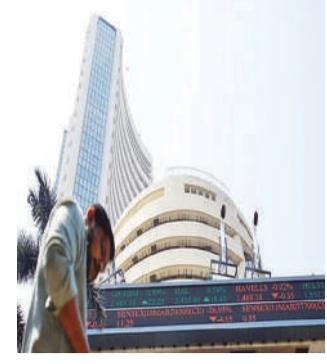




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"Pillar of Trust"

Amit Shah hails NDRF on Raising Day



New Delhi : Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday praised the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) on its Raising Day celebrations, saying the force has emerged as "the pillar of trust for the nation" that has been instrumental in realising the Modi government's vision for a disaster-resilient India.

In a post on X, Shah highlighted the important role of the NDRF in enhancing the preparedness of India in the context of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'disaster-resilient India.'

He described the force as "the pillar of trust, the nation relies on during calamities," and also paid homage to personnel who laid down their lives while saving others. Along with his message, Shah shared images of NDRF teams engaged in rescue and relief operations.

"Warm greetings to the personnel of NDRFHQ on

Raising Day. Through its significant role in realising the Modi govt's resolve to build a disaster-resilient India, the NDRF has today become the pillar of trust the nation relies on during calamities. Salute to the martyrs who sacrificed themselves for the safety of others," Shah wrote.

The National Disaster Response Force was formed on January 19, 2006, as an all-round skilled and specialized response force for natural as well as man-made disasters. The key functions include search and rescue in case of earth quakes and landslides, flood and cyclone rescue, handling chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear emergencies, and medical relief.

The NDRF is strategically deployed across the country with 16 battalions and 28 Regional Response Centres. Its training academy is located in Nagpur.

Fresh snowfall warning in Lahaul-Spiti as tourist rush raises safety concerns

Shimla: The tourist movement continues to swell in the higher reaches of Himachal Pradesh, and the district administration of Lahaul Spiti has issued a strong advisory warning visitors



against risky travel amid deteriorating weather conditions. Despite light snowfall and black ice already rendering roads slippery, a large number of tourists have been heading towards the tribal district, driven by largely dry conditions in other hill resorts.

Authorities say this sudden surge has placed immense pressure on traffic management, particularly on vulnerable mountain stretches such as the Darcha-Shinkula axis and interior roads leading towards Kaza and high-altitude villages.

Officials cautioned that fresh western disturbances expected from Thursday and Friday onwards are likely to intensify snowfall and sharply worsen road conditions. In such a scenario, vehicles may get stranded for prolonged

periods as rescue and evacuation operations become extremely difficult, if not impossible.

Prolonged stranding in sub-zero temperatures, officials warned, could pose serious health risks, especially for tourists unprepared for harsh winter conditions.

The police advisory strictly prohibits movement beyond permitted locations and urges visitors to return in time as per official instructions.

Tourists have been asked not to halt, camp, or park vehicles at unsafe spots, and to completely avoid riverbanks, streams, and landslide-prone areas. Rash driving on snow-covered roads, the advisory states, will invite strict legal action.

Authorities underlined that what appears as an attractive snowfall destination can quickly turn into a life-threatening situation if weather warnings are ignored.

With traffic congestion already reported on key highways, officials appealed to tourists, particularly those packing their bags to reconsider travel plans, monitor official advisories closely, and place safety above adventure. Public cooperation, they stressed, remains crucial to prevent avoidable tragedies in the fragile Himalayan terrain.

PM Modi receives UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan at Delhi airport

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi received Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, at Delhi airport on Monday, marking the start of his official visit to India.

This is Sheikh Mohamed's third official visit to India since assuming office as President of the UAE, and his fifth visit to the country over the past decade.

The visit builds on the strong momentum from recent high-level exchanges between the two nations, including the visit of Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin

Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, in September 2024, and Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, and Crown Prince of Dubai, in April 2025.

India and the UAE share warm, multi-faceted relations underpinned by strong political, cultural, and economic ties.

The countries are major trading and investment partners, strengthened by the Comprehensive Economic Partnership (CEPA), the Local Currency Settlement (LCS) system, and the Bilateral Investment Treaty. They also maintain a robust energy partnership, agreements covering investments in special economic zones, food

developments in West Asia, including the ongoing instability in Gaza, the

visit will provide an opportunity for the two leaders to chart new frontiers for the India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. It will also enable an exchange of views on regional and global issues of mutual interest, where India and the UAE share a high degree of convergence.

Sheikh Mohamed's visit coincides with a critical period in West Asia, as US President Donald Trump launched Phase 2 of the Gaza Peace Plan, aimed at establishing a National Committee for Gaza's administration.



including long-term energy supply arrangements.

During the visit, both leaders are expected to sign security, and nuclear cooperation.

The discussions are also likely to focus on regional

unresolved conflict in Yemen involving Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and the strained Iran-US relations.

Nitin Nabin set to become BJP President

New Delhi: New Delhi, Jan 19 (UNI) The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) election process for its National President has reached the final stage, with Nitin Nabin emerging as the sole candidate for the post, according to an official press statement issued on Monday.

The process was initiated after the completion of organisational elections in 30 of the party's 36 state units, comfortably exceeding the mandatory requirement of elections being completed in at least 50 per cent of the states.

As per the schedule, the notification for the election process was issued on January 16, 2026, along with the publication of the Electoral Roll. The nomination process was held on January 19 between 2 pm and 4 pm.

A total of 37 sets of nomination papers were received in favour of Nitin Nabin for the post of BJP National President. On scrutiny, all nomination papers were found to be duly filled in the prescribed format and declared valid.

Following the completion of the withdrawal period, the National Returning Officer for the BJP Sangathan Parv, Dr K. Laxman, announced that only one valid nomination -- that of Nitin Nabin remains for the post of National President of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

With no other candidate in the fray, Nitin Nabin is set to be elected unopposed as the BJP's National



President, marking the culmination of the party's organisational election process.

Backed by senior party leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and union Home Minister Amit Shah, Nabin's elevation reflects the BJP leadership's confidence in his organisational abilities and mass connect.

father and the BJP cadre base in the region.

Following the 2008 delimitation, he shifted to the Bankipur Assembly constituency—one of Patna's most prominent urban seats, home to institutions such as Patna College and Science College.

He currently represents Bankipur in the Bihar Legislative Assembly and is a five-time MLA, having retained the seat consistently since 2010.

In the 2025 Bihar Assembly elections, Nabin registered a decisive victory with a margin of over 51,000 votes, reinforcing his reputation as a leader with deep grassroots connect and urban electoral appeal.

Within the party organisation, Nitin Nabin is widely regarded as a product of the BJP's cadre-based system. He rose through the ranks of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), serving as its Yuva state president and later as national general secretary.

During this period, he played an active role in youth mobilisation programmes and several national-level organisational initiatives, earning recognition as an effective organiser and strategist.

Nabin began his electoral journey at the age of 26 when he won the Patna West by-election, drawing on the strong organisational network built by his

hosts more than 100 theme-based events.

Notable attraction is the Rashtriya ePustakalaya, a digital library offering access to 6,000 free eBooks, blending traditional book culture with digital innovation.

With its emphasis on education, culture, and accessibility, the New Delhi World Book Fair 2026 continues to celebrate literature while reinforcing India's rich reading ecosystem.

Prashant Jain, Chief Operating Officer of Oswaal Books, who has a stall in the fair said, "The New Delhi World Book Fair offers a powerful platform to engage with learners, parents, and educators from across the country. The entire range of books reflects our commitment to addressing diverse learning needs from early childhood to high-stakes competitive examinations."

Organised by the National Book Trust, the fair was inaugurated by union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

This year's theme,

"Indian Military History: Valour and Wisdom @75" is showcased prominently at the Theme Pavilion, which features over 500 books and

SC stays Rajasthan High Court order on removal of liquor shops near highways

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday stayed a Rajasthan High Court order directing the removal or relocation of all liquor shops situated within 500 metres of National or State Highways across the State. The Bench comprising Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta passed the interim order after hearing Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for the petitioner, and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta for the State of Rajasthan.

Notably, the Solicitor General supported the petitioner's challenge to the High Court order. During the hearing, Rohatgi submitted that the matter before the High Court arose out of a grievance relating to village Sujangarh, but the High Court issued directions applicable to the entire State without hearing affected parties. In response, Justice Mehta observed that the High Court exercises jurisdiction throughout the State. Rohatgi, however, contended that the impugned order was contrary to binding Supreme

Court precedent, which did not impose a blanket prohibition on licensed liquor establishments located within municipal areas. "The judge still says there will be a ban that cannot be," Rohatgi submitted. At this point, Justice Nath remarked, "Judges can do everything," to which Rohatgi responded that the judge being the senior-most at Jodhpur may have proceeded on that basis. Intervening, the Solicitor General urged restraint in such remarks.

Justice Mehta also noted that the issue was sensitive, given the number of deaths attributed to drunk driving, and observed that the concern underlying the High Court's order was "absolutely genuine." He added that the State could, in future, take appropriate steps to ensure that liquor vendors are not located along highways. In an exchange during the hearing, the Solicitor General referred to what he described as "Indian ingenuity," pointing out that in some States, where hoardings advertising liquor are prohibited, only directional arrows are displayed. "Those who know, know what it means," he said. Rohatgi added that



there are also "shadow advertisements" relating to soda and water. Justice Mehta, smiling, remarked that he was unaware of such practices. The High Court order under challenge was passed in December on a petition highlighting a steep rise in drunk driving cases in Rajasthan during 2025.

