

**NATIONAL : PG 3****Hindi is mask, Sanskrit the face, says Stalin****SPORTS: PG 6****With semifinal berth at stake, Australia's pedigree meets...****ENTERTAINMENT: PG 8****Alia Bhatt offers peek into 'favorite kind of chaos' on..**

Nitish Kumar to be NDA's face in Bihar: JD(U)

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES: Ahead of PM Narendra Modi's visit to Bihar on November 13, BJP's ally JD(U) has again reiterated that Bihar Assembly polls in 2025 will be fought under the leadership of CM Nitish Kumar. JD(U) national working president Sanjay Jha said Nitish will be the face of NDA in Bihar. "There is no doubt that Bihar assembly polls will be fought under the leadership of Nitish Kumar. He will be the face of NDA in Bihar. We have decided this in the recent NDA meet-



ing that was held in Patna. We have a target to win 220 seats," Jha added.

Musk's Starlink has to comply with all rules for licence in India: Scindia

► Scindia says the satellite internet services provider is in process of completing all requirements and will get licence once they complete the process

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES: Elon Musk-owned Starlink will have to comply with all norms to get licence for services in India, Union telecom minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Tuesday. The minister said the satellite internet services provider is in process of completing all the requirements and will get licence once they complete the process. "They (Starlink) have to comply with all rules to get the licence. You have to look at it from security perspective as well. They are in process of doing it. Once all requirements are met they will get the licence," Scindia told reporters. He was replying to a



question on status of licence for Starlink. At present, the government has issued licence to Bharti Group-backed OneWeb and Jio-SES joint venture, Jio Satellite Communications.

Congress fighting to save Constitution: Rahul Gandhi

MUMBAI/AGENCIES: A day after the BJP asked the Election Commission (EC) to censure Rahul Gandhi from handing out lies during campaigning, the Congress leader on Tuesday intensified his attack claiming the saffron party and its parent organisation RSS were working round-the-clock to finish off the Constitution.

"The BJP, RSS and (Prime Minister) Narendra Modi continuously attack and attempt to dismantle the Constitution given by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, while Congress fights to protect it," Gandhi said speaking at a rally at Gondia in eastern Maharashtra ahead of the Vidhan Sabha elections in the state. "The Constitution of the country embodies values that have stood for thousands of years, representing the thoughts of Lord Buddha, Sant Basaveshwara, Mahatma Phule, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr Ambedkar and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. This Constitution represents equality, love and respect for all religions. But Narendra Modi criticizes after a red-coloured constitution is shown," the Congress leader added. Mr. Gandhi said that he can tell with 'guarantee' that Mr. Modi



has not read the Constitution, otherwise he would have respected what is written in it. Today there is democracy in India because of the Constitution written by Dr. Ambedkar, he said.

"Mr. Modi often claims he belongs to the OBC community, yet continuously disrespects it. Despite OBCs constituting 50 percent of the population, the Modi government allocates only five percent of funds to them, which is a true insult to the community. This is why Congress is determined to conduct a caste-based census and remove the 50 percent cap on reservations," Mr. Gandhi stated.

Trial in RG Kar rape-murder case starts in Kolkata court

KOLKATA/AGENCIES: The trial in the rape and murder case of a doctor, whose body was found inside the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital here, commenced in a Kolkata court on Monday, three months after the incident.

The proceedings were held in-camera at the court of Additional District and Sessions Judge Anirban Das. The father of the victim was also present as a witness, police sources said.

Prime accused Sanjay Roy was brought to the court in the afternoon and the proceedings were held behind closed door. The prime accused, while coming out of the court, claimed that he had been framed by the administration and was not guilty. "They did not let me speak even today. I've done nothing and have been framed," Roy told reporters while being whisked



away. On November 4, when charges were framed against him, he claimed that he is innocent.

Roy has been booked under Section 64 of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (rape), Section 66 (punishment for causing death or resulting in a persistent vegetative state) and 103 (punishment for murder).

Roy was arrested by the Kolkata police on August 10, a day after the on-duty woman doctor's body was found inside the seminar room of the RG Kar hospital. Later, the CBI took up the investigation into the case on a Calcutta High Court order.

Uddhav claims his bags checked by poll authorities in Latur

► This is the second consecutive day that the former chief minister's party posted a video on a social media platform about his bags being checked by the poll authorities

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR/AGENCIES:

Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday claimed his bags were inspected by election authorities after he arrived in Latur district of Maharashtra to campaign for the November 20 assembly polls. This is the second consecutive day that the former chief minister's party posted a video on a social media platform about his bags being checked by the poll authorities. On Monday, he said that after his helicopter landed at Wani in Yavatmal district, his bag was checked by the authorities. On Tuesday, he said a similar exercise was carried out by the

election officials after his chopper arrived at Ausa in Latur ahead of his scheduled rally there. The Shiv Sena (UBT) posted a video of poll authorities' act on X. In the video, Thackeray is heard asking the election officials their names and their posting while they are checking his bags. During his interaction with them, the Sena (UBT) chief is heard asking them, "How many people have you searched so far?" On their response that he is the first one, he says, "I am the first customer then." Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Maharashtra during the day, he said, "Modi is coming today and I will send you to Solapur



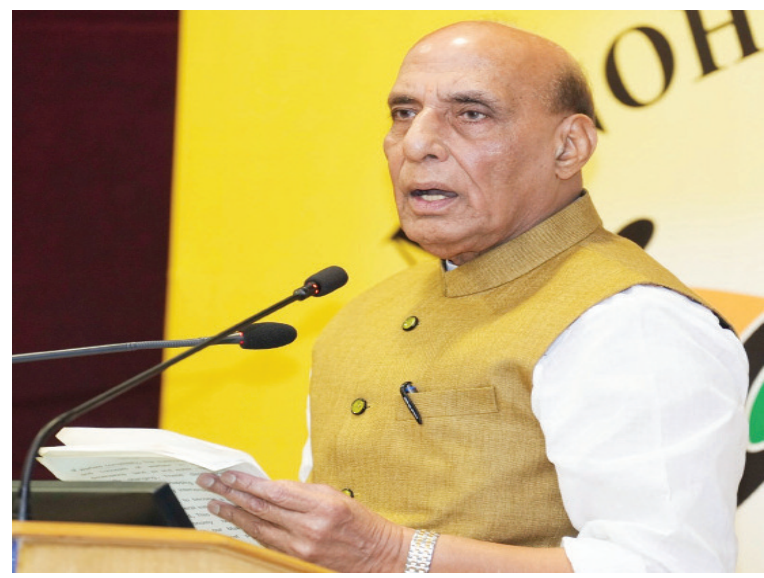
airport, which is shut (in view of the visit). Narendra Modi should also be subjected to this kind of checking," Thackeray later said, "I am not angry with you, but the

same law should be applied to Narendra Modi when he is coming for election campaign... We should live and die for Maharashtra and not do the jobs for other states."

