 hours to reach Guwahati from Agartala by diesel engine. The journey through hill sections of South Assam up to Lumding from Badarpur takes six hours to cover around 160 kilometers distance. After putting trains into electric lines the time

coverage will be reduced to half, which will boost the business of Northeastern states with Tripura instead of concentrating on Guwahati," Transport officials said.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Dr Manik Saha said that the state government has planned to inaugurate the new infrastructure installed in Tripura Sundari temple under the centrally sponsored schemes in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"The construction works are complete. The agencies engaged in the work are giving the finishing touches to the projects. We are eager to have Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the inauguration ceremony," Dr Saha said, adding that under PM's guidance, Tripura tourism has reached a new height and many more new opportunities are coming to add tourist attractions.

## Maha: Marathi actress moves court seeking transfer of probe of accident involving her driver



**Mumbai:** Popular Marathi actress Urmila Kanetkar has moved the Bombay High Court seeking transfer of the investigation from an officer of Samta Nagar police station to any other officer in connection with a case where her driver allegedly hit two construction site workers, killing one and seriously injuring the other in December 2024, a lawyer said on Thursday.

Arguing before a division bench of Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and Neela K Gokhale, the actress stated that the Investigation Officer (IO) was giving evasive replies pertaining to investigation and

CCTV footage of the spot of the incident and the entire scene of offence had been tampered with, as the contractor who was conducting work had not put any 'work in progress' sign at the spot. She has raised various points justifying her plea to transfer the probe.

The bench adjourned the further hearing, after directing the police to see to it whether the footage can be provided to the petitioner.

On December 28 last year, police had registered a case of causing death by negligence and rash driving against Kanetkar's driver, 58-year-old Gajanand Gunnipal, and initiated an investigation.

## U.S. military aircraft crashes into San Diego Bay

**Los Angeles:** A U.S. military aircraft crashed into the San Diego Bay on Wednesday, according to the San Diego Fire-Rescue.

The U.S. military confirmed that only two pilots were on the plane that crashed into the water near Shelter Island. Both pilots have been rescued.

The aircraft was an E/A-18 G Growler, a U.S. Navy spokesperson confirmed.

The aircrew safely ejected, and they were taken out of the water, according to

the spokesperson. The pilots were transferred to a U.S. Customs and Border Protection boat on the scene and later taken to the Hillcrest Medical Center at UC San Diego Health.

Fire officials sent 60 personnel to the scene, including two fire trucks, a foam truck, five engines, a helicopter, two boats and a lifeguard river team. A Navy official said it is unclear if a distress signal was sent out prior to the crash. The pilots have not been identified.

## Trump issues order to ensure U.S. diplomatic personnel follow his agenda



**Washington:** U.S. President Donald Trump issued an executive order on Wednesday to revamp the foreign service to ensure "faithful and effective implementation" of his foreign policy agenda.

The order said failure to implement the president's agenda is against professional discipline and may lead to the termination of personnel.

The order came as Trump instituted changes to ensure U.S. foreign policy is aligned with his "America First" agenda.

The executive order said U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio will implement

reforms in recruiting, performance, evaluation and retention standards to "ensure a workforce that is committed to faithful implementation of the President's foreign policy."

"The Secretary must maintain an exceptional workforce of patriots to implement this policy effectively," the order said.

"The Secretary shall, consistent with applicable law, reform the Foreign Service and the administration of foreign relations to ensure faithful and effective implementation of the President's foreign policy agenda," it added.

## Ukraine-Russia conflict must end, Hegseth, rules out NATO membership

**Washington:** US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth on Wednesday said that the Ukraine-Russia conflict must end, Kyiv's NATO membership is unrealistic, and the US will no longer prioritise European and Ukrainian security as the Trump administration focuses on securing its borders and deterring war with China, media reports said on Thursday.

In remarks before a meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group, Hegseth also said that European troops should be the primary force securing a post-war Ukraine—something US troops will not be involved in, the CCN reported on Thursday.

"The United States does not believe that NATO membership for Ukraine is a realistic outcome of a negotiated settlement," Hegseth said. And he added that any security guarantees offered to Ukraine "must be backed by capable European and non-European troops," according to CNN report.

"To be clear, as part of any security guarantee, there will not be US troops deployed to



Ukraine," he said. Hegseth also said that a return to Ukraine's pre-2014 borders, before Russia invaded Crimea and eastern Ukraine, "is an unrealistic objective."

According to reports, NATO allies, including Hegseth, agree that regaining Crimea from Russia is not realistic, and even Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has not emphasised this as a prerequisite for peace talks. One NATO official said it would have been more concerning if Hegseth had said that returning to Ukraine's pre-2022 borders was unrealistic.

But the comments about security guarantees are sure to concern Zelensky, who said this week that Europe alone cannot provide meaningful security guarantees to Ukraine without American leadership.

Zelensky has also

Zelensky shortly after getting off the phone with Putin.

Later on Wednesday afternoon, Trump said he agrees with Hegseth and does not "think it's practical" to have Ukraine join NATO, the report said.

"I don't think it's practical to have it. Personally, I know that our new secretary of defence is excellent. Pete made a statement today saying that he thinks it's unlikely or impractical. I think probably that's true. I think long before President Putin, they said there's no way they'd allow that. This has been going on for many, many years. They've been saying for a long time that Ukraine did not go into NATO, and I'm okay with that," Trump said from the Oval Office.

A European defence official told CNN that while many in NATO don't necessarily believe Ukraine can join the alliance given the political realities with Russia, they also don't say so publicly—as Hegseth did—because they want to avoid giving Russia the idea that it can dictate who can and cannot join.

## Afghanistan: Death toll from terrorist attack in Kunduz rises to 8

**Kabul:** The death toll from a terrorist attack carried out by a suicide bomber in the Afghan city of Kunduz has risen to eight, a spokesperson for the Afghan Interior Ministry said. "Unfortunately, yesterday we witnessed a heartbreaking incident in Kunduz, as a result of which eight people, including mujahideen and civilians, became martyrs, and some were injured," the spokesperson was quoted as saying by the Salam Watandar radio station on Wednesday. The

investigation into the incident is under the close supervision of security forces, and, according to the initial data, "the roots of this sinister crime lie outside the country," the spokesperson added. On Tuesday morning, a suicide bomber blew himself up outside a Kabul bank branch in Kunduz, where government employees had gathered to collect their salaries. The Islamic State terrorist group (IS or ISIS, banned in Russia) claimed responsibility for the attack.



## Briefs :

## Man killed by speeding bus

**New Delhi :** A speeding private bus fatally struck a government employee, Kamal Kishore, at India Gate Circle on Wednesday. The bus driver abandoned the vehicle and fled the scene. According to police reports, Kishore was riding his motorcycle around 8 a.m. when the bus collided with him. Police immediately transported him to the hospital, where doctors pronounced him dead on arrival. Authorities have launched an investigation and are searching for the driver.

## Delhi milk supplier killed over Rs 15,000 dues, accused arrested after 2 years in Agra

**New Delhi :** A 32-year-old Delhi University graduate was arrested after two years for allegedly killing a milk supplier following a monetary dispute in West Delhi's Punjabi Bagh. The accused, Rajesh Kumar, a resident of Vishnu Garden, was apprehended from Vishu Vihar in Agra for his involvement in the incident that took place in April 2023. According to DCP (West) Vichitra Veer, the victim, Brijbir Singh, had been supplying milk for nearly two decades. Singh had provided milk on credit to a local store and went there on April 15 to collect an outstanding payment of ₹15,000. "Singh met a man named Kapil at the store. An argument ensued when Singh demanded his dues, during which Kapil started abusing him. When Singh protested, Kapil called his friend Rajesh to the scene." DCP Veer said. Rajesh allegedly retrieved a baseball bat from his vehicle and struck Singh on his hands and legs. He then handed the bat to Kapil, who hit Singh on the forehead, inflicting serious injuries. Singh succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment. Kapil was arrested soon after the incident, but Rajesh managed to evade the police and went into hiding. Despite multiple raids at his known hideouts, including those of his family and associates, he remained elusive. A non-bailable warrant was eventually issued against him. Acting on a tip-off, police received information that Rajesh was hiding in Agra. A raid was conducted, and he was found living with his wife, Radha, and their two-year-old son in Vishu Vihar, Agra, where he was taken into custody.