Taking note of the increasing number of highway accidents attributed to alcohol misuse, the High Court had directed the

State to remove or relocate all liquor shops within 500 metres of National or State Highways within two months, irrespective of whether such shops were located in municipal areas, local self-governing bodies or statutory development authorities.

The High Court, in its order, referred to the Supreme Court's decision in State of Tamil Nadu v. K. Balu, which recorded the alarming scale of road accidents caused by speeding and alcohol consumption and directed that no liquor shops be situated within 500 metres of the outer edge of National or State Highways.

The Supreme Court had subsequently clarified that the prohibition did not extend to licensed establishments located within municipal areas, leaving it to the discretion of State Governments to decide whether to extend the restriction to areas under local bodies and development authorities. Against this backdrop, the High Court held that Rajasthan had misused the limited discretion granted

to it.

Expressing serious concern, the High Court observed that revenue considerations could not override the constitutional obligation to protect public life and road safety. It held that alcohol misuse and reckless driving had reached dangerous proportions, infringing the right to life under Article 21, and directed the removal or relocation of all liquor shops within the restricted zone, along with a prohibition on hoardings or advertisements relating to liquor being sold from highways.

Challenging these directions, the petitioner approached the Supreme Court, which has now stayed the High Court order and will hear the matter further.

SC suggests shifting Bikram Majithia to Chandigarh jail

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday suggested that Shiromani Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia be shifted to a jail in Chandigarh while hearing his plea seeking interim bail on the ground that he apprehended threat to his life.

"We are saying shift him to Chandigarh jail, what is the problem?" remarked Justice Sandeep Mehta during the hearing.

A bench comprising Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta was hearing Majithia's petition. On the issue of an alleged threat to life, Justice Mehta quered how many attempts had been made on Majithia since he was taken into custody.

Senior Advocate Gaurav Aggarwal, appearing for

Majithia, urged the court to grant interim bail, submitting that there was a genuine threat, as reflected in the state's own intelligence report dated January 3.

In response to a specific query from the bench, Aggarwal said Majithia has been lodged in Nabha jail since June 2025.

During the hearing, Justice Mehta observed, "Rs 540 crore of public money (is involved)," to which Aggarwal responded that, as per the chargesheet, the allegation pertained to around Rs 40 crore.

Senior Advocate Siddharth Dave, appearing for the state, sought time to file a response. He informed the court that the Punjab and Haryana High Court was already seized of the issue and that the state had assured the High

Court that all necessary steps were being taken to ensure Majithia's safety.

The matter was adjourned, granting time to the state to file a counter-affidavit. Before parting, the bench observed that Majithia's request for interim bail would be considered on the next date of hearing.

Majithia has approached the Supreme Court challenging a Punjab and Haryana High Court order, which dismissed his bail plea in an FIR registered by the Punjab Vigilance Bureau under Sections 13(1)(b) read with Section 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

Notice on the plea was issued by the Supreme Court in December 2025. The FIR was registered on the

basis of a June 7, 2025, report of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing an earlier NDPS case against Majithia.

The SIT alleged that Majithia and his wife had accumulated assets worth over Rs 540 crore, disproportionate to their known sources of income, through a network of domestic and foreign entities.

It was also alleged that Majithia misused his official position to build business interests in the liquor, transport, and aviation sectors through family members and front entities.

Before the High Court, Majithia had contended that the corruption case was an offshoot of the NDPS case in which he was granted bail in August 2022, and that the Supreme Court had dismissed the state's plea for cancellation of that bail in April 2025.

He argued that the same material could not form the basis of a fresh FIR and alleged political motivation behind the prosecution.

He also pointed out that the investigation was complete, with a chargesheet filed on August 22, 2025, comprising nearly 40,000 pages and citing 272 witnesses.

Rejecting these submissions, the High Court held that there was no legal bar on registration of a second FIR when investigation

discloses a larger conspiracy or distinct offences.

Relying on Supreme Court precedent, it observed that economic offences form a separate class for the purpose of bail.

The High Court further noted that the allegations pointed to deep-rooted financial conspiracies with serious implications for the state's financial health, and that release at that stage could hamper further investigation and influence witnesses.

While declining bail, the High Court had directed the investigating agency to complete the remaining investigation within three months and observed that Majithia could seek bail thereafter, noting that he could not be kept in custody indefinitely.





KTR slams Centre for delay in sanctioning Mega Power Loom Cluster for Sircilla

Hyderabad: Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) Working President and former Minister K T Rama Rao on Monday accused the BJP-led Central Government of deliberately delaying and discriminating against Telangana by not sanctioning a Mega Power Loom Cluster for Sircilla, calling it a "political vendetta" against the State's weaving community.

In a letter, addressed to union Minister for Textiles Giriraj Singh, KTR said the proposal had been pending for over a decade despite Sircilla fulfilling every eligibility norm under the Comprehensive Powerloom Cluster Development Scheme (CPCDS).

He recalled writing multiple letters and holding several personal meetings with successive union Ministers over the last 12 years, including the late Arun Jaitley, Smriti Irani and the present minister.

"Despite meeting Central Ministers nearly ten times and submitting de-

tailed reports, the Centre has failed to take a positive decision. What is the real reason behind keeping Sircilla's file aside?" he questioned, alleging that political bias was the only reason for the prolonged delay.

KTR said Central teams had also inspected the region and confirmed its eligibility under CPCDS norms. He pointed out that Sircilla, considered the backbone of

Stating that the Telangana's textile economy, houses over 30,000 power looms and provides livelihood to thousands of families.

He also alleged that Mega Clusters were sanctioned to regions in other States with comparatively lower workforce and capacity, while Sircilla continued to be ignored despite its proven strength.

Stating that the Telangana Government under former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao had completed all preparatory work for the cluster, KTR said land allocation, uninterrupted power and water supply, single-window clearances and State-level incentives were already in place. "Keeping the proposal pending without citing any technical or financial reason is nothing but admin-

istrative arrogance," he remarked.

Taking a swipe at the Centre, KTR said the BJP spoke about "Make in India" and "Atmanirbhar Bharat" but failed to support one of the country's most capable textile hubs.

He warned that the delay was inflicting a heavy human and economic cost on the weavers and claimed the sector had slipped back into crisis, with reports of weavers' suicides resurfacing.

He also criticised BJP MPs and union Ministers from Telangana for failing to raise the issue and protect the interests of the State. "They have been reduced to mere ceremonial showpieces," he alleged.

KTR demanded that the forthcoming union Budget should officially announce the Sircilla Mega Power Loom Cluster and urged the Centre to take an immediate decision in the interest of Telangana's weavers, stating that prolonged inaction would only deepen their anguish.



Bengaluru civic polls after May 25, ballot papers to replace EVMs

Bengaluru: Karnataka Chief Election Commissioner G S Sangreshi on Monday announced that elections to the five new municipal corporations formed under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) will be held after May 25, with ballot papers replacing Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

Addressing the media, Sangreshi said the poll schedule would be finalised after the conclusion of SSLC and PUC examinations.

He made it clear that the same method would be followed for the forthcoming zilla and taluk panchayat elections later this year.

Explaining the rationale, the Chief Election Commissioner said both ballot papers and EVMs are legally valid methods of conducting elections, and there is no prohibition under existing laws or Supreme Court rulings on the use of ballot papers.

He observed that while EVMs have been widely



used over the last few decades, ballot papers remain a recognised and credible system.

Sangreshi noted that many elections in India, including Gram Panchayat, cooperative society and MLC polls, are still conducted using ballot papers, and several countries across the world continue to follow the same practice.

He pointed out that the previous Bengaluru civic elections held in 2015 were conducted using EVMs.

Rejecting suggestions of political influence behind the decision, he stressed that the State Election Commission functions as an independent constitutional authority. Since the law allows flexibility in the choice of voting method, the commission has exercised its discretion after assessing the present circumstances, he said.

The decision comes against the backdrop of the Karnataka government's move last year to recommend ballot papers for all

future panchayat and urban local body elections.

Sangreshi underlined that opting for ballot papers should not be viewed as a step backward. "Ballot-based elections are still in practice and widely accepted. It is a tested and reliable system," he said.

The announcement follows a recent Supreme Court direction to the state government and the election commission to complete Bengaluru's local body elections by June 30. The elected council of the erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) completed its term in September 2020, after which the civic body has been under administrative control.

In September 2025, the city was reorganised into five separate municipal corporations — Central, East, West, North and South — under the Greater Bengaluru Authority, replacing the unified BBMP structure.

Odisha's cooperative sector heading towards bankruptcy :Congress

Bhubaneswar:

All India Kisan Congress National Coordinator and President of the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee Cooperative Cell, Amiya Kumar Patnaik, on Monday alleged that cooperative institutions in Odisha are steadily moving toward bankruptcy. Patnaik said that during the last 25 years of BJD rule and under the present BJP government, cooperative institutions have turned into centres of large-scale corruption, while the legitimate demands of cooperative employees continue to be ignored.

He alleged that cooperative-based oil mills, spinning mills and sugar mills have become defunct, and Regulated Market Committees (RMCs)

are failing to function effectively for farmers. The Congress leader also pointed out the acute shortage of warehouses for storing paddy and other crops, along with the complete absence of cold storage facilities for vegetables across the state.