India embracing 'adaptive defence' to counter evolving threats : Defence Minister Rajnath Singh

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said the Central Government was committed to having an 'adaptive' approach to counter real-time security challenges that the country faced. Being 'adaptive' in terms of the defence of the nation was not merely a strategic choice but a necessity in today's fast-paced world, the minister said. An 'adaptive' approach in defence meant a nation's military and defence mechanisms were continuously evolving to counter emerging threats, he said, adding that it was not merely responding to what had happened but anticipating what could and preparing for it. The Defence Minister was speaking at the inaugural event of the Delhi Defence Dialogue (DDD), hosted by the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA). Rajnath said, "We should be prepared for all future contingencies. It is more than

just protecting our borders; it is about securing our future." The traditional notions of war are being reshaped by emerging technologies and evolving strategic partnerships, with new perspectives, doctrines, and concepts of operations emerging, he added. Rajnath cited how drones and swarm technologies were bringing fundamental changes in the ways and means of warfare. Keeping with the changing nature of threats and challenges, he termed the present age of warfare as an age of 'grey zone and hybrid warfare', where traditional ways of defending were being challenged. Continuous adaptation was the best strategy to deal with the emerging challenges, he said. This includes creating situational awareness, having flexibility at strategic and tactical levels, and being resilient and agile. All the while integrating futuristic technologies. The Union Government was committed to keeping India among the leading coun-



tries, working on emerging technologies in cyberspace and artificial intelligence (AI), the minister said. Rajnath Singh said it was the Modi-led government's unwavering resolve to continuously 'adapt' to counter the challenges

posed by the fast-changing world in today's times. The MP-IDSA, a think tank run by the Ministry of Defence, is hosting the DDD on the theme 'Adaptive Defence: Navigating the Changing Landscape of Modern Warfare'.

Taliban appoints its first acting consul in Mumbai

CHAKRADHARPUR/AGENCIES: The Taliban regime in Afghanistan has appointed an India-based Afghan national, Ikramuddin Kamil, as its new acting consul in Mumbai. He is the first appointee of the Taliban regime in India. The Indian side is yet to make an official comment on the development. Sources, however, said, "A young Afghan student, who the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is familiar with, has agreed to function as a diplomat in the Afghan Consulate." On his affiliation or status, sources said "for us, he is an Afghan national working for Afghans in India". India does not officially recognise the Taliban regime that took over following the collapse of the Ashraf Ghani government in August 2021. Commenting on the issue of recognition, sources

said, "There is a set process for recognition of any government and India will continue to work with the international community on this issue." Kamil has studied in India for seven years while completing his doctorate from South Asia University on a scholarship from the MEA. Over the past three years, Afghan diplomats manning the Afghan Embassy and Consulates in India have sought refuge or asylum in different Western countries and have left India. The development comes just a week after an Indian delegation led by JP Singh, a senior diplomat, visited Kabul to discuss relations with the Taliban-led regime, including the use of Chabahar port in Iran for conducting trade. The first information on the matter came when Sher Mohammad Abbas



Stanikzai, the Taliban's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs, on Monday night, posted on X a picture of Kamil and mentioned his appointment to the consulate in Mumbai. On Tuesday afternoon, the Taliban-controlled Bakhtar News Agency (BNA) said

Kamil's appointment was done as "acting consul of the Islamic Emirate in Mumbai". Kamil holds a PhD degree in international law and previously served as deputy director in the Department of Security Cooperation and Border Affairs in the foreign ministry.

Rahul Gandhi misleading people in Maharashtra using Telangana funds

HYDERABAD/AGENCIES: BRS party working president KTR today accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of deceiving the people of Maharashtra with unfulfilled promises, claiming that Telangana's State government funds, totalling Rs 300 crore, are being misused to spread misleading information in Maharashtra. KTR said these funds, which were supposed to be allocated for local development projects and promises

made to the people of Telangana, are being diverted for campaign purposes through advertisements. He argued that the government was using hundreds of crores to advertise the implementation of promises that have not been fulfilled in Telangana. KTR asserted that Rahul Gandhi is falsely claiming accomplishments in Telangana, stating that the Congress leader has implemented programs and fulfilled promises that were,

in reality, left unaddressed. For instance, KTR highlighted that Rahul Gandhi has been telling the people of Maharashtra that Congress delivered a Rs 2,500 financial assistance to women, a claim that he stated is untrue. KTR also pointed out that Congress has failed to meet many of the promises it made to the people of Telangana, including the long-promised farmer loan waiver, which remains incomplete despite public asser-

tions to the contrary. KTR urged the people of Maharashtra to critically examine these claims and enquire Telangana residents on the actual state of Congress's guarantees. KTR called on Maharashtra voters to support regional parties rather than national parties like Congress and BJP, emphasizing that regional parties have been more effective in countering BJP in States like Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, while Congress, he argued, has proven unable to do so. KTR has alleged that funds from corrupt practices in Telangana are being funnelled into Maharashtra's elections, calling for strict oversight from the Election Commission.

Bengaluru Hosts Bharat Bharti's National Executive Meeting; Mohammad Irfan Ahmed Honored with 'Bharati Bhushan' Award

REYASAT ALI SAMEER Senior Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Bharat Bharti, a nationalist organization committed to making India a global leader for the past 20 years, successfully organized its three-day National Executive Committee meeting in Bengaluru. The meeting was attended by the organization's national office bearers, state presidents, in-charges from various states, and distinguished guests.

Prestigious Guests in Attendance

The closing ceremony featured the prestigious Bharati Bhushan Awards 2025, recognizing individuals who have made outstanding contributions in various fields across India. Among the awardees, Mohammad Irfan Ahmed was especially honored with the Bharati Bhushan award for his exceptional work for minorities, particularly the



Pasmanda Muslim community. Several eminent personalities graced the occasion, including: Former Karnataka High Court Judge Justice Krishna Bhatt

Former Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka Dr. C.N. Ashwathnarayan

Senior administrative officials, university professors, industrialists, and representatives of social organizations

The event was presided over by Bharat Bharti's Executive President Vinay Patrale, while Trust President Subhash Dhawan,

Organization Minister Jagannath Kunjbihari Swain, and Rudra Narayan Tiwari conducted the proceedings. Mohammad Irfan Ahmed Honored with Bharati Bhushan

Mohammad Irfan Ahmed, a former member of Haj Committee of India, Central Waqf Council (Govt. of India), and Railway Board, is currently serving as the National Chief Patron of the Pasmanda Muslim Society Development Committee Federation.

