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ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES TARGET MILITARY FACILITIES NEAR DAMASCUS P09

JADEJA SPINS WEB AS INDIA RESTRICT ENGLAND TO 304 IN 2ND ODI P12

PM to visit France from today, co-chair AI Action Summit and address India-France CEOs Forum

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9



FILE PHOTO

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be on a three-day France visit from Monday at the invitation of French President Emmanuel Macron. He will co-chair the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Summit with Macron on February 11.

PM Modi will attend a dinner hosted by President Macron at the Elysee Palace in honour of visiting heads of government and heads of State on February 10, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri announced in a special press briefing on February 7. After the AI summit on February 11, there will be a bilateral component to the visit and PM Modi and President Macron will address the India-France CEOs forum.

PM Modi and President Macron will hold discussions in both the restricted and delegation level talks format. On February 12, the two leaders will visit the war cemetery and will pay tribute to the sacrifices made by Indian Soldiers in World War 1.

The two leaders will jointly inaugurate the Consulate General of India in Marseille and will pay a visit to Kadash which is the site of the international thermonuclear experimental reactor. After wrapping up France visit, PM Modi will travel to the US.

India and France have traditionally enjoyed close and friendly relations and share a deep and enduring Strategic Partnership (SP) covering all aspects of bilateral cooperation which involves a strategic component. Launched on 26 January 1998, India's first-ever Strategic Partnership, embodied the core vision of both the countries to enhance their respective strategic independence by drawing upon a strong and enhanced bilateral cooperation. PTI

Modi wishes Shinde on birthday, hails him as 'dynamic grassroots leader'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday wished Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on his birthday and said he is a dynamic grassroots leader whose life has been devoted to developing the state. Shinde, the chief of Shiv Sena that is part of the Mahayuti government in Maharashtra, turned 61 on Sunday. "Best wishes to Shri Eknath Shinde Ji on his birthday. He is a dynamic grassroots leader whose life has been devoted to developing Maharashtra and fulfilling the vision of Pujya Balasaheb Thackeray and Dharamveer Anand Dighe," Modi said in a post on X. "May he be blessed with a long and healthy life in service of the people," he said.

Human side of Modi is really interesting...: Lex Fridman 'can't wait' to talk PM ahead of podcast



Lex Fridman is full of admiration for Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of his podcast with the world's most popular leader. Fridman also called the PM "one of the most fascinating human beings" he has ever studied. The renowned AI researcher and podcaster has announced plans to travel to India and speak with the PM in late February. Before the podcast, Fridman will undergo a 48–72 hour fast, inspired by Modi's well-documented multi-day fasts for spiritual reasons. In a post on X (formerly Twitter), Fridman shared his excitement about the upcoming conversation. "Narendra Modi is one of the most fascinating human beings I have ever studied. I can't wait to talk to him on a podcast for several hours in a few weeks," he wrote.

Manipur CM Biren Singh resigns two years after ethnic violence began

- Trigger for the resignation is the recent SC order where CFSL has been directed to submit a report on veracity of 'leaked audio tapes' that allegedly suggested Biren Singh's role in ethnic violence



NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Sunday tendered his resignation to Governor AK Bhalla in Imphal.

Singh's ouster follows his meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah earlier this week and again on Sunday.

Singh's resignation has been a long-discussed matter in the BJP, which let him continue despite his alleged role in the violence in the state that led to over 200 killings.

The trigger for the resignation is the recent Supreme Court order where the Central Forensic Sciences Laboratory (CFSL) has been directed to submit a report on the veracity of the "leaked audio tapes" where Singh is purportedly boasting about his role in the Manipur violence.

Singh, a majority Meitei leader, has been at the centre of a long ethnic conflict between the Meitei and Kuki groups in the state with the latter seeking his ouster.

Ahead of the submission of CFSL report to the Supreme Court, which has sought it in a sealed cover given the sensitivity of the matter, Singh on Sunday met the governor and put in his papers.

"I Nongthombam Biren Singh, Chief Minister of Manipur, am submitting my resignation herewith. It has been an honour to serve the people of Manipur thus far. I am extremely grateful to the Central government for timely actions, interventions, developmental work and implementation of various projects for safeguarding the interest of every single Manipuri. My sincere request to the Central government through your good office is to continue with the same," the resignation letter reads. Singh also listed measures, he said, he took in the interest of the state. PTI

31 Naxalites, 2 cops killed in encounter in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur

BIJAPUR, FEBRUARY 9



In a major operation against the Left Wing extremism, security forces gunned down 31 Naxalites during an encounter in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Sunday, police said.

Two security personnel were also killed and as many others injured in the face-off, they said.

More than 650 security personnel entered the Indravati National Park area from different sides and eliminated 31 Naxalites in their den, Chhattisgarh's Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma said.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said the end of Naxalism in the country and the state is certain. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the state will get rid of Naxalism by March 2026, he added.

With this incident, 81 Naxalites have been gunned down by security forces in separate encounters in Chhattisgarh so far this year.

The latest gunfight took place at a forest in Indravati National Park area in the morning when a joint team of personnel from different security forces was out on an anti-Naxalite operation, Inspector General of Police, Bastar Range, Sundarraj P said.

Personnel belonging to the District Reserve Guard (DRG), Special Task Force (STF) and Bastar Fighters, all units of the state police, were involved in the operation, he said. PTI

BJP seeks time from L-G for meeting newly-elected Delhi MLAs

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9



A day after registering a massive victory in the Delhi Assembly elections, the BJP on Sunday sought time for a meeting of the newly elected party MLAs with Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena.

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva wrote to Saxena, seeking an appointment for a meeting with the 48 newly elected party MLAs and seven Lok Sabha MPs from the city.

"I, along with the BJP MPs from Delhi and our newly elected 48 MLAs, wish to meet you at an early date. Please, allow an appointment at an early date according to your convenience," he wrote to the L-G.

The BJP has returned to power in Delhi after 26 years, defeating the AAP in the assembly polls. The AAP managed to win 22 of the 70 assembly seats while the Congress drew a blank in the elections.

The BJP leaders said the formation of the government is likely to take place after Prime Minister Narendra Modi returns from his foreign visit.

The buzz over the new chief minister has intensified in the party with several names of senior leaders, who won the elections, being speculated to hold the top post. PTI

Nadda meets Shah as BJP gets down to picking new Delhi CM



NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9 FILE PHOTO

BJP president JP Nadda met Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday as the party's exercise to pick the new Delhi Chief Minister gathered pace, a day after it won the Assembly polls and ended a more than 26-year spell out of power.

Senior leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had held consultations at the BJP headquarters on Saturday as well after Modi delivered a victory speech to jubilant party workers.

With the BJP making impressive gains in every region and among most communities in the polls, it has been left with a wide pool of potential chief ministerial candidates.

With larger political messaging often guiding the party's choices in choosing its chief ministers in different states, political watchers believe that Delhi would be no exception.

While visible faces such as Parvesh Verma, a leader from the Jat community who defeated AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal, and seasoned organisational leaders like Satish Upadhyay, Vijender Gupta, Ashish Sood and Pawan Sharma are being talked about, the BJP has a history of elevating leaders with a relatively low public profile.

A BJP leader said the party could also consider an MLA with 'Purvanchal' background, a Sikh, or a woman, depending on the political calculations guiding its top brass. Past experience, including in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in 2023, and Odisha last year, leave little room for speculation on such matters, he added. PTI

Looking forward to witness future of aerospace sector: Rajnath on Aero India 2025



NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said he will be attending the 15th edition of 'Aero India' in Bengaluru that will showcase cutting-edge defence technologies and global aviation excellence.

'Aero India' is billed as Asia's largest air show, and hosted at Air Force Station, Yelahanka in the southern city.

"Leaving New Delhi for Bengaluru to attend the 15th edition of Biennial Aero-India. #AeroIndia2025 will showcase cutting-edge defence technologies and global aviation excellence. Looking forward to witness the future of aerospace sector," Singh posted on X. PTI

Aero India: Air chief marshal and Army chief take sortie in Tejas

BENGALURU: Air Chief Marshal AP Singh and Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi on Sunday set the tone for the grand Aero India-2025 by flying in the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas at Yelahanka-based Air Force Station here. The performance by the top brasses was the prelude to the biannual event, which commences on Monday and will continue till February 14. PTI

Delhi CM Atishi submits resignation to LG; formation of new govt likely after PM's US visit

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9



Delhi Chief Minister Atishi handed over her resignation to Lt Governor V K Saxena on Sunday, a day after her Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) faced a crushing defeat in the assembly polls.

Atishi, who retained her Kalkaji seat, handed over her resignation to Saxena at Raj Niwas, officials said.

The LG's office said that Saxena has asked the outgoing CM to continue on the post till formation of a new government.

> Lt Governor Saxena asks Atishi to continue till formation of new government

The BJP is expected to stake claim to power next week after Prime Minister Narendra Modi returns from a foreign visit, party leaders said.

"Hon'ble Lt Governor, Shri VK Saxena today received the resignation of Hon'ble CM, Ms Atishi. He asked her to continue in her position till the formation of the new government," Raj Niwas, Delhi posted from its official X handle. PTI

President Murmu to visit Maha Kumbh today, take holy dip at Sangam

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9

President Droupadi Murmu will visit the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj on Monday and take a holy dip at the Sangam, her office said.

Maha Kumbh, which began on Paush Purnima (January 13), is the world's largest spiritual and cultural gathering, attracting devotees from across the globe. It will continue until Mahashivratri on February 26.

"During her day-long visit to Prayagraj, the President will take holy dip and perform Pooja at Sangam, perform Pooja and Darshan at Akshayvat and Hanuman Mandir, and also visit the Digital Kumbh Anubhav Centre," the Rashtrapati Bhavan said in a statement issued on Sunday.

Sangam is the confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the mystical Saraswati rivers. PTI

Govt has taken note of 'objections' on US treatment of Indian deportees: Khattar

BHOPAL, FEBRUARY 9



Union minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Sunday said the government has taken note of the "objections raised by everyone" over the manner in which illegal Indian immigrants were recently deported from the US. There has been an uproar over the deportation of illegal Indian immigrants by the US in handcuffs during their 40-hour flight onboard a military aircraft. The US military aircraft carrying 104 illegal Indian immigrants landed in Amritsar on February 5. India on Friday said it has registered concerns with the US over the deportation of illegal immigrants in shackles and conveyed that this kind of treatment could have been avoided. PTI

Govt to launch 100 e-buses in Amritsar despite past transport project failures

AMRITSAR, FEBRUARY 9



Despite the failure of two major public transport projects — the City Bus Service and the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) — the state government is set to introduce 100 electric buses on city roads under a Centrally sponsored scheme. The Local Bodies Department has already initiated the procurement process following a recent meeting.

As part of the initiative, the government plans to procure 347 electric buses for five cities in the state, including Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Patiala.

Amritsar would receive 100 buses, Jalandhar 97, Ludhiana 100 and Patiala 50. Local Governments Minister Dr Ravjot Singh met with Municipal Corporation (MC) officials to discuss the purchase of these buses.

The electric bus fleet in Amritsar would consist of 50 small and 50 large buses.

The smaller buses would operate within the city limits, while the larger ones would connect the city to nearby towns.

These electric buses would also be integrated with the existing BRTS to improve public transport connectivity.

The initiative aims to enhance travel facilities and contribute to a cleaner environment. It is important to note that this project has been launched by the Central Government.

Minister Dr Ravjot Singh said the introduction of electric buses would strengthen the public transport system and promote green mobility in the state.

He also highlighted the ongoing efforts to replace 1,200 diesel autos with electric auto rickshaws in Amritsar and the distribution of 160 pink e-autos to women, with a 90 per cent subsidy.

However, the initiative comes after the failure of previous transport projects. In 2016, over 60 buses from the City Bus Service were damaged due to administrative negligence and around 90 buses from the BRTS project have been off the road since July 2023.

Despite efforts, the Municipal Corporation has struggled to streamline the bus services. AGENCIES

NGO Coordination Society charts social initiatives, retains leadership for 2025-26

PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Ferozepur, February 9



The NGO Coordination Society Ferozepur, a collective of various social organizations engaged in community welfare, held its monthly meeting at NeelKanth Mandir, where it unanimously decided to retain its existing executive committee for the year 2025-26.

The leadership team includes Inderjit Singh Gogia as President, Mangat Ram as Secretary, Kamlesh Vohra as Cashier, and Harish Monga as Chairman.

During the meeting, the members outlined several upcoming social initiatives. One key decision was to support students in a remote area by providing them with eatables and stationery items, reinforcing the organization's commitment to education and child welfare.

Additionally, to promote road safety awareness, the society resolved to install a flex board with a social message at a prominent location in the city. The message, such as "Avoid using mobile phones while driving to reduce road accidents," will be updated every fortnight with new awareness campaigns.

The society also discussed expanding its network by adding more members from other social organizations to enhance its outreach and impact.

Furthermore, to strengthen camaraderie among members, it was decided to celebrate birthdays collectively, fostering a sense of unity within the organization.

Prominent attendees at the meeting included Inderjit Singh Gogia, Balwinder Singh Gogia, Kamlesh Vohra, Ashok Kumar, Mangat Ram, and A.C. Chawla. The NGO Coordination Society continues its mission to drive meaningful social change in Ferozepur through collaborative efforts and sustained initiatives.

₹4 cr green belt project under flyovers in ruins due to neglect



AMRITSAR, FEBRUARY 9

The green belt developed under flyovers in Amritsar has deteriorated due to poor maintenance and neglect by the authorities.

The Municipal Corporation had invested Rs 4 crore in 2019 to revamp the space under elevated roads, completing the project in May 2021.

A significant portion of the funds came from the Smart City initiative, which included the installation of 2,000 LED lights on the ceilings under the Bhandari Bridge, Taranwala Pul and Kachehri Chowk flyovers.

The project also involved the installation of 101 ground-embedded lights, decorative lanterns on posts, interlocking pavers, an upgraded drainage system, landscaping, horticultural work and the construction of planter walls and designer guard rails. However, despite the substantial investment, these areas have fallen into disrepair due to a lack of maintenance and administrative neglect.

Stray cows, illegal parking and the homeless have taken over these spaces, leaving them unkempt and unused as originally intended.

Although the Municipal Corporation provides shelter facilities at the Gol Bagh Shelter Home, many homeless individuals prefer to remain under the flyovers, setting up makeshift shelters instead.

Local residents are concerned about the poor upkeep of the area. Rajinder Singh, a shopkeeper near the civil hospital here, remarked, "The government spent a huge amount on beautification, but now it has turned into a mess. Stray animals roam freely and garbage is piling up."

Residents are calling on the authorities to take immediate action to restore the spaces, ensuring proper maintenance and enforcement of regulations to prevent encroachments. Another resident, Ravi Sharma, said, "At night, these areas become unsafe due to poor lighting and illegal activities. We expected the project to improve our city, but it feels like a waste of money." AGENCIES

80 stolen mobile phones returned to owners



FATEHGARH SAHIB, FEBRUARY 9

The police traced 180 stolen mobile phones and handed them back over to their respective owners. Addressing the media, Senior Superintendent of Police Dr Ravjot Grewal said the police had received various complaints of mobile thefts particularly during the Shaheedi Sabha.

The Technical Cell of Police Department Fatehgarh Sahib was deputed to trace the phones. They succeeded in tracing 180 phones with the help of IMEI tracking and the CIER portal. She encouraged locals to immediately visit the nearest Saanjh Kendra and file a report regarding the loss of a phone. AGENCIES

Police arrest 2 in connection with water supply employee's murder

AMRITSAR, FEBRUARY 9



The Mehta police have arrested two individuals in connection with the murder of Shamsher Singh, a 39-year-old employee of the Water Supply Department, who was shot dead on January 31 at a water tank in Ghanshampur village.

The police said the accused have been identified as Karan Singh from Cheema Bath village (Beas) and Jaspreet Singh alias Lalla from Dubgarh village (Beas). Police officials said two other accomplices, Harpreet Singh alias Happy of Rampur Bhut Wind village, Vairowal (Tarn Taran); and Raja aka Kattu of Dubgarh village, are at large.

During questioning, the accused said the motive behind the murder was Shamsher's harassment of Harpreet Singh's girlfriend. The police have produced the accused in court and obtained police remand for further investigation and raids are ongoing to apprehend the remaining two accomplices, including the prime accused, Harpreet Singh.

The police action follows a complaint filed by Shamsher Singh's wife, Bhupinder Kaur. She told the police her husband left for duty around 9 am on the day of the incident. She had a doctor's appointment in Mehta and planned to meet him at the water tank later that afternoon. Upon arriving, she went inside the tubewell room while Shamsher continued working outside. AGENCIES

Awareness camp on eye donation organised

DALJEET AJNOHA
PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Hoshiarpur, February 9



The Rotary Eye Bank Cornea Transplant Society organized a special function to highlight its efforts in promoting eye donation and corneal transplants. Several dignitaries and experts from various fields attended the event.

Speaking on the occasion, President Sanjeev Kumar Arora emphasized the importance of eye donation and the need for greater awareness among the public. He highlighted the organization's commitment to restoring vision and transforming lives through cornea transplants.

Dr. Daljit Singh, Retired Professor also addressed the gathering, sharing insights on medical advancements in ophthalmology. Retired Principal B Ed College Hoshiarpur DK Sharma added his views on the significance of such initiatives in society.

The event saw the presence of several prominent members, including President Sanjeev Arora, Secretary Principal DK Sharma, Vice President Prof. Daljit Singh, Patron Dr. Jamil Bali, Madan Lal Mahajan, Avinash Sood, Jagdish Aggarwal, Amarjeet Sharma, Devinder Arora, H.K. Nakra, Parveen Khurana, and Tamana Babu.

A special moment of the event was the honoring of Dr. Daljit Ajnoha for achieving his Ph.D. in Journalism. The recognition was a testament to his dedication and contributions to the field of media and education.

The function concluded with a call for increased awareness regarding eye donation and a collective effort toward eradicating corneal blindness.

National Mathematics Day celebrated in Ferozepur with recognition of 35 educators

HARISH MONGA
PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Ferozepur, February 9



Mayank Foundation, with support from the Punjab State Council for Science & Technology, the Department of Science & Technology (GOI), and NCSTC, hosted a grand celebration of National Mathematics Day (NMD) to honour educators and inspire students in the field of mathematics.

National Mathematics Day is celebrated in honour of the legendary mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan, whose groundbreaking contributions inspire generations. The event served as a testament to the profound impact of mathematics on our understanding of the world.The event at a local college featured the prestigious 'Ambassador of Mathematics' awards and a series of inter-college competitions, including a Maths Quiz, Rangoli, PPT Presentations, and an Exhibition.

Chief Guest Prof. S.S. Sandhu, who dedicated 42 years to teaching mathematics in Ferozepur, delivered an inspiring address, emphasizing the subject's crucial role in shaping future leaders and professionals. His words ignited enthusiasm among students, encouraging them to explore the world of mathematics with renewed passion.

A total of 80 students from seven colleges participated, showcasing their mathematical knowledge and creativity. The competitions were filled with excitement as students engaged in problem-solving, artistic expressions, and innovative presentations related to mathematics.

As a tribute to educators shaping young minds, 35 college and school lecturers, principals, headmasters, and mathematics teachers were honoured with the 'Ambassadors of Mathematics' awards for their exceptional contributions to the subject.

Project Coordinator Arnish Monga highlighted the significance of such initiatives, stating, "Events like these encourage educators to continually refine their teaching methods, ultimately benefiting students and strengthening the educational ecosystem."

Mayank Foundation remains committed to fostering education and mathematical excellence, providing young minds with opportunities to learn, grow, and achieve their full potential.

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Burglars' gang busted in Jalandhar, 3 arrested

JALANDHAR, FEBRUARY 9

The Jalandhar Police have busted a gang of burglars and arrested three of its members, who specifically targeted NRI properties and vacant houses, officials said on Sunday.The police recovered substantial stolen property along with a vehicle used in the crimes.