To address these issues, Patnaik announced that the Odisha Pradesh Congress Cooperative Cell on Monday launched the Cooperative Protection Campaign, starting from Ganjam district.

The campaign aims to



Weather forecasting in UP to receive a major boost with the installation of 5 State-of-the-art radars



Lucknow: A major step is being taken to further strengthen the weather forecasting system in Uttar Pradesh. Five state-of-the-art dual-polarimetric Doppler radar systems are being installed in the state, which will become operational in the next six months.

This information was provided by Manish Kumar, Director of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Lucknow on Monday. He said that these radars are being installed in Lucknow, Azamgarh, Jhansi, Aligarh, and Varanasi. Four of these radars are being installed by the Uttar Pradesh government, while one radar in Varanasi is being installed by the IMD. This will ensure overlapping coverage in the radar network and significantly increase the accuracy of weather forecasts.

According to Manish Kumar, these advanced radars are capable of tracking the reflectivity and three-dimensional structure of clouds, which will further improve the capacity for 'nowcasting' or short-term weather forecasting. Along

with this, 2,450 automatic weather stations and 2,000 automatic rain gauge stations are being established at the block level across the state. This will create a robust block-level weather network throughout Uttar Pradesh. He also informed that there is a proposal to install wind profiler radar meters in Lucknow and Varanasi. The site selection and tendering process have been completed, and these radars will become operational in the next one year, making daily weather monitoring more effective. In addition, under IMD's 'Mission Mausam' scheme, state-of-the-art observation systems will be established in Bareilly, Deoria, and Prayagraj.

which will be operational in the next one and a half years. These systems will assist in surface, remote sensing, and upper atmospheric observations, strengthening forecasting accuracy and disaster management capabilities.

Senior scientist Mohammad Danish of IMD Lucknow said that the shift from traditional systems to digital systems will provide real-time data, more frequent updates, and high-quality weather data. This will make it possible to issue accurate weather warnings in a timely manner. Overall, these initiatives are expected to significantly strengthen weather forecasting, disaster management, and public safety in Uttar Pradesh.

Telangana BJP questions CM Revanth Reddy's US visit for Harvard leadership programme

Hyderabad: The Telangana BJP on Monday expressed surprise and strong disapproval over Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's decision to travel to the United States to attend what it termed a "crash leadership course," questioning the timing and financial prudence of the visit.

According to reports, the Chief Minister has enrolled in a programme titled "Leadership for the 21st Century: Chaos, Conflict, and Courage" at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. He is scheduled to be on the Cambridge, Massachusetts campus from January 25 to 30, travelling to the US directly from Davos, where he will attend the World Economic Forum.

Reacting to the development, BJP State Chief Spokesperson and Media In-Charge N V Subash in a statement said leadership is not acquired through short-term courses but proven through governance, accountability and performance.

"Shouldn't such academic pursuits have been completed earlier in life?" he asked, adding that the Chief Minister's focus should be on addressing issues within the state rather than attending overseas programmes.

Subash also questioned whether the trip reflects personal aspirations being prioritised over public responsibilities.

He alleged that the Chief Minister was using public funds for personal



interests, citing what he called recent "public theatrics" that distract from governance.

The BJP leader pointed to what he described as a contradiction in the government's claims.

While the Chief Minister has stated that the state exchequer is under strain and funds are insufficient to implement Congress' electoral promises, he argued that spending on an overseas leadership programme sends a conflicting message.

He said the resources and administrative attention directed toward such international engagements could instead be utilised to address key concerns such as farmer welfare, employment generation, infrastructure development and implementation of welfare schemes.

The BJP expressed hope that the Chief Minister would return with "greater seriousness and dignity" and focus on delivering tangible outcomes for the people of Telangana.

"The people of the state did not vote for foreign certifications.

They voted for transparent, efficient and accountable leadership at home," Subash said.

JK: SFs launch search op to track down hiding terrorists in Kishtwar

Jammu: The joint team of Security Forces (SF) launched a massive search operation on Monday morning to track down the hiding terrorists in the forests of Singhpora in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir.

A fierce gun battle erupted between security forces and terrorists on Sunday in the Singhpora area of Chatroo in the Kishtwar when acting on a tip off about the presence of two to three terrorists of Pakistan based Jaish-e-Mohammad outfit, in the forest area, a team of army, police and spe-

cial operation group launched searches.

The terrorists fired upon the search party, which was retaliated and the encounter triggered.

However, as per reports, around eight soldiers have also suffered injuries, primarily due to splinter injuries caused by a sudden grenade attack from the hiding terrorists.

"The search operation resumed in the early morning supported by drones and sniffer dogs," they said, adding that the area has been cordoned off.

Multiple road accidents in UP leave five dead, many injured

Lucknow: In separate road accidents across Uttar Pradesh, at least five people were killed and several others injured in Gonda, Unnao, Barabanki, and other districts.

On the Lucknow-Ayodhya service lane near Palhari under Kotwali Nagar area, an auto-rickshaw carrying passengers met with a fatal accident in the wee hours of Monday. Seeing a gravel-laden trailer approaching from the opposite direction, the auto driver swerved left. As a result, Ashish Yadav (resident of Pandeypur, Maurawan, Unnao), who was sitting on the right side of the auto, fell onto the road. The rear wheel of the trailer ran over his head, killing him on the spot.

Police seized both vehicles, but the drivers fled. According to Kotwali Nagar SHO Sudhir Kumar Singh, Ashish worked with an NGO and taught young children at anganwadi centers. He was liv-

ing on rent near the police station in Zaidpur. On the Lucknow-Bahraich National Highway near Hari Narayanpur turn, an Innova car collided head-on with an Ertiga car while attempting to overtake an Alambagh depot bus. After the collision, the Ertiga veered right and was hit by an oncoming roadway bus.

Devendra Kumar Tiwari (resident of Rosipurwa, Colonelganj, Gonda), who was seated in the front of the Ertiga, died in the accident. He worked at a petrol pump and was travelling after taking a lift. Two others, Islam (resident of Siddharthnagar) and Atikur Rahman (from Gonda), were injured and referred from the CHC to the district hospital. Innova passenger Makbool Ahmad of Bahraich sustained serious injuries, while his family members suffered minor injuries.

In another tragic inci-

ting on rent near the police station in Zaidpur. On the Lucknow-Bahraich National Highway near Hari Narayanpur turn, an Innova car collided head-on with an Ertiga car while attempting to overtake an Alambagh depot bus. After the collision, the Ertiga veered right and was hit by an oncoming roadway bus.

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Briefs :

Expelled BJP MLA Kuldeep Sengar's bail plea rejected in Unnao rape victim's father's death case

New Delhi : The Delhi High Court on Monday rejected the bail plea of Kuldeep Singh Sengar in the custodial death case of the father of the Unnao gang-rape victim. The Delhi High Court on Monday rejected a plea by expelled BJP leader Kuldeep Singh Sengar to suspend a 10-year prison sentence imposed for his role in the custodial death of the father of a rape survivor from Uttar Pradesh. Justice Ravinder Dudeja said the court found no grounds to grant interim relief, dismissing Sengar's application for suspension of sentence while his appeal against conviction is pending. The judge noted that though Sengar has served about seven and a half years of the 10-year sentence but said the delay in hearing the appeal could not justify relief, as part of the delay was attributable to multiple applications filed by Sengar himself.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said on Monday that Kuldeep Singh Sengar and other accused were convicted in the case by a lower court on March 4, 2020. The court had sentenced Sengar to 10 years in prison, fine and to pay Rs 10 lakh as compensation to the legal heirs of the deceased. Kuldeep Singh Sengar had filed an appeal against the lower court's decision.

ECI to host global democracy meet IIIDEM-2026 in New Delhi from Jan 21

New Delhi : The Election Commission of India (ECI) will host the inaugural India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM) 2026 from January 21 to 23 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, positioning India as a global hub for dialogue on democratic practices and election management. Organised by the India International Institute of Democracy & Election Management (IIIDEM), the three-day conference is touted as the largest global conference of its kind in the field of democracy and elections, and expected to see participation from nearly 100 international delegates representing over 70 countries. Representatives of international organisations, foreign missions in India, and leading academic and practising experts in the electoral domain will also take part.

AAP's 'Employment and Social Justice' march enters Varanasi, FIR against MP

New Delhi : The Aam Aadmi Party's 'Employment and Social Justice' foot march entered Varanasi on its third day on Sunday, with party leaders claiming widespread public support along the route from Mirzapur. The march, led by AAP's Uttar Pradesh in-charge and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, is focusing on unemployment and social injustice in the state. The march concluded at a banquet hall in Varanasi after passing through several areas. According to AAP supporters, the procession was welcomed with flower petals and cheers by crowds including youth, lawyers, and elderly citizens. The entry into Varanasi coincided with the registration of a police FIR against Sanjay Singh. The MP has been booked for his alleged opposition to the demolition work at the Manikarnika Ghat.

Addressing the issue during the march, Singh sharply criticised the state's BJP government, accusing it of attacking Hindu faith by damaging the historic ghat, which is linked to 18th-century ruler Ahilyabai Holkar.

Atishi denies allegations of disrespecting Sikh Gurus in Assembly

New Delhi : Atishi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Legislative Assembly, has formally rejected allegations of breach of privilege and contempt levelled against her.

The notice, dated January 15, stems from a complaint concerning proceedings in the House on January 6.