He was honored for his dedicated efforts toward the welfare of minorities, especially the Pasmanda Muslim

community across the country. The award was presented to him by Justice Krishna Bhatt (Retd.) of the Karnataka High Court.

Honored Personalities Several distinguished individuals from various fields were also recognized at the event, including:

Sanjay Bhai Patel (All India Gujarati Society, Bhopal)

Mahesh Chhabria (President, World Sindhi Society)

Bhagat Ram Chhabra (Bharatiya Sindhu Sabha)

Somasekharan Nair (President, Global Nair Society)

Uttam Prakash Aggarwal (President, National Aggarwal Development Trust)

Ram Subramaniam (President, Saurashtra Tamil Sangam, Madurai)

Ravindra Patil (Former Deputy Mayor, Surat)

Dr. Jagdish Bhai Patel (Former Mayor, Surat)

Other esteemed dignitaries Bharati's Contribution to Nation-Building

During the event, Irfan Ahmed, who is also the in-charge of Bharat Bharti for Haryana, Chandigarh, Punjab, and Jammu & Kashmir, highlighted the organization's role in national development:

"Bharat Bharti is uniting people from various states and linguistic backgrounds to build 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' (One India, Great India). Our goal is to make India a global leader, and we are committed to this mission."

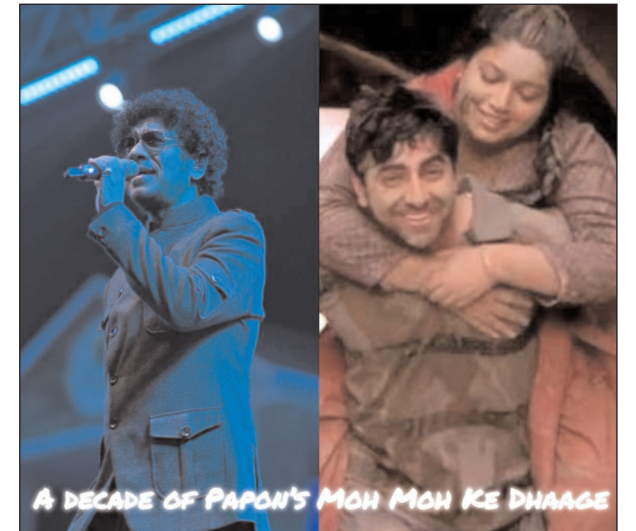
A Timeless Classic: 'Moh Moh Ke Dhaage' Completes 10 Years of Musical Magic

HUMMER NEWS

NEW DELHI: Some songs transcend time, weaving themselves into the very fabric of our emotions. One such masterpiece is Moh Moh Ke Dhaage, a song that continues to mesmerize listeners even after a decade. On February 27, 2015, this timeless melody was released as part of the soundtrack of Dum Laga Ke Haisha, and since then, it has remained a staple in every romantic playlist.

Moh Moh Ke Dhaage is sung by the immensely talented Papon, composed by Anu Malik and penned by the legendary Varun Grover. The song's ethereal lyrics and soul-stirring composition made it an instant classic, earning widespread acclaim and multiple accolades.

What makes Moh Moh Ke Dhaage truly special is its ability to evoke deep emotions, capturing the essence of love, longing, and unspoken connections. Papon's earthy and emotive vocals brought a



raw intensity to the song, making it one of the most cherished romantic tracks of the decade.

Over the years, the song has not only remained popular but has also been revisited through numerous covers, reality show performances, and even wedding playlists, solidifying its place as a modern-day classic. Fans continue to resonate with its poignant

melody and heartfelt lyrics, proving that true music knows no expiry date.

As Moh Moh Ke Dhaage completes a glorious decade, it serves as a beautiful reminder of music's power to touch hearts and create timeless memories. Here's to ten years of an unforgettable song and the many more decades it will continue to enchant listeners!

Traffic police missing in Sadar jam

•Traffic police is forcing traders to come on the road - Pamma and Yadav

HUMMER NEWS

NEW DELHI: Federation of Sadar Bazar Trades Association Chairman Paramjit Singh Pamma and Rakesh Yadav said that traders and shoppers are facing a lot of problems every day due to Sadar Bazar traffic jam. There is a lot of anger among the traders because festivals are coming in the near future. Holi is coming closer and the problem of jam is increasing.



Paramjit Singh Pamma and Rakesh Yadav said that earlier also traders had protested against this and it was decided in the meeting with traffic officials that traffic officers will be present at all the squares connected to Sadar Bazar. Who will work to clear the traffic jam, but

for a long time no traffic officer is seen at the square. Due to which the situation of jam remains for hours. While it was decided to deploy traffic police officers in the morning and evening at Sadar Thana, 12 Tooti, Qutub Road Teliwara, Mithai Pul and other chowk, but police officers are absent from every chowk. Even if they are seen somewhere, they are standing there only to harass people or to issue challans. And if someone

parks his two wheeler, the traffic police crane lifts it quickly and takes it away. But it does not do anything to open the traffic.

Pamma and Yadav said that on the other hand, from Sadar Bazar Thana to 12 Tooti Chowk, parking has been provided by the Municipal Corporation, but they park in three lines on the road, due to which there is a traffic jam there every day. Due to which there is a lot of difficulty in commuting in emergency, due to which a big accident can happen.

Rajnikant Borele celebrated Maha Shivratri

CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Pandharkwad city's famous social worker, Rajnikant Daluramji Borele, and his wife Sau, Neeta Bhabhi Madavi (Borele) son Sarvam Rajnikant Borele celebrated together, Maha Shivratri is big festival with devotion.

On 26/2/2025, there is a statue of Ekanteshwar Mahadev (Shiv Linga) and Hanumanji in Krishi Upaj Anaj Mandi.

Ekanteshwar Mahadev and Hanumanji were decorated with loincloth, balloons, flower garlands and banana trees. Bhajan kirtan "Sundar Kand" was recited in front of Ekanteshwar Shiv Linga and Hanumanji.

On this occasion, Rajnikant Borele also beautiful voice bhajans in Shiv Povaada and Braj language. Due to which the devotees were mesmer-



ized.