## Cops solve 1.5cr burglary case at jewellery outlet, arrest three

**New Delhi :** Police have cracked a burglary case reported from a Kalyan Jewellers outlet in Lajpat Nagar 2 on Jan 29, arresting the thief and two receivers of stolen jewellery. Stolen items worth Rs 1 crore were recovered. According to DCP Ravi Kumar Singh, the lone thief broke into the outlet by cutting through a glass window and made away with diamonds and gold worth Rs 1.5 crore. After selling the stolen items, he fled to Rishikesh and was lying low. Police tracked him down through a phone number he used to book a bike ride to Lajpat Nagar. The three accused have been identified as Shoib alias Lalla, Sumit Soni, and Manik Kadam. "Shoib, the main accused, is a 31-year-old resident of Bhalswa Dairy with a history of involvement in eight previous cases. Sumit Soni, a 30-year-old goldsmith, is a resident of Madangir, with five previous cases against him. Manik Kadam, a 42-year-old goldsmith shop owner, is a resident of Tigri in south Delhi," police said. The investigation began with two incidents: a theft at a kids' clothing showroom on Jan 14-15.

## Delhi Police detain 14 students amid protest and Vandalism at Jamia Millia Islamia

**New Delhi :** Delhi Police have taken 14 individuals into custody in connection with a protest and incidents of vandalism at Jamia Millia Islamia University. According to the university administration, a group of students had gathered illegally in the academic block on the evening of February 10, causing disruptions and damage to university facilities.

University officials stated that over two days, the protesting students vandalized property, including damaging the central canteen and breaking the gate of the security advisor's office. The administration condemned these actions, citing concerns over defaced walls, disruption of academic activities, and the discovery of prohibited items in possession of some students.

This incident followed a larger demonstration earlier in the week, where a significant number of students protested against what they perceived as the administration's crackdown on student activism. The protest, led by Left-leaning student groups such as the All India Students Association (AISA) and the



All India Revolutionary Students Organisation (AIRSO), accused the university of suppressing dissent. The demonstration occurred just ahead of a key disciplinary committee meeting scheduled for February 25 to address the case of two PhD students accused of organizing last year's anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protest. On Thursday morning, university officials, with assistance from the police, dispersed the students from the protest site to restore order on campus. A case was subsequently filed against 14 individuals identified

by the university. In response to the situation, security at the campus gates was tightened, with paramilitary forces and anti-riot vehicles deployed outside. Entry to the university was restricted, with only students carrying valid identification being allowed inside. The crackdown on student protests at Jamia Millia Islamia is reminiscent of past incidents, notably the December 15, 2019, anti-CAA protests. During that event, police allegedly entered the university library and used force on students while searching for outsiders, sparking nation-

wide protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

The recent events highlight the ongoing tensions between the university administration and student groups. While the administration emphasizes the importance of maintaining order and discipline, students claim their right to protest is being systematically undermined. With the disciplinary hearing on February 25 approaching, the issue of student activism at Jamia Millia Islamia remains a subject of intense debate and contention.

## Work on Ghazipur mound of shame to resume soon

**New Delhi :** The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is set to begin the second phase of biomining at the Ghazipur landfill by late March, following similar operations at the Bhalswa and Okhla landfills. Activities at Bhalswa and Okhla started in January after the Supreme Court authorized the municipal commissioner to implement six waste management programs.

A municipal official stated on Tuesday that the work order for biomining at Ghazipur will be issued by Friday, and operations are expected to begin within 12-15 days. "The delay occurred due to high quotes from bidders, which required re-tendering. The agency we finalized will charge Rs 395 per tonne instead of Rs 495 per tonne for processing the waste," the official said. The project at Ghazipur will cost around Rs 177 crore.

Currently, Bhalswa's contractor processes 8,000 tonnes of legacy waste daily, while Okhla handles 5,000 tonnes. MCD expects to process a minimum of 8,000 tonnes daily at Ghazipur, targeting a total of 30 lakh tonnes, with an additional 15 lakh tonnes potentially being



processed if the contract is executed on time. Ghazipur accounts for 45% of the 160 lakh tonnes of legacy waste across Delhi's three major landfills.

In the second phase, the contractor at Bhalswa is tasked with processing 30 lakh tonnes within 18 months at a rate of Rs 423 per tonne, with the project costing around Rs 190 crore. Meanwhile, at Okhla, the contractor will be paid Rs 404 per tonne to manage 20 lakh tonnes, with the potential to process an additional 10 lakh tonnes if completed on time, at a total cost of Rs 121 crore.

Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena recently visited Bhalswa and directed that the daily processing be increased to 12,000 tonnes. "MCD has reclaimed around 20 acres of land at Bhalswa

after processing 45 lakh tonnes during Phase I. The LG has instructed the development of a green space on at least 5-6 acres to beautify the area and demonstrate the restoration efforts," a civic official said. Sources indicate that the second phase of biomining at all three landfills will be closely monitored by the Prime Minister's Office, which will also oversee the Yamuna cleaning initiatives. The biomining efforts at Okhla, Bhalswa, and Ghazipur were launched in 2019 after the National Green Tribunal raised concerns about the public health risks caused by the massive garbage heaps. The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs allocated Rs 1,395.6 crore under Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0 for the initiative.

## Sixth Delhi Finance Commission to be formed soon: Gupta

**New Delhi :** The Sixth Delhi Finance Commission will be established soon after the formation of the BJP government in Delhi, newly elected BJP MLA from Rohini, Vijender Gupta, announced on Wednesday. He emphasized that the BJP's commitment to the development of Delhi means there will be no delay in the commission's formation. Gupta highlighted that the panel plays a crucial role in the financial management of development projects undertaken by municipal corporations.

Criticizing the AAP-led Delhi government, Gupta, who served as Leader of the Opposition in the previous assembly, accused it of neglecting the importance of the commission. He stated that the delay in its formation since April 2021 is a serious violation of Articles 243-I and 243-Y of the Constitution. This delay, he claimed, has adversely affected financial planning and resource allocation in Delhi, particularly for the Municipal Corporation of



Delhi (MCD), impacting essential services such as road maintenance, sanitation, park upkeep, and sewer management.

Gupta further revealed that BJP MLAs met the President on August 30 last year to lodge a formal complaint regarding these "constitutional violations" and also filed a petition in the Delhi High Court to address the issue.

Responding to Gupta's allegations, AAP pointed out that it has consistently demanded the formation of the Sixth Finance Commission, which was previously resisted by the BJP.

Gupta reiterated that the BJP government will systematically repair the damage caused by what he described as AAP's "decade-long misgovernance." He assured that public welfare and development projects would be prioritized. "In the very first cabinet meeting of the new BJP government, issues like roads, electricity, water, and sanitation will top the agenda," Gupta said. "ial decisions regarding these projects will be taken," he said.

## 'Attack' on cops

## Delhi court asks AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan to join probe, shields him from arrest till February 24

**New Delhi :** A Delhi court on Thursday granted interim relief to AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan, protecting him from arrest until February 24 in a case related to alleged obstruction of police officers. The court instructed Khan to cooperate with the investigation and directed the police to conduct his questioning under CCTV surveillance.

Earlier, the Rouse Avenue Court issued a notice to Delhi Police on Khan's anticipatory bail plea, which was filed after an FIR accused him of obstructing police officers on February 10 while they were attempting to arrest a proclaimed offender, Shavez Khan, in Jamia Nagar.

Amanatullah Khan has denied the allegations, calling the charg-



es "false and baseless." In a four-page letter to the Delhi Police commissioner, the Okhla MLA claimed the case against him was fabricated and demanded a fair probe. He argued that there were no reasonable grounds for registering the FIR.

According to the FIR, the incident occurred on February 10

around 3 p.m. when a Crime Branch team went to Jogabai Extension in Jamia Nagar to arrest Shavez Khan, an accused in a 2018 attempted murder case. While interrogating Shavez, Amanatullah

Khan allegedly arrived with 20-25 supporters and confronted the officers.

DCP (South East Delhi) Ravi Kumar Singh said the Crime Branch team had gone to Amanatullah's house to arrest Shavez, but the MLA and his supporters allegedly helped him escape. The FIR claims that Khan and his supporters threatened the officers, saying they "don't value courts or law enforcement."