In a detailed written response addressed to the Secretary of the Delhi Legislative Assembly, Atishi categorically denied the accusations.

"I state with utmost clarity and sincerity that I have never made any derogatory remark against Sikh Gurus, either in the House on 6th January or at any other point of time in my life. I categorically deny the allegation in its entirety," she stated in her statement.

She described her personal reverence for Sikh Gurus as a matter of family values and faith. Atishi emphasised the gravity of the charge, stating she is "morally incapable" of uttering disrespectful words to



wards figures like Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji.

Regarding the January 6 session, Atishi clarified the context as a heated political exchange during a discussion on pollution and governance. She asserted, "At no point were Sikh Gurus referred to, invoked or alluded to in any manner whatsoever."

The Leader of the Opposition also raised procedural concerns about the notice served to her. She ar-

gued that the notice uses vague language, citing "pandemonium in the House" without specifying the exact remarks she is alleged to have made, their context, or how they were considered derogatory. This lack of particulars, she contended, places her in an "untenable position" and is contrary to principles of natural justice.

Further, Atishi noted she received no prior communication from the Speaker seeking her clarification.

er asking her to clarify her position, as mentioned in the notice.

To enable a comprehensive response, Atishi has requested the Assembly Secretary to provide specific documents. These include a copy of the original complaint, the complete and unedited official video recording of the January 6 proceedings, and copies of any written communications from the Speaker seeking her clarification.

Single helpline number 112 for all disasters and emergencies in Delhi

New Delhi : The Delhi government has introduced a single emergency number, 112, for all kinds of disasters and emergency situations under the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) 2.0.

With this initiative, citizens will no longer need to remember or dial multiple helpline numbers during crises, ensuring quicker and more coordinated assistance.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Monday said that at present, different emergency services operate through separate helpline numbers such as police (100), fire services (101), ambulance and health services (108), women's helpline (181), child helpline (1098), gas

leakage (1906), electricity supply (19123), water supply (1916), Delhi Metro (155370) and disaster management services (1077). The multiplicity of numbers often causes confusion and delays during emergencies. Under ERSS 2.0, citizens will be able to seek all forms of emergency assistance by dialing only 112.

Ministry of Home Affairs has already notified 112 as the national emergency number, and Delhi is now moving to fully operationalise it. ERSS 2.0 is a modern, unified signal-handling system in which all emergency calls, mobile app alerts, panic button triggers, SMS messages and web-based alerts will be received at a single Public Safety Answering

Point (PSAP). Based on the nature of the emergency, police, fire, ambulance and disaster management services can be alerted simultaneously.

An important feature of ERSS 2.0 is that assistance can be sought not only through phone calls but also via a mobile app, emergency buttons, SMS and online platforms. This ensures that even if a person is unable to speak during an emergency, they can still send a distress signal and receive help.

Another key advantage of the new system is automatic location identification. As soon as an emergency call or alert is received, the system will automatically detect the caller's location, eliminating the need for victims to

explain where they are. This enables the control room to immediately dispatch the nearest police vehicle, ambulance or fire tender, saving crucial time during the golden hour and significantly improving response efficiency.

Under the new arrangement, a single call to 112 will alert police, fire and medical services together, reducing delays caused by inter-departmental coordination. The ERSS 2.0 control room will also be equipped with a modern dashboard to track the incident location, the vehicles deployed and their estimated arrival time.

In case of any delay, alternative resources can be dispatched promptly, ensuring continuous monitoring and greater accountability.

According to Delhi CM

Rekha Gupta, the system will be implemented in a phased manner. In the first phase, all existing emergency helpline numbers will be integrated with 112.

the Shankaracharya. "Computer Engineer falls into drain at Noida, calls his father for help, struggles to stay afloat for 3 hours. Yogi Govt was busy teaching a lesson to Shankaracharya. No wonder, lakhs of Engineers, Doctors, MBAs, Consultants are leaving India every year," he posted on X.

He further said no one wants to return to India once they settle abroad. "Most who chant 'Modi-Modi' in foreign countries don't want to come back to India," his post read.

On Friday evening, Rajkumar Mehta received a dis-

treasing call and text from his son, Yuvraj, alerting him that his vehicle had fallen into a waterlogged ditch. Rajkumar immediately rushed to the scene and informed the police and fire department. While emergency teams reached within 15 minutes, they lacked the necessary equipment to conduct a rescue.

Yuvraj had managed to climb onto the roof of his partially submerged car and remained there from midnight until around 2:00 AM, desperately trying to keep the vehicle from sinking fur-

AAP leader accuses UP govt of neglect in engineer's drowning death

New Delhi : AAP's Delhi President Saurabh Bharadwaj on Monday accused the Yogi Adityanath-led UP Government of doing nothing to save the precious life of a computer engineer in Greater Noida. A 27-year-old software engineer, Yuvraj Mehta, was killed after his car plunged into a deep, water-filled ditch amid dense fog in Noida. He died in front of his father, Rajkumar Mehta.

Bharadwaj stated that for three hours, no one came to rescue the computer engineer, while the UP government was busy "harassing

the current Delhi administration. He stated that pollution remains a serious

Delhi Cong calls for health check-ups in schools citing pollution concerns

New Delhi : President of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee Devender Yadav on Monday raised concerns over the persistent air pollution in the Capital and its impact on children's health. He attributed the ongoing problem to the failure of govt

AAP leader alleges bribery at Delhi borders, calls GRAP a "scam" in pollution control

New Delhi : Delhi State President of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Saurabh Bharadwaj, on Monday levelled serious allegations against the Delhi Police, accusing them of systematic bribery and deliberately undermining efforts to control the national capital's worsening air pollution. The allegations come amid the enforcement of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), a set of emergency measures implemented to curb toxic air levels during periods of severe pollution in Delhi.

Bharadwaj took to social media platform X to post a video that he claimed showed Delhi Police personnel accepting bribes in exchange for allowing trucks carrying construction material to enter the city. According to the AAP leader, these trucks were permitted entry despite strict GRAP restrictions that prohibit the movement of such vehicles in order to limit dust and particulate pollution.

In his post, Bharadwaj asserted that CCTV footage from entry points into the capital would corroborate his claims, alleging that at least 300 trucks were allowed to enter Delhi in a single night.

He further alleged that this practice continues throughout the night across various locations in the city, effectively rendering the pollution-control measures meaningless.

"GRAP 4 is a scam," Bharadwaj wrote in his post, accusing the authorities of failing to take the health



The Opposition's Declining Unity

The balance of power in Indian politics is currently clearly tilted in one direction. The Bharatiya Janata Party has taken such a lead at all three levels - organization, leadership and electoral strategy - that the opposition's mass is becoming increasingly fragmented day by day. While the process of leadership change in the BJP is going smoothly, on the other hand, the opposition parties seem to be stuck in internal differences, selfish equations and directionless politics.

Currently, there is only one dominant force that is constantly underlining its influence on the horizon of Indian politics, and that is the Bharatiya Janata Party. The BJP will get a new full-time president in the coming week, and the election of a relatively new but organizationally loyal leader, Nitin Nabi, as the full-time president from the post of working president says a lot. This election has once again proven how tight and impenetrable the grip of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah on the party is. Despite facing many challenges at the international level and some degree of political deadlock, the BJP's coin is still ringing in domestic politics. The issue of Hindutva is currently at the center of all political discussions and all other questions and problems seem to be secondary for the time being. This era of victory that began in 2014 is still going on with the same vigor, and the BJP has become a huge and precise machine for winning elections, not just a political party, although the opposition is criticizing that it has become a huge and precise machine for winning elections.

In the face of this storm of BJP, the condition of non-BJP parties has become very bad. The Congress, which once brought independence to the country under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, is in a state of disarray today. Although Rahul Gandhi is trying to raise important issues, the party does not seem to be getting the desired momentum. Although the opposition is constantly criticizing the functioning of the Election Commission and the role of Commissioner Dnyanesh Kumar, it does not seem to have any impact on the actual voting or the results. Although the opposition is crying foul over the Commission's conduct, it is becoming helpless before the BJP's electoral tactics. The 'India' alliance of the opposition parties is currently going through a struggle for existence. Most of the regional parties in this alliance seem to have their vision limited to their own states. Be it China's infiltration or the controversial statements of US President Donald Trump, these regional parties have little to do with international issues like that. As long as the BJP does not bother them in their own states, they pretend to unite at the national level. 'Our business should run smoothly' is their main motto, and this alliance goes down the drain when selfishness gets in the way.

In this age of instant noodles, political loyalties and alliance unity have become as fleeting as water on a taro leaf. The 'INDIA' alliance finds itself in a precarious situation, unable to hold on to its gains, and appears to have completely lost its momentum after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The BJP, like a skilled magician, creates confusion by raising multiple issues simultaneously and achieves its political objectives amidst the chaos. The opposition is repeatedly failing to understand this technique. As the upcoming elections in Kerala draw closer, the conflict there is becoming more intense. After the last parliamentary session, Prime Minister Modi and opposition leaders, including Priyanka Gandhi, had an informal tea meeting. This cordial picture drew sharp criticism from the Left parties in Kerala against the Congress. The Left parties are becoming restless due to the increasing strength of the Congress in Kerala, and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's popularity also appears to be declining. Vijayan's working style is being criticized as that of 'Kerala's Modi' even within his own party, and this decline of the Left has become a matter of concern for democracy.