Rajnikant Borele is a virtuous, religious man and a great devotee of Lord Shiva. With a Trishul on his forehead, a Rudraksha necklace around his neck and Trishul mark on his hands, he is a great devotee of Lord Shiva. Rajnikant Borele says that Lord Shiva has been very kind to him. He started visiting Jyotirlinga and pilgrimage places from the age of



13. He has visited Char Dham, 12 Jyotirlingas, Four Kumbhs, many Shaktipeeths 6, Saptपुरी, Char Dhams of Uttarakhand, Amarnathji and Ujjain Kumbh, 118 kms Panch Kosi Pada Yatra, Vrindavan 84 Kos Braj Yatra, Govardhan Ji Parikrama, bathing from Gangotri to Gangesganga, bathing in Godavari Narmada, Kaveri, Saryuji, Yamunaji, Saraswati, Kshirpraj etc.

Patna Sahib, Hemkund Sahib, Nanded Sahib,

and Nanak Jeera too these have been done. And again means again 2 Kumbhs, 1 Dham, 5 Jyotirlingas have been visited. People's lives have passed, some have passed away, still they could not do it, our second round has begun. This is only Shiva's grace.

After completion of Sunderkand Rajnikant Borele, wife Sau, Neeta Madavi (Borele) performed Aarti - Pujan as per the rituals.

After this, the head of Shiv Shakti Ramayan Mandal honoured them with Tilak and presented money to the Mandal. After that all the dignitaries who participated in Sunderkand honoured them with Tilak and presented money with the auspicious hands of Sarvam

Borele.

On 27/2/2025, Rajnikant Borele started the food prasadi by performing the ritualistic worship and offering food prasadi and naivedya prasadi to Lord Shiva and Lord Hanuman. All the Shiva devotees and devotees took the prasadi.

Rajnikant Borele's uncle Raju Chiranjilal Borele, aunt Yogita Raju Borele, brother Vishal (Sai) Borele, nephew Shubham (Bunty) Borele, Ekansh (Kanha) Bhalchandra Madavi, Umesh Pancholi, Santosh Tavekar, Ganesh Kasturwar, Ninad Kelapure, Atish Gedam, Shankar Atram, Raju Bhandarwar, Akash Mandewar, Vaibhav Nilgirwar, Borele family and friends were prominently present in the Mahashivratri festival, Sunderkand and Prasadi religious work.

IKEA answers the call to "When is IKEA coming to North India" with the launch of online deliveries

HUMMER NEWS

NEW DELHI: IKEA, the world's most loved 82-year-old Swedish home furnishings retailer, announces entry into its much-anticipated market, North India with the start of online delivery across Delhi-NCR and 9 satellite cities including Agra, Prayagraj (Allahabad), Amritsar, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Kanpur, Lucknow, Ludhiana, and Varanasi. Starting March 1, customers from these markets will be able to seamlessly explore and shop its range of 7000+ products and solutions through the IKEA app, www.ikea.in website, and using its shop by phone assistance. Customers will not only enjoy the ever-so-iconic DIY way of assembling IKEA furniture but also benefit from the brand's home furnishing expertise through remote planning, interior design services, and seam-



less assembly and installation support.

"Ever since our first store opening in Hyderabad, IKEA continues to receive endless love and anticipation from the north of India through hundreds of orders coming in from these cities through our B2B channels, consistent online visitation, app downloads, as well as a steady stream of social media enquiries. This has been a missing piece in

our India story. Now, it's our turn to reciprocate and we've been eagerly waiting to bring IKEA to North India. As we continue to strengthen our omni-channel growth in the country, this launch in Delhi NCR and other markets will be a strong foundation for our future growth in the region," said Susanne Pulverer, CEO & Chief Sustainability Officer, IKEA India.

North India is undeniably India's

- Introduces online deliveries in Delhi-NCR and 9 satellite markets starting March 1
- 7000+ good quality, affordable, sustainable and thoughtfully designed products
- 100% EV-led deliveries
- Close to 1 lakh customers from Delhi NCR are already a part of the IKEA family members' community

largest home furnishings market. IKEA aims to unlock this opportunity through its decades of experience in shaping the category and leadership when it comes to learning about life at home around the world and in India. This deep understanding comes from years of curiosity and commitment to learning—conducting thousands of home visits across India to go

beyond furniture and truly grasp how people live, their daily rituals, needs, and aspirations. By combining these insights with continuous research and global expertise, IKEA will ensure its solutions are relevant, smart, and affordable, making everyday life better for many people.

In India, IKEA welcomes close to 300+ million online and offline visitors and more than 2.7 million IKEA Family Members. Even before its formal entry into the market, Delhi NCR has already seen close to 1 lakh customers sign up to be part of this community. The sheer size of the market, the diversity in homes and needs in the region, speedy digital adoption, and the scope to establish an organized category play coupled with the vision to create a better everyday life for the many steers the way for IKEA in this next phase.

NASVI Calls for Urgent Action on Street Vending Issues Post BJP Government in Delhi

HUMMER NEWS

NEW DELHI: The National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) convened a meeting at the Gandhi Peace Foundation with street vendor market leaders from across Delhi to address the pressing issues faced by street vendors in the city. The gathering comes at a pivotal time as the new BJP-led government takes charge in Delhi, raising hopes for much-needed reform in the street vending sector.

The demands raised in the meeting: Continuous Dialogue will be conducted with the district MLA and

Minister & officials of the Urban Development Department regarding the issues of street vendors.

Suggestions regarding the survey of street vendors will be put forward to MCD.

TVC & market leaders will be actively involved in the survey of street vendors.

Street Vendors will meet their zone-wise DCP regarding the police intervention in street vending.

The Street Sathi App will be promoted for the welfare of street vendors market-wise.

Women's financial literacy training will empower the women vendors and more involvement from markets is necessary.

Forever Living Products India Launches Tulsi Van Honey - A Perfect Blend of Purity and Wellness

HUMMER NEWS

NEW DELHI: Forever Living Products India introduces Forever Tulsi Van Honey, a premium, 100% natural honey infused with the essence of sacred Van Tulsi. This single-flora honey offers a rich, aromatic experience while delivering numerous health benefits, making it a perfect addition to a healthy lifestyle.



Combining the ancient wellness properties of Van Tulsi with the natural goodness of honey, Forever Tulsi Van Honey serves as a natural sweetener packed with antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals. It strengthens the immune system, boosts energy, supports weight management, and enhances overall well-being. Free from added sugar, antibiotics, and heavy metals, this honey is

FSSAI-certified and lab-tested, ensuring the highest standards of purity. It has also undergone SMR testing, confirming the absence of adulterants like rice syrup. Its distinctive flavor and medicinal benefits make it a versatile addition to daily wellness routines, whether used as a healthier alternative to refined sugar or incorporated into skincare and haircare.