The confrontation reportedly turned aggressive, with the officers being pushed and shoved, allowing Shavez to escape. Since then, both Amanatullah Khan and Shavez have remained untraceable. The case is still under investigation.

## Dwarka to be city's jewel, literally

**New Delhi :** Dwarka could soon be the capital's jewel, literally. Delhi Development Authority plans to establish a gold souk and upscale retail space specialising in the gold trade in Sector 22 Dwarka, turning the place into a centralised hub for jewellery shopping, reminiscent of Dubai's popular gold markets.

The development will feature exclusive showrooms dealing in retail and wholesale of

gold and ornaments and boutiques catering to precious metal traders and buyers. "DDA is seeking expressions of interest for developing amenities, which also include commercial spaces and service apartments for people visiting the gold market for trading purposes. It will be developed on a 3.91-hectare plot," states a DDA document on the plan. A DDA official said, "We want it basically to become a one-stop destination

where all retail and wholesale activities related to gold trading will be done. We will be adopting the transit-oriented development concept for the project. The floor area ratio and estimated car parking space required will be finalised accordingly." The Gold Souk Mall in Gurgaon's Sushant Lok is India's first specialty jewellery mall. The site will be leased for an initial period of 40 years, with a provision to extend it by another 20

years. The initiative aims to generate funds for subsidised projects while preventing unauthorised settlements and illegal construction activities on vacant plots, said officials. Officials also stated that the project was part of a sustainable model from which DDA expects to generate good revenue. The land-owning agency is also working on the development of a hospital on 3.7 hectares of land in Sector 9, Dwarka, corporate of-

fices in Sector 36 and 30 in Rohini. It has invited expressions

of interest from suitable investors for these projects.

## Police examine IAS and IPS officers in connection with 2022 extortion case

**New Delhi :** Delhi Police has examined an IAS officer and an IPS officer in connection with a case of extortion, according to sources.

The questioning took place in mid-Jan and police have filed their first chargesheet in the case. While the cops confirmed the development, they did not elaborate, saying it was a "sensitive case".

The case pertains to an incident in 2022 when two men — gym trainers by profession — were arrested for allegedly trying to extort money from an elderly man and his family in northwest Delhi's Maurya Enclave, accusing them of having an illegal

borewell in their house.

The victim's family called the local police and the PCR. The two accused, who are currently out on bail, dialled the officers requesting help. It was alleged that the area SHO was asked to let them go. In their statement during examination, the two officers accepted their acquaintance with the accused men and their call exchanges, but denied any further connection or involvement in the case, police said.

According to the chargesheet, the two accused posed as officials of the SDM's office and the joint commissioner of police's office to allegedly extort money from the complainant. "From the investi-

gation conducted so far, it has been revealed that the accused misused his acquaintance with the IAS and the IPS officer. Both the accused persons, with common intention, posed as govt officials and tried to extort money from public persons. There is sufficient evidence against both the accused persons for committing an offence under IPC sections 170, 385, 509 and 34. Therefore, a chargesheet has been filed against them," the chargesheet stated. The investigation is still ongoing. Police are likely to file a supplementary chargesheet, placing on record the report of the vigilance inquiry that was conducted in the case.

## Aero India 2025



## Careless infection!

A patient has died in Mumbai due to the rare disease Gulen-Barre Syndrome (GBS), which has been spreading across the state. After Pune and Solapur, this disease has now shown its presence in Mumbai too. A resident of Wadala area, who was admitted to Nair Hospital in Mumbai, died of this disease. This patient was working as a ward boy at BN Desai Hospital of Mumbai Municipal Corporation.

According to the Health Department report, the number of GBS infected patients in the state has reached 197. Recently, five more new patients have been found in Pune division. These include 40 patients from Pune city, 92 from newly incorporated villages, 29 from Pimpri-Chinchwad and 28 from Pune rural. Currently, 50 are undergoing treatment in the ICU and 20 patients are on ventilators.

A 53-year-old patient undergoing treatment at Nair Hospital died on February 10. This patient did not have fever or diarrhea, but he fell ill 16 days after returning from a tour of Pune. A 16-year-old student from Palghar, who is suffering from GBS, is undergoing treatment at the same hospital and her condition is improving.

GBS is not a contagious disease, but an autoimmune disorder. The body's immune system attacks the nervous system, which weakens the muscles and can even cause paralysis in severe cases. It is not transmitted from one person to another, but it can develop after a viral or bacterial infection.

As the number of GBS patients is increasing rapidly, a question mark has been raised on the municipal corporation's water supply system. It is initially estimated that the prevalence of this disease has increased due to drinking contaminated water. The municipal corporation has failed to provide clean water to the citizens. Even today, water is supplied to Pune through 1,000 private tankers every day, on which citizens are spending lakhs of rupees. After the increase in the number of GBS patients, the water of wells in Dhayari, Nanded, Ambegaon areas was tested and it was revealed that it was contaminated. However, if the municipal corporation had taken proper measures for water purification in time, this spread could have been prevented.

Although Pune is a rapidly growing city, civic amenities are still inadequate. As a result, the empire of tanker mafia has flourished. The government and the Municipal Corporation should take immediate steps to improve water supply and health services.

The Municipal Corporation has appealed to people to contact the nearest Municipal Hospital without panic if they experience symptoms of GBS. If diagnosed and treated on time, the disease can be cured. However, the GBS epidemic has ruined the unplanned civic amenities of the municipality. The health of citizens has been put at risk due to inefficiency in the health system and contaminated water supply. If public institutions do not take timely measures, more serious consequences may be seen in the future. Even if it is not a contagious disease, careless infection is more dangerous!

All the municipal hospitals and medical colleges in Mumbai are equipped for GBS treatment. The municipal administration is clarifying that the necessary medicines, equipment and expert manpower are available for the treatment of patients. Citizens should not panic if they experience any symptoms of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS). The municipal administration has also appealed to immediately contact the nearest municipal hospital for guidance and treatment.

Guillain-Barré Syndrome is a rare autoimmune disorder, in which the body's immune system attacks its own nervous system. This weakens the muscles and can even lead to paralysis in severe cases. Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) is not a contagious disease. It does not spread from one person to another. The exact cause is unknown. This disease occurs after a respiratory or digestive tract infection. It needs to be treated immediately. Guillain-Barre Syndrome is not a new disease, it has been known for many years. Although it is not a contagious disease, sometimes it can develop after a bacterial or viral infection. There are also many other causes of GBS. Guillain-Barre Syndrome occurs throughout the year. Approximately one in 1 lakh people suffers from this disease. Therefore, every month, some GBS patients come to major hospitals / medical colleges in Mumbai for treatment.

In the past few years, this disease has exposed the negligence of millions of citizens of Pune in providing water without purification. This disease is not contagious; but it spreads due to contaminated water. Diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, fever, are some of its symptoms. These symptoms are seen in many diseases; but the muscles of some GBS patients gradually relax, they stop working and this leads to temporary disability; It is experienced that if these patients have some other diseases, complications increase and the risk increases. It is the job of the health system to provide these patients with proper treatment, while it is the job of the municipality to remove the root cause of the disease, the contaminated water, and supply clean water. However, the high cost of treating patients and the lack of water purification projects in the relevant areas have made it difficult to control the situation. Due to this, public anger is increasing there.

The entire Pune gets its water supply from the Khadakwasla dam. Yet, the system has failed to create a system for the supply of clean water in this area. Even today, water is supplied there through local wells, and it was admitted in front of Health Minister Prakash Abitkar. It is true that the villages in this area have recently been included in the municipal corporation; but this cannot be said to be the reason for not arranging water purification. After the outbreak of 'GBS', leaders and administrative officials visited the wells in Dhayari and Nanded. If they had inspected these wells and made arrangements earlier, perhaps the spread of 'GBS' could have been prevented.

'GBS' has also raised questions about the unplanned urbanization of Pune. Education and employment are leading to migration to Pune from all parts of the state and even from across the country. The total population of the Pune Metropolitan Authority area has now crossed the 50 million mark. To accommodate such a large population, it will not only be possible to increase the area; facilities have to be created for them as well. 'GBS' has highlighted the infection of inefficiency and carelessness in our public systems. If this infection is removed, it is relatively easy to overcome other infections.