On the other hand, Amit Shah has geared up to oust Mamata Banerjee's government in West Bengal. Efforts are underway to corner the Trinamool Congress using new legal and political issues. Although Mamata Banerjee is formally part of the 'INDIA' alliance, she is not inclined to leave any seats for the Congress in the upcoming elections. Therefore, a direct contest is expected between the BJP and the Trinamool in Bengal. The situation is no different in Tamil Nadu. Since Chief Minister M. K. Stalin does not want to give the Congress a share in power, the Congress is now reportedly in contact with film star Vijay and his 'TVK' party. The BJP has also started working on forming a coalition of smaller parties there, along with the AIADMK. The conflict between the Aam Aadmi Party and the Congress in Punjab is well-known, with the Congress trying to weaken Kejriwal's party, while the Congress accuses Kejriwal of acting as the BJP's 'B team'. In Jammu and Kashmir, the ruling National Conference appears to be under pressure from the BJP, which is why the BJP's dominance is also felt in the politics there. Overall, given the current political situation, the possibility of opposition parties uniting in the coming year is extremely slim. While every regional party is struggling for its own existence, the BJP is strengthening its organization at both the central and state levels. It will be interesting to see how the new president, Nitin Naveen, under the guidance of Modi and Shah, carries forward the party's triumphant march. The lack of a concrete program and universally accepted leadership among the opposition is making these battles easier for the BJP. Looking at today's political situation, the defeat of the opposition is not only a result of the BJP's strength, but also a reflection of their own failures. Beyond declarations of unity, the opposition is failing to present a concrete program, credible leadership, and a national perspective. Regional self-interest, personal ambitions, and mutual distrust make opposition alliances appear strong only on paper. Until the opposition overcomes these limitations, it will be impossible to stop the BJP's organized juggernaut. Until the opposition moves beyond its narrow regional identities and presents a national vision, it will be difficult for any alliance to stop the BJP's victorious march. The coming period will not only be about power equations, but also about determining who survives in the battle of ideologies.

Fostering India's Indigenous Chip Design Ecosystem

India is strengthening its semiconductor ecosystem as a strategic pillar of economic growth, technological capability, and national resilience. With global demand for advanced electronics and AI-driven applications rising steadily, the semiconductor industry is projected to reach nearly USD 1 trillion by 2030. At present, the global semiconductor workforce faces a shortfall of semiconductor talent, resulting in a requirement for over 1 million additional skilled professionals by 2032. This positions India as a pivotal contributor to the global semiconductor ecosystem through targeted initiatives.

Recognizing chip design as a strategic national priority, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has implemented proactive measures to transform India's semiconductor design landscape. These initiatives span approximately 400 organizations, including 305 academic institutions under the Chips to Start-up (C2S) Programme and 95 startups under the Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme.

By enabling nationwide participation in semiconductor chip design, the C2S Programme democratizes access to advanced design capabilities. It empowers students, researchers, and entrepreneurs irrespective of institution or location to develop innovative semiconductor solutions, and accelerating indigenous innovation in line with the vision of technological self-reliance, innovation, and global competitiveness in the semiconductor sector.

The C2S Programme is an umbrella capacity-building initiative launched by the MeitY in 2022, with a total outlay of ₹250 crore over five years, covering academic institutions across India.

The C2S Programme targets the development of 85,000 industry-ready professionals across undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels. This includes: 200 PhD scholars engaged in advanced research in chip design,

7000 M. Tech graduates specializing in VLSI or Embedded Systems, 800 M. Tech graduates from computer, communication, or electronic systems programmes with focused VLSI exposure, 69,000 B. Tech students trained through VLSI-oriented coursework.

Moreover, beyond man-

EDA software and semiconductor foundries, enabling them to design, build, and test their own chips. These opportunities also include implementing R&D projects under the C2S Programme to develop working prototypes of Application-Specific Integrated Circuit (ASICs), Systems-on-Chip (SoCs), and

infrastructure, intellectual property cores, and technical mentorship.

This centralized support enables institutions to undertake chip design and fabrication activities, strengthening India's domestic semiconductor design capability.

The Chips to Start-up Programme has delivered

support and large-scale capacity building. Key programmes and institutions such as C-DAC and ChipIN centre, provide end-to-end enablement for chip design education and innovation. By integrating R&D institutions and industry partners, the C2S institutional framework supports indigenous chip design and advances India's objective of a self-reliant and globally competitive semiconductor design ecosystem.

MeitY leads national semiconductor initiatives, provides policy direction, and anchors schemes such as Chips to Start-up Programme.

Under the Chips to Start-up Programme, SCL facilitates fabrication of chip designs developed by students and researchers from participating academic institutions through shared wafer runs. SCL undertakes fabrication using established process technologies and provides packaging support for approved designs. Fabricated chips are delivered back to institutions, allowing students to validate designs on silicon and gain practical exposure to post-fabrication testing and evaluation.

These coordinated institutional frameworks ensure equitable access to national chip design infrastructure, strengthens academia-industry collaboration, and builds a steady pipeline of industry-ready chip designers. It plays a critical role in advancing indigenous chip design capability and positioning India as a credible participant in the global semiconductor ecosystem.

Semiconductors have emerged as a strategic foundation for innovation, economic growth, and national security. Leadership in semiconductor design and talent development is increasingly central to global technological competitiveness. Recognising this, India is positioning its academic and innovation ecosystem to play a decisive role in shaping future semiconductor technologies.

The Chips to Start-up Programme reflects India's commitment to building a strong and self-reliant semiconductor ecosystem. By enabling large-scale skill development, hands-on design experience, and access to national infrastructure, the programme is empowering students, researchers, startups, and entrepreneurs to contribute to indigenous chip design and innovation.

Through a combination of national technological facilities and fabrication support, the programme has enabled large-scale participation from academic institutions and startups.

India's chip design eco-

system under the Chips to Start-up Programme is being strengthened through a coordinated institutional framework that combines technological infrastructure

value chain.

C-DAC has established

and operates the ChipIN

Centre at Bengaluru, which

serves as the national hub for

chip design enablement. The

Centre provides shared ac-

cess to commercial EDA

tools, high-performance

computing resources, IP li-

braries, and technical men-

toring. It also manages de-

sign onboarding, verifi-

cation, and aggregation

programme on January 19.

The regional competition has been con-

ceptualised to reduce geographic and logis-

tical barriers for participation, strengthen skill

ecosystems in the North Eastern Region, and

identify region-specific strengths and high-

potential candidates aligned with industry

and national priorities.

This integrated approach ensures strong industry alignment, high-quality competition standards and adherence to national and international benchmarks. Winners from the North East Regional Competition will advance to the national stage of IndiaSkills Competition 2025-26, contributing to India's growing pipeline of skilled talent for global opportunities.

IndiaSkills 2025-26: North East Regional Competition

brating regional talent and excellence.

The competition will be inaugurated on 19 January 2026 by Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education, Government of India, reaffirming the Government's commitment to strengthening skill development, regional inclusion and competitive excellence across emerging regions of the country.

Smt. Hema Usman, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India addressed the pre-event press conference. The North East Regional Competition represents a decisive step in deepening India's skilling architecture across emerging regions of the country.

The competition will commence with the

Opening Ceremony at the B.K.B Auditorium,

Gauhati University followed by a familiarisa-

IndiaSkills is the country's premier national skill competition framework, designed to identify, nurture and benchmark India's best vocational talent against global standards, while creating a structured progression pathway for skilled youth from the grassroots to national and international platforms, including the WorldSkills Competition.

The ongoing IndiaSkills Competition 2025-26 cycle has witnessed one of the widest participation footprints to date, with 3.65 lakh candidates registering from 35 States and Union Territories across 63 skill categories, through the Skill India Digital Hub.

The competition will commence with the

Opening Ceremony at the B.K.B Auditorium,

Gauhati University followed by a familiarisa-

Several Initiatives in the Distribution Sector Improve Key Performance Indicators

the distribution sector.

The Minister said this achievement was possible due to the leadership and vision of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi captured in his words that, "India is driving not only its growth but also the growth of the world, with the energy sector playing a significant role in this". Shri Manohar Lal said the government is committed to the required reforms in the sector so that the power sector can support our growing economy and play its part in the journey towards Viksit Bharat.

Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS): Enhancing financial viability through infrastructure modernization and accelerated smart metering.

Additional Prudential Norms: Linking access to finance for Power sector Utilities to achievement against performance benchmarks to

promote fiscal and operational discipline. Amendments to Electricity Rules: Enforcing timely cost adjustments, prudent tariff structures, and transparent

utilities for improved financial governance.

Late Payment Surcharge Rules: Enforcing legal contracts through timely payments in the power sector

subsidy accounting to ensure

full cost recovery.

Electricity Distribution

(Accounts and Additional

Disclosure) Rules, 2025: Introducing uniform account

ing and enhanced transpar-

ency across Distribution

thereby supporting investment in new RE projects. Incentivizing states to implement critical power sector reforms, with borrowing limits tied to performance metrics as part of Additional Borrowing Scheme.

The result of these re-

forms is evident not just in

the positive PAT posted by

Distribution Utilities af-

ter so many years, but also in

other performance indica-

tors.