Packed with immune-boosting properties, Forever Tulsi Van Honey

helps the body fight infections while promoting better digestion and gut health with its antibacterial and anti-inflammatory effects. The natural sugars in honey provide a sustained energy boost, making it an excellent replacement for processed sweeteners. It also supports metabolism and aids digestion, contributing to weight management. Rich in skin and hair-friendly nutrients, it deeply nourishes, hydrates, and revitalizes, making it an excellent natural beauty enhancer. Additionally, its cognitive benefits contribute to improved memory and brain function, making it an essential part of a balanced lifestyle.

"At Forever Living Products India, we are committed to bringing nature's finest products to our customers. Forever Tulsi Van Honey is a testament to our promise of purity and wellness.

2 in 5 Children in India Do Not Have a Healthy BMI, Reveals Sportz Village's 13th Annual Health Survey

HUMMER NEWS

NEW DELHI: Sportz Village's 13th Annual Health Survey (AHS) has revealed alarming gaps in the fitness and well-being of school-going children across India. Conducted annually since 2010, the survey aims to analyze and evaluate the health and fitness levels of children in schools across India.

The 13th edition of the survey, powered by EduSports, assessed 1,16,650 children aged 7 to 17 years across 85 locations, highlighting the urgent need for structured physical education programs in schools.

The EAST REGION has emerged with the second-best

- The 13th Annual Health Survey studies data from 1,16,650 children aged 7 to 17, spanning 85 locations across India.
- In comparison, children from government schools fared better than private schools in BMI, Lower body strength, Aerobic and Anaerobic capacity & Flexibility.

performance showcasing an overall fitness in a total of 56.40% of children, showing notable strengths in Upper body strength (54%), Lower body strength (46%), and Flexibility (77%). The survey highlights that a

higher percentage of children from the NORTH REGION have shown extremely poor performance, recording the lowest percentages in three out of seven fitness parameters. The region performed the weakest in Lower body strength (35%), Abdominal strength (81%), and Anaerobic capacity (58%), underscoring significant areas for improvement in these key fitness indicators.

The performance of children from the SOUTH REGION has been a mixed bag. A higher percentage of children have performed well in the parameters of BMI (60.12%), Aerobic capacity (31%), Anaerobic capacity (62%), and Abdominal strength (87%), while showing areas of

improvement in Upper body strength and Flexibility.

WEST REGION has performed the best when compared to all other regions with higher percentage of children performing exceptionally well in the parameters of Upper body strength (58%) Lower body strength (60%), Anaerobic capacity (81%), Abdominal strength (93%), Aerobic capacity (52%) & Flexibility (81%).

Moreover, a higher percentage of children in private schools have better Upper body strength levels (47%), compared to the children from government schools (37%) as well as Abdominal strength levels (87%) compared to the children in government schools (84%).

Delhi govt will initiate probe into govt money used in 'Sheesh Mahal': Parvesh Verma

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES: Delhi minister Parvesh Verma said an investigation will be initiated into the 'Sheesh Mahal' controversy to determine how much government money was used in renovating former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's official residence.

The bungalow at 6, Flagstaff Road, used by Kejriwal while he was the CM, has been dubbed by the BJP as a "Sheesh Mahal". The BJP, which removed the AAP from power in Delhi earlier this month, has accused him of misusing public funds for "luxury additions" in the bungalow.

Speaking to PTI on Thursday, Verma stated, "The lavish Chief Minister's office, built three years ago under the AAP government, will be investigated to determine how much money was spent



on its reconstruction and on what basis officials granted permission for such expenses."

"The Chief Minister's residence at 6 Flagstaff Road, dubbed 'Sheesh Mahal' by the BJP, will also be examined to assess how much money the previous govern-

ment allocated for its renovation," said Verma, who defeated Kejriwal from the New Delhi seat in the February 5 assembly polls.

Verma, who also serves as the PWD Minister, visited Defence Colony to inspect ongoing infrastructure projects alongside senior depart-

ment officials.

During the visit, he reviewed a damaged culvert ('puliya') that has been in disrepair for the past two years, causing road closures and severe traffic congestion in the area. He directed officials to expedite the tender process, assuring residents that repair work would commence by April.

Highlighting the significance of the route, he stated, "This road leads to Barapullah and is a crucial corridor for commuters. Due to negligence by the previous government, the cost of the Barapullah project has doubled from its original sanction."

Criticising the former administration, he added that over the past ten years, no minister from Arvind Kejriwal's team had visited the site to monitor its progress.

Congress slams govt over household indebtedness, says it failed to acknowledge 'crisis'

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES: Flagging the issue of household indebtedness, the Congress on Thursday said the root cause of such a "deep-seated" malaise was the stagnation in real wages and claimed the government had failed to acknowledge the "crisis".

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh cited the recently-released Indus Valley Annual Report 2025, an examination of India's economic landscape and start-up ecosystem by VC firm Blume Ventures, to attack the government.

The report offers a granular look into the Indian economy, he said and asserted that its most worrying implications were for India's household finances.

Ramesh said India's recovery from COVID-19 was based on consumption growth that was driven by loans.

Consumer loans in the post-Covid years were about 18 per cent of the Private Fi-



nal Consumption Expenditure, he said.

In this time, personal loans replaced industry loans as the biggest segment of non-food borrowing, Ramesh said.

"This was a reflection of the slowing private investment levels. Much of this indebtedness was due to the rise in small ticket personal loans from non-banking financial companies -- they

comprise 82 per cent of the new personal loans originated in 2024," he said citing the report.

Credit growth has now created a household indebtedness crisis instead of continuing to fuel consumption, Ramesh said.

Household debt to GDP has hit an all-time high of nearly 43 per cent, he claimed.

"As a flipside to the house-

hold indebtedness, households are saving less -- especially financially. Household share of savings dropped from 84 per cent in FY 2000 to 61 per cent in FY 2023, reflecting an increase in uninvested corporate profits," he said.

Without adequate savings to finance investments, combined with sluggish foreign direct investment, India is undergoing a massive slowdown in private investment, Ramesh said.

"The root cause of this deep-seated malaise is the stagnation in real wages, both in the salaried sector and in the informal rural sector. Without increasing labour productivity and higher wages, any growth in consumption will have to be based on unsustainable credit booms," the Congress leader said.

Ten years after this crisis first surfaced, and five years after COVID-19 hit, the government continues to fail to acknowledge this crisis, Ramesh alleged.

Police start probe into Rs 77 crore 'fraud' at tri-services club on Navy's complaint

MUMBAI/AGENCIES: Mumbai Police has started an investigation into an alleged fraud of Rs 77.52 crore at the United Services Club here, police and Defence officials said on Thursday.