The accused have been identified as Kuldeep Kumar and Sonu Kashap, both UP natives and currently residing in the district, and Parmeet Singh of Jalandhar.SSP Harkamal Preet Singh Khakh said the gang employed sophisticated techniques, using specialised tools to break into locked houses during nighttime hours.AGENCIES

Amritsar's iconic 100-year-old General Post Office is up for restoration

AMRITSAR, FEBRUARY 9



Built in December 1925, Amritsar's iconic General Post Office (GPO) is set to undergo restoration and conservation work ahead of the official centenary events in 2026. The GPO was set up as a local sub-post office before being upgraded in 1894. The head post office, a single-storey structure, was shifted to the premises on Court Road in March 1926. It was declared a heritage structure on February 15, 1993.

The British-era structure has standout features such as jack arch ceilings, archways, a front porch with a grand doorway, skylights and fireplaces.

A memorandum of understanding was signed between the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) and the Department of Posts for the documentation and conservation of heritage post offices across the country in 2022. As a follow-up of this initiative, specific MoUs were signed between INTACH and GPOs of Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Nagpur. Experts from INTACH-Punjab, in collaboration with their Delhi counterparts, had signed a pact with the Department of Posts in September last year to initiate work at the Amritsar GPO. Four months on, work is yet to begin. AGENCIES

Jalandhar Commissionerate Police uncovers unit of manufacturing illegal weapons

MINOR ARRESTED WITH 10 ILLEGAL PISTOLS



PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Jalandhar, February 9

In a significant breakthrough, Jalandhar Commissionerate Police, led by Commissioner of Police Swapan Sharma, uncovered a unit of manufacturing illegal weapons by nabbing a person and recovering 10 country-made pistols from him.

Giving details, the Commissioner of Police said that the police got a tip-off that a city-based man was involved in the manufacturing of illegal country-made pistols.

Subsequently, Sharma said that the police laid a trap and arrested the man identified as Harjinder Singh, alias Giyani, resident of Kott Mohalla, Jalandhar. He said that Harjinder is a minor and has been involved in this business since long adding that his criminal history is being traced.

The Commissioner of Police said that police recovered 10 country-made pistols, a cutting iron machine, a drill machine, various other tools used for the illegal manufacturing of pistols and a two-wheeler without registered number plate.

Dr Baljit Kaur urges Centre to strengthen welfare schemes for scheduled castes

PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Chandigarh, February 9



Punjab Social Justice, Empowerment and Minorities Minister Dr. Baljit Kaur, while addressing a high-level meeting in Delhi with the Union Minister and Ministers from various States and Union Territories, highlighted the unique challenges faced by Punjab and urged the Government of India to implement key policy reforms for the welfare of Scheduled Castes. She commended the Government of India for this initiative, emphasizing that each state has its own set of challenges and that this platform provides an opportunity for states to voice their specific concerns. Cabinet Minister Kaur highlighted that Punjab has a Scheduled Caste population of nearly 32%, which may have further increased. Given this demographic, she stated that the gap-filling fund, currently set at Rs 20 lakh per project for villages under the Adarsh Gram Yojana, be increased to at least Rs 1 crore, as the existing allocation is insufficient for comprehensive infrastructure development, particularly for road construction.

Medical aid to Dallewal stopped as doctors unable to find veins for intravenous drip: Farmer bodies

CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 9



Two prominent farmer bodies on Sunday claimed that medical aid to fasting farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal has been stopped for the past six days as doctors are unable to find his veins for administering intravenous drip.

"Dallewal's medical aid has been stopped for the past six days because his veins are blocked and doctors are unable to find his veins to insert (intravenous) drip," the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) said in a joint statement.

Convenor of SKM (Non-Political), Dhallewal has been on a fast-unto-death on the Khanauri border point since November 26 last year, seeking legal guarantee of minimum support price for crops, among other demands.

He started getting medical aid after a Centre government delegation led by joint secretary (agriculture) Priya Ranjan on January 18 invited SKM (Non-Political) and KMM for talks to discuss their demands in Chandigarh on February 14.

However, Dallewal did not end his fast and was being given intravenous fluids. Meanwhile, both the SKM (Non-Political) and KMM are preparing to hold 'Kisan Mahapanchayats' at Ratanpura in Rajasthan (February 11), Khanauri border (February 12), and Shambhu border (February 13) to mark the completion of one year of the ongoing protest. PTI

Govt launches WhatsApp number 9056009884 for NRIs to report their grievances, says Minister Dhaliwal



PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Chandigarh, February 9

Aiming to address the concerns and grievances of Non Resident Indians (NRIs) Punjabis, the Government of Punjab under the visionary leadership of Bhagwant Singh Mann, Chief Minister of Punjab, has launched a WhatsApp number 9056009884 for NRIs to report their problems and complaints. In this connection, complaints of NRIs are forwarded to the concerned departments as well as the ADGP of NRI Wing of Punjab Police for forthwith redressal.

NRIs can visit on nri.punjab.gov.in website for any information and this website has detailed information pertaining to NRI police wing, state commission for NRIs and NRI sabha.

Administrative Reforms and NRI Affairs Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal informed that NRI Affairs department is providing facilities of countersigning/ attestation of various documents such as birth certificate, unavailability of birth certificate, late birth entry, police clearance, medical certificate, educational qualification certificate, driving certificate, death certificate, marriage/ divorce certificate, decree, adoption deed, affidavit, fingerprint and other certificates etc. of Punjabis living in abroad. NRIs can apply online on E-Sanad portal for getting their documents countersigned from their homes.

Punjab's sericulture sector flourishes with government initiatives



PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Chandigarh, February 9

The Punjab Government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann and with the guidance of Horticulture Minister Mohinder Bhagat, has made significant strides in promoting sericulture. This initiative aims to enhance farmer's livelihoods and bolster the state's economy.

A pivotal initiative was the organization of the Silk Mark Expo 2024 at Kisan Bhawan, Chandigarh. Inaugurated by Minister Mohinder Bhagat, the event showcased the state's commitment to sericulture and provided a platform for artisans and traders nationwide. The Minister released a brochure titled "The Journey of Sericulture in Punjab," highlighting the sector's growth and achievements.

Minister Bhagat emphasized the government's dedication to rural empowerment through sericulture. He stated, "The price of cocoons in Punjab has risen from Rs 550 per kilogram to Rs 1,250 per kilogram due to focused government efforts, ensuring fair compensation for silk farmers, particularly women engaged in sericulture."

He informed that Infrastructure development was a key focus, with annual cocoon production reaching 29,000 kilograms. The reactivation of the Silk Seed Production Centre in Dalhousie aimed to provide high-quality silk seeds at nominal prices, fostering self-reliance among farmers.

The state›s efforts were recognized with the Silver Award at the Skoch National Awards 2024 for the project "Women Empowerment and Socio-Economic Growth through Sericulture," underscoring the positive impact on women's empowerment and socio-economic development.

Minister Mohinder Bhagat further explained, the Punjab Government plans to launch an exclusive "PunjabSilk" brand and establish silk reeling units and cocoon storage facilities to enhance value addition and increase farmer incomes. These initiatives reflect a steadfast commitment to expanding silk farming, empowering rural communities, and elevating Punjab's sericulture sector.

Government releases ₹4.21 cr grant to strengthen facilities in 15 old age homes: Minister

PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Chandigarh, February 9

The Punjab Government is committed to serving, supporting and upholding the dignity of the elderly. As part of this commitment, the state government has established old age homes in all districts to provide safe shelter for destitute elderly. For the financial year 2024-25, the Punjab Government has released a grant of 4.21 crore for 15 old age homes across the state.

Social Security, Women and Child Development Minister Dr. Baljit Kaur stated that any elderly person can reside in these homes, where they are provided with free accommodation, clothing, food, and other essential facilities. For this purpose, old age homes are being run by the department in collaboration with non-governmental organizations.

She disclosed that the old age homes of various districts of the state have been provided with Rs. 37.68 lakhs to Amritsar, Rs. 28.54 lakhs to Bathinda, Rs. 28.54 lakhs to Fazilka respectively. Apart from this, A grant of Rs 70.41 lakh to Ludhiana, Rs 22.47 lakh to Malerkotla, Rs 28.54 lakh to Moga, Rs 28.79 lakh to Pathankot, Rs 17.77 lakh to Patiala, Rs 30.80 lakh to Ropar, Rs 58.49 lakh to Sangrur, Rs 21.55 lakh to Tarn Taran, Rs. 22.02 lakhs to Faridkot and Rs. 26.37 lakhs to Ferozepur has been issued.

Low water level in dams may hit power generation, irrigation needs

PATIALA, FEBRUARY 9

The water level in dams in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh is significantly lower this year compared to the same period last year, as per the latest Central Water Commission (CWC) report of February 6.

"The low water level in Ranjit Sagar Dam (RSD), Bhakra Dam and Pong Dam reservoirs in Himachal Pradesh and Punjab is a cause for concern as it may affect irrigation and power generation requirements for Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan," said a former Chief Engineer with the Punjab State Power Corporation Limited. AGENCIES

Woman held for 'duping' youth of ₹3.5 lakh on pretext of job in Punjab Police

ABOHAR, FEBRUARY 9

A woman has been arrested for allegedly duping a youth of Rs 3.5 lakh on the pretext of getting him recruited to Punjab Police. The woman's two sons are reportedly Punjab Police personnel. Action has been taken after investigating Gurdeep Singh's complaint given to Sriganganagar SP on February 22, 2024.

Police said on Sunday that Rajwinder Kaur (60) of Chak 1-C village, has been arrested, her daughter Jagwant Kaur is also wanted in the case. Rajwinder's sons Pradeep Singh and Ranveer Singh are in Punjab Police. However, the sons have not bee indicted. Complainant Gurdeep said in his statement that his son Ramandeep Singh (23) had appeared in the Punjab Police recruitment exam held in 2021. PTI

Organisers of greyhound racing in Moga booked

FARIDKOT, FEBRUARY 9

In a major crackdown on illegal greyhound racing, the Moga police have registered a case against some persons for organising unauthorised dog races, highlighting the blatant violation of animal welfare laws.

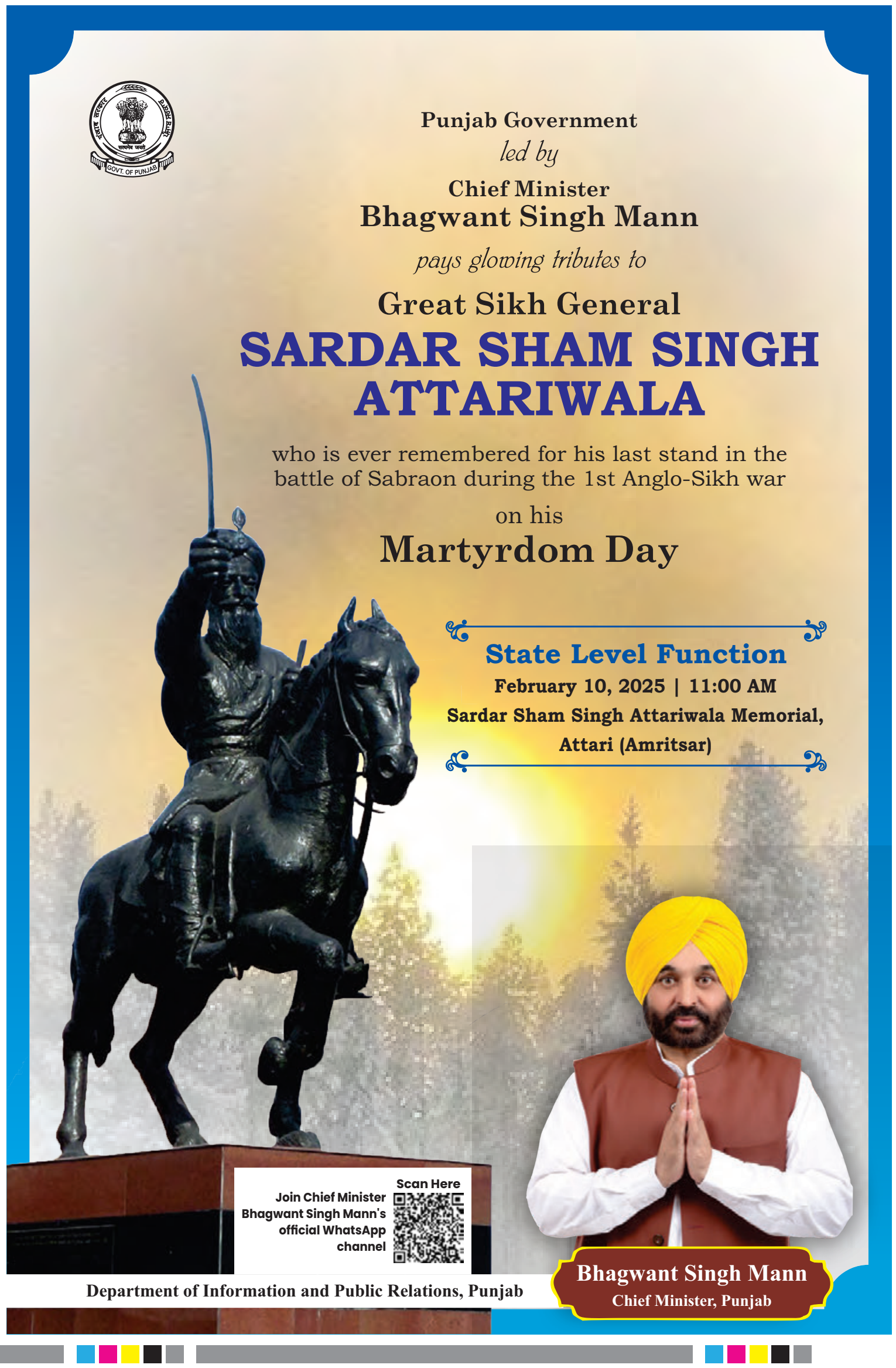
Among the accused are Harinder Singh, alias Lali, and Harmel Singh of Daroli Bhai village. Some other accused are yet to be identified.

The case was filed following a complaint lodged by Saloni Sakaira, cruelty response coordinator at PETA-India and Animal Welfare Representative of the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI), the Government of India. The complaint highlights serious violation of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act-1960 and a 2020 directive issued by AWBI, which explicitly bans all forms of dog races in India.

According to the complaint, the animal welfare board had issued an official directive to the Chief Secretary of Punjab on December 7, 2020, categorically stating that all animal races, including greyhound racing, were illegal under the PCA Act-1960. The directive further warned that organising such races amounted to contempt of the Supreme Court of India and violated multiple legal provisions.

Under Section 3 and Section 11 (1)(a) of the PCA Act, 1960, animal caretakers are legally obligated to prevent unnecessary pain and suffering. However, greyhound racing has been deemed inherently cruel, causing severe physical and psychological distress to the animals.

Investigations have revealed that greyhounds are forced to run at dangerously high speeds, leading to serious injuries. The organisers face legal consequences, and further investigations are underway to identify other individuals involved in the illegal activity. AGENCIES



Mohali Police register FIR in illegal mining case

A.S. PRASHAR
PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Mohali, February 9

To curb illegal mining activities in the district Sahibazada Ajit Singh Nagar, Police have registered an FIR against the unidentified persons under sections 21 (1) and 4 (1) of Mines and Minerals (Regulation of Development) Act 1957 at Majri Police Station.

Divulging the details, the Deputy Commissioner Aashika Jain said that there is a zero tolerance policy to illegal mining activities in the district. Any one found indulged in such activities will be dealt with sternly. She said that as soon as the information was received about the illegal mining site at Mianpur Changar, the previous day, an administrative team led by SDM Kharar Gurmander Singh was immediately rushed to the site to check the facts and after their confirmation, an FIR was recommended against the culprits.

She said that preliminary a heavy digging machine has been recovered near the site which is owned by private people. She said that the revenue department has been asked to ascertain the ownership of the land to act further.

She said that preliminary a heavy digging machine has been recovered near the site which is owned by private people. She said that the revenue department has been asked to ascertain the ownership of the land to act further.

Deputy Commissioner Jain said that the District Police has been urged for time bound investigation of the case and to book the accused behind this illegal mining.

SDM Derabassi inspects Banur Weir desilting site

PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Mohali, February 9

In order to maintain more transparency in the ongoing work of De-silting of Banur Weir, Sub Divisional Magistrate, Derabassi, Amit Gupta, inspected the site with Drainage and Mining Officials, on Saturday. SDM Derabassi said that as per the directions of Deputy Commissioner Aashika Jain, the visit was aimed at strengthening the existing monitoring mechanism further.

He said that the Drainage and Mining Officials have been instructed to get the fresh drone survey of the material excavated from the bed of Banur Weir. The DEM Survey is done regularly in the presence of the departmental vigilance team of the Water Resources Department. They were also directed to give the access of CCTV monitoring to the District Administration also that was earlier vested with a vigilance team of the Water Resources Department for regular monitoring.

Similarly, the Junior Engineer level officer of the Department who has been given the task to get the desilting work in his presence from 8 am to 6 pm, was asked to implement the conditions of the excavation strictly after the day came to an end. He said that there will be no excavation after the 6:00 PM and it will be ensured by the department that at the end of the day timing, only the vehicles having loaded with the material, would only be let to go out and no further loading would be allowed at that time.

The SDM has sought a detailed report from the Executive Engineer, Mining regarding corrective steps taken by them. He also instructed the local police to keep vigit to the area to prevent any illegal activity. It is worthwhile to mention that the Banur Weir De-silting site is located on the upstream side of the Banur Weir. From the past few years there has been deposition of silt in the Banur weir due to which the water storage capacity of the Banur weir has decreased significantly.

During the flood season of 2023-24, it was observed that the water level in the Banur Weir was very high which could have impacted various villages located near the site on the left side of Ghaggar River villages Bakarpur, Paragpur and at the right side villages. Shatabgarh, Chat bir, Rampur Kalan. The state has allowed an excavation of 5771132 CFT (Cubic Feet) that will generate a revenue of Rs 302.98 lakh.

Final day of 14th Panjab University Rose Festival witnesses musical extravaganza

PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Chandigarh, February 9



The 14th Panjab University Rose Festival concluded on a high note, receiving an overwhelming response from participants and visitors alike. The final day of the festival featured vibrant competitions, large and enthusiastic crowds, and a mesmerising musical evening.

The much-anticipated Rose Prince & Princess Competition was the highlight of the day, with young participants charming the audience with their innocence and enthusiasm. The results were as follows:

Rose Prince Competition:

- 0-1 Years: 1st – Arjan | 2nd – Parbaaz Singh
- 1-2 Years: 1st – Vrishank Singh Rana | 2nd – Mivaan Pathak | 3rd – Yugav Kapoor | Consolation – Swastik Sharma
- 2-3 Years: 1st – Dilshaan Singh | 2nd – Gurwaris Singh | 3rd – Saathwik | Consolation – Sehajdeep Singh, Ivan Sharma

Rose Princess Competition:

- 0-1 Years: 1st – Sumaira Eva | 2nd – Gurnoor Kaur | 3rd – Vamika Thakur, Vamika
- 1-2 Years: 1st – Amayra Malhotra | 2nd – Reva Jain | 3rd – Shambhavi Mahendru | Consolation – Sehaj, Aahana Thakur
- 2-3 Years: 1st – Anaysha Yadav | 2nd – Tashi Randhawa | 3rd – Gurjas Kaur | Consolation – Bhavisha Rawat, Kudrat Kaur

The Fancy Dress Competition was another crowd favourite, with children showcasing creativity and confidence. The winners were:

Fancy Dress Competition:

- 3-5 Years: 1st – Anayna Khanna | 2nd – Dhanvi Mittal | 3rd – Aviraj Attri | Consolation – Harnidh Kaur, Kashvi, Vama, Haarvi, Inaaya Rudra, Satvik Verma, Saumya Verma
- 5-9 Years: 1st – Vedanti Ghai | 2nd – Dakshit Mahajan, Kavyansh | 3rd – Sneha, Naimish Saini, Seerat | Consolation – Shriyan Batra, Raina Batra, Samayra Chopra, Shanaya, Nitya, Amyra, Ditya Arora, Rishita

As the evening set in, the festival reached its grand finale with an electrifying performance by Punjabi singer Jeet Jagjit at the Old Convocation Ground. His energetic and soulful renditions captivated the audience, providing a fitting conclusion to the three-day floral celebration.