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) with an endeavour to integrate various stakeholders of defence R&D ecosystem in the country, is participating in the 15th edition of Aero India during February 10-14, 2025 at the Air Force Station Yelahanka, Bengaluru. It will feature indigenously developed state-of-the-art technologies and systems, working models and innovations in all formats, i.e., Indoor Pavilion, Outdoor Displays, India Pavilion and Flying display.

DRDO for the first time is showcasing a full-scale model of India's first 5.5 Gen stealth aircraft Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) equipped with cutting-edge features at the India Pavilion.

This Pavilion at Aero India 2025 will showcase India's commitment to its Make-in-India initiative by displaying indigenous defence manufacturing capabilities and cutting-edge technologies ready for the global stage. The pavilion exemplifies the combined strength of India's private industries, Defence PSUs, start-ups, and DRDO. Apart from this, visitors to this Pavilion will gain insight from 16 other DRDO developed products and technologies being displayed such as Twin Engine Deck Based Fighter (TED-BF); LCA Mk-2 Model; Air Droppable Container (ADC) -150; Advanced Light Weight Torpedo; Kaveri Derivate Aero Engine without afterburner, Naval Anti-ship missile - Medium Range and various other missiles. DRDO indoor pavilion at Hall-D at Aero India is meticulously divided into 9 themes, encompassing core areas of defence innovation. The themes are: 'Airborne Surveillance Solutions', 'Naval Warfare', 'Next-Generation Missile Systems', 'Supremacy in the Skies - ADA's 5th Gen Leap', 'Unmanned



Aerial Systems', 'RadarScope: Mapping the Invisible', 'Maritime Sentinel: A New Era of Surveillance & Safety', 'Sensors Suite for Fighter Aircraft' and 'Rakshak'. The Pavilion is displaying over 330 products which are categorised into 14 technology zones.

It will provide an in-depth exploration of key defence areas, namely Advanced Materials & Composites; Surveillance & Reconnaissance Technology; Antenna & Microwave Technology; Soldier Support Systems; Combat Aircraft Technology; Corporate Directorates; Micro Electronic Devices, Computational Systems and Cyber Security; Land Systems & Munitions; Missile Technology; Next-Gen Combat Vehicles & Tactical Mobility; Photonics, Laser and Quantum Technology; Electronic Warfare & Communication; Simulation & Training Technology; and Aero Propulsion Technology. The indoor pavilion is also displaying the products developed under

Technology Development Fund (TDF) Scheme being executed by DRDO. The outdoor segment of DRDO pavilion is designed to demonstrate the real-world application of cutting-edge defence technologies featuring full-scale model of QRSAM Mobile Launcher Vehicle, Akash NG Launcher; Archer UAV 1:1 (Rustom-1); Air Droppable Survival and Rescue Kit (SARK); Emergency Escape Parachute System for Air Crew (EPPSA); Military Combat Parachute System (MCPS); Vehicle Mounted Jammer; Anti UAV (JAU) Entity of Project DHARASHAKTI, and VHF Radar. The demonstration of Dornier aircraft's midlife upgrade is one of the main highlights of DRDO's participation at the Aero Show.

The upgraded Dornier is showcasing enhanced avionics, better fuel efficiency, advanced radar systems, enhanced manoeuvrability, integrated surveillance systems, and improved electronic warfare capabilities, reinforcing

its role as a dependable asset of the Indian Air Force. DRDO will conduct a seminar with the theme 'DRDO Industry Synergy towards Viksit Bharat: Make in India - Make for World' at Hall No. 2 on February 11, 2025.

The seminar will foster industry engagement, promote self-reliance in defence and provide a boost to defence exports. Members of Academia, Indian Private Industry, StartUps, PSUs, and DRDO will participate in this seminar. Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Sanjay Seth will inaugurate the event and will release the Revised Policy for ToT, DRDO Policy for Harnessing Innovative Startups in Defence R&D and Compendium of DRDO Products for Export. During the seminar, Handing Over of Licensing Agreement for Transfer of Technology (LATOT) to Industries will also take place. At the event, Secretary DDR&D and Chairman DRDO Dr. Samir V Kamat will chair a panel discussion on Opportunities for Industries in Defence

Export to foster a collaborative environment for enhancing defence exports. Under the banner of Aero India 2025, an Indigenisation & Valedictory event themed as 'SAMARTHYA' will be organised on February 12 by Department of Defence Production (DDP), to recognise and felicitate the contributors of Indigenously developed cutting edge technologies. Five DRDO developed products have been recognised to be showcased and Team leader of these products will be felicitated by the Raksha Mantri

As a prelude to Aero India, DRDO also organised the 15th edition of the Biennial Aero India International Seminar in association with the Aeronautical Society of India (AeSI) during February 8-9, 2025 in Bengaluru. The theme of the seminar was 'Futuristic Aerospace Technologies: Challenges in Design Validation', covering emerging trends in futuristic aerospace technologies and military airworthiness & certification: challenges in design and testing. This seminar provided valuable insights about cutting-edge technologies, a platform to explore collaborative research opportunities and forge strategic partnerships, while advancing the future of aerospace and defence technologies. DRDO's exhibition at Aero India 2025 is an excellent opportunity for the Indian aerospace community to foster the cause of indigenous development of military systems and technologies with the spirit of self-reliance & national pride. Working towards the vision of Samarth and Shashakt Bharat, DRDO is developing the indigenous capabilities of the country by equipping the Armed Forces with state-of-the-art technologies/equipment, and bolstering the defence sector through collaboration with the private sector.

## Fish Processing Industries

According to the Marine Product Export Development Authority (MPEDA), there are currently 646 registered seafood processing units, of which 57 are located in Tamil Nadu.

The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India is implementing a flagship scheme namely "Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)" with highest ever investment of Rs.20,050 crore in fisheries sector for a period of 5 years with effect from the financial year 2020-21 to FY 2024-25 in all states/ Union Territories (UTs). PMMSY inter alia supports the creation of modern post-harvest cold chain infrastructures such as cold storages, ice plants, including with ice flaking and ice crushing units and fish transportation vehicles etc. to increase the capacity and efficiency of fish processing industries. To enhance the global competitiveness of the fish processing Industries,

PMMSY also supports for quality fish production, species diversification, promotion of export-oriented species, branding, standards, and certification, training and capacity building etc besides development of modern fishing harbours and fish landing centers, etc. The Department of Fisheries, Government of India has approved proposals to the tune of Rs. 1825.89 crore for development of cold chain infrastructure under PMMSY including construction of 634 cold storages/ice plants and 27189 post-harvest transportation facilities. So far, the Department of Fisheries, Government of India, under PMMSY during the last four financial years (FY 2020-21 to 2023-24), and in the current financial year (2024-25), has approved 39 ice plants/cold storages, 1540 post-harvest transportation facilities, 3 fish retail markets, and 55 fish vending kiosks for marketing of fish, to the State of Tamil Nadu, aimed at development of



fish processing and post-harvest industry in the State.

The Government of India, Ministry of Commerce and Industry has established the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) through the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) Act, 1972 as a

dedicated agency to facilitate export of seafood. The MPEDA enrolls exporters, lay down quality standards, liaisons with importers to boost the exports and conducts capacity building programme like training, awareness campaigns, workshop/ meets for relevant stakeholders to im-

prove their technical know-how for enhancing the capacity and efficiency of fish processing industries. In addition, MPEDA also participates in various trade fairs and exhibitions, and organizes Virtual Buyer Seller Meets (VBSMs) and Chintan Shivir etc.

The State/UT-wise details of post-harvest infrastructure proposals approved during the last four financial years (FY 2020-21 to 2023-24), and current financial year (2024-25) (till date) under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) is furnished at Annexure-I.

The State/UT-wise financial assistance given by MPEDA to the seafood processor for the last five years is furnished at Annexure-II. Further, under the Long-Term Interventions component of Operation Greens, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries has approved 11 projects on shrimp processing in different districts of Andhra Pradesh in year 2022. These

projects represent a total project cost of ₹693.37 crore, with an allocated grant-in-aid of ₹114.62 crore. Details of these 11 projects along-with status are furnished at annexure-III.