Financial discrepancies at the 97-year-old tri-services establishment came to light during a routine audit a few months ago, a Defence PRO said.

The case has been transferred to the Economic Offences Wing of Mumbai Police, officials said. A complaint regarding the alleged fraud was recently lodged at the Cuffe Parade Police Station here by a Navy captain on the instructions of the Western Naval



Command headquarters. The United Services Club, Colaba, is a 97 years old Tri-Services Club.

A few months earlier, as

part of a routine audit, a discrepancy was noticed by the Secretary of the Club. This led to a special audit by the contracted CA and, subse-

quently, detailed scrutiny of the financial accounts were undertaken on instructions of the Club Management, whereupon significant anomalies were discovered," a Defence PRO said in a statement. Besides the registration of a First Information Report, a detailed special audit by an independent chartered accountant has been ordered, the statement added. The Defence forces and US Club are committed to maintaining the highest standards of conduct and financial probity, and all cooperation will be extended to the law enforcement and financial agencies to identify any wrong-doing and ensure justice, it said.

CAG report exposes major irregularities in Delhi liquor policy, referred to PAC for probe

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES: The CAG report on the Delhi liquor policy has been referred to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) for examination, with the committee expected to submit its report within three months, assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta said Thursday.

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report on the regulation and supply of liquor in Delhi has highlighted serious irregularities in the implementation of the excise policy by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government. Following discussions in the assembly, the report has been referred to the PAC for a detailed probe, with findings expected within three months.



Gupta made the announcement, stating that the matter required urgent attention due to the financial losses incurred by the government.

The audit, conducted for the period between 2017 and 2021, pointed to significant lapses in the licensing process, pricing mechanisms, and regulatory over-

sight. It alleged that the policy led to substantial revenue losses, benefiting private companies at the expense of public funds. The report said that a revenue loss of Rs 2,002 crore was recorded due to various irregularities, including failure to re-tender surrendered licences, excessive discounts, and waivers in license fees.

During the assembly session, several members expressed serious concerns over the findings, demanding strict action against those responsible.

Gupta stated that the Delhi assembly's PAC would conduct a thorough review of the report and submit its findings within three months.

Oscar winner Gene Hackman, wife and their dog found dead in their New Mexico home, authorities say

SANTA/AGENCIES: Oscar-winning actor Gene Hackman and his wife were found dead in their New Mexico home Wednesday, authorities said.

Foul play is not suspected, however authorities did not release any details of the circumstances of their deaths and said an investigation is ongoing.

Santa Fe County Sheriff's Office spokesperson Denise Avila said deputies responded to a request to do a welfare check at the home Wednesday around 1:45 pm local time and found Hackman, his wife Betsy Arakawa and a dog dead.



Hackman, 95, was a five-time Oscar nominee who starred in dozens of films

and one of the industry's most respected and honoured performers. His two

Oscar wins, for "The French Connection" and "Unforgiven", were spaced out 21 years apart.

News of his death comes just four days before this year's Academy Awards ceremony.

Hackman played a variety of roles, appearing in action movies, thrillers and even appearing in a comedic part in "Young Frankenstein".

Aside from appearances at awards shows, he was rarely seen in the Hollywood social circuit and retired in his mid-70s.

An email sent to his publicist was not immediately returned early Thursday.

Rape inside MSRTC bus: police announce Rs 1 lakh reward for information about absconding accused

MUMBAI/AGENCIES: Pune Police on Thursday announced a reward of Rs 1 lakh for information leading to the arrest of a history-sheeter who allegedly raped a 26-year-old woman inside a state transport bus at the Swargate bus station here, officials said.

As many as 13 police teams are working to track down accused Dattatray Ramdas Gade (37) who is on the run since the incident which took place on early Tuesday morning, an official said.

A reward of Rs 1 lakh will be given to a person providing information about his whereabouts, Pune police commissioner Amitesh Kumar told PTI. Another police official said that information about Gade can be provided at numbers 020-24442769 or 9881670659.

The informer's name will be kept secret, he added. Gade has half a dozen cases of theft, robbery and chain-snatching registered against him in Pune and adjoining Ahilyanagar district, and was out on bail since 2019 in one of the offences.



Swargate in Pune city is one of the largest bus depots of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC). According to the survivor woman, as she was waiting for a bus for Phaltan in Satara district at one of the platforms around 5.45 am on Tuesday, a man approached and engaged her in conver-

sation, calling her 'didi' (sister), and said the bus for Satara had arrived at another platform. He took her to an empty 'Shiv Shahi' AC bus parked elsewhere on the sprawling station premises.

As the lights inside the bus were not on, she hesitated to get in at first, but the man convinced her that it was the

right vehicle. He then followed her inside and raped her before fleeing, the woman, who works in the medical field, told police.

The shocking incident in the heart of the city caused an uproar, with Opposition lambasting the BJP-led Maharashtra government over women's safety.

Hindi is mask, Sanskrit the face, says Stalin

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES: Leader of Opposition (LoP) Atishi on Thursday said AAP MLAs were being stopped from entering the Delhi Assembly premises after being suspended for three days from the proceedings in the House.

Atishi said the BJP was "crossing all limits of dictatorship" after coming to power.

Soon after the House proceedings began on Tuesday, Atishi and other AAP MLAs protested against the alleged removal of B R Ambedkar's portrait from the CM's office. Speaker Vijender Gupta suspended the 21 AAP legislators for disrupting Lt Governor V K Saxena's inaugural address to the newly constituted House.

In a post on X, Atishi said, "AAP MLAs were suspended from the House for three days for raising slogans of 'Jai Bhim'. And today, they are not even being allowed to enter the Vidhan Sabha premises. This has never



happened in the history of the Delhi Legislative Assembly."

On Tuesday, 21 out of 22 AAP MLAs, including Atishi, were suspended from the House. The suspension of AAP MLAs came on a day when the Delhi government tabled a Comptroller and Au-

ditor General (CAG) report on the liquor policy, further intensifying the political face-off between AAP and the BJP.

Okhla MLA Amanatullah Khan was the only AAP legislator spared from the suspension, as he was not present in the House during the

protest. The motion for suspension was moved by minister Parvesh Verma.

As soon as the LG began his address, the AAP legislators started raising slogans against the alleged removal of portraits of Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh from the Chief Minister's office.

MEA takes up with US visa issue of family of Indian student injured in accident

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has taken up with the US a request for an urgent visa by the family of an Indian student who is battling for life following a road accident in California, sources said. Neelam Shinde from Maharashtra's Satara was critically injured in the accident on February 14 and has been in a coma at a hospital since then.