Speaking about the festival's success, the PU spokesperson expressed gratitude to all participants, attendees, and organising teams for making the event a resounding success. He highlighted how the festival continues to bring the community together while celebrating nature, talent, and cultural vibrancy.

Donation made for welfare of wheelchair cricketers

PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Chandigarh, February 9



Under its Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR) initiative, Intersoft Data Labs & Solutions - an IT services firm, handed over a cheque of Rs 3 lakhs to Non - Governmental Organization (NGO) Women & Child Care Welfare Foundation (WCCWF), for the welfare of Wheelchair Cricketers. The gesture was appreciated by Jasbeer Kaur, President, WCCWF and Kamaljeet Singh, General Secretary, WCCWF.

Jasbeer Kaur expressed her happiness saying that the donation will help WCCWF in providing the needed support and help to wheelchair cricketers.

Sandeep Passi, MD, Intersoft Data Labs & Solutions said, "At Intersoft we always make it a point to support causes like that of rehabilitation of the differently abled. I am happy that the financial help provided by us will help fulfil some of the basic needs of wheelchair cricketers."

Love is in the air at NITZ Beauty Lab & Co

PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Mohali, February 9



NITZ Beauty Lab & Co., a luxury salon located at Sec 79 , Mohali, has drawn up an interesting celebration during the ongoing Valentine's week right till D-Day - February 14.

Neetu Sethi Thakur, Founder , NITZ said, "We have installed a spin-the-wheel in our premises. A client needs to give a nudge to the arrow-hand on the wheel and he or she will get advantage of the 'service mentioned' where the arrow-hand stops. The activity has started and will be on till Valentine's Day."

The spin-the-wheel has interesting options like 'Free foot massage', 'Book membership & get cocktail hair spa free', 'Buy one pedicure of mintree & get manicure free' and 'free headwash'. "The option that a client might not want the hand to stop on is 'Oops !!next time'," quipped Neetu.

Punjab to organise 2-day Equestrian Festival on March 1 and 2

PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Mohali, February 9

Punjab's Tourism and Cultural Affairs Department will organise state's first Equestrian Festival at Forest Hills, village Karora in SAS Nagar District on March 1 and 2, 2025.

Divulging the details, the Deputy Commissioner Ashika Jain while holding a preparatory meeting for the smooth and successful conduct of the upcoming event, assigned the various responsibilities to the departments for arrangements.

She said that the horse riding competitions will also be part of this event. Horses from the reputed stud farms and clubs across the state and country will also participate during the festival.

During the meeting, eight committees under the supervision of senior officers were formed and allocated tasks for the event.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (Urban Development) Anmol Singh Dhaliwal, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Rural Development) Sonam Chaudhary, Chief Minister Field Officer Dipankar Garg and officials from various departments of the district were present during the meeting.

8th Amateur Golfers Society Golf Tournament held



PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Panchkula, February 9

Col. G C Sharma (retd) emerged as the winner in the handicap 0-9 category at the 8th Amateur Golfers Society Golf Tournament held at the Panchkula Golf Club (PGC) on Sunday. The tournament was organised by the Amateur Golfers Society (AGS) - a non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to the promotion of golf.

Displaying his exceptional skills on the lush green golf course of PGC, Col. G C Sharma clinched the top spot with an impressive score of 72 in this prestigious tournament. In the same category, Col. Tika Bedi secured the second spot with a score of 78, while Brig. G J Singh settled for the third position with a score of 81.

Vineet Garg, Additional Chief Secretary of Education, Government of Haryana, graced the occasion as the chief guest, while Anish Arora, Director, TSJ Group(Mohali Citi Centre), H C Goyal, Owner , Jia Diamonds and Vivek Kapoor, MD of Jupiter Aqua Lines (JAL), were the Guests' of Honor.

Meanwhile, in a stellar performance, Babita Mahajan emerged victorious with a score of 87 in the women's category. In the Handicap 10-15 category, Prashant Modgil clinched first position with a score of 75, while Rajinder Meena with 81 and G S Hira with 82 secured second and third positions, respectively.

In the handicap 16 and above category, CP Kaushal emerged victorious with an impressive score of 80, while Dr. RK Talwar finished as the first runner-up with a score of 81, and Kulbir Bakshi attained third place, scoring 82. The winners were felicitated with trophies and gift hampers to honor their achievements.

Day 2 of NCNO 2025: A deep dive into groundbreaking ideas and engaging discussion

PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Chandigarh, February 9

The second day of the National Conference of Neuro-Ophthalmology 2025 (NCNO-2025) commenced with great enthusiasm and an intellectually stimulating agenda, featuring a mix of cutting-edge symposia, expert panel discussions, and interactive case-based learning. The day began with a robust lineup of oral presentations, where researchers and clinicians presented free papers on novel advancements in Neuro-Ophthalmology and provided a platform for young researchers to showcase their work and contribute to scientific dialogue.

The highlight of the day was CME on Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension (IIH), where experts will discuss the latest advancements in diagnosis and management.

Key Sessions:

- Obesity, Metabolic Syndrome, and IIH: Prof. Kathleen Digre (USA) delivered an insightful talk on the expanded spectrum of IIH.
- Panel Discussion: Experts debated burning topics like the role of lumbar puncture and transverse sinus stenting in IIH.
- Neuro-Immunology: Sessions on optic neuritis, myasthenia gravis, and orbital inflammatory syndromes were well-received.
- Burning Debates: Controversial topics such as the lifelong role of anticoagulation in chronic CVT were debated by experts.

The day also featured the first NCNO ORATION delivered by Prof M Madhusudan from Trivandrum who talked upon his experiences on neuroophthalmology in India.

As Day 2 of NCNO-2025 concluded, the much-awaited inaugural ceremony took place, marking the official commencement of the National Conference of Neuro-Ophthalmology 2025. The ceremony was presided over by Prof. Vivek Lal, Director, PGIMER, and Organizing The distinguished Chief Guest for the event was Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin, AVSM, VSM, Director General Armed forces Medical Services (DGAFMS) who graced the occasion with their empowering address. The event concluded with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp.

The organizing team expressed their heartfelt gratitude to all dignitaries, faculty members, and attendees.

Classifieds

CHANGE OF NAME

I Amarjit Kaur W/o Bhupinder Singh R/o Badla Teh. Amargarh (Malerkotla) have Change my name to Amarjeet Kaur.

I, Baljit Kaur W/O Rajpal Singh R/O Vill Qila Hakima Tehsil Dhuri (Sangrur) Have Change My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Balbeet Kaur .

I, Gopal Krishan S/o Ram Pal Bhatia R/o Near Sadar Bazar, H.No. 33/21, Dari Mal Street, Nabha Distt. Patiala have changed my name to Gopal Krishan Bhatia.

I ARMY NO JC781912H, RANK NB/SUB NAME MANOJ KUMAR, UNIT 5 ARMD WKSP C/O 56 APO RESIDENT OF VILLAGE PAILANI, BANDA, PAILANI, UTTAR PRADESH PIN 210126 That, I have changed my son's Name from AYAN to AYANSH KUMAR.

I SUSHAMA YADAV LEGALLY WEDDED WIFE OF ARMY NO. 14655989P RANK HAV NAME AKHILESH KUMAR UNIT 5 ARMD WKSP C/O 56APO, RESIDENT OF VILLAGE RUSTAMPUR, ASAPUR, VARANASI, UTTAR PRADESH PIN 221007 That, I have changed my date of birth from 20-10-1987 TO 20-10-1986.

I Sanjeev Kumar S/o Late Ram Sarup R/o 9255, St. No. 01, Joshi Nagar, Haibowal Kalan (Ludhiana) have changed my name to Sanjeev Kumar Gupta

I Mandeep Singh Sidhu S/O Iabh Singh R/O Village Balwar kalan Tehsil and Distt Sangrur Punjab - 148001 , have Changed my name to Mandeep Singh

I Gurmit Kaur Mother of No.4483213W Rank L/Hav Name Daljit Singh Presently residing at Vpo Kakrala Tehsil Nabha Distt Patiala have changed my Name from Gurmeet Kaur to Gurmit Kaur

I Lalita Devi Mother of No 15696853W Rank HAV (EFS) name Shyam Kumar Singh R/o VPO Hasanpur Distt Vaishali State Bihar Pin 844506 have changed my name from Lalta Devi to Lalita Devi

I Davinder Singh Chumbar S/O Dulla Singh R/O Village Dhaner Tehsil Mehal Kalan (Barnala) Have Changed My Name To Davinder Singh

I Charnjeet Kaur Mann W/o Harpal Singh Mann R/o Patti Mann, Sekha (Barnala) have changed my name to Charnjit Kaur Mann.

I Rekha Alias Sonu D/o Satnam Singh R/o H.No.25/587, Basti Mohan Singh, Moga District Moga I have known as both names

I hitherto known as KIRANJIT KAUR W/o JAGDEEP SINGH BRAR Residing at Ghal Kalan, Moga, District Moga, Punjab-142048, India, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as KIRANJIT KAUR BRAR

I Parvinder Kaur W/o Gurdev Singh R/o H.no. 1485, St No.2, Nanda Colony, Basti Jodhewal (Ludhiana) have changed my name from Parvinder Kaur to Surneet Kaur.

I Gaganpreet Kaur Wassan D/o Shinder Pal Singh R/o Z5-6711, St No-9/3-B, Guru Gobind Singh Nagar, Barnala Road, (Bathinda) have changed my name to Gaganpreet Kaur.

I, ASHOK KUMAR SADANA S/O KASTURI LAL R/O H.NO. 153, NEAR SHAKTI NAGAR CHOWK, GREEN FIELD, (LUDHIANA) have changed my name to ASHOK KUMAR.

I, VEENA SADANA W/O ASHOK KUMAR R/O HOUSE NO. 153, NEAR SHAKTI NAGAR, GREEN FIELD (LUDHIANA) have changed my name to VEENA KUMARI.

I, Jasbir Singh S/O Bachittar Singh R/O Thrike, Tharike (Ludhiana) have changed my name to Jasvir Singh.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Manjeet Kaur Mother of 2496737K Rank Hav Name Gurpal Singh Unit PRC C/o 56 Apo R/o Vpo Bahadarpur Distt Sangrur declare that in my son's Service Record my name and DOB Wrongly entered as Manjit Kaur and DOB 01/07/1962 but my correct name name is Manjeet Kaur and Correct DOB is 01/01/1946

I Rajinder Singh S/o late Moju Singh R/o Village Kumbharwal Tehsil Dhuri (Sangrur) declare that my son Lovepreet Singh alias Labu (unmarried) is out of my control and has fallen into bad company. I hereby disqualify him from my movable and immovable property. Whoever deals with him will be responsible for himself. I and my family will not be responsible for anything.

I Gurmit Kaur Mother of No.4483213W Rank L/Hav Name Daljit Singh Presently residing at Vpo Kakrala Tehsil Nabha Distt Patiala have changed my DOB from 01.05.1930 to 01.01.1945

I Army No 2478696A Rank Hav Gurmail Singh (Retd) S/o Malkeet Singh R/o Vpo Khirkianwala Distt Sri Muktsar Sahib Declared That In My Army Records My Wife Name Is Wrongly Written As Kulvir Kaur & Date Of Birth Wrongly Written As 15-5-1968 . But Her Correct Name Is Nasib Kaur Correct Date Of Birth Is 27-12-1965. So Please Correct It.

I Army No 15138742L Rank Rect Om Parkash (Retd) S/O Late Dial Singh R/o Vpo Thara Singh Wala Distt Fazilka Declared That In My Army Records My Mother Name Is Wrongly Written As Balo Bai . But Her Correct Name Is Lalo Bai .So Please Correct It.

ਮੈਂ ਸਤਵਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਜੋਗਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਾਸੀ ਮਕਾਨ ਨੰਬਰ 121, ਮੁਹੱਲਾ ਧੋਬੀਆਂ, ਵਾਰਡ ਨੰਬਰ 01, ਬਸੀ ਪਠਾਣਾ ਤਹਿਸੀਲ ਬਸੀ ਪਠਾਣਾ, ਜਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਫਤਿਹਗੜ੍ਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਹਾਂ ਲ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਕਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਕਹਿਣੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਚੱਲ-ਅਚੱਲ ਜਾਇਦਾਦ ਤੋਂ ਬੇਦਖਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਲੈਣ ਦੇਣ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਖੁਦ ਜਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।

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409 newly qualified CAs conferred degrees at ICAI convocation

PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Panchkula, February 9



In a momentous occasion for the accounting fraternity, 409 newly qualified Chartered Accountants (CAs) from upper north region were conferred with their degrees at a convocation ceremony organized by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) at Indradhanush Auditorium on Friday. The event was presided over by CA Abhishek Singh Chauhan, Chairman ICAI Chandigarh Branch in the presence of governing council members, senior professionals, and proud parents.

Addressing the gathering, CA Chauhan emphasized the importance of innovation in the field of accountancy, underscoring its role in driving national prosperity. He encouraged the young professionals to remain diligent, ethical, and dedicated as they step into their careers, particularly in taxation and financial management.

Adding to the significance of the event, CA Atul Gupta, Past President of ICAI, highlighted ICAI's stature as the world's largest professional body for Chartered Accountants, established by an Act of Parliament. He described the CA profession as the "mother of all professions," which is playing a pivotal role in shaping the economic framework of the nation. He urged the graduates to uphold integrity and professionalism while contributing to India's financial growth.

The ceremony also featured inspiring addresses by Central Council Member and Convocation Coordinator Raj Chawla, NIRC Member Shalini Gupta, and other senior Chartered Accountants, who extended their best wishes to the newly minted professionals, encouraging them to excel in their endeavors and make meaningful contributions to the field of finance.

Free medical camp for Central Jail's women inmates

AMRITSAR, FEBRUARY 9



The FICCI FLO city chapter, in collaboration with the National Rural Health Mission, organised a free medical camp for women inmates at the Amritsar Central Jail. Dr Simarpreet Kaur Sandhu, Chairperson of the FICCI FLO city chapter, explained the camp aimed to raise awareness about the importance of health, hygiene and overall wellness among the women prisoners.

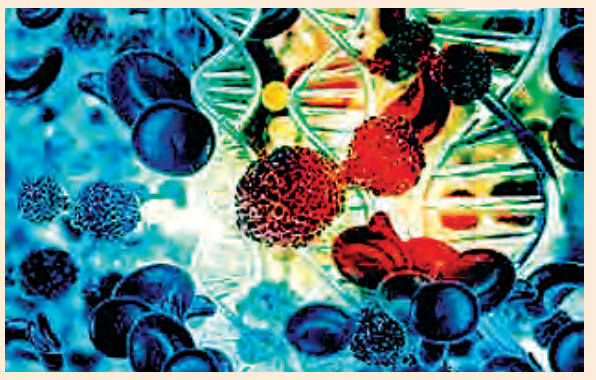
Dr Sonali Devgan, CEO of ESS NGO, organised a session on menstrual health, addressing common myths and promoting the proper use of reusable and disposable menstrual hygiene products. Dr Sandhu also introduced the Pushpa Punya project, initiated by Dr Rajan Sharma, which focuses on converting floral waste into incense sticks. The aim was to involve the women inmates in the production of these incense sticks, providing them with an opportunity for employment.

Dr Sandhu said FLO had been working alongside various stakeholders to carry out health and cancer awareness initiatives. In line with these efforts, the district administration, in partnership with the FICCI FLO city chapter, had organised a cancer awareness, early detection and free health check-up camp on World Cancer Day at Government Senior Secondary School, Bal Kalan. The camp was a joint initiative involving the World Cancer Care Charitable Society, the Punjab Government, the National Rural Health Mission and private partners, aimed at spreading awareness about cancer prevention and the importance of early detection.

This camp was organised in memory of Dr Hardas Singh Sandhu, a renowned orthopaedic surgeon and cancer crusader from Amritsar, who played a significant role in the fight against cancer. Dr Simarpreet Kaur Sandhu, Chairperson of FLO Amritsar, emphasised the importance of collective efforts to fight cancer and promote a healthy lifestyle. She stated, "We have been focused on addressing healthcare challenges, particularly for rural populations. It is crucial to address the needs of underserved areas with sustained healthcare interventions." AGENCIES

Patiala varsity researchers make breakthrough in cancer treatment

PATIALA, FEBRUARY 9



In a breakthrough in cancer treatment, Punjabi University researchers have found solutions to increase the effectiveness of chemotherapy and also identified specific obstacles that arise in the way of the effectiveness of this treatment.

The research work was published in the International Journal of Biological Macromolecules.

ICMR Senior Research Fellow and researcher Gera Narinder of Punjabi University, Patiala, under the supervision of Prof Om Silakari from the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Drug Research of Punjabi University, Patiala, conducted important research on chemo-resistance associated with drug-metabolising enzymes (DMEs).

Gera Narinder is currently working as a Project Scientist at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad. Prof Om Silakari said chemo-resistance continues to be a major challenge globally, due to which the availability of active drugs is not sufficient to kill cancer cells, and consequently, cancer patients die. He explained that among the main factors contributing to this phenomenon are Phase-1 and Phase-2 DMEs, which inactivate anti-cancer drugs, reduce their effectiveness, and lead to a drug resistance state, where the drug does not do its job.

> Gera Narinder is currently working as a Project Scientist at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad. Prof Om Silakari said chemo-resistance continues to be a major challenge globally, due to which the availability of active drugs is not sufficient to kill cancer cells, and consequently, cancer patients die.

Recognising the need to address this challenge, Gera Narendra's research focused on designing novel molecules targeting DMEs involved in cancer-drug inactivation and resistance. The aim of this novel approach is to improve the survival rate of cancer patients experiencing drug resistance. AGENCIES

Bizman gets ₹30 lakh extortion call, probe on

INDERJIT SINGH
PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Ludhiana, February 9

A city-based businessman received an extortion call from an unknown international number wherein the caller threatened to kill him if he failed to pay Rs 30 lakh. Division Number 8 Police Station have registered an FIR against some unidentified accused and initiated investigation.

Victim Ravish Gupta, 37, a resident of Mall Enclave, reported that he had been receiving continuous calls and messages on WhatsApp from an international number over the past few days. The unknown caller demanded Rs 30 lakh in ransom and warned that failure to comply would result in dire consequences, including death.

Acting swiftly on Gupta's complaint, the Division Number 8 Police Station registered an FIR under Sections 308 (4) and 351 (2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against the unidentified accused.

Inspector Balwinder Kaur, Station House Officer (SHO) of Division Number 8 Police Station, said the police were close to arresting the suspect and that necessary security measures had been taken to ensure the safety of the victim.

School principal gets extor tion call from gangster Dony Bal

AMRITSAR, FEBRUARY 9

Notorious gangster Balwinder Singh alias Dony Bal who is based abroad has demanded extortion money from a private school principal who has lodged a complaint with the Jandiala police in this connection.

Jandiala police registered a case against Dony Bal under relevant sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Bal originally hails from Sathiala village here and has a number of criminal cases, including that of murder, attempt to murder and robbery, against him. He is an associate of Bambiha-Rana Kandowalia gang and somehow managed to flee to foreign shores on a fake passport and forged documents.

The victim said that he has been working as principal in a private school for the past 11 years. Since January 25, he received a number of calls from different foreign numbers. The caller identified himself as Doni Bal Sathiala and demanded Rs 1 crore in extortion money from him while threatening to shoot him and his family in case of failure to cough up the money. Police sources said they were verifying the facts and a probe is on. AGENCIES

Housing Dept plans one-time settlement scheme for IT firms

CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 9

The state government is coming up with a one-time settlement scheme for information technology (IT) companies that have defaulted on the terms and conditions of allotment of land.