As reported by MPEDA, during the financial year 2023-24, India exported 17,81,602 MT of Seafood worth US\$ 7.38 Billion and ₹ 60,523.89 Cr. The aquaculture sector contributed 62% and capture fisheries 38% of the total exports in terms of value (US\$), which benefited approximately 1 lakh farmers and 10 lakh fishermen across the country. Further, fish processing industry has significantly helped fishers and fish farmers in India by steady demand, increasing their income, reducing post-harvest losses, and expanding market access. The industry has also created direct and indirect employment opportunities in processing, packaging, and distribution, further supporting coastal and inland fishing communities.

## Cycling is the solution to obesity and pollution: Dr. Mandaviya

Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya met with leading cycle manufacturers today to discuss strategies for promoting cycling nationwide. The meeting focused on incentivizing cycling and further boosting the momentum of the Fit India Sundays on Cycle initiative.

"I used to cycle regularly to Parliament because of my passion for cycling. Cycling is the solution to multiple issues, including obesity and pollution. We need to make cycling fashionable, link it to health benefits, and market it effectively," Dr. Mandaviya told the cycle manufacturers.

Union Minister urged manufacturers to offer incentives to encourage cycling across all age groups. "We need to attach cycling with tangible benefits—such as carbon credits for riders, free helmets, or exclusive membership perks for regular cyclists. Incentives will naturally drive people towards cycling," he emphasized.

Dr. Mandaviya also highlighted the potential for a growing demand for cycles to drive infrastructure development. "We need to work together to build a cycling culture, not just sell cycles. Cycling can significantly reduce our carbon footprint, and we should explore options like carbon credits. We must engage school children, office goers, and the masses by offering incentives like free helmets or rewards for



regular cycling," he added.

Union Minister had launched the cycling drive at Major Dhyani Chand Stadium in the national capital on December 17, 2023, to encourage cycling as a sustainable, healthy, and environment-

Representatives from Hero Cycles, AlphaVector 91 Cycles, Decathlon, and Cult.fit attended the meeting and expressed their commitment to supporting the "Sundays on Cycle" initiative. They pledged to explore innovative ways to engage with the cycling community by way of incentivisation, promote cycling as a lifestyle, and contribute to the development of a vibrant cycling culture in India.



and from Kolkata to Aurangabad.

cycles. We have to work as a team to ingrain

this message among all that cycling everyday has to be an integral part of our lives as it pays a lot of dividends and give out an overall health-centric message. We have to sell the culture, not the product," mentioned Rohit Sharma, chief marketing officer, Hero Cycles. Adding how the meeting has stood fruitful, Vikas Jain, associate vice president, Alphavector India Pvt Ltd, said, "This is eye opener to all of us to have this meeting for the first time and we are privileged that the Government of India is supporting this drive. We will come up with ideas and collectively work towards bringing cycling back to fashion, with the cooperation of the Hon'ble Union Sports Minister."

The Fit India Sundays on Cycle is organised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS), in collaboration with the Cycling Federation of India (CFI) and MY Bharat. Events are simultaneously held nationwide at SAI Regional Centres, National Centres of Excellence (NCOEs) and the Khelo India centres (KICs). The riders at the Sundays of Cycle have included Indian Army jawans, postmen from India Post, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), prominent sports stars like Lovlina Borgohain, Sangram Singh, Shanky Singh, Nitu Ghanghas, Saweety Boora, Preeti Pawar Rubina Francis and Simran Sharma as well as celebrities like Amit Sial, Rahul Bose and Gul Panag.



# HARYANA

## Briefs :

**Rohtak team conducts raid in Meerut, arrests doctor, 3 touts**

Rohtak : A radiologist and three touts were arrested in a raid by a Health Department team from Rohtak at an ultrasound centre in Meerut on Tuesday. The ultrasound centre, where the sex determination test was conducted, has been sealed, and an FIR has been registered. An amount of Rs 26,800 was recovered during the raid. "A team led by Dr Vishvjeet Rathie, District Nodal Officer (PC and PNDT), raided the Global Diagnostic Centre in Meerut. Radiologist Dr Chavi Bansal and touts Anil, Pawan and Hemender were arrested," said Dr Ramesh Chander, Civil Surgeon, Rohtak. "The radiologist conducted the ultrasound examination of the decoy patient without filling the mandatory Form-F and informed her about the gender of the foetus, following which the doctor was nabbed," said Dr Rathie. The raid was conducted after striking a deal for a sex determination test through a dental surgeon, he said, adding that strict legal action would be taken against those found involved in such rackets and networks.

**ED team raids BJP leader Niti Sen Bhatia's residence in Panipat**

Panipat : A team of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) raided the residence of senior BJP leader Niti Sen Bhatia at Model Town in Panipat on Thursday morning. The raid is purportedly being conducted in connection with a money laundering issue. An ED raid was simultaneously conducted at the Paonta Sahib-based pharmaceutical firm Vidit Health Care, which is owned by BJP leader's son Neeraj Bhatia. Former Karnal MP Sanjay Bhatia, who is a close relative of Niti Sen Bhatia, also reached the house on getting information about the raid. Navin Bhatia, the elder son of Niti Sen Bhatia, has applied for the Mayoral post from Panipat from the BJP in the civic polls. His claim for the mayoral post was being considered to be very strong among the aspirants. The tickets for the mayoral posts are yet to be finalised. Notably, Neeraj Bhatia, the younger son of Niti Sen Bhatia, who is one of the owners of Vidit Healthcare, Paonta Sahib, was arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Jammu, in August last year in a case registered in January 14 for the alleged illegal sale of codeine syrup. The NCB had seized 33.98 kg of codeine-based cough syrup, 900 tablets of alprazolam, 56 capsules of tramadol, 210 tablets of lorazepam, 570 tablets of clobazam and Rs 15.03 lakh in cash from Bhatia's residence and his associate's home in Delhi last year. However, he has been released on bail by the Jammu and Kashmir High Court. Sources said the ED team reached the BNP leader's residence in the wee hours on Thursday along with CRPF personnel. The team also called a mechanic to open the locks of an almirah in the house. As the information about the ED raid spread in the city, scores of BJP leaders and other supporters reached house, but no one was allowed to enter.

## Temperature rises above normal in state

Hisar : With the day-time temperature rising higher than normal by about 2°C to 5°C in various parts of the state, agriculture experts have issued an advisory to farmers to take measures to protect rabi crops, especially wheat. The average normal temperature should remain between 22°C to 23°C. Dr Om Prakash Bishnoi, wheat scientist from Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University (HAU), Hisar, said it took 90-95 days for the wheat earhead to emerge and 42-45 days for grain filling, but higher temperatures might shorten this period, potentially reducing grain quantity and yield. He said an increase of temperature by 1% above normal could bring down the yield by 6-7%. However, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) said there had been a further increase of 3.6°C in average maximum temperature in the state, leading to concerns among farmers due to its impact on wheat crop.



Dr Bishnoi said to counteract the effects of higher temperatures, farmers were advised to spray 2 kg of potassium nitrate dissolved in 100 litres of water per acre. This helped the crop tolerate heat stress and supported grain development. Besides, timely irrigation at critical stages, zinc application, and white rust control measures should be followed to sustain yield potential. The farmers should stay updated with weather forecasts and adopt necessary precautions, he added. Meanwhile, the highest maximum temperature of 30.9°C in the state was recorded at Hathnikund Barrage in Yamunanagar district. The average minimum temperature has increased by 0.6°C, though it remains near normal. The lowest minimum temperature of 7.3°C was recorded at Saragthal. Dr Bishnoi said lower night-time temperature was a relief for the crops. "If the night-time temperature rises above 15°C, it may harm the crops," he said, adding

that a meeting chaired by Research Director Dr Rajbir Garg was held to formulate crop advisory. In the last week of January and the first week of February, two to three western disturbances occurred, but no rainfall was recorded, which decreased the humidity in the air, leading to a rise in temperature. If snowfall occurred in hilly regions, night-time temperatures would remain low. Rainfall in the state could also help in reducing the temperature, said experts.