The Aggregate Tech-

nical & Commercial (AT&C)

losses have reduced over the

years, signalling a transfor-

mation. The AT&C losses

have reduced from 22.62%

in FY 2013-14 to 15.04%

in FY 2024-25. Further, signal-

ing much improved cost re-

covery, the Average Cost of

Supply-Average Revenue

Realized (ACS-ARR) gap

has narrowed from ₹0.78/

kWh in FY 2013-14 to ₹0.06/

kWh in FY 2024-25. Re-

forms such as the Electricity

(Late Payment Surcharge)

Rules have led to a 96% re-

duction in outstanding dues

to generating companies

from ₹1,39,947 crore in

2022 to just ₹4,927 crore by

January 2026—while bring-

ing down Distribution utility

payment cycles from 178

days in FY 2020-21 to 113

days in FY 2024-25.

The Ministry of Power

has put in concerted efforts

over the past decade to im-

prove the performance of

distribution utilities across

the country. In addition to

the different policy initia-

tives, extensive engage-

ments with States and UTs have empha-

sized reforms in the distri-

bution sector.

These include discus-

sions led by Shri

Manohar Lal, Union Power

Minister during the Reg

HARYANA

Briefs :

Burshyam's Kabaddi Culture Breeds Champions

Panipat : In Burshyam village of Panipat district, kabaddi is more than a sport—it is a way of life that has produced generations of champions over the past 35 years.

The village boasts two Arjuna Awardees, eight international players and around 150 national-level kabaddi players. More than 60 villagers have secured government jobs on the strength of their sporting achievements, while Indian women's kabaddi team captain Ritu Negi also hails from Burshyam.

Kabaddi took root here in 1990 when Circle Kabaddi was introduced, followed by technical training from seasoned players from Sonepat's Rindhana village. Since then, the sport has flourished, bringing recognition and opportunities to the village.

Former Haryana Kabaddi Association treasurer Rajender Gulia said players from Burshyam serve across the armed forces, police and public sector units. The village also houses a rare indoor kabaddi stadium, maintained by the panchayat.

Children as young as six train daily on multiple grounds, guided by government coaches and senior players. Girls too have embraced the sport, training at nearby centres with aspirations of national glory.

Local residents say the culture of mentorship and community support has been key to sustaining the village's kabaddi legacy. With continued backing, they hope Burshyam will remain a cradle of champions for years to come.

University Steps In to Revive Saang

Rohtak : With the traditional folk theatre form Saang facing an uncertain future in the age of the internet and artificial intelligence, Dada Lakhmi Chand State University of Performing and Visual Arts has launched an initiative to revive and promote the art.

A one-day Saang festival will be organised at the university on January 22, featuring performances by prominent Saang troupes from across Haryana. Education Minister Mahipal Dhanda will attend the event as chief guest.

Vice-Chancellor Dr Amit Arya said Saang reflects Haryana's cultural soul and carries strong social messages along with entertainment. He noted that only a handful of families were still practising the art, making collective support essential for its survival. The festival, he said, aimed to expose younger generations to the richness of this ancient tradition.

Dr Arya recalled that Saang had historically been used in villages not just for entertainment but also for social reform and fundraising, with performances helping finance wells, ponds, schools, temples and community centres. Sharing festival details, he said artistes including Pandit Vishnu Dutt, grandson of poet Dada Lakhmi Chand, Pradeep Rai Nindana, great-grandson of Rai Dhanpat Singh, and Dr Satish George Kashyap would perform with their troupes.

Registrar Dr Gunjan Malik Manocha described Saang as a rare blend of folk songs, dialogue and acting, where artistes perform in multiple styles simultaneously and male performers portray female roles.

Arti Rao Backs Father in BJP Rift



Rewari : The ongoing political tension within the Bharatiya Janata Party in south Haryana has taken a sharper turn with Health Minister Arti Rao openly entering the fray to support her father, Union Minister Rao Inderjit Singh, as factionalism among senior leaders becomes increasingly visible.

The rivalry, which has been simmering beneath the surface for some time, has now spilled into the public domain, with competing camps laying claim to political influence in the Ahirwal belt.

Rao Inderjit Singh's supporters have projected him as the most prominent leader of the region, crediting him with strengthening the BJP's base and steering the party to repeated electoral successes.

According to his backers, Rao Inderjit's long political experience and consistent presence in both state and national politics have made him a unifying force not only in Ahirwal but

across Haryana. They argue that his contribution to the party's organisational growth and electoral strategy has often been underestimated by rivals.

On the other hand, Haryana minister Rao Narbir Singh and former minister Abhe Singh have pushed

back against this narrative, asserting that they too enjoy strong grassroots support and political standing. Leaders close to them claim that their influence among voters is substantial and that it is unfair to attribute the BJP's success in the region to a single individual.

This tug-of-war for recognition has created disconcert within party ranks, especially as the BJP seeks to project unity ahead of future

electoral challenges.

Amid this backdrop, Arti Rao's entry into the debate has added a new dimension to the unfolding political drama. By speaking out publicly, she has made it clear that she will not remain silent while her father's leadership is questioned by fellow party members.

In recent remarks, Arti Rao urged critics of Rao Inderjit Singh to engage in self-reflection instead of targeting a senior leader, warning that such attacks could weaken the party from within. She stressed that internal rivalries should not overshadow the larger goal of strengthening the BJP's position in the state.

She described her father as a leader whose influence extends far beyond Ahirwal, noting that his political stature is recognised across Haryana.

According to her, attempts to confine his relevance to a single region ignore his broader role in state and national politics.

Village Girls Rise to National Football Camps

Hisar : Alakhpura village in Bhiwani district has carved out a unique identity on the national sports map by emerging as a strong centre of women's football, with an extraordinary number of girls from the village making it to national-level football camps.

Adding to this remarkable achievement, another young player from the same village has secured selection in the Under-17 national camp currently underway in Andhra Pradesh, further underlining the village's growing dominance in women's football. The consistent success of these players has prompted the Haryana government to recognise the village's potential and establish a dedicated women's football nursery in Alakhpura, aimed at nurturing and streamlining grassroots talent. Coach Sonika Bijarania, who has been instrumental in shaping many of these players, said that most of the girls come from economically modest families but possess exceptional determination, discipline and passion for the sport.

Sugar Mill Recharges 60 Lakh Cubic Metres Water

Yamunanagar : Saraswati Sugar Mills Ltd has set an example in sustainable water management by successfully recharging more than 60 lakh cubic metres of rainwater and floodwater into underground aquifers as part of its long-term corporate social responsibility initiative.

The water conservation effort assumed greater significance in the aftermath of the devastating floods that struck the Yamunanagar region in July 2023, when nearly 343 villages were affected and standing crops, including paddy and sugarcane, were damaged across about 80,000 acres.

Although the floods highlighted the urgent need for better water management, the initiative itself had been launched earlier in 2019-20, when the mill decided to focus its CSR activities entirely on water conservation under the guiding philosophy of "Water is Life".

Chief Executive S K Sachdeva said the programme

was designed to move beyond traditional rainwater harvesting methods by adopting scientific and innovative solutions tailored to the region's geography and flood patterns.

He explained that high-capacity recharge borewells were installed in low-lying and flood-prone areas to channel excess monsoon and floodwater directly into underground aquifers, thereby reducing waterlogging while simultaneously replenishing depleting groundwater reserves.

This dual approach, Sachdeva said, not only mitigates the impact of floods but also helps ensure long-term water security for agriculture and domestic use in surrounding areas. Under the initiative, a total of 213 rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge structures have so far been constructed across Yamunanagar district and adjoining areas, covering both rural and semi-urban locations. Senior vice-president D P Singh said the project

begun on a modest scale in Arnoli village, where a few structures were installed as a pilot effort to test their effectiveness and impact.

Encouraged by positive results, the programme was gradually expanded to several other villages, including flood-affected and water-stressed areas, ensuring wider community benefit.

Singh added that apart from villages, the mill also extended the initiative to educational institutions, religious places and healthcare facilities, integrating water conservation into public and community spaces.

He described the initiative as one of the most scientifically advanced and impactful water conservation programmes undertaken by a sugar mill in Haryana, particularly in terms of groundwater recharge and flood mitigation.

The project has also helped raise awareness among local communities about the importance of rainwater harvesting and sustainable water use.

HC to Hear Challenge to Haryana Prosecution Promotions

Chandigarh : The Punjab and Haryana High Court has scheduled March 30 for hearing a writ petition questioning Haryana's decision to fill senior posts in the prosecution department through promotions without issuing any public advertisement, a move alleged to be contrary to the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023.

The matter came up before a division bench of Justice Ashwani Kumar Mishra and Justice Rohit Kapoor. The petition assails the Haryana State Prosecution Department Legal Services (Group 'A') Amendment Rules, 2025, along with the order dated December 31, 2025, under which several Deputy Director of Prosecution posts were filled. Advocate Pardeep Kumar Rapria, who has filed the petition, has argued that the amended rules travel beyond the scope of the parent legislation and are therefore unconstitutional. Citing Section 20(2) of the BNSS, the petitioner has maintained that only advocates with at least 15 years of

practice or those who are or have been Sessions Judges are eligible for appointment as Director or Deputy Director of Prosecution. Rapria, who claims over 18 years of legal practice including work with the NIA and CIC, has asserted that he meets all statutory requirements.

According to the plea, the state amended the 2013

service rules to allow promotion, transfer or deputation to senior prosecution posts from among serving officers. It is alleged that by relying on these amended provisions, the government promoted certain officers without opening the field to eligible advocates, thereby denying them an equal opportunity.