Mostly located in Mohali, 78 companies face cancellation of allotment over default in payment of instalments or violation of the terms and conditions regarding the construction schedule or generating employment. In over 30 cases, allottees have not started the construction work, sources said.

The OTS issue will come up for discussion in the next Cabinet meeting. Promoters of the information technology-enabled services (ITES) companies have been crying foul over "non-cooperation" at the hands of government agencies. "Fifty-four companies in Mohali, which have completed the construction work, are not being given completion certificates," said an entrepreneur. The Housing Department is eyeing around Rs 2,000 crore revenue by offering the amnesty scheme to defaulting allottees of residential, commercial and institutional properties in urban estates.

> 'For the allottees, who have defaulted on the payment of instalments, the government proposes to waive 6 per cent penal interest, subject to the payment of pending instalments with 12 per cent interest as per norms'

"For the allottees, who have defaulted on the payment of instalments, the government proposes to waive 6 per cent penal interest, subject to the payment of pending instalments with 12 per cent interest as per norms," said the official. "The step will help boost the ITES sector. These companies aim to generate an investment of around Rs 6,000 crore besides producing employment avenues for 50,000 to 75,000 persons in the next two years in Mohali," said Jatin Gandhi, vice-president of the IT Companies Association. AGENCIES

Police recover 30 stolen vehicles, 6 individuals held

AMRITSAR, FEBRUARY 9



The city police have recovered 30 stolen vehicles and arrested six individuals involved in vehicle thefts. The recovery followed investigations into two separate FIRs.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Alam Vijay Singh said that 24 of the recovered vehicles were scooters and six were motorcycles. The accused include Joban Singh, a resident of Adarsh Nagar in Ajnala, who worked at a local dhaba, along with two juveniles. The police managed to recover 11 scooters and one motorcycle following their interrogation. The arrests took place in the Ranjit Avenue area.

Additionally, Rohit Kumar from Mohan Nagar, Verka; Saleem from Adarsh Nagar, Ajnala; and Sunny Sharma from Ajnala were arrested. These individuals worked as labourers. Their interrogation led to the recovery of 13 scooters and five bikes. The DCP stated while the mastermind behind the thefts, a person from a nearby area, has been identified, they are still at large. He added more recoveries are expected following his arrest. AGENCIES

Stamp duty likely on property transfer among kin

CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 9



The Punjab Government may re-impose stamp duty on the transfer of property among blood relatives, according to sources. This stamp duty was waived off by the Shiromani Akali Dal-BJP government in 2014.

The issue is to be taken up in the meeting of the Punjab Cabinet to be chaired by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday.

> The issue is to be taken up in the meeting of the Punjab Cabinet to be chaired by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday.

The idea behind the move is to generate resources for the cash-strapped state government. If approved by the Cabinet, one to 2.5 per cent stamp duty may be imposed, a source added.

It is learnt that the Revenue Department has proposed to impose 1 per cent stamp duty on transfer of property from parents to children or from grandparents to grandchildren, and 2.5 per cent duty on transfer of property among siblings. Almost 25 per cent of total transfer of properties take place between blood relatives. Earlier, the government had imposed 2 per cent stamp duty on property transferred through General Power of Attorney. AGENCIES

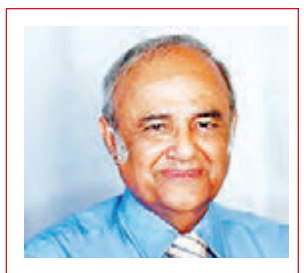
Descendants of Sardar Hari Singh 'Nalwa' unveil new genealogy page in Delhi

CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 9

The descendants of legendary Sikh general Hari Singh 'Nalwa' on Saturday unveiled a new genealogy page dedicated to their iconic ancestor. The descendants gathered in New Delhi at the residence of Adarsh Chopra, the eldest member of the Nalwa clan, for the launch of the page.

This genealogy page is part of the website www.harisinghnalwa.com, which honours the achievements of Sardar Hari Singh 'Nalwa'. It has been created "to inspire younger members of the family to learn about their heritage and connect with their family tree".

Hari Singh became known as 'Nalwa' after Maharaja Ranjit Singh, upon witnessing the young warrior single handedly slay a tiger that had attacked him, exclaimed, "Wah mere Raja Nal, Wah!" Although Hari Singh never used the name 'Nalwa' himself, it was embraced by courtiers and historians as a symbol of his bravery and resilient spirit. Hari Singh is remembered for his successful efforts in reclaiming large portions of the subcontinent, previously annexed by Ahmed Shah Abdali's Afghan empire, which now form part of present-day Pakistan. Hari Singh had four sons and two daughters. After being wounded in the Battle of Jamrud (1837), his greatest concern was for his younger, unmarried daughter. For the first time in the Nalwa family's genealogy, both male and female descendants are recognised, reflecting the full scope of his legacy. AGENCIES



On Sunday, in the prestigious Four Bed Rooms Apartment Society, Swami Vivek Anand Vihar Welfare Society, A Block, B R S Nagar, elected its new President Vijay Kumar Anand for the second term 2025-2027. Returning Officer S P Karkara, retired IAS, and Asst Returning Officer Sanjeev Kapoor, DGM, Punjab National Bank, conducted the election process in a most professional way and declared and announced that Anand is the President of the Society for 2025-2027 term. Anand thanked the members of the society for sparing their valuable time on Sunday to participate in voting for the Presidential election of the Society. He was overwhelmed with the whole-hearted support and electing him president for the 2nd term. He assured members that that he will discharge his duties to the best of his ability as president and it will be a constant endeavour of the new team to further improve upon the existing level of service. BPE

Hydrocarbon exploration survey won't harm agri land, says firm

MUKTSAR, FEBRUARY 9

A senior official of the Haryana-based company executing a hydrocarbon exploration survey for energy behemoth Oil India Limited at 10 villages of Muktsar's Lambi block has said that the exercise won't cause any harm to agriculture land as feared by farmers. Chhail Singh, project manager at DS Geo Services Private Limited, also said that they would proceed with the exercise only after "clearing doubts of farmers".

The statement came days after sarpanches of the villages approached the Punjab Department of Rural Development and Panchayats, requesting that the survey be stopped as it might cause irreparable damage to their fertile land. They also feared that in case hydrocarbon deposits are found there, the government might acquire their land for mining activities, leading to their displacement. However, the official asked the villagers not to panic, saying they have already submitted a detailed survey plan to the civil administration.

"We are conducting a seismic survey for the exploration of hydrocarbons in six districts of Punjab — Muktsar, Moga, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Faridkot and Bathinda. In addition, a similar survey is being undertaken in 11 districts of Rajasthan," he said.

He said some four-inch-wide shotholes will be drilled to a depth of just 20 meters to conduct the seismic survey, a method of imaging the earth's subsurface by recording and measuring artificially generated ground vibrations.

The technique is used to explore petroleum, natural gas and mineral deposits.

"The entire survey in Muktsar district will take almost a month. On an average, we cover six to seven kilometre of area daily. Our team will meet every farmer on whose land a borewell is to be drilled, and only then we will proceed with the survey," the project manager said.

"However, it may take some time to clear doubts of farmers, and completing the survey may take longer," he added. AGENCIES

Rural Police nab 6 with 3.4 kg heroin

AMRITSAR, FEBRUARY 9



The Rural police here have confiscated 3.4kg of heroin and arrested six individuals in three separate incidents. In addition to the heroin, the police seized a car and a motorcycle, both used in narcotics smuggling.

Police officials said the accused have been identified as Rajan Singh, Gurpreet Singh alias Kali from Basarke village, Satnam Singh from Dhanoe Khurd village, Micheal from Sangtuwal village, Sagar Sharma alias Choptra from Dhianpur and Harpal Singh from Bal Kalan village.

SSP (Amritsar Rural) Charanjit Singh said the Gharinda police arrested Rajan Singh and Gurpreet Singh, seizing 890g of heroin. In a separate operation, Gharinda police arrested Satnam Singh and seized 510g of heroin. Meanwhile, the Rajasansi police arrested Micheal and Sagar Sharma, seizing 1kg of heroin hidden in their vehicle. The police also arrested Harpal Singh from Bal Kalan village, seizing 940g of heroin from him. AGENCIES

Indian Chapter of World Punjabi Congress Lahore releases list of office-bearers

PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Ludhiana, February 9



The Indian Chapter of World Punjabi Congress Lahore on Sunday announced the list of new office-bearers. Dr Deepak Manmohan Singh has been appointed as President, Sehajpreet Singh Mangat as Secretary General and Prof Gurbhajan Gill and Dr Shinderpal Singh Senior have been appointed as the new Vice Presidents.

While reorganising the World Punjabi Congress Lahore, Chairman Fakhar Zaman had appointed Dr Deepak Manmohan Singh the President of the Indian Chapter and the eminent poet Sehajpreet Singh Mangat the Secretary General and Chief Coordinator. He had given the authority to appoint the remaining office-bearers to the President and Secretary General.

After mutual consultation by the President and Secretary General of the Indian Chapter, the complete formation of the Indian unit has been completed.

bright Punjab Express

A stunner

The electorate of Delhi has spoken. And it has chosen to favour the saffron party. Ending its 27-year exile from power in the national Capital and handing the ruling AAP a stunning defeat, the BJP has swept the Delhi Assembly elections, bagging as many as 48 of the 70 seats in the House.

The remaining 22 seats went to AAP while the Congress drew a blank for the third time in a row. AAP leader and former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia were among the prominent leaders who lost. Of the AAP tally of 22 – down from 67 and 62 seats in 2015 and 2020 – most came from the reserved constituencies (8 out of 12) and Muslim-majority seats (6 out of 7).

Thanking the people of Delhi for reposing faith in the BJP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing a gathering at the party headquarters hours after the verdict, said, "Delhi has liberated itself. The people have short-circuited the politics of shortcuts... Even after getting 100% success in three Lok Sabha elections, our workers had the pain of not being able to serve Delhi fully. This desire, too, Delhi has fulfilled this time."

Modi said, "Wherever NDA has got the mandate, we have brought new heights of development to that state. People are choosing our governments two-three times... Broken roads, garbage dumps and polluted air – these are the problems that people of Delhi have faced. We will build Delhi as a modern city. For the first time ever, the BJP will have a government in every state within NCR."

On his part, Kerjriwal accepted his defeat. In a video address, he said, "We humbly accept whatever decision the people have made. The people's verdict is paramount. I wholeheartedly congratulate the BJP on this victory. I hope they fulfill all the expectations and aspirations with which people have given them this mandate. Over the past 10 years, we have made sincere efforts to improve the lives of Delhi residents. We have undertaken initiatives in the fields of education, healthcare, water supply, electricity, and various other areas to provide relief to the people. We also worked to improve Delhi's infrastructure. Now that the people have given their verdict, we will not only play the role of a constructive Opposition but also continue serving society... We did not enter politics for power... We will continue this work," he said.

The BJP vote share went up from 38.5% in 2020 to 45.6% this time, gaining 40 seats in the process. The AAP, meanwhile, went down to 43.5% from 53.5% in 2020. The Congress vote share went up by nearly two percentage points.

The "double engine government" was one of BJP's primary campaign pitches which, it promised, would work better in Delhi than in any other part of the country, with land, law and order, police and services under the Centre through the Lt Governor.

SPIRITUAL WORLD



Exam warriors redefined, beyond the battlefield of exams

DHARMENDRA PRADHAN*



Nature, in its infinite wisdom, has bestowed upon each human being a distinct identity – from our fingerprint to iris, from our perceptions to thoughts, from our talents to achievements. This profound truth about human uniqueness has been the defining feature of our society and our educational system must mirror this uniqueness. Every child possesses certain innate talent; some dazzle with academic brilliance, others with a flair for creativity, and still others with athletic prowess and professional acumen. Reflecting this uniqueness, Swami Vivekananda once said, "Education is the manifestation of perfection already present in man."

Drawing out the natural talent of a child and creatively engaging her in academic and extra-curricular pursuits of her choice have been the formidable challenges before our educational institutions. Our role, as educators and policymakers, is to nurture the unique talent of a child, leading to her excellence in chosen pursuit. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has marked a paradigm shift as to how we define and nurture talent. It is a philosophical framework that can truly descry the nuanced contours of uniqueness that exist in each of our child that contributes to our country's advancement.

Under our Prime Minister's visionary leadership, we are implementing wholesome reforms in education to ensure that the educational journey of a child remains ever exciting and memorable, shorn of any stress and pressure, neither during the studies nor during the exams. This perspective is central to our educational reforms, right from the foundational learning to the highest levels of education and research.

A few years ago, the Bal Vatika or toy-based learning for our young learners would have invited widespread scepticism. Today, thanks to NEP, these innovative approaches are revolutionizing early education, making learning a joyful undertaking rather than a burdensome obligation. Our new education system recognizes that each child blossoms as per her natural talent.

Our credit transfer policy that puts in place an Academic Bank of Credit, represents yet another innovative step ahead. It recognizes that life's path may not always be linear, but zigzag and that learning can occur in a variety of circumstances and at varying paces. Learners could halt formal education as they pursue a passionate interest, obtain practical experience, or support their family. When they return to formal education, their experiences and accomplishments come handy and these are valued and incorporated into their academic record of credit. This adaptability underscores that the doors to learning are always open, bringing people back to learning ecosystem at any point in their lives.

The Government is committed to nurture a culture where exam success never overshadows holistic development, threatening the mental well-being of our youth. Recognizing this critical challenge, our government has made it a national priority to help overcome the exam-related stress. The Prime Minister's ground-breaking "Pariksha Pe Charcha" initiative represents our commitment to transforming how students, parents, and educators need to approach assessments. The Prime Minister's interaction with students, parents, and guardians, has turned exam anxiety into a national dialogue. He has endeavoured, over the years, to allay anxiety around exams that puts needless strain on impressionable minds. The practical tips of Prime Minister, drawn from his own life and experiences, have been well received by the exam-goers, ensuring a hassle-free and stress-free optimal exam performance by them. In an example of true leadership, we are witnessing a visionary leader's dedication to fostering the future generation of Indians that contributes to nation building and ensures the nation's inexorable march towards progress.

Parents and civil society are central to this transformation. Pareeksha Pe Charcha has been transformative in highlighting the critical importance of mental health and supportive learning environments. This is a mindset that needs to be magnified and permeated across classrooms, and students of all ages, across our entire educational landscape – not just 10th and 12th Boards. The pressure and stress with exams, need to be dispelled from all stages of learning.

In the wise words of Rabindranath Tagore, "Don't limit a child to your own learning, for he was born in another time." Our approach to educational change is guided by this wisdom. The idea that stress in education is inevitable needs to give way to the understanding that real learning thrives in nurturing environments. When communities, educators, and families work together to create an atmosphere where students can flourish, success ensues. From the classroom to the playground, from vocational training centers to research laboratories, we must create spaces where diverse talents can find their spark and flourish. The traditional one-size-fits-all approach is sought to be changed to give way to a more nuanced, responsive system that recognizes and nurtures individual potential.

As we progress rapidly towards a Vikasit Bharat, our education system stands as a key foundation stone of national transformation. We recognise that every skill has merit, every journey has value, and every child has the right to discover her unique path to excellence. When we nurture diverse talents, we strengthen the fabric of our society and enhance our nation's capabilities across all spheres.

Today, I call upon every parent, teacher, and citizen of our great nation. The transformation of education is not merely a government initiative – it is a national mission that demands our collective commitment and shared perspectives. We will achieve our goals when collaboration and partnership between the Government and the civil society define our policies and actions.

Our children are our future. They will shine with their unique talents and make the country proud. A bright future beckons us. We hold that in the uniqueness of every child lies the uniqueness of Bharat's future. Stress-free learning will be the key to hone the unique contributions of our immensely talented students.

Union Minister of Education

Chinese DeepSeek gives different answers about kimchi's origin: Seoul spy agency

The Chinese artificial intelligence (AI) model DeepSeek provided different answers to sensitive questions depending on the language -- for example, defining kimchi's origin as Korea when asked in Korean, but claiming it is Chinese when asked in Chinese, Seoul's spy agency said on Sunday.



The National Intelligence Service (NIS) said it has also found the AI service provides its advertisers with unlimited access to users' personal data and such information is subject to submission to the Chinese government upon its request under Chinese law, reports Yonhap news agency.

The NIS released its assessment of the technological verification of DeepSeek amid growing controversy over security concerns surrounding the service, which has prompted South Korean authorities to block access to the site.

When the NIS asked where kimchi originates, DeepSeek responded, "It is a signature Korean food imbued with its culture and history," according to the agency.

But when asked the same question in Chinese, it said, "The origin is not Korea, but China," and "It is related to Korea," when asked in English, the NIS said.

On a question in Korean about China's Northeast Project, a history initiative criticised by South Korea as distorting regional history, DeepSeek pointed to "various perspectives" among neighbouring countries due to historical differences.

However, in English or Chinese, it said the project is a "legitimate initiative for revitalising China's northeastern region in line with its national interests."

Asked in Korean about South Korea's Dano festival, DeepSeek answers that it is a Korean tradition, while it responds in Chinese and English that it is a Chinese traditional holiday.

Other commonly used AI services, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT and CloverX, developed by South Korea's Naver, all provided the same answers regardless of the language, the agency said.

DeepSeek also collects users' keyboard input patterns, which could potentially be used to identify individuals and user data it collects, like chat records, could be sent to certain servers in China.

It is designed to store all user inputs, share user data with advertisers without restrictions and there is no clear limit on how long the data can be stored, raising concerns about user privacy, the NIS said.

The agency also pointed out that DeepSeek's terms of service indicate that users' personal information and input data can potentially be accessed by the Chinese government.

The NIS has sent notices to all government agencies in South Korea calling for caution regarding security when using generative AI tools, such as DeepSeek. IANS

Powerhouses of the cell may help cure diabetes, say researchers

Mitochondria, that produce energy for the cell, holds the key to curing diabetes, researchers have learned.

Mitochondrial defects are associated with the development of diseases such as type 2 diabetes.

Patients who suffer from this disorder are unable to produce enough insulin or use the insulin produced by their pancreas to keep their blood sugar at normal levels.

Several studies have shown that insulin-producing pancreatic cells of patients with diabetes have abnormal mitochondria and are unable to generate energy.



Yet, these studies were unable to explain why the cells behaved this way.

In a new study published in the journal Science, researchers at the University of Michigan in the US used mice to show that dysfunctional mitochondria trigger a response that affects the maturation and function of these cells.

"We wanted to determine which pathways are important for maintaining proper mitochondrial function," said Emily M. Walker, Ph.D, a research assistant professor of internal medicine and first author of the study.

To do so, the team damaged three components that are essential for mitochondrial function: their DNA, a pathway used to get rid of damaged mitochondria, and one that maintains a healthy pool of mitochondria in the cell.

"In all three cases, the exact same stress response was turned on, which caused pancreatic cells to become immature, stop making enough insulin, and essentially stop being pancreatic cells," Walker said.

"Our results demonstrate that the mitochondria can send signals to the nucleus and change the fate of the cell." The researchers also confirmed their findings in human pancreatic islet cells.

Losing your pancreatic cells is the most direct path to getting type 2 diabetes. Through our study we now have an explanation for what might be happening and how we can intervene and fix the root cause, said authors.

The team is working on further dissecting the cellular pathways that are disrupted and hope that they will be able to replicate their results in cell samples from diabetic patients. IANS

DISCLAIMER: The opinions expressed in the articles published in these columns are the personal opinions of the authors. The facts and opinions appearing in the articles do not reflect the views of Bright Punjab Express and Bright Punjab Express does not assume any responsibility or liability for the same.