## FDA cracks down on online sale of MTP kits, 227 seized in raids

Chandigarh : In a major crackdown on the illegal online sale of (MTP) kits, a team from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Health Department raided pharmacies in Ghaziabad and Badaun (Uttar Pradesh), seizing 227 MTP kits being sold unlawfully. The operation was launched on the directions of ACS Health, Sudhir Rajpal, who had instructed State Drug Controller Manmohan Taneja to curb the unauthorised sale of MTP kits. As part of the crackdown, a decoy operation was conducted by Amandeep, (DCO), Gurugram, who placed an online order for MTP kits. Upon receiving payment, the online pharmacies — operating from Ghaziabad and Badaun — dispatched the kits under the brand name "Unwanted" to the DCO's official address, along with instructions on how to use them for abortion. Taneja emphasised the legal restrictions on MTP kits, stating: "The MTP Act 1971 & Rules 1975 allow medical termination of pregnancy up to nine weeks using MTP kits only under the supervision of a Registered Medical Practitioner (RMP) and in an approved MTP



centre." Following the operation, FIRs were registered on February 11 under the MTP Act, (BNS) and the Drugs and Cosmetics Act at Sector 40 police station in Gurugram. The suppliers identified in the investigation include: Satyam Tripathi Office, Ghaziabad, M/s Baba Shyam Store, Badaun and M/s Apurva Mfg Group of Companies, Badaun. Taneja highlighted the serious health risks posed by illegal MTP kit usage, saying: "Many pregnant women who ingested these kits unlawfully at home had to be rushed to government health centres in life-threatening conditions. Their lives were saved by doctors and based on their statements, FIRs were filed against suppliers.

These cases are under trial in various courts." FDA teams, along with police and health officials, raided the supply points to investigate further. At the Ghaziabad pharmacy, officials seized 191 MTP kits and the owner was arrested for illegally supplying the kits without any records of acquisition. In Badaun, the police team found 36 more MTP kits intended for unlawful distribution. Officials confirmed that the pharmacy had been involved in the large-scale illegal supply of such kits. ACS Sudhir Rajpal noted that since 2015, more than 1,220 FIRs have been registered under the PC-PNDT and MTP Acts to prevent illegal abortions and protect the girl child in the state.

## Anti-corruption bureau opens office in Palwal amid rising bribery cases

Faridabad : In response to rising corruption cases in the region, the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has opened a branch office in Palwal, marking the second such unit after Faridabad. This move follows the detection of 26 bribery and corruption cases across Faridabad and Palwal districts over the past year. A senior ACB official stated that the new office would provide easier access for complainants who previously found it difficult to approach the Faridabad office. The Palwal unit, located in Rehrana village near the Mini Secretariat, will be headed by a DSP-rank officer and supported by six personnel, including an Inspector.

Among the major cases recently exposed, Rathi said it included the ongoing probe into a Rs 54-crore fraud in the BDPO office at Hassanpur, Palwal, the arrest of a patwari from the DTP office accepting Rs 2 lakh in bribes, the arrest of a UP Police Sub-Inspector for taking a Rs 2 lakh bribe last month. The ACB has released helpline numbers 1064 and 1800-180-2022 for citizens to report corruption. Last year, five police personnel were dismissed from service in Palwal after being found guilty of corruption and misconduct. The officials included two sub-inspectors, two assistant sub-inspectors and one constable.



Inaugurating the office on Tuesday, ACB SP Jaiveer Rathi said, "This facility will enable citizens to report corrupt officials more conveniently. It will not only save time and money for complainants but also help the department take swift action." He emphasised that the primary objective of the ACB is to curb bribery in public offices. Since January 1, 2024,

An official from the Police Department confirmed that these dismissals followed departmental inquiries, which found them guilty of taking bribes and other irregularities while on duty.

## NHAI awaits utilisation report for green corridor along Delhi-Mumbai Expressway in Faridabad

Faridabad : Even as the 24-km passage of Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, which passes through the city, has become operational, the (NHAI) is yet to receive the utilisation certificate for the work related to compensatory plantation along the corridor. The NHAI had released funds to the tune of Rs 5 crore for the work nearly three years ago. According to sources in the NHAI and district administration, though the part two of the expressway connecting Mithapur (Jaitpur Pushta) on the Delhi border and in Kelly village of Ballabgarh subdivision in the district has been made functional, the issue of compensatory plantation or the proposal of development of a green corridor along the expressway is a cause for concern as the department concerned is yet to submit the compliance report of the project, for which funds were released way back in 2022. "The utilisation certificate had been sought around



a year ago and the NHAI had taken up the matter with district officials, the authorities concerned are yet to reveal the details through the prop-

er format for the utilisation of the funds meant for plantation," said an NHAI official. Expressing dissatisfaction, an official of the Faridabad Metropolitan Development Authority (FMDA) said a proper report about the green corridor was yet to be submitted despite the matter being highlighted during a meeting chaired by the local MP last month. As the NHAI had provided funds to the Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran (HSVP) for the purpose in March 2022, the work involved compensatory forestry along the passage as around 5,700 trees had been removed to pave way for the construction of the expressway. The State Information Commission had also directed the HSVP in June last year to furnish the details of the plantation work carried out to Ajay Bahl, a local who had lodged a complaint to get the details about the work through an RTI application two years ago. Though plantation across several acres in Sector 59 here has been claimed to be carried out, a proper report is yet to be submitted.

## Doctor shortage hits Emergency Wing at Faridabad Civil Hospital

Faridabad : The emergency wing of Faridabad's 200-bedded Civil Hospital continues to grapple with severe doctor shortage and it is operating with only two medical officers instead of the required six. Despite appointments by the Health Department, six doctors have failed to join duty, exacerbating the crisis. To cope, the hospital has been deploying field doctors on deputation, but insiders reveal that this temporary fix is insufficient. "The Casualty section requires at least six doctors, but it has been relying on just two to three doctors, leading to patient care challenges," a hospital employee said on the condition of anonymity. The situation becomes



critical at night, when doctors are often unavailable to treat serious cases. Additionally, a shortage of General Duty Assistants (GDAs) further strains hospital operations. Information obtained under the RTI Act by local resident Ajay Saini revealed that six appointed doctors

failed to report for duty between 2014 and 2023. Shockingly, one doctor has been absent since November 24, 2014, without any formal notification to the department, yet no termination orders have been issued. Currently, the hospital is operating with 41 doctors

against a sanctioned strength of 55, leaving crucial specialties vacant, including radiology, psychiatry, forensic, neurosurgery and gastroenterology. The absence of a radiologist means ultrasound procedures are handled by a Deputy CMO as a part-time arrangement. Adding to patient woes, activist Satish Chopra, who has been on a 71-day sit-in demanding a Trauma Centre, claims that the hospital suffers from a 20-30% medicine shortage at any given time. However, Dr Vikas Goel, Principal Medical Officer (PMO), refuted this, stating that retired doctors have been hired to fill gaps and there is no shortage of medicines.

## Officials told to put up posters on govt buildings to raise awareness about cybercrimes

Jhajjar : Keeping in view the rising cases of cyber fraud, Deputy Commissioner Pradeep Dahiya has directed officials to put up posters on government buildings and at Common Service Centres (CSCs) in the district to raise awareness about cybercrimes. The initiative aims at educating the public on the deceptive tactics used in modern cyber frauds, helping people avoid falling victim to such crimes. Speaking on the matter, Dahiya emphasised that cyber fraud could only be prevented through heightened awareness. "The district administration is focused on increasing awareness among the people to ensure they can identify and avoid such frauds," he asserted. The DC also mentioned that the administra-



tion was seriously considering organising workshops at the Gram Panchayat level to further educate citizens. Additionally, similar workshops will be held in collaboration with bank officials to help people understand the ways to avoid financial fraud. Earlier, Dahiya while addressing the people at a workshop held here to observe Safe Internet Day pointed out that awareness was the

biggest weapon to avoid cybercrime. "While using the Internet, it's important not to click on any tempting or suspicious post. Awareness about Internet usage needs to be heightened. One should avoid rushing when online, as hurrying increases the chances of making mistakes, which can lead to significant losses. A wrong click, made in haste, can make anyone a victim of cybercrime," said the DC.

## Three months on, Rohtak performing arts varsity's contractual faculty awaits salaries

Rohtak : Contractual faculty members of Dada Lakhmi Chand State University of Performing and Visual Arts (DLC-SUPVA), Rohtak, have not received their salaries for up to three months. Some of these staffers last received salaries in November last year. DLC-SUPVA comprises Film and TV, Visual Arts, Design, and Town Planning and Architecture departments, at which nearly 35 adjunct and guest faculty members are employed on a contractual basis. The contractual teachers of Film and TV faculty have not received their salaries for three months, and those from the remaining faculties have been awaiting their salaries for two months.