Shinde reportedly suffered severe injuries to her head, hand and chest.

Her family has sought an urgent visa to travel to the US to be by her side.

The MEA has taken up the matter with the US. The US side is looking into the formalities for early grant of visa for the applicant's family, the sources cited above said. Nationalist Congress Party

(Sharadchandra Pawar) leader Supriya Sule flagged the case on Wednesday.

"Student Neelam Shinde has met with an accident in the USA and is hospitalised in a local hospital," she said in a post on X. "Her father, Tanaji Shinde, from Satara, Maharashtra, India, urgently needs to visit his daughter due to a medical emergency."

EDITORIAL

NO FREE LUNCH!

If the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thought that he was doing the west a favour by fighting its proxy war with Russia, he was highly mistaken. The USA is about to extract its pound of flesh from Kvyi. While ordering Russia and Ukraine to stop killing people (in the war), the US President Donald Trump announced that the two countries will soon sign a deal in Washington DC in which the US would get full rights to extract the rare earth minerals from the soil of Ukraine. Zelenskyy told his people that unless he does so, generations of Ukrainians would become slaves of the USA to repay the money the US gave to it for fighting the war. The European countries which followed the USA in supporting Kvyi with arms and aid against Russia are feeling betrayed, for none of them would get their monies they spent in supporting war against Russia back. Surely there are no free lunches in the domain of diplomacy!

RISE OF AFGHAN CRICKET

The recent victory of the Afghan team over England in the ICC Champions trophy is a major milestone in that country's steady rise as a cricketing power. Since their ICC debut in 2010, the team has been consistently showing its strengths and prowess in the world cups. Afghanistan defeated three former world champions--England, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka--to secure a sixth-place finish and qualify for the ICC Champions Trophy. Successive performances of the international cricket proved they were no longer just an underdog side pulling off occasional upsets but a force capable of competing with the best. With each ICC event, Afghanistan rewrites its cricketing story, firmly establishing itself as a serious threat to the world's best teams. Indian always celebrate the victory of Afghans as the two have connection; the afghan team was initially trained in India and very idea that the Afghan must play cricket was of India.

• Abdul Kalam

Urdu: A Priceless Heritage of Indian Culture



REYASAT ALI SAMEER SENIOR CORRESPONDENT

Languages are not merely a means of communication; they are the carriers of a nation's culture, civilization, and history. Among the many languages of India, Urdu holds a special place because it is not just a language—it is a movement, a sentiment, and a shared heritage.

Urdu was born in the soil of India, and in this very soil, it nurtured the Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb (composite culture). It is a language that echoes love, embodies the fervor of revolution, calls for change, and reaches literary heights. It is in this language that Ghalib expressed the depths of love, Mir transformed pain into poetry, and Iqbal dreamt of India's glory—

"Saare jahaan se achha, Hindustan hamara." ("Better than the entire world is our Hindustan.")

Urdu: Not Just a Language, but a Cultural Movement

Urdu has been the strongest link in India's Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb. It is a language that has resonated in temple hymns, mosque prayers, gurudwara shabad kirtans, and church supplications alike.

There was a time when Urdu poetry was an integral

part of debates in the Indian Parliament. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once said—"Urdu is the identity of India's shared culture. To erase it would mean harming the very fabric of Indian civilization."

Great poet Ramdhari Singh Dinkar expressed Urdu's beauty in these words—"Urdu is that river which not only carries the sweetness of love but also the waves of revolution and struggle."

Munshi Premchand, in support of Urdu, stated—"Urdu is a language that is very close to our hearts. It is an integral part of our cultural heritage and serves as a highly effective medium for expressing our emotions, thoughts, and sensitivities."

Mahadevi Verma described Hindi and Urdu as the "two eyes" of India, which together provide a complete vision of its culture.

The Role of Urdu in the Freedom Struggle

From the Revolt of 1857 to India's independence in 1947, Urdu not only gave birth to revolutionary ideas but also spread them to the masses.

1. Contribution of Urdu in the Revolt of 1857

Bahadur Shah Zafar's famous verse—

"Ghaziyon mein booharahi, London tak chalegi tegh Hindustan ki."

("As long as faith remains among the warriors, India's sword will reach the throne of London.")

—became the battle cry of revolutionaries.

2. Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, and Batukeshwar Dutt

Their letters, proclamations, and ideologies were primarily written in Urdu.

3. Ram Prasad Bismil and Ashfaqulla Khan

Their iconic composition "Sarfaroshi ki tamanna ab hamare dil mein hai" (The desire for sacrifice now fills our hearts) became the anthem of the freedom struggle.

4. Subhas Chandra Bose and the Azad Hind Fauj

Subhas Chandra Bose prioritized Urdu in his army, recognizing it as a language of national unity.

5. Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Patel

Both leaders regarded Urdu as an integral part of Indian culture.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel once stated—"We must unite India, not divide it in the name of languages."

The Role of Urdu Journalism in the Freedom Struggle

Urdu journalism played a crucial role in India's independence movement. Newspapers and magazines in Urdu not only exposed British atrocities but also inspired people with the spirit of swaraj (self-rule), independence, and revolution.

To suppress these voices, the British government imposed strict censorship, confiscated publications, and imprisoned editors—some were even sentenced to death.

Key Urdu Newspapers and

Magazines in the Freedom Struggle

1. Jam-e-Jahan Numa (1822)

India's first Urdu newspaper, published in Kolkata by Harihar Dutt. It focused on social reforms and criticized British rule.

2. Awadh Akhbar (1858)

Published from Lucknow, it highlighted the 1857 revolt and its brutal suppression.

3. Tilism (1879)

A newspaper that spread revolutionary ideas and criticized British policies.

4. Madina (1912)

Published from Bijoor, this paper strongly supported the independence movement.

5. Al-Hilal (1912) – Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

This newspaper, launched by Maulana Azad, frightened the British government with its radical ideas promoting Hindu-Muslim unity, the Non-Cooperation Movement, and the Khilafat Movement. It was banned in 1914.

6. Al-Balagh (1915) – Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

After Al-Hilal was banned, Azad started Al-Balagh, which also promoted independence.

7. Zamana (1903) – Munshi Daya Narayan Nigam

A well-known Urdu newspaper published in both Hindi and Urdu, it criticized British oppression.

8. Hamdard (1913) – Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar

This Delhi-based newspaper highlighted British injustices and the Indian struggle. It was eventually banned,

and Jauhar was imprisoned.

9. Qaumi Awaaz (1945) – Jawaharlal Nehru

This paper supported the Quit India Movement.