NEWSBRIEFS

Cops seize 11 tonnes of ganja from 4 tractors in Dhule; unidentified person booked

MUMBAI: An unidentified person has been booked after 11000 kilograms of ganja were found on four tractors in Maharashtra's Dhule district, a police official said on Sunday. The contraband was seized in Shirpur taluka, inspector Jaypal Hire said. "We were alerted about ganja being cultivated through drip irrigation on a 3-acre plot in Ambegaon, which is on the border with Madhya Pradesh. Between Saturday and Sunday, we seized four tractors with 11000 kilograms of ganja. The plot is just 15 kilometres from a police station," the official said. An unidentified person has been booked under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, he added. **PTI**

Fire breaks out in Kolkata slum, one dead

KOLKATA: One person died in a blaze that gutted at least 30 shanties in Narkeldanga area of the metropolis, a fire brigade official said on Sunday. Seventeen fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the flames, which were first spotted around 10 pm on Saturday, he said. The fire left around 200 people homeless, officials said. The charred body of Habibullah Mollah (65) was recovered from a godown adjacent to the shanties, after fire brigade personnel managed to douse the blaze around 3 am, they said. During the day, West Bengal Municipal Affairs Minister and Kolkata Municipal Corporation Mayor Firhad Hakim visited the spot and interacted with locals. **IANS**

Priyanka Gandhi urges for more funds to tackle human-animal conflict in Wayanad

WAYANAD, FEBRUARY 9



Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday vowed to pressure both the central and state governments to increase funding for mitigating human-animal conflict in this hill constituency while also raising Corporate Social Responsibility funds for the cause. Addressing the party's booth-level leaders in the Thiruvambadi Assembly constituency, the Wayanad MP said that she will try her best to minimise the instances of human-animal conflict.

She said that while holding a discussion with the authorities including the District Magistrate and forest officials following the death of a woman due to the attack of a tiger in Mananthavady, they cited the issue of shortage of funds. "I told them I will pressurise both the Centre and state governments to increase the funding to mitigate the problem and at the same time we will raise the CSR funds wherever we can help with it," Priyanka added. She stated that since January four deaths have occurred in Wayanad due to wild animal attacks. On the second day of her three-day visit to Wayanad, Priyanka addressed the issue of human-animal conflicts in her first meeting at Eranad Assembly constituency, stating that she would write to both the central and state governments asking to allocate more funds, as adequate funding is essential for effective protection measures.

Later, speaking to reporters after the meeting on the human-animal conflict issue, she said she has already raised it once and will continue to raise it.

"It's something we need to look into, it's a complex issue as there is no easy solution. Definitely, I will put as much pressure and raise as much as I can," she added. Priyanka stated that there is difficulty in securing funds from both the Centre and the state government.

"I will take up this issue and ensure it is resolved," she said, adding that increased funding is crucial for better monitoring, improved safety measures, and enhanced protection for forest guards, watchers, and others involved. Earlier on the day, continuing her criticism of the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre, the Congress general secretary alleged that, for the first time in history, a government is working to weaken both the Constitution and democracy of the country.

Addressing the party's booth-level leaders in Eranad Assembly constituency, Priyanka said, "It's probably for the first time in our country's history, we have a government that is working to weaken the Constitution and the democracy." "You must understand that today the fight we are fighting is not just a fight for our own politics and ideology but a fight for protecting the essence of India, everything that makes our nation what it is today," she added. Encouraging party workers, she stated, "You worked with deepest dedication for me in the election and I am truly grateful for that." **PTI**

BJP will come to power in Bengal in 2026 assembly polls: Pradhan

KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 9

Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday asserted that the BJP will come to power in West Bengal in the 2026 assembly elections.

The Union Education Minister also accused the Mamata Banerjee government of putting roadblocks to the implementation of central projects in West Bengal, while falsely accusing the Centre of ignoring the state.

"BJP's vote share in West Bengal has been around 30-40 per cent since 2019 and if the party gets another 10 per cent of votes, it will dislodge the Mamata Banerjee government from power," Pradhan said while while addressing a press meet here on the salient features of the Union budget. **PTI**

There won't be any impact of Delhi polls in Bihar: Tejashwi

PATNA, FEBRUARY 9

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Sunday dismissed suggestions that the BJP's stupendous victory in the Delhi assembly polls will have an impact in Bihar where elections are due later this year. The former deputy chief minister of Bihar also said that a return to power "after nearly 26 years" made it incumbent upon the BJP to fulfil the promises made to the people of Delhi.

Yadav, who is now the leader of the opposition in the state assembly, briefly replied to questions from journalists about the verdict in Delhi where INDIA bloc partner Aam Aadmi Party was voted out of power. "In a democracy, the people are supreme (janta maalik hai). The BJP has been voted to power after nearly 26 years. Hopefully, promises made to the people will be fulfilled and there will not be empty rhetoric (jumlebaazi)," Yadav said.

The RJD leader, whose party has won the highest number of seats in the last two assembly polls in Bihar, was also asked about the claim of the BJP and its allies that upcoming elections in the state will benefit the NDA as there was a momentum in favour of the ruling coalition. The young leader remarked dismissively, "Bihar is Bihar. It needs to be understood (Bihar Bihar hai... samajhna padega)." The NDA is headed in Bihar by JD(U) supremo Nitish Kumar who has been the chief minister since 2005, except for a brief period when the reins were handed over to Jitan Ram Manjhi. **PTI**

No one can undermine farmers' role in India's journey towards development: VP Dhankhar

JAIPUR, FEBRUARY 9



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday said that no one can undermine the role of farmers in India's journey towards development.

Addressing the Akhil Mewar Region Jat Mahasabha in Chittorgarh, the vice-president said the farmers possess political strength and economic capability, adding they should not depend on anyone's help. "When the economic situation of farmers improves, the country's situation improves. After all, farmers are the providers and they should not look to anyone or depend on anyone for help because farmers with their strong hands possess political strength and economic capability," Dhankhar said. "No matter what happens, no matter how many obstacles arise, no one can undermine the role of farmers in India's journey towards development.

Today's governance system bows to the farmers," he added. Remembering the Jat reservation movement that took place 25 years ago, the vice-president urged that never forget the support and efforts of this society gave social justice. Today the results of that effort are visible in the administrative services of the country and the state, he added.

Encouraging the farmers to take advantage of Agricultural Science Centers, Dhankhar said, "There are over 730 Agricultural Science Centers to help farmers. Don't leave them alone, go there and ask them. What services will you offer us?' Learn about new technologies and government policies." **PTI**

Centre should take diplomatic steps to stop 'atrocities' on Hindus in Bangladesh: Ashok Gehlot

JAIPUR, FEBRUARY 9

Former Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot on Sunday said the Centre should take diplomatic steps to stop "atrocities" on Hindus in Bangladesh. Soon after his statement, BJP state president Madan Rathore hit out at the Congress leader saying the party has once again "remembered Hindus" after the drubbing in Delhi.

He said that the central government is making diplomatic efforts to stop violence in Bangladesh. Gehlot's remarks came after Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh on Friday said in a written response in the Lok Sabha that since August last year, reports have cited deaths of 23 Hindus and 152 incidents of attack on Hindu temples in Bangladesh.

"It is unfortunate that despite such a situation, the Indian government has not yet deemed it appropriate to make any statement on global platforms, or put pressure on Bangladesh," Gehlot said in a post on X. "The government should take diplomatic steps to stop the atrocities being committed against Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh," he added.

Rathore in a statement alleged that the Congress during the Delhi polls refrained from making any such statement due to fear of losing its vote bank, but was now out peddling "pseudo-Hindutva." "Those who always talk about appeasement have also started talking about Hindus' interests, this is a good thing," Rathore said. The BJP leader said that the central government is putting diplomatic pressure on Bangladesh over the sectarian violence there. **PTI**

DELHI/NCR

Probe transferred only in rare circumstance, hits morale of police: Delhi HC

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9



Investigation into a criminal case is transferred from one agency to another only in rare and exceptional circumstances, as it hits at the morale of the police which must be avoided at all costs, the Delhi High Court has observed. The high court said bald allegations are not sufficient for transfer of investigation to another probe agency.

"Transfer of investigation to another agency is only done in rare and exceptional cases such as cases where high officials of state authorities are involved. Accusations against an investigating officer alone are not sufficient to transfer investigation unless there is sufficient material to show that the investigating officer is mixed up with the accused," Justice Subramonium Prasad said.

The court passed the order on February 6 on petitions filed by several persons accused in a cheating case being probed by the Economic Offences Wing of Delhi Police, seeking to transfer the investigation to a superior agency like the CBI or the Special Cell. The allegations in the criminal case were that monies of homebuyers and investors were siphoned out and the investigation was being conducted by the agency to unearth the money trail to find out where the monies have been actually parked. The petitions sought that the probe be transferred to a Special Investigative Team (SIT) headed by a retired judge or to a superior investigating agency for monitoring the investigation. The court said it was satisfied with the investigation, and it cannot be said that the investigating agency has been lax in its probe.

The judge dismissed the petitions saying they have been filed in the absence of any material placed before the court as to why the investigating agency has been lax. The court said the petitioners have not made out any case that they were being victimised because of the pressure exerted by the complainants. The complainants in the case are helpless investors/homebuyers who have invested substantial amounts in the properties which are being constructed by the accused, the court noted. It applied the parameters laid down by the Supreme Court, which say an investigation is transferred only when the court finds that a fair, honest and complete probe is not being carried out. "In fact, transfer of investigation from the investigating agency hits at the morale of the police, which must be avoided at all costs," the high court said. **PTI**

Atishi danced as Kejriwal's 'ploy to engineer her defeat failed': Anurag Thakur

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9



Former Union minister and BJP leader Anurag Thakur on Sunday alleged that outgoing Delhi Chief Minister Atishi danced after coming to know that Aam Aadmi Party convener Arvind Kejriwal's "ploy to engineer her defeat had failed". Thakur was commenting on a leaked video clip purportedly showing Atishi dancing after her victory from the Kalkaji Assembly constituency. The defeat has revealed the fissures in top AAP leaders, Thakur said.

Atishi was among the select AAP leaders who won the polls as others, including Kejriwal and former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, lost the polls. "Look at the politics of Arvind Kejriwal, (he) came into politics by climbing upon the shoulders of Anna Hazare, finished him off, then formed his own party. He then finished off the founding members of his party," Thakur alleged. Kejriwal's team worked against senior AAP leaders and ministers, but ultimately Kejriwal got the taste of his own medicine, he said.

"Atishi ji's name was missing from the election banner, poster and the entire (poll) campaign. Attempts were made to defeat her in her assembly constituency and that is why you saw her dance in the leaked video," Thakur said. Thakur said Atishi was expressing her "happiness" over the defeat of the former chief minister and former deputy chief minister like other Delhiites. "They wanted to put the blame of the liquor scam on Sisodia, but we had said even then that Kejriwal is the kingpin. The court punished him and he is currently on bail," Thakur said. Responding to a question, he said, "The one who was trying to finish his own people internally, that gentleman himself got finished.

Now, how loud will be the rebellious tones, wait for a few more days. Because this dance that you have seen is not just about winning one assembly (seat). It was an indication in this direction, that you have put in a lot of effort, now let's see what happens next." Elaborating further about the Delhi assembly elections, Thakur during his brief halt in Lucknow, said, "One of the major factors behind the BJP's win in Delhi was the 'Modi ki Guarantee', and there is full guarantee of it getting fulfilled. And people have thrown out those who make guarantee of lies, and have given a concrete guarantee that he (Kejriwal) will never enter again.

"Apart from this, the people of Delhi had got fed up with the misgovernance and corruption... Now, it is 'Delhi mein Modi, Desh mein Modi' and the roads leading from 'sankalp' (promise) to 'siddhi' (fulfillment) have been opened. The BJP has been chosen to make a 'viksit' Delhi. The promises, which we have made, we will fulfill them, this is 'Modi ki Guarantee'," Thakur said. **PTI**

Okhla MLA Khan blames Congress for AAP loss

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9

AAP's Okhla MLA Amanatullah Khan on Sunday blamed the Congress for the party's defeat in the Delhi polls, a charge rubbished by the grand old party. AAP -- which had won 62 assembly constituencies in 2020 and 67 in 2015 -- saw its tally plunge to 22 as the BJP registered a landslide victory with 48 seats in the 70-member House. Khan accused the Congress of prioritising AAP's defeat over its own electoral success.

"The Congress contested the election not to win but to ensure our defeat. Rahul Gandhi came to campaign in my constituency for the first time ever. It knew it had no chance of winning but was determined to make us lose," Khan said. AAP and the Congress are constituents of the opposition INDIA bloc and had contested last year's Lok Sabha elections in an alliance in Delhi. Alliance partners are supposed to support the strongest party in each state, Khan said. "We were strong in Delhi, not the Congress. But its actions helped the BJP come to power. The Congress had nothing to lose but its strategy hurt secular voters the most," he added.

AAP secured 43.57 per cent of the votes polled while the BJP managed 45.56 per cent. The Congress' vote share stood at 6.34 per cent. Highlighting the narrow difference, Khan claimed AAP was defeated using every possible means. Responding to Khan's claims, senior Congress leader Narendra Nath asserted that his party contested the elections to win. "Our vote share went up. We contested with the intent to win, not make anyone lose. It is a different matter that our vote count exceeded AAP's losing margin in 14 seats," the former Delhi minister said. **PTI**

'Shiv Vihar' or 'Shiv Puri': BJP's Mustafabad MLA Bisht proposes constituency name change

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9

The BJP's newly-elected Mustafabad MLA Mohan Bisht on Sunday proposed to change the name of the northeast Delhi constituency, which has a significant population from the minority community, to "Shiv Vihar" or "Shiv Puri". He justified his proposal by claiming that the Hindu population was higher in the constituency. "On one side, there are 58 per cent people and, on the other, 42 per cent. It is the right of the 58 per cent that the name should be changed accordingly. The name could be Shiv Vihar or Shiv Puri," he told PTI.

The 67-year-old secured victory over AAP's Adeel Ahmad Khan in Mustafabad by 17,578 votes. Elected as an MLA for the sixth time, Bisht was shifted from the Karawal Nagar seat that he had won in the 2020 election. The senior leader had openly expressed his resentment at being replaced by Mishra in Karawal Nagar. He agreed to contest from Mustafabad after being placated by the BJP's national leadership.



Reacting to Bisht's proposal to change the Mustafabad name, AAP's Okhla MLA Amanatullah Khan sought to know what the BJP wanted to achieve by it. Instead of doing such things, the BJP should start working positively and avoid negativity, he told reporters. Bisht is being seen by some in the party as a potential candidate for the post of chief minister.

"The party gave me the chance to contest elections seven times and I won six of those. I am a regular party worker and whoever the party chooses will carry the 'lotus' symbol," he said, when asked to comment on the speculation.

The BJP swept to power in Delhi after more than 26 years, winning 48 of the 70 assembly seats. AAP won 22 seats while the Congress drew a blank in the polls held on February 5. The results were announced on Saturday. **PTI**

Haryana CM says agents who facilitated 'dunki' route travel being identified for strict action



CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 9

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Sunday said those travel agents involved in sending the state youth abroad through illegal routes are being identified and strict action will be taken against them.

He further said that the state government has already established proper mechanisms for citizens seeking employment opportunities abroad, ensuring they do not victims of fraud in any manner.

A US military aircraft brought back 104 illegal Indian immigrants last week, the first such batch of Indians deported by the Donald Trump administration as part of a crackdown against illegal immigrants.

Of these deportees, 33 each were from Haryana and Gujarat, 30 from Punjab, three each from Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, and two from Chandigarh. Several of them from Haryana have narrated the ordeal they faced after being duped by unscrupulous travel agents and have demanded action against them.

Interacting with reporters in Faridabad, Chief Minister Saini said those involved in sending the state's youths abroad through illegal ('dunki') routes are being identified and strict action will be taken against them.

He reiterated that the state government will introduce a law aimed at controlling illegal immigration strictly. The proposed legislation will be presented in the upcoming budget session, he further said.

Meanwhile, Saini hosted a luncheon on behalf of the State Government at a tourist complex during the ongoing 38th Surajkund International Crafts Mela in Faridabad.

The event witnessed the presence of many distinguished guests, including several Haryana ministers, some Union ministers, BJP MLAs from the state and senior BJP leaders, among others.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the event, Saini said that the people of Delhi have given a historic mandate by endorsing the BJP's policies.

"The people of Delhi are now happy as they will finally receive the full benefits of all the schemes implemented by the Central Government from which they had been deprived for several years," he said.

He further said that former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had always "misled" the people.

Saini alleged that Kejriwal has consistently resorted to falsehoods, whether it was regarding cleaning the Yamuna river, providing clean drinking water to every household, or constructing new roads.

He said that Kejriwal "deprived eligible beneficiaries of benefits from ambitious welfare schemes like Ayushman Bharat even though such initiatives are meant for people from all sections of society". PTI

'People endorsed PM Modi's guarantees'

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Sunday said the people of Delhi endorsed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guarantees, and asserted that the national capital would now stride firmly towards a "Viksit Bharat". Modi's policies will now be implemented in Delhi, ensuring that the people benefit from welfare schemes such as Ayushman Bharat and access to clean drinking water, he added.Addressing a press conference at Haryana Bhawan, the BJP leader said the people of Delhi responded to AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal's "deceitful promises" by voting him out of power.

The BJP swept to power in Delhi after more than 26 years, winning 48 of the 70 assembly seats. AAP won 22 seats while the Congress drew a blank in the polls held on February 5.The people will also oust the "AAP-da (disaster)" from power in Punjab, like they did in Delhi, Saini claimed. With this historic win, Delhi will now stride forward firmly towards a "Viksit Bharat", he added. PTI

Rail connectivity in Mewat will improve mobility: CM Saini

RAJENDRA KHATRY
PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU
Chandigarh, February 9

Haryana Chief Minister,Nayab Singh Saini said that after 2014, the double-engine government of the Centre and Haryana, working under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been ensuring holistic development without any discrimination. Inspired by Shaheed Hasan Khan Mewati, the government has been implementing several development projects in Mewat.He said that to directly connect Mewat with Delhi and Alwar via rail, a railway project will be executed in the region for which budgetary provisions have been made. The construction of the railway line will not only facilitate smooth transportation for the people of Mewat but will also open new avenues for employment opportunities for the youth, said the Chief Minister while addressing representatives of the All India Mewati Panchayat at his residence, Sant Kabir Kutir on Saturday.

People voted against corruption in Delhi: Haryana Ministers

CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 9

Haryana ministers on Sunday attributed the BJP's win in the Delhi assembly polls to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "pro-people" policies, and said the people of Delhi have voted against "corruption" and "misgovernance". Calling it a triumph of 'seva' (service), 'sushasan' (good governance) and 'jankalyankari nitiyan' (public welfare policies), Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Shyam Singh Rana said the election results reflect the unwavering support of the people for the BJP.

The BJP will form its government in Delhi after a gap of more than 26 years as it won 48 of the 70 seats in the Assembly polls, the results of which were announced on Saturday, while the AAP secured victories from 22 seats and the Congress drew a blank for a third straight time.

Haryana Education Minister Mahipal Dhanda said the people of Delhi did not believe in false promises of the Aam Aadmi Party and have completely rejected Arvind Kejriwal and his party. "This victory reflects the unwavering trust of the people in the BJP and is a win for Prime Minister Modi's developmental policies. The people of Delhi have rejected corruption, misgovernance, and deceitful politics, choosing progress instead," Dhanda said.

He further said the BJP has always worked with the principle of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' and the people of Delhi have reaffirmed their faith in this vision by electing the BJP with an overwhelming majority. Haryana Tourism Minister Arvind Sharma recalled that in 2020, AAP national convener Kejriwal had declared that if he failed to clean the Yamuna, the people of Delhi should not vote for him and today, the people of Delhi have upheld their promise, he said.

Sharma alleged that by fighting the elections using every possible tactic -- "persuasion, money, force, and deception" - Kejriwal tried to damage the brotherhood between Delhi and Haryana. However, the people of Delhi understood his tricks and gave a strong response".

The Haryana minister said "the people of Delhi realised how Kejriwal had blocked the benefits of Centre's welfare schemes from reaching lakhs of families. This made it clear that Kejriwal had no interest in Delhi's development or the welfare of the common people".."With a double-engine government now, Delhi's development will accelerate, and the common man will fully benefit from both the central and state government's policies," he said.