Contacted for comments, DLC-SUPVA Registrar Dr Gunjan Malik Manocha said the delay in disbursement of salaries to contractual faculty members had been caused due to the delay in the appointment of a Vice-Chancellor. "However, Shree Prakash Singh has now assumed charge as the Vice-Chancellor, and salaries will be released within a week after the completion of the official procedure in this regard," she added. DLC-SUPVA Teachers' Association president Indranil Ghosh said having to work without receiving salaries for the past few months had been quite challenging for contractual faculty members.

## Jail inmates' products draw crowds at 38th edition of Surajkund craft mela

Faridabad : The ongoing 38th edition of Surajkund International Craft Fair here showcased several items prepared by jail inmates and their families, attracting many visitors from across the country. The fair began on February 7, and will run up till February 23. "Various handicraft, art and locally made items, including bakery products, are not very enticing, and I felt satisfied to buy some items like cookies that made me recognise the hard work and spirit of those who wanted to come out as reformed individuals," says Rakesh

Kashyap, a resident. Claiming that such items were much cheaper in comparison to many artefacts or products sold at many stalls, he said the attempt to promote such an initiative was appreciable. "The inmates, who have prepared such items, may not have been present to see how interested people are in buying their products, but they'll certainly feel proud and satisfied when they realise," said a female visitor from Faridabad. The authorities have displayed several items prepared by as

many as 19 jails from states across Haryana, include Nuh, Hisar, Ambala and Kaithal. The mela provided the inmates a platform to showcase their talent, said Yogeshwar, an official from the Jail Department. The items kept for sale include bags, chairs, paintings, handicraft items and food items such as biscuits, namkeen and cookies. He said the initiative was not only to promote the products manufactured in jails but also financially help inmates as 50 per cent of the money would go into their pockets.

## Gurugram's garbage woes take centre stage in civic polls

**Gurugram** : As Gurugram prepares to elect its civic representatives after a 27-month hiatus, the waste management crisis — a key issue in the last election — continues to plague the city. With 36 wards comprising villages, builder colonies and HSVP sectors, garbage disposal and sanitation have emerged as major concerns in over 20 wards, making it a central election issue. The problem is most severe in rural areas, particularly in Ward 20, home to Bandhwari village, which hosts the city's infamous landfill site. Every day, over 1,200 metric tonnes of waste is dumped here, leading to severe health and environmental hazards. Though the Municipal Corporation Gurugram (MCG) has deployed vendors for legacy waste treatment, progress has been slow, leaving garbage scattered across the ward, with residents battling stench, pollution and health risks. "Garbage defines our lives. It dictates everything — where we get water, when we sit outside, even if we let cattle roam



freely. Now, it will decide who we elect," said Rajesh Kumar, a former panchayat member of Bandhwari. "Our village has suffered ever since we were included in MCG. They misuse our land as a dump yard." The crisis extends beyond villages, affecting residential societies and upscale localities. Vaishali Rana Chandra, a local resident and environmentalist, expressed frustration over air and water pollution caused by Bandhwari landfill fires and leachate runoff. "People bought homes worth crores to be closer to nature and the Aravallis. Instead, they got a garbage mountain

view, toxic leachate lakes and dying wildlife," she said. Other wards facing similar waste management challenges include Ward 1 (Sikanderpur Ghosi village), open dumpyard at the city's entrance, frequently overrun with stray cattle; Wards 10 & 11 (Khandas Mandi, Pace City, Hans Enclave) struggle with irregular garbage collection; Ward 25 (HSVP sectors, including Sector 17) faces illegal dumping and commercial encroachment. "We have a major problem with garbage dumping by local market vendors and illegal usage of residential units for commercial uses.

## After Assembly setback, Ambala MC poll a litmus test for Cong

**Ambala** : After a poor performance in the previous Assembly election in Ambala Cantonment, the upcoming Municipal Council election in Ambala Sadar is shaping up to be a crucial test for local Congress leaders. Party workers fear a lack of leadership, internal divisions and absence of a strong organisation could hamper their chances once again.

A senior local Congress leader, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said, "The party activities came to a standstill after the election. Some major steps should have been taken when several leaders left to support Congress rebel and Independent candidate Chitra Sarwara. The party was divided into two and we are facing a similar situation again in the council election."

Tensions surfaced at a Congress Bhawan meeting on Tuesday after some leaders sought the support of Ambala City MLA Nirmal Singh for the council elec-



tions. This move did not sit well with many party workers, as Singh's daughter, Chitra Sarwara, had contested the previous Assembly election as an Independent, leading to the Congress candidate finishing in third place.

Onkarnath Paruthi, former general secretary of the Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee grievance cell, highlighted the party's disarray: "The Municipal Council election will be a big test for Congress. Disappointment

has spread among grassroots workers after recent electoral setbacks. Due to infighting and the absence of a proper organisation, well-known Congress leaders are unwilling to contest the council election. The state leader-

ship is responsible for this situation."

Pavinder Singh Pari, who unsuccessfully contested the last Assembly election, defended the party's strategy, saying: "A meeting was held and it was unanimously decided to give command of the election to Ambala City MLA Nirmal Singh. He is a senior leader and a voter in Ambala Cantonment. He has assured us of his support and asked for a list of candidates. We will also request MP Varun Chaudhry to be our star campaigner." Despite internal conflicts, Congress remains hopeful. Ashok Jain, the party's convener for the council election in Ambala Cantonment, said, "The party is making strong preparations and we will contest elections in all 32 wards, including the chairperson's post. While the absence of a structured organisation is a challenge, we are confident that party workers will come together and fight unitedly."

## Persistent property ID errors in Karnal MC upset residents

**Karnal** : Discrepancies in property IDs within Karnal Municipal Corporation (KMC) limits remain a major issue, causing significant inconvenience to residents. Problems with ownership verification, property transfers and tax assessments persist despite multiple initiatives by authorities to rectify errors.

Errors in property IDs include name changes, incorrect addresses, mobile number updates, incorrect property size, change in category or use and status updates from unauthorised to authorised. These discrepancies have created roadblocks for residents attempting to sell or purchase properties.

The issue has been raised multiple times in the Haryana Assembly, with Opposition leaders accusing the government of negligence. Protests have been staged demanding a quicker resolution. According to official data, Karnal had 1.42 lakh property IDs in 2013. A 2019-20 survey by a private company, assigned by the Directorate of Urban Local Bodies Haryana, increased the number to 1,62,222. Following claims and objections, this number further rose to



1,66,584.

In November 2022, KMC uploaded property ID data online for public verification and correction. Since then, over 88,000 complaints have been filed regarding incorrect entries, leaving residents struggling to get them rectified. Following the online verification initiative, the number of registered properties increased to 1,68,341. Out of the

88,000 complaints, officials have approved 67,000 corrections, rejected nearly 18,000 as invalid, kept 370 objections pending and sent 2,100 cases back to owners for additional documents. To improve data accuracy and limit unauthorised access, the department has introduced a self-certification process. So far, 36% of property owners have self-certified their details, placing KMC third in

Haryana for property self-certification. As many as 57,000 properties out of 1,68,341 have been self-verified by residents. Despite these efforts, many residents continue to struggle with property ID errors. Yashpal, a local resident, said: "The property ID of my residence was shown as commercial. Despite multiple complaints, the issue remained unresolved for several days." Bhupinder Kumar, another resident, said, "I had to visit the MC office for months to resolve my property ID issue. Authorities kept asking for additional documents." Amit Kumar, another resident, said: "I had to raise objections multiple times before my property ID issue was finally resolved." The Opposition has criticised the government's handling of the issue, with Congress leader and former Deputy Mayor Manoj Wadhwa slamming the property ID and NDC portal system.

"Flaws in property IDs and the NDC portal have persisted throughout the last tenure. These portals have only caused inconvenience to residents. This system should be removed," said Wadhwa.

## Vij replies to party notice, refuses to give details

**Ambala** : Cabinet minister Anil Vij today said that he had sent his reply to the BJP high command regarding the show-cause notice issued against him, and was ready to give more replies if the party wanted.