RSS Calls for Panch Parivartan



Speaking in Panipat, RSS Sah Sarkaryavah Alok Kumar emphasized that the organisation's upcoming centenary year should not merely be a time for celebra-

tion, but an opportunity to inspire meaningful national progress rooted in collective

responsibility and societal practices, strengthening of family values, and fostering civic responsibility. He stressed that these transformations are interconnected and must be pursued collectively by citizens from all walks of life to ensure sustainable national development. Kumar highlighted that social harmony remains the foundation of a strong nation. He urged people to rise above divisions of caste, region, and language, and work together with mutual respect and understanding. According to him, national unity cannot be achieved through policies alone, but through everyday actions that reflect empathy, cooperation, and shared responsibility.

Swadeshi practices, strengthening of family values, and fostering civic responsibility. He stressed that these transformations are interconnected and must be pursued collectively by citizens from all walks of life to ensure sustainable national development. Kumar highlighted that social harmony remains the foundation of a strong nation. He urged people to rise above divisions of caste, region, and language, and work together with mutual respect and understanding. According to him, national unity cannot be achieved through policies alone, but through everyday actions that reflect empathy, cooperation, and shared responsibility.

Notorious Criminal Arrested After Encounter

Sonepat : The CIA-1 unit of Sonepat police arrested a wanted criminal after a brief encounter in the Kharkhoda area, during which the accused sustained a bullet injury to his leg.

The accused, Ankit of Ridhau village, carried a reward of Rs 5,000 and was wanted in 16 criminal cases, including robbery, dacoity and murder. Acting on a tip-off, Inspector Bir Singh and his team traced him near IMT Kharkhoda, where he opened fire, prompting police retaliation.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Narender Kadyan said a country-made pistol, two live cartridges and a mo-

torcycle without a number plate were recovered. During preliminary questioning, Ankit reportedly confessed to attacking a witness in an attempt to prevent testimony in an old case.

Wanted criminal carrying a cash reward was arrested by the CIA-1 unit of Sonepat police following a brief encounter in the Kharkhoda area, officials said on Tuesday. The arrest came after the accused opened fire at the police team during an operation based on specific intelligence inputs, leading to retaliatory action by the police.

The encounter took place near the IMT Khark-

hoda region when the police team attempted to intercept the suspect. During the exchange of fire, the accused sustained a bullet injury to his leg and was immediately overpowered by the police.

He was later taken into custody and provided medical treatment under police supervision. The accused has been identified as Ankit, a resident of Ridhau village. Police records reveal that he was a notorious criminal with a long history of serious offences and had been absconding for a considerable period. Due to his repeated involvement in violent crimes, the police had announced a reward of Rs

5,000 for information leading to his arrest.

According to officials, Ankit was wanted in as many as 16 criminal cases registered across different police stations. These cases include serious charges such as robbery, dacoity, and murder, making him a high-priority target for law enforcement agencies in the district.

Inspector Bir Singh, who led the CIA-1 team, said the operation was launched after receiving a reliable tip-off about the accused's movement in the Kharkhoda area. Acting swiftly on the information, the team laid a trap and tracked Ankit near the industrial area.

HC Emphasises Reform, Cuts Sentence of Elderly Convict

Chandigarh : Stressing that criminal justice must prioritise reform over retribution, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has reduced the jail sentence of an 87-year-old convict to the period he has already spent in custody, while enhancing the compensation payable to the victim.

Justice Aman Chaudhary upheld the man's conviction in a case of causing hurt but curtailed his sentence to five months and 19 days already undergone.

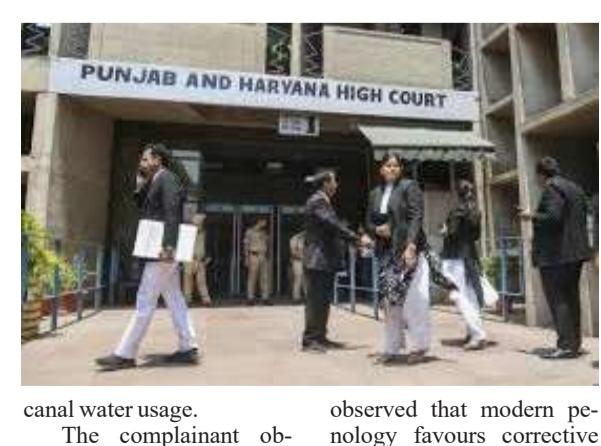
The fine was increased from Rs 1,000 to Rs 10,000, with directions that the amount be paid to the injured complainant.

The case stemmed from an incident in August 2009, when a dispute erupted over

canal water usage. The complainant objected to neighbours obliterating water before their allotted time, leading to an alleged assault that caused injuries.

While explaining the reasoning behind the reduced sentence, the court observed that modern penology favours corrective measures such as probation and admonition, while balancing the interests of both the victim and the accused.

Justice Chaudhary noted that incarceration should not be the sole response to every offence.



"Women's HIL helped me grow as a striker & handle pressure moments better": Lalremsiami

New Delhi: Shrachi Bengal Tigers forward Lalremsiami reflected on her side's runners-up finish in the Women's Hockey India League (HIL) 2025-26, calling the season a valuable learning experience both personally and collectively, while expressing confidence that the team will go one step further next year.

"It was a very good season for us and I got a lot to learn from it. Of course, we wanted to win the title and become champions, but as a team I think we performed really well. Sometimes the final result is not in your control, but overall, I really liked the HIL this time. We enjoyed it a lot and learned a lot together," Lalremsiami said.

The Tigers were involved in multiple high-pressure encounters that went down to penalty shootouts, including the Final against SG Pipers. Reflecting on those moments, the Indian veteran said the team focused more on backing their own strengths rather than overthinking the outcome.

"In our matches against the Pipers earlier, one game went to shootout after we conceded late, and in the other we dominated most of the match but couldn't score."

She added that the league significantly improved her decision-making inside the circle.

"As a striker, you have to make quick decisions in 1v1 situations and under pressure inside the circle. In Hero HIL, I experienced a lot of those moments. Sometimes I made wrong decisions early on, but match by match I learned what to do better. Especially inside the circle, my decision-making has improved a lot."

Speaking about the strong Indian core in the Tigers squad, Lalremsiami highlighted the importance of familiarity and leadership.

"Players like Vandana, Monika, and Gurjeet are our seniors and we play together for India, but we hadn't

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time to build combinations, but everyone – players and coaches – gave 100 percent to understand each other quickly. Our team culture and communication were very good, and that helped us on the pitch. Senior players handled the team very well and guided the younger players. Everyone played their own game, and that consistency was very important for us."

Looking ahead, the 25-year-old was clear about the team's ambition. "Last time we finished third, this season we finished second. Next season, we will definitely aim for the trophy," she said.

Individually, Lalremsiami enjoyed one of her most productive seasons, scoring three goals and finishing among the top five scorers in the tournament, after playing the full campaign as a striker.

"In the last season, I was playing more as a midfielder, but this season I played the entire tournament as a striker. That gave me more chances to score goals. The midfielders and defenders supported me a lot, and I'm really grateful for that. I enjoyed this season and I'm happy with how I played."

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"Players like Vandana, Monika, and Gurjeet are our seniors and we play together for India, but we hadn't



played together for some time. Reuniting in HIL was exciting and a lot of fun. As the team's ambition. "Last time we finished third, this season we finished second. Next season, we will definitely aim for the trophy," she said.

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After a slow start to the tournament, Shrachi Bengal Tigers found consistency and momentum as the league progressed. Lalremsiami credited the team environment, communication and leadership group for building strong on-field chemistry in a short period.

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Pro Wrestling League: Jyoti Sihag Downs Olympic Silver Medallist Guzman Lopez

Noida : Straight from Haryana's wrestling heartland, Sisai, Tigers of Mumbai Dangals' 53kg pick, Jyoti Sihag, produced one of the standout results of Pro Wrestling League 2.0, defeating Paris 2024 Olympic silver medallist Yusneyls Guzman Lopez of Cuba 9-5 on Sunday at the Noida Indoor Stadium.

With the scores tied at 5-5 and only 20 seconds remaining, the 2024 World Military Wrestling Championships gold medallist sealed her victory with a decisive takedown during the Power Minute, turning the bout in the closing seconds and capping a composed, high-pressure performance.

Speaking of her triumph, Jyoti said, "I want to thank my team and Aksha (Kamboj) ma'am, who believed in me, who trusted me and gave me an opportunity to represent Tigers of Mumbai Dangals in Pro Wrestling League. This is my debut season. I am happy with my performance today and getting a good result for the team. I hope I can continue this form, and I am sure we will find our winning strength in the next match."

The forward also underlined the impact of leagues like the Women's HIL on Indian players' confidence. "Hero HIL is a huge stage. Young players dream of playing here and playing alongside foreign players. When you start, the confidence may not be very high, but with time it increases a lot. For both seniors and youngsters, this league is very important for improvement."

With a packed international calendar ahead, including Women's 2026 FIH Hockey World Cup Qualifiers, which are set to take place in Hyderabad in March, 2026 Asian Games and other major tournaments, Lalremsiami believes her HIL experience will prove crucial.

"In the last season, I was playing more as a midfielder, but this season I played the entire tournament as a striker. That gave me more chances to score goals. The midfielders and defenders supported me a lot, and I'm really grateful for that. I enjoyed this season and I'm happy with how I played."

She added that the league significantly improved her decision-making inside the circle.