Public Works and Public Health Engineering, Minister, Ranbir Singh Gangwa said it is a victory for the development vision of PM Modi, Union Minister and BJP president J P Nadda, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

The minister criticised Kejriwal and AAP leaders for "misleading the public with various propaganda tactics during the elections".

"However, this time, the people of Delhi did not fall for their false promises. Instead, they have placed their trust in the BJP," he said adding "just like in Haryana, the double-engine government in Delhi will steer its development in a new direction". PTI

Trees illegally felled at government office in Faridabad: NGT

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9



The National Green Tribunal has observed that several trees were illegally felled in the premises of the office of the deputy director of animal husbandry and dairying in Haryana's Faridabad.

The green body was hearing a plea alleging unauthorised cutting of some pipal (sacred fig) trees at the instance of the deputy director along with the range officer and contractor.

The plea submitted that though permission to cut shisham (Indian Rosewood) and miscellaneous trees was granted, there was no permission to cut pipal trees In December last year, the tribunal had constituted a joint committee to ascertain the number and extent of illegal tree felling, the types of trees that had been cut and the permission obtained from the competent authority.

The joint committee comprised member secretary, Central Pollution Control Board, and the Chandigarh regional office of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

In an order dated February 3, a bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava said the committee filed its report on January 31 and according to it permission was given only for "transplanting" eight ficus trees and not for cutting them.

The bench also comprising judicial member Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi and expert member Afroz Ahmad said according to the committee report, the conditions had been violated by cutting down three pipal trees.

The report recommended the state government could take appropriate action and the divisional forest officer (DFO) could be directed to take the requisite action for violating the conditions for the permission, the bench noted.

"The report reveals that though permission was for transplanting five pipal trees, violating the same, three pipal trees have been cut," the bench said.

The counsels for the authorities sought four weeks to file their objections or response to the committee's report.

Allowing the same, the tribunal posted the matter for further proceedings on April 28. PTI

HIMACHAL/J&K

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq urges govt to release all political prisoners from J&K

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 9



Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on Sunday expressed concern over the deteriorating health of Baramulla Lok Sabha member Sheikh Abdul Rashid alias Engineer and called for release of all political prisoners from Jammu and Kashmir.

"Concerned by media reports of deteriorating health of Engineer Rashid, now shifted to hospital . Also the news report that Tihar jail authorities have arbitrarily withdrawn phone call and emulaqat facilities (video call) to political prisoners in custody of NIA , is very distressing," he said in a post on X.

The Hurriyat Conference chairman also expressed concern over the health condition of other political prisoners.

"Besides reports of health condition of many political prisoners especially the elderly in jails is a matter that worries not just their families but all people . The policy of severity in dealing with Kashmiris is a zero sum game," Farooq said.

"Once again urge the Government of India to release all political prisoners, including the leadership, lawyers, civil society members, media personnel and youth and at least while they are in jails to respect and restore their rights as per the law," he added. PTI

PDP chief lashes out at authorities for stopping Iltija Mufti to hold press conference in Jammu

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 9

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Sunday lashed out at the authorities for preventing her daughter and party leader Iltija Mufti from addressing a press conference in Jammu.

"Visiting and offering solace to the families of victims has now been criminalised. This is evident from the latest actions of the police, who have detained Iltija at the Circuit House in Jammu, preventing her from addressing a press conference," the PDP president said in a post on X.

Earlier in the day, Iltija met the family of a youth who recently committed suicide after alleged torture by police over his suspected links with terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, party leaders said Mehbooba said the understanding of democracy by the ruling party seemed to be limited to conduct of elections only.

"This blatant disregard for our democratic rights as free citizens highlights a disturbing trend. It appears that the ruling party's understanding of democracy extends only as far as holding elections and forming a government, with little regard for the fundamental freedoms that underpin a true democracy," she said. PTI

Delhi polls sent clear message that Cong's intentions, policies anti-people: HP BJP chief

SHIMLA, FEBRUARY 9

The Delhi assembly polls in which the Congress suffered a complete wipeout for the third consecutive time is a clear message to the Himachal Pradesh people that the ruling party's intentions and policies are "anti-people", alleged BJP state chief Rajiv Bindal on Sunday.

In the Delhi Assembly polls, The BJP won 48 of the 70 seats at stake and the AAP was way behind with 22, according to the Election Commission website.

The Congress, which had ruled for 15 consecutive years under Sheila Dikshit from 1998, came a cropper in the Assembly elections, failing to get even a single seat for the third straight time. Its candidates suffered crushing defeats with a majority of them even losing their deposits.

Taking a jibe at the Congress, Bindal said the party failed to win even a single seat and its candidates lost security deposit in 67 constituencies.This is an open message that the intentions and policies of the Congress are anti-people, he asserted.

In a statement issued here, Bindal said the Congress, which came to power in Himachal Pradesh by "deceiving" the unemployed youths is now busy spending its time abusing the BJP.The tall promises of the Congress of giving five lakh jobs in five years have fallen flat, the BJP state chief claimed, adding that there has been no job and no employment since the formation of the Congress government. Prime Minister Narendra Modi government has started the expansion of railways which has reached up to Bilaspur but the Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu government is trying to take undue credit for it, he claimed.

Leader of the opposition and former chief minister Jai Ram Thakur said the people of Himachal Pradesh are fed up with the "disastrous" Congress government just like the Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi.

The Congress government in Himachal Pradesh is taking loans after loans, but development has come to a standstill, he alleged. PTI

Pak intruder held along LoC in Rajouri

RAJOURI/JAMMU, FEBRUARY 9

A 40-year-old resident of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) was apprehended near the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Sunday, officials said.

Abdul Rehman, a resident of Seri village of Kotli district, was under the influence of drugs when he was intercepted by the Indian Army shortly after he intruded into this side in Lam area of Nowshera sector, they said.

The officials said that no incriminating material was recovered from the possession of the individual, who was being questioned. PTI

Tunnel linking Navbahar to IGMC to reduce traffic congestion in

SHIMLA, FEBRUARY 9

A state-of-the-art tunnel linking Navbahar to the Indira Gandhi Medical College (IGMC) would reduce the traffic congestion and make the urban commute faster and smoother in Shimla, a spokesperson of the Himachal Pradesh government said here on Sunday.

The total estimated cost of the project is Rs 295 crore, he said in a statement issued here, adding that the project epitomised forward-thinking urban planning.

The Public Works Department (PWD) had spent Rs 1,238 crore by the end of September 2024 out of the total allocation of Rs 2,806 crore for this financial year and in the past two years, 1,376 km of roads and 1,192 km of cross-drainage systems have been built in Himachal Pradesh, he said.

Moreover, 1,741 kilometers of roads have been metalled and tarred to a superior standard, the statement said.

Road access has been extended to 61 census villages and 116 bridges have been constructed over challenging terrains, he added. PTI

Cong was ready for pre-poll alliance with AAP in Delhi but Kejriwal refused: Tariq Hameed Karra

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 9



Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee president Tariq Hameed Karra on Sunday said the Congress was ready for a pre-poll alliance with the AAP in the Delhi Assembly elections but its convenor Arvind Kejriwal refused.

"Congress was always ready to go in alliance but it is Arvind Kejriwal who refused to be part of the alliance. He was not ready for a joint election," he said here. Karra said the results of the Delhi Assembly polls were distressing but it was clear that any opposition alliance would be incomplete without the Congress.

"One thing that has emerged out of this whole process is that as far as INDIA bloc is concerned, I think it is a message to all the constituents that without the Congress, you cannot do anything," he said.

"In my opinion, the results are a message for the INDIA bloc that if we have to fight the menace of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), without the Congress it won't be possible. They must not get into petty issues. I hope that this message, which is very loud and clear, will reach the constituents of INDIA bloc," he added.

Karra said the Congress party has always been making sacrifices."Even in Jammu and Kashmir, we made a sacrifice. But if they still feel going solo is the option, then they should be ready for results like Delhi," he said.The Congress leader said the outcome of the Delhi polls was the defeat of Kejriwal. PTI

E-commerce platform HIMIRA boosts women self help groups earnings in HP

SHIMLA, FEBRUARY 9

The women self-help groups (SHGs) have successfully delivered over 1,050 online orders across the country, including Kerala, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan in almost a month since January 3, following the launch of the official e-commerce platform Himira, an official statement said.

With integration into e-commerce, products crafted by women of the SHGs are now automatically listed on platforms like Paytm and Mystore, making them accessible to buyers across the country, the statement issued here said.

"Through this digital platform, nearly 30,000 SHG women across the state have gained direct access to livelihood opportunities that were previously not accessible," Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said on Sunday. "The website features a diverse range of nearly 30 products, from handwoven Himachali textiles to pure and natural food items", he said.

Sukhu said that he also gifted Himira products to Union Ministers and other dignitaries.

"Women associated with SHGs are enthusiastic about the government's initiative to enhance market access through the e-commerce platform. SHGs across the state have welcomed this step wholeheartedly", he added.

For Jaswinder Kaur of Nalagarh in Solan district, joining the Sainath SHG became a life changer.

Along with financial support and Rs 60,000 loan for livestock and non farming activities, she ventured into producing cow dung products. Her monthly income has now increased from Rs 1000 to Rs 20,000. PTI

NEWSBRIEFS

Afghanistan seizes 731 kg of illicit drugs, arrests 25 smugglers

KABUL: Afghanistan's security forces have seized 731 kg of illicit drugs and arrested 25 drug smugglers in the eastern Nangarhar province over the past week, the country's Ministry of Interior Affairs said in a statement on Sunday. The drugs were confiscated during military operations conducted by security forces on the outskirts of Jalalabad city and in various districts of the province, the statement added. According to the statement, 3,499 stimulant tablets have also been discovered during the operations, Xinhua news agency reported. **IANS**

11 kg of heroin, over 4.6 million stimulant tablets seized in Myanmar

YANGON: Myanmar authorities have seized a drug trafficking gang along with 11 kg of heroin and over 4.6 million stimulant tablets in the central Mandalay region, the local media reported on Sunday. Acting on a tip-off, the anti-narcotics police conducted a search operation in Pyigyitagon township on February 1 and confiscated 11 kg of heroin, reports Xinhua news agency, quoting state-run daily The Mirror. A further investigation led to the discovery of over 4.6 million stimulant tables at a warehouse in the same township, the report said. The seized drugs, including the 11 kg heroin, over 4.6 million stimulant tables and other substances, were valued at over 7.3 billion kyats (about 3.47 million US dollars) on the black market, it said. **IANS**

South Korea: Four dead, six missing after fishing trawler sinks off southern coast

YEOSU (SOUTH KOREA): A fishing trawler with 14 crew members on board sank in waters off South Korea's southern coast early on Sunday, leaving four people dead and six missing, officials said, with rescue efforts underway. The 139-ton vessel, carrying eight South Koreans, three Vietnamese and three Indonesians, was reported missing at 1:41 a.m. in waters about 17 kilometres east of the island of Habaek, near Yeosu, located 316 km south of Seoul. Coast Guard vessels and other fishing boats have so far rescued eight crew members, but four South Koreans have died, including the vessel's 66-year-old captain, Yonhap news agency reported. **IANS**

Tears of joy as five Thai hostages return home after a year in Hamas captivity

BANGKOK: Thailand witnessed an emotional homecoming as five nationals, held captive by Hamas for more than a year, finally reunited with their families at Suvarnabhumi Airport on Sunday, local media reported. The five returnees -- Sathien Suwannakham from Nong Bua Lam Phu, Pongsak Thaenna from Buri Ram, Watchara Sriaoun from Udon Thani, Surasak Rumnao from Udon Thani, and Bannawat Saethao from Nan -- were welcomed with tearful embraces, marking the end of their harrowing ordeal, The Bangkok Post reported. Dressed in winter jackets, the men were visibly moved as they embraced their families. **IANS**

Israeli airstrikes target military facilities near Damascus

DAMASCUS, FEBRUARY 9



Israel carried out airstrikes on military sites in the countryside of Syrian capital Damascus, targeting facilities in the Deir Ali area, local media reported.

The attack struck a location near the capital, while the Israeli military claimed its aircraft had bombed a weapons depot belonging to Hamas in the same area. No casualties were immediately confirmed, Xinhua news agency reported quoting Sham FM.

Meanwhile, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, reported that Israeli airstrikes hit storage facilities linked to the First Division and Brigade 166 in Al-Kiswah, southern Syria.

The strikes triggered powerful explosions, setting off fires at the targeted sites, though the number of casualties and the extent of damage remains unclear.

The attack is part of an ongoing pattern of Israeli airstrikes on military sites in Syria, often targeting weapons depots and positions associated with Iran-backed groups and Palestinian factions.

> 'The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) will remain at the summit of Mount Hermon and in the buffer zone indefinitely'

Israeli officials have repeatedly stated their commitment to preventing arms transfers to Hezbollah and other militant groups operating within Syrian territory.

There was no immediate comment from Syrian authorities on the attack.

Earlier in January Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said that the country's military forces will remain in Syria for an "unlimited time."

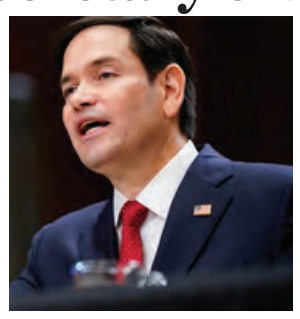
"The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) will remain at the summit of Mount Hermon and in the buffer zone indefinitely," Katz said during a visit to military posts established by Israel at the Mount Hermon summit.

He claimed that the move is aimed "to ensure the security of Israel's citizens."

"I came here to ensure that the IDF is well-prepared in defence and offence for prolonged deployment at the Mount Hermon posts," he said. **IANS**

Hamas must release all hostages now: US Secretary of State

WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 9



Reiterating US President Donald Trump's firm stance, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio called for the immediate release of all Israeli hostages taken by Hamas, following the return of three captives.

Taking to X, Rubio posted, "After 490 harrowing days in captivity, Eli, Or, and Ohad are finally home in Israel. President of the United States (POTUS) was clear -- Hamas must release all hostages now!"

The statement came after Hamas released three Israeli hostages on Saturday. The freed captives, kidnapped during the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on October 7, 2023, were identified as Ohad Ben Ami, 56, a dual Israeli-German citizen; Eli Sharabi, 52; and Or Levy, 34.

According to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the hostages were transferred from central Gaza to the IDF and the Israel Security Agency before crossing into Israel.

Earlier, three vehicles from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) arrived at the designated handover site in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza. The visibly frail and exhausted hostages stepped onto a platform to speak before being handed over by Hamas' military wing, Al-Qassam Brigades, to the ICRC.

Reports noted that Ben Ami's wife had also been kidnapped on the same day but was released after 54 days in captivity as part of a previous hostage deal.

This release marks the fifth hostage-prisoner swap under the first phase of a ceasefire agreement brokered by Egypt and Qatar with US support.

As part of the deal, Israel has also begun releasing 183 Palestinian prisoners from its jails. Abdullah al-Zaghari, head of the Palestinian Prisoners Club, confirmed that the released prisoners, transported by Red Cross buses, arrived in Ramallah. TV footage showed a large crowd gathering to welcome them.

The Hamas-affiliated Prisoners' Media Office stated that among the freed Palestinian prisoners were 18 serving life sentences, 54 with long-term sentences, and 111 from Gaza who were arrested after the October 7 attack.

The ongoing ceasefire agreement, which took effect on January 19, outlines a phased swap: Hamas is to release 33 Israeli hostages over 42 days, while Israel will free hundreds of Palestinian prisoners. **IANS**

North Korean leader says US causing 'conflicting structure,' vows to bolster nuclear forces

SEOUL, FEBRUARY 9



North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has accused the US of standing behind the world's disputes, reaffirming the country's policy to further develop its nuclear forces, the North's state media reported on Sunday.

Kim made the remarks during his visit to the Ministry of National Defence the previous day in celebration of the 77th anniversary of the founding of its armed forces, the Korean People's Army, Yonhap reported quoting the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

Delivering a speech to military and political commanding officers of the ministry, Kim referred to a series of new plans for bolstering "all deterrence" and reaffirmed the country's "unshakable policy of more highly developing the nuclear forces," KCNA said, without providing details of the plans.

The leader claimed that US nuclear strategic assets deployed on the Korean Peninsula, the US-led nuclear war simulation exercises and the US-Japan-South Korea military cooperation are "inviting military imbalance" on the peninsula and in Northeast Asia, causing "a new conflicting structure" and posing a grave challenge to North Korea.

North Korea "does not want unnecessary tension" in the region, Kim said, adding that, however, it will take "sustained countermeasures to ensure the regional military balance" to prevent the outbreak of a new war and ensure peace and security on the peninsula. He also accused the US of "standing unfailingly behind the world's big and small disputes and tragedies of bloodshed," stating that this proves the regime's line of seeking "an unlimited defence capability" is "most just."

Kim also blamed the US for the Russia-Ukraine war, expressing "serious concern" that the US and Western countries are prolonging the war with the "unrealisable dream to deal strategic setbacks to Russia," the KCNA said.

North Korea's army and people "will invariably support and encourage the just cause of the Russian army and people to defend their sovereignty, security and territorial integrity," Kim said, referring to the mutual defence treaty he signed with Russian President Vladimir Putin last year.

In a separate commentary, the KCNA also slammed joint South Korea-US military drills that have taken place this year, accusing them of heightening tensions. "Hostile and risky actions will only lead to undesired results" the KCNA said, without elaborating on what it meant by undesired results. **IANS**

African leaders call for immediate ceasefire in Congo

DAR ES SALAAM, FEBRUARY 9



African leaders called for an "immediate ceasefire" in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and reaffirmed their full support for seeking a lasting solution to the ongoing conflict.

A "historic summit," jointly convened by the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), two major regional blocs, was held on Saturday in the Tanzanian port city of Dar es Salaam to address the escalating crisis in eastern DRC, Xinhua news agency reported.

In a final communique, regional leaders called for an "immediate ceasefire" and the restoration of supply lines in the DRC, as the March 23 Movement (M23) has reportedly been advancing toward Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu province, after establishing its so-called administration in Goma, the capital of North Kivu province and a key regional hub.

Recognising the urgency of the situation, leaders attending the summit directed the EAC-SADC Chiefs of Defence Forces to meet within five days to devise technical measures for enforcing an immediate and unconditional ceasefire.

The leaders urged the reopening of traffic routes to restore humanitarian supply lines, particularly the road linking Goma and Bukavu, which has been cut off by the M23 rebellion's advances, and the Goma International Airport, which was severely vandalised during the hostilities.

Political and diplomatic engagement is the most sustainable solution to the conflict in eastern DRC, the communique stated, as regional leaders expressed support for resuming direct negotiations with all state and non-state parties, including the M23, under existing regional mediation frameworks. **IANS**

7.6-magnitude quake strikes Caribbean, tsunami warnings issued

WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 9



A powerful earthquake of magnitude 7.6 struck the Caribbean Sea, triggering tsunami warnings for multiple countries, US monitoring agencies reported.

According to the US Geological Survey (USGS), the quake struck at a shallow depth of 10 km (6.21 miles) on Saturday evening (local time), with its epicentre located about 130 miles (209 km) north of Honduras, near the Cayman Islands.

The US Tsunami Warning System initially issued a tsunami alert for the Caribbean Sea and areas north of Honduras. While no tsunami threat was reported for the US Atlantic or Gulf Coast, advisories were issued for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center stated that "hazardous tsunami waves" could affect coastal areas within 620 miles of the epicentre, including the Cayman Islands, Jamaica, Cuba, Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua, the Bahamas, Costa Rica, Belize, Haiti, Panama, and Guatemala. **IANS**

'Six killed in Israeli drone strike in Lebanon'

BEIRUT, FEBRUARY 9

Six people were killed and two others injured in an Israeli drone strike targeting the al-Shaara area near the town of Janta in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley.