Taking a serious note of the statements by the senior BJP leader against CM Nayab Singh Saini and state BJP chief Mohan Lal Badoli, the BJP had issued a show-cause notice to Vij.

The minister has reportedly sent an eight-page reply to the high command. Speaking to mediapersons here, Vij said, "I was asked to give a reply within three days, and I have submitted my reply in time. I was in Bengaluru and came to know about the show-cause notice through the media.

Before I got the hard copy of the notice, it was already in the media. It was a secret communication between two people. How it was leaked to the media and who is leaking the letters is a



matter of investigation. If the party wants, this angle should also be investigated."

Refusing to divulge the details of his reply, he said, "I will not disclose what I have written. I have even torn the copy of my reply and will burn it. I have mentioned everything I could remember and also told the party that if it wants my reply on any other issue, it can tell me. I will reply." The party had issued a notice to Vij for allegedly breaching party discipline through his public

statements. In the notice, issued by Badoli on the directions of the national party president, Vij was asked to respond within three days.

Vij had earlier made back-to-back statements expressing dissatisfaction against his own government and criticised Saini, saying that the CM was unaware of the ground realities.

He had also called for Badoli's resignation on "moral grounds" after the latter was named in a rape case in Kasauli.

## Education must be practical, not just about degrees, says Dhanda

**Panipat** : Education Minister Mahipal Dhanda on Wednesday reiterated the state government's commitment to strengthening the education system by making it more effective and employment-oriented. He emphasised that education should equip students with practical knowledge to help them become self-reliant rather than merely obtaining degrees.

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating a library and building constructed by the Narwal Khap in Kathura village of Baroda constituency, Dhanda acknowledged various development initiatives underway in the village. He also announced a grant of Rs 11 lakh for the construction of a Narwal Khap Bhawan.

During his visit, the minister directed officials to rec-

tify shortcomings in the newly built library and enhance its facilities. Expressing concern over the poor condition of the village school, he assured that necessary upgrades would be made soon. "Officials must send an estimate for the reconstruction and improvement of the school so that the work can be completed at the earliest," Dhanda instructed.

The minister highlighted the rapid implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, stating that it would be fully effective by 2025. "The education system must be employment-oriented so that children gain practical knowledge and become self-reliant during their studies," he asserted.

Dhanda also stressed the importance of updating educational content, saying that incorrect literature and mis-

leading facts must be removed as they influence students' thinking.

"Education should not just be about earning degrees but about making individuals capable," he added.

Criticising the Macaulay education system, the minister said it had weakened the thinking abilities of the youth and there was an urgent need for curriculum reforms. "Macaulay's education system has dampened young minds and it is essential to change it," he stated.

Responding to a question about the upcoming civic polls, Dhanda asserted that the BJP was well-prepared and in a strong position to contest.

"The BJP will enter the electoral fray with full preparations and perform better in the upcoming civic polls," he claimed.

## Three senior leaders join forces to gain control

**Karnal** : In a dramatic turn of events, three prominent Sikh leaders in Haryana have joined forces to take control of the (HSGMC) after contesting the recent elections on different symbols.

Jagdish Singh Jhinda, head of Panthak Dal (Jhinda) and former HSGMC (ad hoc) president, Didar Singh Nalvi, president of Sikh Samaj Sanstha and former senior vice-president of the ad hoc committee, and Baljeet Singh Daduwal, former ad hoc committee president, held two secret meetings on February 9 and 11 in Panchkula. Their objective: securing the support of Independent members to gain a majority and take charge of HSGMC affairs. The first-ever HSGMC elections on January 19 resulted in a fractured mandate, with no single faction securing a majority. The committee comprises 22 Independent members, nine from Panthak Dal (Jhinda), six from the SAD-affiliated Haryana Sikh Panthak Dal and three from Sikh Samaj Sanstha. To strengthen its position, 19 Independent members formed the Akal Panthak Morcha, which has se-



cured the support of six members from Sikh Panthak Dal, bringing its total strength to 25. Jhinda and Nalvi won their respective seats, while Daduwal lost. Before the elections, Daduwal attempted to register a group called Shiromani Akali Dal (Azad), but its registration was denied due to its resemblance to a po-

litical party's name, which is restricted under the Act. Confirming their meetings, the trio expressed a commitment to working together for the welfare of the Sikh community. "I have no issues joining hands with anyone if it is for the betterment of the community and to ensure effective management of HSGMC," said Jhin-

da. Nalvi echoed similar sentiments:

"For me, the community's welfare is the top priority. On the day of the election results, I had already offered my group's support to Jhinda. I also met Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini twice to discuss the election outcome." Daduwal emphasised their mission to prevent those who opposed their cause from taking control. "The Sikhs of Haryana fought for over two decades to get a separate committee. We have now set aside our differences and held two meetings. We have enough members to form the committee's body." On the other hand, Independent Akal Panthak Morcha claims it has sufficient numbers to take control. Prakash Singh Sahuwal, an Independent member from Nathusari Chopta, said: "We have the numbers and will participate in co-opting the maximum additional members." Baldev Singh, president of Haryana Sikh Panthak Dal, confirmed his group's support for the 19-member Akal Panthak Morcha, saying they are in a strong position to manage HSGMC's affairs.

## Ex-Merchant Navy employee stabs daughter to death; attacks wife, mother with hammer

**Rewari** : Police have arrested a 40-year-old former employee of the Merchant Navy, accused of stabbing his 9-year-old daughter to death and injuring his wife and mother by hitting them with a hammer in the Mayur Vihar locality here on Tuesday night. The accused, identified as Sandeep Kumar of Hudiya Kalan village in Alwar district (Rajasthan), currently resides in a rented accommodation in Mayur Vihar in the city. "On the in-

tervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday, we received information that a man in Mohalla Mayur Vihar had beaten up and injured his wife, daughter, and mother. Acting swiftly, the police rushed to the spot and found many people gathered there. A lot of blood was found scattered in the room, after which the Forensic Science Laboratory team was called to visit the scene of the crime. A knife used in the crime was also recovered from the

spot," said the spokesperson of the district police. He maintained that the accused's wife, Kusumlata, and mother, Prem Devi, said that Sandeep had stabbed his daughter, Ranvita, in the neck. Later, the girl, in critical condition, was rushed to the hospital with the help of an ambulance. The accused's wife and mother also suffered injuries in the attack and were hospitalised. The spokesperson informed that a case of murder

was then registered against the accused, Sandeep Kumar, in this respect. Acting swiftly, the accused was arrested a few hours after the crime. The preliminary investigation suggested a domestic feud behind the crime, he added. Manish Kumar, SHO, Ram Pura Police station, told The Tribune that the accused had left his job in the merchant navy in 2017 and he used to quarrel with his wife due to some domestic issues.

## Government committed to improve groundwater levels in dark zone blocks, says minister

**Chandigarh** : Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil has emphasised that dedicated measures are being taken to improve groundwater levels in Haryana's dark zone blocks. Speaking at a press conference alongside Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Shyam Singh Rana, he said the Central government is committed to implementing effective water conservation and recharge initiatives in collaboration with the Haryana Government.

Patil highlighted that around 150 districts across India have several blocks classified as dark zones due to severe groundwater depletion, with

Haryana among them. The ministry's goal is to help Haryana's dark zone blocks recover through rainwater conservation efforts, which, he stressed, "can only be successful with public participation." The minister revealed that in the Union Budget 2024, Haryana has been allocated approximately Rs 76,000 crore for development projects. Additionally, the state has received around Rs 78,000 crore in grants, accelerating its progress. Comparing the figures with previous governments, Patil stated: "Before 2014, Haryana received only Rs 19,000 crore in the Central budget and Rs 21,000 crore in grants. The

current allocations reflect the government's commitment to Haryana's rapid development." Patil also highlighted the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, under which 13.8 lakh farmers in Haryana are receiving direct financial benefits. Across India, the scheme has benefited over 9.58 crore farmers. Further, he shared that Rs 3,416 crore has been allocated in the Railway budget to enhance Haryana's rail infrastructure. Key developments include 14 new projects covering 1,195 km and 34 railway stations being upgraded under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, with an investment of Rs 1,149 crore.