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MARKET

BSE Sensex		
Close 83,246.18	Percent change -0.39%	
Previous close 83,570.35	Open 83,494.49	
High 83,539.93	Low 82,898.31	

Nifty 50		
Close 25,653.10	Percent change -0.42%	
Previous close 25,694.35	Open 25,653.10	
High 25,653.30	Low 25,494.35	

Nifty 500		
Close 23,373.75	Percent change -0.47%	
Previous close 23,485.30	Open 23,443.30	
High 23,443.35	Low 23,324.85	

Nifty Next 50		
Close 68,693.90	Percent change -0.24%	
Previous close 68,857.90	Open 68,792.25	
High 69,233.70	Low 68,516.90	

Nifty 100		
Close 26,181.95	Percent change -0.39%	
Previous close 26,285.30	Open 26,245.95	
High 26,246.10	Low 26,104.95	

Nifty Bank		
Close 59,891.35	Percent change -0.34%	
Previous close 60,095.15	Open 60,093.30	
High 60,107.50	Low 59,594.60	

Nifty Midcap 100		
Close 59,647.65	Percent change -0.37%	
Previous close 59,867.80	Open 59,739.55	
High 59,938.70	Low 59,480.30	

Top Gainers

Company	Current	% Gain
Interglobe Avi	4,941.50	4.25
Tech Mahindra	1,718.30	2.86
HUL	2,413.90	2.27
Kotak Mahindra	426.90	2.08
Bajaj Finance	969.45	2.02

Top Losers

Company	Current	% Loss
Wipro	245.95	-8.04
Reliance	1,413.60	-3.04
Eternal	281.35	-2.21
ICICI Bank	1,380.60	-2.14
TMV	344.00	-2.71

Commodities

Commodity	Price	Change (%)
Gold Feb 05	144,980.00	2,463.00 1.73
Silver Mar 05	303,425.00	15,663.00 5.44
Crudeoil Feb 19	5,396.00	-53.00 -0.97
Naturalgas Jan 27	328.10	47.70 17.01

Sensex, Nifty succumb to selling pressure in blue-chips Reliance, ICICI Bank

Mumbai : Indian equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Monday, weighed down by sharp losses in heavyweight stocks such as Reliance Industries, Eternal, and ICICI Bank amid persistent global tariff-related uncertainties.

Investor sentiment remained fragile as concerns over global trade tensions, a weakening rupee, and continued foreign capital outflows kept market participants cautious, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 324.17 points, or 0.39 per cent, to close at 83,246.18. During intraday trade, the benchmark index fell as much as 672.04 points, or 0.80 per cent, to hit a low of 82,898.31.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty slipped 108.85 points, or 0.42 per cent, to settle at 25,585.50, snapping its recent gains.

Heavyweight Reliance Industries emerged as the biggest drag on the indices, falling 3.04 per cent after the company reported a flat net profit of Rs 18,645 crore for the third quarter.

The muted earnings performance came as a decline in gas production and weakness in the retail segment offset gains in other business verticals, disappointing investors.

Banking stocks also faced selling pressure, with ICICI Bank sliding 2.26 per cent following a decline in its December-quarter consolidated profit.

The lender's profit fell 2.68 per cent to Rs 12,537.98 crore, impacted by an RBI-mandated Rs 1,283-crore provision related to agricultural loans that were wrongly classified as priority sector advances. On a standalone basis, ICICI Bank, the country's

second-largest private sector lender, reported a more than 4 per cent decline in October-December profit at Rs 12,883 crore. Other prominent Sensex laggards included Eternal, Titan, Adani Ports, Tata Consultancy Services, and UltraTech

Cement, reflecting broad-based selling across sectors. However, selective buying was seen in pockets of the market, with InterGlobe Aviation, Tech Mahindra, Hindustan Unilever, and Bajaj Finance ending the session in the

green. Asian markets presented a mixed picture, as South Korea's Kospi index and Shanghai's SSE Composite closed higher, while Japan's Nikkei 225 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended lower.

European markets were trading significantly lower during Indian market hours, mirroring the cautious global mood, while US markets had ended marginally lower on Friday. "Global risk appetite weakened after US President Donald Trump announced new tariff threats against eight European nations, reigniting concerns of a potential US-EU trade dispute," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments Limited.

"This development triggered a broad risk-off mood across global equity markets, prompting investors to rotate toward safe-haven assets like gold," he added.

PSBs clear over Rs 52,300 cr loans to MSMEs via digital credit model: Ministry

New Delhi: Public Sector Banks (PSBs) have sanctioned loans worth more than Rs 52,300 crore to nearly 3.96 lakh Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) during the period from April 1 to December 31, 2025, under the newly introduced digital credit assessment model, an official statement said on Monday here.

The digital model marks a major shift in the way MSME loans are processed, replacing traditional manual evaluation with a technology-driven system that relies on verified digital data.

The initiative aims to improve speed, transparency and reach of credit delivery to small businesses across the country.

Under this framework, banks assess loan applications using digital footprints



such as GST filings, income tax data, bank transaction history and credit bureau information.

This has significantly reduced paperwork and short-

loans through an end-to-end online process, eliminating the need for repeated branch visits.

It also supports both ex-

isting borrowers and new-to-

government-backed credit guarantee mechanisms, which reduces lending risk for banks and encourages higher loan sanctions to small and micro enterprises.

This has helped widen credit penetration, especially among smaller businesses that often face challenges in meeting conventional collateral requirements.

MSMEs play a crucial role in employment generation, exports and overall economic growth. Improved access to timely and affordable finance is expected to strengthen business expansion, technology adoption and capacity building in the sector.

The strong loan sanction numbers achieved within a short period indicate growing acceptance of digital lending frameworks within the public banking system.

This partnership is focused on execution and measurable outcomes. The collaboration will jointly identify high-potential startups, offer structured co-incubation and hands-on scale support, and enable access to capital of up to Rs 2 crore, helping founders move confidently from early traction to scalable growth. The MoU was signed between Ravi Eswarapu, CEO, RTIH, Visakhapatnam and Dr VK Rai, CEO, IIMCIP, reinforcing a shared commitment to building fundable, scalable, and nationally visible and globally competitive startups emerging from the region.

Speaking on the collaboration, Ravi Eswarapu said, "This partnership is all about creating real impact. By combining RTIH's innovation ecosystem with IIMCIP's proven incubation expertise, together, we aim to empower startups from Andhra Pradesh to scale nationally and globally."

Dr VK Rai, CEO, IIM Calcutta Innovation Park, added, "There is a strong entrepreneurial energy in Andhra Pradesh. Our role is to help convert that energy into fundable, scalable businesses with structured support and by connecting founders to the right networks,

mentors, and markets. IIMCIP's partnership with RTIH is about turning regional entrepreneurial potential into scalable, fundable enterprises with national impact."

This collaboration aligns with IIMCIP's broader mission of strengthening entrepreneurship in emerging and under-represented regions. Its core offerings span structured mentoring, capacity building, seed funding and access to markets and investors.

Space sector demands new space Act, infra status, PLI, tax incentives

Chennai: A comprehensive new Space Act, statutory position for Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe), infrastructure status for the industry, increasing the foreign direct investment (FDI) limits under automatic route, productivity linked incentive scheme (PLI), tax holiday are some of the 2026-27 union Budget wishlist submitted by the industry body Indian Space Association (ISPA).

ISPA is an industry association of private space companies.

As India stands at the threshold of becoming a global space power, with private sector participation enabled under the Space Policy 2023, the next critical step is fiscal, regulatory and structural support to accelerate growth and position India among the top three space-faring nations, ISPA said.

ISPA has outlined key private space sector recommendations for government consideration, which aim to boost domestic manufacturing, enhance national security, create high-value jobs and foster global competitiveness while ensuring controlled and secure access to strategic satellite and geo-spatial data.

India's space sector is entering a decisive growth phase, yet it remains structurally disadvantaged in access to finance due to its capital-intensive nature and mis-

sions be sourced from Indian private entities (NGEs). There should be scope to include satellite manufacturing and payloads, earth observation (EO) data and analytics, SATCOM services and ground infrastructure, launch subsystems and deep-tech components and space situational awareness (SSA) networks. The government should also position its various ministries as anchor customers.

Space infrastructure underpins telecommunications, defence, navigation, finance, weather forecasting, disaster management, and governance. Formal recognition will enable infrastructure-grade financing, reduce cost of capital by 2-3%, and strengthen national resilience.

As to the financial incentives, ISPA has sought PLI scheme for satellites, launch vehicles, space-grade components, and critical subsystems; provide a five-year tax holiday for space manufacturing, launch services, and space-based service providers; enable R&D tax credits of 20-30% for qualifying space-sector R&D; accelerated depreciation for satellites, rockets and launch-related hardware and capital investment tax credits for launch pads, ground stations, TTC networks, and mission control centres, Earth Observation and communication constellations.

According to ISPA, the government should mandate that at least 50% of all its procurement for space-based services, hardware, and mis-

ifications and smart contract integration, the company said.

As part of its international growth strategy, the company is establishing an office in Dubai to strengthen its presence in the GCC region and support regional enterprises and financial institutions.

Software escrow is a secure, tripartite arrangement between a software developer, a client or end user, and an independent escrow provider, under which the software's source code and doc-

umentation are held safely and released only if predefined events, such as vendor insolvency or contract breaches, occur.

Esc