Israeli warplanes were conducting intensive mid-altitude flights over southern Lebanon, while the Israeli military carried out a detonation operation in the village of Adaisseh, located in the eastern sector of the border region in southern Lebanon, Xinhua news agency reported quoting the state-run National News Agency (NNA).

As tensions rose, several municipalities in western and central southern Lebanon issued warnings to residents, journalists, and visitors about the presence of landmines left behind by Israeli forces, some of which had been turned into traps targeting civilians, according to the NNA.

Hours later, the Israeli military said its air force had struck a Hezbollah target in the Bekaa Valley. **IANS**

UAE condemns Netanyahu's remarks on Palestinian state in Saudi Arabia

ABU DHABI, FEBRUARY 9



The United Arab Emirates (UAE) strongly condemned remarks made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who suggested that a Palestinian state could be established on Saudi Arabian territory.

The UAE's official news agency, WAM, reported that the country had expressed its "strong condemnation and denunciation" of Netanyahu's "unacceptable and provocative" remarks, calling them "a blatant violation of international law and the United Nations Charter."

UAE Minister of State Khalifa Bin Shaheen Almarar reiterated his country's unwavering solidarity with Saudi Arabia, emphasising its commitment to Saudi Arabia's security, stability, and sovereignty, Xinhua news agency reported.

The minister also reaffirmed the UAE's firm opposition to any actions that undermine the rights of the Palestinian people or force their displacement. He called for an immediate cessation of settlement activities, warning that such actions jeopardise regional stability and hinder prospects for peace.

Almarar further urged the international community, including the United Nations and the UN Security Council, to take decisive action against illegal practices that violate international law. **IANS**

Egypt to host emergency Arab summit on Palestine on Feb 27

CAIRO, FEBRUARY 9



Egypt announced on Sunday that Cairo will host an emergency Arab summit on February 27 to address the latest developments concerning the Palestinian issue and the Gaza Strip, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The summit was decided to be held after Egypt's high-level consultations with Arab nations, including Palestine, which requested the summit, and coordination with Bahrain, the current chair of the Arab League (AL) summit and the AL Secretariat, according to the statement.

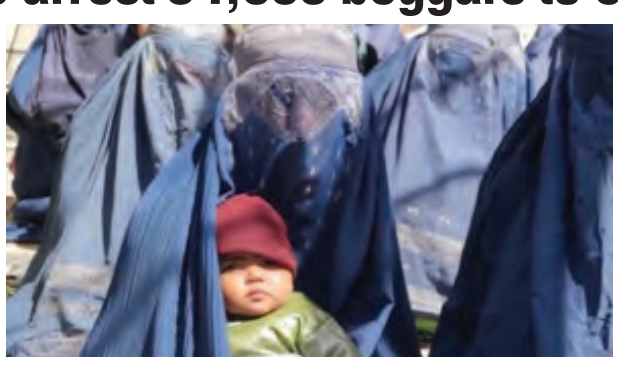
The announcement followed controversial remarks by US President Donald Trump suggesting the relocation of Palestinians from Gaza to neighbouring countries, including Egypt and Jordan. The proposal has been widely rejected both regionally and internationally, Xinhua news agency reported.

During a joint press conference in Washington with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday, Trump said that the US planned to assume control of Gaza and redevelop it after relocating its Palestinian residents.

Trump has previously floated similar proposals, which both Egypt and Jordan have explicitly rejected, reaffirming their opposition to any forced displacement of Palestinians. **IANS**

Afghan Police arrest 34,000 beggars to end begging culture: Official

KABUL, FEBRUARY 9



Police in Afghanistan have arrested more than 34,000 beggars from across the country over the past year to give an end to the culture of begging in society, a deputy on counter-narcotics of the Ministry of Interior Affairs said. "We have arrested 34,377 beggars over the past year," the National Radio and Television of Afghanistan (RTA) quoted Mullah Abdul Haq Akhund Hamkar on Sunday as saying.

Major parts of the collected beggars were fake and professional, the official told the state-owned media outlet, saying the police after investigation have allocated a monthly allowance to the needy one and referred the professional beggars to the concerned entities for further investigation, Xinhua news agency reported.

A commission was established to register beggars and categorise them as "professional", "destitute" or "organised", which involves taking their biometric data and fingerprints.

According to Taliban officials, nearly 60,000 beggars have already been "rounded up" in Kabul alone.

The death of detainees rounded up under anti-begging laws is factored into the wording of the Taliban's new law, in which Article 25 states: "If a beggar dies while in custody and has no relatives or if the family refuses to collect the body, the municipal officials will handle the burial." **IANS**

lifestyle



Kriti celebrates 1 Year of 'Teri Baaton Meina Aisa Uljha Jiya' with quirky video

Kriti Sanon played a robot, SIFRA for the first time in her career in "Teri Baaton Meina Aisa Uljha Jiya". As the movie has clocked one year of release, the diva used a special social media post to mark the occasion.

She uploaded a video on her Instagram handle, where we can see Kriti Sanon standing in silence when a girl brings her food. She comes with a plate full of nuts, bolts, a screwdriver, and a switch to the actress and says, "your lunch." Kriti Sanon also takes the plate from her and starts eating.

"#Throwback to the quirkiest character I've played- SIFRA! 1 Year of #TeriBaatonMeinaAisaUljhaJiya Miss you Aaru!! @shahidkapoor and the entire team.", Kriti Sanon captioned the post.

"Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya" revolves around a smart robotics engineer, Aryan Agnihotri (Shahid Kapoor). His aunt, Urmila Shukla (Dimple Kapadia) invites him to the USA and introduces him to the Super Intelligent Female Robot Automation alias SIFRA (Kriti Sanon), who looks and behaves exactly like a human. The story gains momentum as these two try to pass her off as a normal girl in their family.

Directed and penned by Amit Joshi and Aradhana Sah, the project marked their directorial debuts. Produced by Maddock Films in collaboration with Jio Studios, "Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya" also stars Dharmendra, Rakesh Bedi, Anubha Fatehpuria, Rajesh Kumar, Raashul Tandon, Grusha Kapoor, Brijbhushan Shukla, and Ashish Verma in key roles, along with others."Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya" reached the cinema halls on 9th February 2024. IANS



Kiara gives a peek into her 'Happy Sunday' reads

Bollywood actress Kiara Advani is all set to spend her Sundays reading books. Kiara took to her Instagram stories, where she shared a picture of two books – A diary which had " Note to self Today will be a good day" written on it and "Meditation" by Marcus Aurelius.

For the caption, she wrote: "Happy Sunday." On January 29, Kiara kickstarted the Bangalore schedule of Yash starrer 'Toxic' A source close to the production house revealed, "After completing the pivotal schedule in Goa, Kiara Advani and Yash have now arrived in Bangalore to begin a long and crucial leg of shooting for Toxic."

The source said that the schedule will delve into the film's intense narrative, and both "Yash and Kiara are thrilled to bring this unique story to life." The sources further claim that the Bangalore schedule of the drama will incorporate some critical scenes that explore important aspects of the storyline.

Prior to this, the makers shot a song sequence for the movie in Goa featuring Kiara Advani and Yash. Renowned choreographer Ganesh Acharya has helmed the track. "Toxic" will see the return of Yash in a dancing avatar after a very long time. Aside from Kiara Advani and Yash, "Toxic" will also see Lady Superstar Nayanthara, and Darrell D'Silva in pivotal roles, along with others. "Toxic" is expected to be set against the backdrop of a bygone era. The film will revolve around a powerful drug cartel in Goa that pulls the strings behind a facade of sun-soaked beaches and vibrant culture.

In addition to "Toxic", Kiara Advani has also been roped in as the leading lady in Ayan Mukerji's "War 2". With Hrithik Roshan, Jr NTR in the lead, the film will see the return of Kabir Dhaliwal (Hrithik Roshan) combating a new threat to the nation. IANS



Sonakshi shares glimpse of her wordplay with 'pasandida mard'

Sonakshi Sinha, known for her striking presence on social media, recently posted a video with her 'pasandida mard.' Taking to her Instagram stories, the 'Akira' actress took to her Instagram stories and reposted an adorable video of turtles and captioned it, "Me with pasandida mard." Sonakshi also tagged her husband and actor Zaheer Iqbal in the post. In the clip, two turtles can be seen playing with each other. Meanwhile, Sonakshi Sinha has been showcasing some gorgeous ethnic looks to inspire fashion enthusiasts. She had previously dropped her stunning photos from the Shaadi.

For her first ensemble, the 'Dabangg' actress opted for a beautiful blue sharara adorned with intricate gota-patti work, paired with matching jewelry to complete the look. For her second look, the actress was a vision to behold in a red suit, complemented by large jumkas and tille wali juttis. She also dazzled in a long blue velvet kurta, accessorized with exquisite kundan jewelry. For the caption, the 37-year-old actress wrote, "Shaadi lookbook! Mehendi...pheras... reception! Styled by my lovelies @sanamratansi and @jaferalimunshi (tap for deets)."

In addition to Sonakshi, Zaheer also posted a few pictures from the same wedding on his Instagram stories. The couple has been enjoying their time in Jaipur over the past few days. On the work front, the actress was last seen in the horror-comedy "Kakuda," alongside Riteish Deshmukh and Saqib Saleem. Reports suggest that she and Zaheer Iqbal will next be seen together in "Tu Hai Meri Kiran," after their previous film, "Double XXL," which didn't perform well at the box office. However, the project has reportedly faced legal challenges with Adlabs. According to reports, Adlabs claimed that "Tu Hai Meri Kiran" infringes on the copyright of films for which they hold the rights.

Additionally, Sonakshi will star in Nikita Roy and The Book of Darkness, a project directed by her brother Luv Sinha. The film also features Paresh Rawal and Suhail Nayyar. IANS



Huma ads a furry friend to her family: Meet Toosh Qureshi

Huma Qureshi has added another cute member to her family. The 'Tarla' actress used social media to introduce us to her furry friend, Toosh Qureshi. She recently shared a video on IG where we can see the dog running in the garden. The clip was accompanied by a still of Toosh Qureshi lying in the bed.

"Our hearts are full .. Meet Toosh Qureshi .. Our jaan", Huma Qureshi wrote as the caption. On the professional front, Huma Qureshi will next star in the highly-anticipated Kannada drama, "Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups". Touted to be a period gangster action film, the drama will see 'KGF' fame Yash as the lead. Additionally, Lady Superstar Nayanthara, Kiara Advani, Tara Sutaria, Sudev Nair, Darell D'Silva, and Akshay Oberoi are also a part of the movie's core cast.

KVN Productions and Monster Mind Creations have produced the movie that was initially scheduled to be released in the cinema halls on 10th April 2025. However, later the release was postponed due to production delays. The makers shared the teaser of "Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups" on Yash's birthday, giving fans a glimpse of his rugged and intense look. The film is expected to be set against the backdrop of a bygone era. The movie will revolve around a powerful drug cartel in Goa that pulls the strings behind a facade of sun-soaked beaches and vibrant culture. IANS

Here's what Ananya is gorging on guilt free in Chennai



Actress Ananya Panday is currently in Chennai and enjoying indulging in culinary treats there guilt-free. Ananya took to her Instagram stories, where she shared a picture of a plateful of idli with podi. The actress did not add any caption to the picture but added a geo-tag which read "Chennai, India."

The actress did not share any details about her visit to Chennai. Last week, Ananya excelled in her first-ever megaformer class, a high-intensity workout that is known for its combination of pilates, strength training, and cardio. For the unversed, a megaformer class is a high-intensity, low-impact workout that utilizes the Megaformer machine to tone and strengthen the body.

The megaformer is designed to enhance strength, flexibility, and endurance. Ananya reposted a photo shared by her fitness coach Namrata Purohit on her Instagram stories. The fitness coach posted a photo of the actress and wrote, "@ananyapanday's first megaformer class, and she found it very fun and easy.

Right, Ananya?." Resharing the post, the 'Student of the Year 2' actress wrote, "Mega tough." The workout targets the entire body with a focus on strength, flexibility, and endurance. The Megaformer class is popular among fitness enthusiasts for its intense and effective training regimen.

> Resharing the post, the 'Student of the Year 2' actress wrote, "Mega tough." The workout targets the entire body with a focus on strength, flexibility, and endurance.

The actress had also shared a sneak peek into her Trataka meditation, a practice that involves staring at a single point or object to achieve a state of deep meditation.

In the image, the actress was seen staring at a lit candle placed on a table in a corner of a dark room. The caption of the photo read, "Ananya Panday practicing #Trataka meditation. Focus, stillness, clarity." Ananya will next be starring in the romantic film "Chand Mera Dil," where she will share the screen with Lakshya Lalwani, who gained attention with his debut film "Kill." IANS

NEWSBRIEFS

OliveYou: Celebrating love at Olive Café & Bar

CHANDIGARH: This Valentine's, Olive Café & Bar brings you a week of good food, great company, and a touch of romance. With soft pink and white hues setting the mood, enjoy a special Valentine's menu by Chef Karl Whittaker. The menu has been unveiled and will be available till Valentine's Day-14th February. The menu features standout dishes like the Quattro Formaggi Soufflé, a light and airy blend of four cheeses, the Cupid's Lamb Pie, slow-cooked lamb shanks wrapped in a black pepper shortcrust, and the indulgent Lobster Tagliatelle in a rich bisque sauce. Pair your meal with one of our Love Potions. . BPE

Six of top 10 firms add ₹1.18 lakh cr in market value; HDFC Bank leads tally

MUMBAI: The combined market valuation of six of the top 10 most valuable companies saw a significant rise of Rs 1,18,151.75 crore last week as the rise was mainly driven by positive investor sentiment and steady buying interest in banking and telecom stocks. HDFC Bank and Bharti Airtel emerged as the biggest gainers, benefitting from strong business performance and growth prospects. In the last trading week, the Sensex climbed 354.23 points, or 0.45 per cent, while the Nifty added 77.8 points, or 0.33 per cent. The overall bullish trend in the market was supported by encouraging domestic economic indicators and global cues, helping key companies maintain their upward momentum. HDFC Bank saw its market capitalisation jump by Rs 32,639.98 crore at Rs 13,25,090.58 crore. Bharti Airtel also posted impressive gains by adding Rs 31,003.44 crore to take its total valuation to Rs 9,56,205.34 crore. IANS

India's pharma exports has potential to reach $350 billion by 2047: Report

NEW DELHI: India's pharmaceutical exports are projected to double from approximately $27 billion in 2023 to reach $65 billion by 2030, and can further grow to an estimated $350 billion by 2047, according to a new report. While India is the largest supplier of generic drugs globally, accounting for one in five generic drugs sold worldwide, the nation currently ranks 11th in terms of export value. By innovating and diversifying its export basket to include specialty generics, biosimilars, and innovative products, the report emphasizes how India can potentially secure a position among the top five nations in export value by 2047, according to the report by Bain & Company in collaboration with the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA), Indian Drugs Manufacturers Association (IDMA) and Pharmexcil. "India has long been the pharmacy of the world. Now we want to change the narrative to 'India as the healthcare custodian of the world'. The government is fully committed to achieving this goal by fostering innovation, boosting R&D, and ensuring seamless regulatory processes," said Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry. IANS

Nuclear plants to power railways: Ashwini Vaishnaw

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9



The growing power requirements of Indian Railways (IR) are likely to be met with clean and reliable nuclear power, for which the Power Ministry has been approached, said Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. The Railway Ministry is in touch with the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) and Ministry of Power (MoP) for allocation of nuclear power to meet part of its traction power requirement, he said in a recent reply in Rajya Sabha. He said Indian Railways has been exploring sourcing power from existing and upcoming nuclear power plants.

He said nuclear power being a clean and reliable source will help the railways, reducing the dependence on fossil fuels, and thereby lessening carbon emissions. On fare concession offered to passengers, the Minister said that Indian Railways gave a subsidy of Rs 56,993 crore on passenger tickets in 2022-23. The Minister said that this amounts to a concession of 46 per cent on average, to every person, travelling on railways.

In other words, if the cost of providing service is Rs 100, then the ticket costs Rs 54 only, according to the minister. "This subsidy is continuing for all passengers. Further, concessions beyond this subsidy amount are continuing for many categories, including Persons with disabilities (Divyangjans) and 11 categories of patients and eight categories of students," he said.

The Union Minister said the number of passengers availing the concession in different classes and different trains over various Zonal Railways varies from year to year. During the financial years 2020-21 to 2024-25 (up to December 2024), approximately 2,357.8 crore passengers of all ages (including senior citizens) travelled on Indian Railways, he said.

He also highlighted that for the ease of travel of the elderly and women, the railways earmarks a combined reservation quota of six to seven lower berths per coach in sleeper class, four to five lower berths per coach each in Air Conditioned 3 tier (3AC) and three to four lower berths per coach in Air Conditioned 2 tier (2AC) classes (depending on the number of coaches of that class in the train) for senior citizens, female passengers of 45 years of age and above and pregnant women. IANS

Piyush Goyal slams states seeking Central funds on basis of tax contribution

MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 9



Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has come out strongly against the demand of some states seeking allocation of central funds in proportion to the taxes that they contribute to the Central pool. Criticising this approach as "petty thinking and unfortunate," the minister highlighted the Prime Minister's view that if the country has to prosper, the eight states of the Northeast and eastern Indian states of Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand must develop as well.

"There are some states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana which say they should get back the amount of taxes they have paid. There can't be more petty thinking than this. There cannot also be anything more unfortunate than this," Goyal lamented. The MP from Mumbai North constituency was speaking at the 'Rashtriya Ekatmata Yatra 2025', an event here organised by the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad and the Students Experience in Inter-State Living initiative on Saturday.

In an oblique reference to the previous Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi government, the minister also said, "It is unfortunate that some leaders of the earlier government which was there for two-and-a-half years, used to calculate the tax paid by Mumbai and Maharashtra and demand that they should get back this amount in Central funds." However, there is no need to worry now as the present BJP-led government in Maharashtra is very sensitive towards Northeast India, Goyal said.

The Centre distributes funds to the states in accordance with the recommendations of the Finance Commission on the share of states in the total net proceeds of all taxes, including corporation tax, personal income tax, and central GST. The 15th Finance Commission (FC) recommended that 41 per cent of the central government's divisible tax pool be allocated to states for the period 2021-26. This is known as vertical devolution.

The 15th FC also recommended criteria for distributing the funds among states, known as horizontal devolution. IANS

Significant reduction in gold smuggling post July import duty cut: CBIC Chief



NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9

Gold smuggling has reduced significantly since July 2024 when the government slashed import duty on the precious metal to 6 per cent, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) Chairman Sanjay Kumar Agarwal said.

As per the latest available data, Customs and DRI officers seized 847 kg of gold worth Rs 544 crore at various airports in the April-June period of the current fiscal. In July, the government reduced customs duty on gold to 6 per cent from 15 per cent.

"After the rate of duty was reduced on gold in the last year's budget, there is a significant reduction in the smuggling of gold," Agarwal told PTI in an interview.

Although Agarwal did not reveal the quantum or value of gold seizures, he said authorities are keeping regular watch over the international passenger traffic, porous borders, and commercial cargoes coming into the country to cut the smuggling of narcotics through any route.

Smuggling is the secret movement of goods across national borders to avoid customs duties or import or export restrictions. It typically occurs when either customs duties are high enough to allow a smuggler to make a large profit on the clandestine goods or when there is a strong demand for prohibited goods, such as narcotics or weapons.

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), under CBIC, is the apex agency of the Indian customs in the field of anti-smuggling in India. During the 2023-24 financial year, DRI officers alone seized 1,319 kg of gold and smuggling through India's porous eastern borders, particularly with Bangladesh and Myanmar, has also emerged as a major concern for law enforcement agencies.

This is part of the 4,869.6 kg of gold seized by the CBIC, including by Customs officers, in 2023-24. 1,922 persons were arrested by the CBIC during the year.

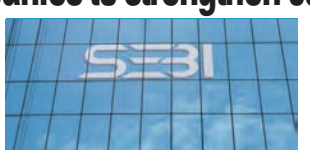
As per DRI's Smuggling in India Report released in December, India has become a major destination for illicit gold imports, with gold and silver predominantly originating from Gulf states such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia, where these metals are sourced and available at lower prices. Gold smuggling through air routes in India remains a prominent method used by smugglers. Middle East and South East Asian countries have traditionally been the major points of origin. IANS

SEBI proposes stricter rules for listed companies to strengthen corporate governance

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed new rules to improve corporate governance at listed companies. These proposals focus on revising the format of the Annual Secretarial Compliance Report (ASCR), setting eligibility criteria for appointing auditors, and introducing monetary limits for approvals of Related Party Transactions (RPTs). The SEBI aims to ensure that listed companies follow strict compliance and maintain transparency in their operations. In a consultation paper, the regulator has suggested changes to make the ASCR more detailed.

The new format will provide clearer confirmation of whether a company is following securities laws.



Additionally, the SEBI has proposed making ASCR a mandatory part of the annual report, which would enhance accountability.

For auditor appointments, it has suggested incorporating provisions from the Companies (Audit and Auditors) Rules, 2014, into the Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements (LODR) Regulations. This will ensure that statutory auditors have the necessary qualifications and experience suited to a company's size and complexity.

The SEBI has also proposed that audit committees should carefully evaluate the qualifications of signing partners before appointing them. IANS

BHEL gets Letter of Intent for renewable energy transmission project in Rajasthan

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9

Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd received a Letter of Intent from Rajasthan Part I Power Transmission Ltd to design and execute the high voltage direct current (HVDC) link along with associated AC substations to transmit renewable energy from Bhadla III (Rajasthan) and Fatehpur (UP), according to a regulatory filing on Sunday.

BHEL has received the LOI in consortium with Hitachi Energy India Ltd. for the project which will establish two HVDC LCC terminal stations of 6,000 MW at Bhadla (Rajasthan) and Fatehpur (UP), and an over 800 kV HVDC LCC



terminal station (4X1,500 MW) from Bhadla III and Fatehpur, along with associated AC substations.

The project has to be completed by 2030, the filing said. Rajasthan Part I Power Transmission is a special purpose vehicle of Adani Energy Solutions Ltd created to efficiently evacuate renewable energy generated in the Rajasthan Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) through an HVDC scheme. Government-owned Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) has reported a more than two-fold jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 135 crore for the October-December quarter of the current financial year. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 60.31 crore in the same quarter of FY 2023-24. BHEL's revenue shot up by 32.2 per cent to Rs 7,277 crore during the third quarter from Rs 5,504 in the same period of the previous year.

The company earnings before interest, depreciation, tax and amortisation (EBITDA) rose 40.5 per cent during the third quarter to Rs 304 crore from Rs 216 crore in the same quarter of the previous financial year. IANS

OYO reports ₹166 cr profit in Q3, revenue jumps 31 pc

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9

Travel tech unicorn OYO on Sunday reported a strong financial performance in the third quarter (Q3) of FY25, posting a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 166 crore. This is a significant rise compared to Rs 25 crore in the same period last year (Q3 FY24).

The company's revenue also saw growth of 31 per cent at Rs 1,695 crore in the October-December quarter (Q3), compared to Rs 1,296 crore a year ago period. According to reports, OYO's adjusted EBITDA for the quarter stood at Rs 249 crore, a 22 per cent increase from Rs 205 crore recorded in the same period last fiscal.

The company's gross booking value (GBV) surged to Rs 3,341 crore with a 33 per cent growth from Rs 2,510 crore in Q3 FY24. However, these financial figures do not include the performance of G6 Hospitality, as its acquisition became effective only in the third week of December.

For the first nine months of FY25, OYO reported a cumulative profit after tax of Rs 457 crore, a sharp improvement from a loss of Rs 111 crore in the corresponding period last year. The company's growth was primarily fueled by strong performance in its key markets of India and the US. Additionally, emerging markets in Southeast Asia and the Middle East played a crucial role in driving the company's expansion.

OYO has been actively pursuing strategic initiatives to strengthen its position in the market. The company has focused on the premiumisation of its hotel portfolio in India and has also expanded globally through acquisitions. IANS

India's semiconductor consumption market to grow at a 13 pc CAGR through 2030

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9



Driven by the government's production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, India's semiconductor consumption market which is valued at $52 billion in 2024-25 is expected to grow at a robust CAGR of 13 per cent through 2030.

Sectors like automotive and industrial electronics present significant value-addition opportunities. Mobile handsets, IT, and industrial applications, which together contribute nearly 70 per cent of the revenue, remain the primary growth drivers, according to Dr V Veerappan, Chairman of the Indian Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA).

India's semiconductor market is projected to grow to $103.4 billion by 2030, powering the $400+ billion electronics market.

The government's targeted incentives for FABs and OSATs, increased R&D investments, and collaborative industry initiatives are key to propelling India's semiconductor sector forward, with significant projects Investment commitment of over $21 billion by IESA member companies in last one year, according to Ashok Chandak, President, IESA.

Focusing on local semiconductor design and manufacturing while reducing import dependency is crucial to strengthening India's position in the global electronics ecosystem and retaining economic value in the country.

A skilled workforce is the backbone of India's semiconductor aspirations. By investing in education and hands-on training, we can equip the youth to lead the sector's transformation. IANS

Meta likely to lay off thousands of employees, says leaked memo

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9

Tech giant Meta is expected to lay off around 3,000 employees, which is about 5 per cent of its total workforce, as per a leaked internal memo, reports said on Sunday. According to the report, the memo, posted by Janelle Gale, Meta's Vice President of Human Resources, was shared on the company's internal Workplace forum. The memo states that affected employees will receive an email on Monday morning informing them about their job status. For some international employees, the layoff process will begin on Sunday at 2.30 a.m. IST. In the US, employees will be notified at 6.30 p.m. IST on Monday.

Within an hour of receiving the email, they will lose access to company systems. The email will also provide details about severance packages. Gale acknowledged the difficulty of the situation, especially for teams losing a manager or colleague. She mentioned that Meta offices will remain open, but employees who prefer to work remotely on Monday can do so. Since Meta follows a hybrid work model, requiring employees to be in the office three days a week, working from home on Monday will still count as an in-person workday.



The company has not disclosed the names of the employees being laid off. Some of these roles may be refilled in the future, but there is no set timeline. Employees whose managers are laid off will be assigned new reporting heads. Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg had previously hinted at job cuts, stating that the company was raising performance standards.

Typically, Meta phases out low performers over a year, but this time, the layoffs are happening on a much larger scale based on recent performance reviews. Meanwhile, Amazon recently laid off dozens of employees, while Salesforce cut about 1,000 jobs earlier this year. The trend of job cuts in the tech industry continues as companies focus on efficiency and cost-cutting. IANS

SPORTS

TEMBA BAVUMA

"IN THE WORLD CUP, YOU HAVE TIME TO TAKE STOCK AND STEP UP. BUT IN THE CHAMPIONS TROPHY YOU CAN'T DO THAT BUT WE ARE HOPEFUL OF GOING ONE STEP FURTHER IN THE TOURNAMENT."

Jadeja spins web as India restrict England to 304 in 2nd ODI

CUTTACK, FEBRUARY 9





Left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja continued his stranglehold over English batters with brilliant figures of 3 for 35 as India bowled out the visitors for a sub-par score of 304 in the second ODI here on Sunday.

On a good batting surface, Jadeja's crucial breakthroughs came against the run of play as he dismissed an aggressive Ben Duckett (65 off 56 balls) and a well-set Joe Root (69 off 72 balls), preventing England from building on their strong start.

Electing to bat, England laid a solid foundation with contributions from Duckett, Root, and skipper Jos Buttler (34 off 35 balls).

At 200/3 in 35 overs, England seemed on course for a 330-plus total, but Jadeja's disciplined bowling stifled their momentum, denying them the extra 15-20 runs.

England would have struggled to reach 300 if not for Liam Livingstone's brisk 41 off 32 balls (2x4, 2x6) and Adil Rashid's explosive five-ball 14, which included three consecutive boundaries off Mohammed Shami.

However, three run-outs in the final couple of overs saw them bowled out with a delivery to spare.

This is in fact the lowest total at Barabati Stadium since 2011 as 350-plus has been the average first innings score since then.

Jadeja's tactical awareness first undid Duckett, tempting him with a widish delivery out of his hitting arc which the southpaw miscued straight to mid-on.

Jadeja then removed Root for the fifth time in ODIs, slowing it down and tossing it up, only for Root to loft it straight to Kohli at deep extra cover.

Jadeja capped off his spell with a final-ball dismissal of Jamie Overton, who tried to create room but ended up skying it to Shubman Gill at cover.

It was a third catch for Gill who was simply phenomenal on the field on a day India made some poor judgments, burning two reviews, both against Root off mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy, who had figures of 1/54 on ODI debut.

Harshit Rana (1/62 in 9 overs) proved expensive, conceding 14 runs in his two overs as Duckett capitalised on his pace, finding gaps with ease.

Duckett was in sublime touch, flicking anything on his pads and threading the off-side field with finesse. The small boundaries aided his fluency as he raced to a 36-ball fifty. Salt joined the charge, launching the first six of the innings, dispatching Hardik's slower ball over long-on.

England's raced to 75 for no loss in 10 overs without taking undue risks.

From 81 for no loss, England were suddenly 102/2, with Root and Harry Brook at the crease, it was India's perfect opportunity to seize control. Root and Brook steadied England's innings. They rotated strike well, blending control with intent, and kept the scoreboard moving at six runs per over. **PTI**

After India, New Zealand is one of strongest teams in Champions Trophy: R Ashwin

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9



Spin great R Ashwin has called India and New Zealand the strongest sides heading into the Champions Trophy but warned teams against taking Australia lightly despite the loss of key players to injuries as they "bring their A-game" into marquee tournaments.

The ICC event starts in Pakistan on February 19 with India playing all their matches in Dubai under a hybrid model agreement.

"India has the home advantage in Dubai, and it almost like every other team is playing an away match against India. This is a problem for the other teams, for sure," Ashwin said on his Youtube channel.

With the long-forgotten tri-series making a return after a gap of many years, Ashwin wondered if India should also have played in a triangular tournament instead of a bilateral series against England for better preparation before the Champions Trophy.

"Is this preparation with England enough for the Indian team ahead of CT in Dubai? Should we have played a tri-series too? Pakistan, New Zealand and South Africa are playing in Pakistan conditions, which would help them in the CT.

"India only played against England in India, and moreover, we don't have a lot of pleasant memories of playing T20s in Dubai. The toss becomes really crucial in Dubai. I think winning the toss becomes crucial." Ashwin said New Zealand, despite the absence of the long-serving pace duo of Trent Boult and Tim Southee, who have quit playing the 50-over format, will pose a challenge to India.

"After India, New Zealand is one of the strongest teams in the Champions Trophy. Since the likes of Southee and Boult are not playing, there is a question mark about their bowling attack. Who will accompany Matt Henry? Will it be Will O-Rourke, who has the potential to be a runaway champion of next generation. Will it be Ben Sears?

"They have an experienced spin attack with Michael Bracewell and Glenn Phillips. Mitchell Santner is the captain, how is he planning to marshall his resources. New Zealand is definitely a strong team. They are one of the challengers to India."

As far as Australia are concerned, Ashwin observed that they transform into a formidable outfit when the stakes are high in ICC events.

"Steven Smith as captain is a marriage made in heaven. Smith is going to captain the team in the Champions Trophy. Will Smith, Head, Maxwell and Labuschagne pull through the team to the semis. I always believe that Australia is a champion team that always brings its A-game in marquee tournaments.

"Considering Australia have a few issues in their bowling department, a lot will depend on Smith's form and captaincy." Skipper Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood were on Thursday ruled out of the Champions Trophy due to injuries.

They are also without Mitchell Marsh, who is grappling with a back injury and was ruled out of the tournament on January 31, and Marcus Stoinis, who announced on Thursday that he would be retiring from ODI cricket, removing himself from the squad.

Ashwin also expressed his excitement at the return of tri-series tournaments after a gap of many years.

"Another moment of happiness is the return of the tri-series. Yeah, there are bilateral series happening, including the India-England one. But it feels like England isn't playing serious enough cricket.

"In the recent series against Pakistan, England's template worked, and the absolutely trampled them. Brooke and Duckett scored heavily.

"I don't think the Champions Trophy in Pakistan will have such pitches. It will be far from easy for bowlers, and probably, England's firepower would be back to shooting blanks in the tournament.

The great off-spinner, who announced his retirement from international cricket during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia, added, "90s kids would definitely understand this fascination for tri-series.

"Now, South Africa, New Zealand, and Pakistan have decided to reignite the interest in the tri-series and organise a tournament. The revival of tri-series tournaments would breathe life into the ODI format that is gradually getting overlooked. **PTI**

Bosch replaces Nortje in SA's Champions Trophy squad



JOHANNESBURG, FEBRUARY 9

South Africa on Sunday named relatively newcomer Corbin Bosch as a replacement for injured fast bowler Anrich Nortje for the Champions Trophy later this month. Nortje was ruled out of the marquee ICC event with a recurring back injury last month.

Bosch, 30, who made his international debut in December last year, has played just one ODI, scoring an unbeaten 40 and taking a wicket with his right-arm pace bowling.

"Along with Bosch, South Africa have also added fast bowler Kwena Maphaka in the squad as a travelling reserve. The two fast bowlers along with batter Tony de Zorzi will travel to Pakistan on Sunday to join the squad for the remainder of their ODI (tri-) series," the ICC said in a release. Last month, Cricket South Africa (CSA) had said Nortje would not be in line to recover for the Champions Trophy, commencing in Pakistan and Dubai on February 19.

Nortje had also missed out on the 2023 Cricket World Cup in India due to a stress fracture in his back. **PTI**

Format makes Champions Trophy more challenging than World Cup: Bavuma

LAHORE, FEBRUARY 9



South African captain Temba Bavuma on Sunday termed the ICC Champions Trophy a bigger challenge than the 50-over World Cup because lesser number of matches make it tough for teams to make a comeback.

The marquee event is scheduled to start across Pakistan and Dubai from February 19, and South Africa will open their campaign against Afghanistan at Karachi on February 21.

"In the World Cup, you have time to take stock and step up. But in the Champions Trophy you can't do that but we are hopeful of going one step further in the tournament," Bavuma told a media conference here.

"Obviously, we have our sights on where we want to be in the Champions Trophy this time but the format makes it more challenging for teams when you look at the 50-over World Cup," he added.

South Africa, the losing finalists of the T20 World Cup 2024, and the finalists of the upcoming World Test Championship, will face off New Zealand on Monday with a depleted squad, and at least five-six players are expected to debut.

Many of the players named in the squad for the Champions Trophy and tri-series are yet to join the side because they were part of the just-concluded SA20.

Bavuma said it will be a challenge for the new players and team to play in foreign conditions but he noted that they play a lot of cricket in different conditions.

"It is a lovely opportunity for a couple of guys who have been doing well in domestic cricket and in T20 leagues to make a statement on what value they can add to the team," he said.

"The tri-series will give us a chance to acclimatise to playing in Pakistan and get knowledge to share it with a wider group and it is also an opportunity for young players to keep on playing in future," he said.

Bavuma hoped that spinners Keshav Maharaj and Tabraiz Shamsi would play an important role in the Champions Trophy. **PTI**

Man City given scare by third-tier Leyton Orient in FA Cup

LONDON, FEBRUARY 9



Ahead of a Champions League playoff against Real Madrid, Manchester City survived a scare at third-tier Leyton Orient to advance to the fifth round of the FA Cup.

City hosts Madrid on Tuesday in the first of a two-legged playoff. And while Pep Guardiola's team eventually fought back to win 2-1 against Orient on Saturday, it will likely need a much-improved performance to overcome Champions League holder Madrid.

Orient threatened to pull off a famous upset when it led 1-0 at halftime against Guardiola's four-time defending Premier League champion.

It took goals from substitutes Abdukodir Khusanov and Kevin De Bruyne to secure victory for City at Brisbane Road.

"It was impossible to control," Guardiola said. "We played with character, and we are in the next round and it's always nice."

Orient went ahead in spectacular fashion when Jamie Donley's shot from just past the halfway line hit the bar and rebounded off the back of City goalkeeper Stefan Ortega in the 16th minute.

It was officially credited as an own-goal, but Donley took the congratulations as he celebrated wildly in front of the home fans. He was also rewarded with the player-of-the-match award.

But the goal wasn't enough to hold off City's fightback.

Rico Lewis' effort deflected off Khusanov in the 56th to level the match and De Bruyne flicked a shot past Josh Keeley in the 79th to seal victory.

It wasn't all good news for Guardiola, however, with $61.8 million midfielder Nico Gonzalez injured and substituted after 22 minutes of his debut.

Already in the final of the English League Cup, Newcastle advanced in the FA Cup with a 3-2 win against Birmingham. **AP**

Mbappé and Álvarez score as Madrid derby ends in 1-1 draw

MADRID, FEBRUARY 9





Kylian Mbappé scored in his first capital derby against Atletico Madrid as Real Madrid fought back for a 1-1 draw and kept its slim lead of the Spanish league on Saturday.

Next up for Mbappé and Madrid is a trip to Manchester City on Tuesday for the first leg of their Champions League knockout round playoff.

Julián Álvarez put Atletico ahead from the penalty spot in the 35th minute. Mbappé equalized in the 50th for the hosts, which stayed one point ahead of Atletico in the standings.

Jude Bellingham hit the crossbar with a header as Madrid searched for a second goal. Atletico goalkeeper Jan Olbak made saves to deny Rodrygo, Vinícius Júnior and Mbappé to split the points at the Santiago Bernabeu.

"We knew how to hang in there and had our chances," Álvarez said. "We are in the fight and will stay in it right to the end." Atletico, which spent big last summer to acquire Álvarez and other reinforcements, is trying to add to league titles in 2021 and 2014 under coach Diego Simeone.

Barcelona, in third place, is five points behind Madrid before visiting Sevilla on Sunday. Mbappé had missed the first Atletico derby of the season, a 1-1 draw in September, because of injury.

A spate of injuries left Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti relying on a makeshift backline of Lucas Vázquez, regular midfielder Aurélien Tchouaméni, youth player Raul Asencio, and Fran García.

A reckless stretch of his boot by Tchouaméni that ended up tripping Samuel Lino was spotted by a video review referee and sent Álvarez to the penalty spot.

The former Man City striker gently stroked his penalty down the middle as Thibaut Courtois dived to his left.

Antoine Griezmann showed again his great value to Atletico with precision passing even under duress. The French midfielder twice placed perfectly weighted balls that left Álvarez and Lino in good position to get off shots inside the area, but clumsy touches by both ruined the opportunities.

"It is a draw that leaves both teams thinking they could have gotten a better result," Simeone said. "We had some situations that we lacked the clarity we needed to resolve better."

Rodrygo sparked the Madrid comeback just after halftime when he dribbled past Javi Galan and Lino on the right side and slipped a ball to Bellingham in the heart of the box. Bellingham's scuffed shot hit a defender and fell to Mbappé to rifle home for his first goal against Atletico.

Mbappé had missed the first Atletico derby of the season, a 1-1 draw in September, because of injury.

Madrid poured forward searching for a second goal with Atletico rattled. Vinícius dribbled down the left side and scooped the ball for Bellingham, who smashed a header off the woodwork.

Simeone changed both his full backs with Reinildo and Nahuel Molina in the 63rd, but Oblak still had to come to Atletico's rescue on three occasions.

"It is going to be a tightly contested league until the very end," Ancelotti said. Ancelotti hinted that he will make changes to his starting 11 for City, most likely in midfield since he has few options in defense other than including Ferland Mendy, and will find it hard to touch his attack. That means that Dani Ceballos could likely make way for Eduardo Camavinga or Luka Modric.

Former Madrid defender Marcelo was honored before kickoff after he announced his retirement this week. **AP**

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