Atrocities on Urdu Journalists by the British

1. Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar (Hamdard)

Repeatedly imprisoned by the British for his fearless journalism.

2. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (Al-Hilal, Al-Balagh)

His newspapers were banned, and he was jailed in 1923.

3. Munshi Daya Narayan Nigam (Zamana)

Threatened multiple times for writing against the British.

4. Hasrat Mohani (Urdu-e-Mualla, 1903)

The man who coined the slogan "Inqilab Zindabad" (Long Live the Revolution) used his newspaper to support freedom fighters. He was arrested and jailed by the British.

Urdu journalism never bowed before the British and remained an integral part of the independence movement.

Urdu Literature as a National Treasure

The Indian government and literary institutions have taken significant steps to preserve Urdu literature. Some of its greatest works include:

Diwan-e-Ghalib (Mirza Ghalib)

Bagh-o-Bahar (Mir Amman Dehlvi)

Ghubar-e-Khatir (Maulana Abul Kalam Azad)

Shahnama-e-Hind (Maulana Shibli Nomani)

Asar-us-Sanadid (Sir Syed Ahmed Khan)

Tilism-e-Hoshruha (A masterpiece of Urdu prose)

Eminent Figures on Urdu

Allama Iqbal called Urdu the voice of India's soul—

"Mazhab nahi sikhata aapas mein bair rakhna, Hindi hain hum, watan hai Hindustan hamara."

("Religion does not teach us to bear enmity among ourselves. We are Indians, and our homeland is Hindustan.")

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said—"To make India truly democratic and inclusive, we must preserve our linguistic diversity."

Atal Bihari Vajpayee remarked—"Languages build bridges, not walls. Urdu and Hindi together reflect India's soul."

Is Opposing Urdu a Truth or a Conspiracy?

Some people try to spread hatred against Urdu today. Ironically, they express their opposition in Urdu itself.

Saving Urdu is Our Responsibility

Urdu is not just a script or a pronunciation—it is the soul of India. Associating it with any single religion is unfair. Hindi and Urdu complement each other; one is incomplete without the other.

If we do not preserve Urdu, we will lose an invaluable treasure of our culture.

In the end, let it be said—"Urdu is not just a language; it is the voice of our civilization. Preserving it is our responsibility."

OUR REAL WEALTH: RELATIONSHIPS

Rajyogi Brahm Kumar Nikunj Ji

Our lives revolve around the relationships that we have inherited by birth as well as the ones that we made after birth and also they continue after we rest in peace i.e. death. Isn't it so ironic that throughout our lives we struggle hard to maintain our relationships and yet we cannot achieve that perfect balance in our relations, be it personal or professional?

The reasons for this may be numerous, however, to make the long story short one would find that most of the reasons are so common and at times quite foolish on our part that we find it funny when we sit down and think about those silly reasons which become the very cause for turning our relationships sour. It's a fact that all of us are living a fast-paced life where we get extremely busy accumulating financial assets and physical comforts. So lost have we got in this race to achieve something, that we hardly find time to sit back and think as to where our relationships are heading to.

Our craze for materialism has made us forget that material belongings are devoid of meaning if there is no peace or happiness within. Today we have reached a stage where instead of humans, we have made smart gadgets, material belongings and social status as our



companions. We are gradually getting transformed into machines with no heart, feelings or emotions. As a result, our relationships have become strained. So, always nurture your relationships and handle them with utmost care because it's too painful an experience when a person we know suddenly becomes a person we know. There is a well-known saying that 'we see things not as they are but as we are.' While our physical eyes see everything and everyone the same way, it is the thoughts and feelings that accompany the act of seeing that form an impression in the mind about what we are seeing.

On the other hand, if we are in a nega-

tive frame of mind, we might perceive things negatively. We all fail to understand the fact that whether it's friendship or relationship, all bonds are built on trust, without it we won't achieve anything. Hence we should try our best to remain safe from a dreadful habit called assumption which creates mistrust leading to suspicion, anger, enmity and finally separation. We should also refrain from playing the blame game that's the biggest hindrance to maintaining good relations. It's normal for all of us to blame the opposite party in case of a failed relationship, because nobody would ever take responsibility on the self, however, we should remember that when we point one fin-

ger at someone, the other three are pointing at us, so it is always better to take personal responsibility and accept our folly rather than create an environment of hatred for each other.

A relationship is like a house. When a light bulb burns out, do we go and buy a new house? Not really, we fix the bulb and move on. The same applies to our relationships too, we keep on nursing our egos to such an extent that it leads to misunderstanding, creating a heavy atmosphere. Hence we should realize that having an easy and cooperative nature towards everyone would help us to be flexible and humble. We should always give value to our relationships and should make an effort to nurture them, rather than lose them on trivial matters. Supreme Almighty can fulfil all relationships with us. Hence, when we experience the relations of father, teacher, preceptor, companion and friend with HIM, then it becomes easy to give love to all other human beings and leads us to the understanding that we are all children of the same father and need to take care of everyone around us. Lastly, we should not forget that a real relationship has trust, faith, tears, fights, pain, arguments, patience, secrets, jealousy and overall - LOVE. So, love all and get loved in return by all. This is the key to positive & peaceful living.

How antibiotic-free poultry empowered a mother and her community

Swapna Majumdar

Four-month-old Angel Singh is a post-term baby. Having been born after a ten-month pregnancy, many of her family members were afraid she would be weak and sickly. But Pinky always knew her child would be healthy despite being born a month after what is considered a normal nine-month pregnancy period.

Angel's weight and other health indicators at birth proved her mother right. Much of Pinky's confidence stemmed from the fact that she was regular with her antenatal checkups (ANC). She also focussed on a nutritious diet of leafy greens which she sourced from her small vegetable patch at the back of her house in Uttar Pradesh's Samsa Tarhar village in Bahraich, the second most backward district in India. As her pregnancy progressed, Pinky, a small poultry farmer, diversified her diet to include antibiotic-free eggs and poultry. This was to be a smart move.

Not only because it helped her stay healthy and increase her weight and haemoglobin levels, but more importantly, thanks to her poultry training,

she was able to ensure whatever she ate was free of antibiotics. By using natural feed and herbal remedies while raising her chickens, she was able to cut the risk of developing antimicrobial resistance (AMR), a condition arising from the consumption of meat and eggs of poultry fed with antibiotics to promote quick growth and prevent diseases.

Just how critical this practice was can be gauged from the worrying fact that, in 2019, over 297,000 deaths in India were directly attributed to AMR. Moreover, the poultry environment has been a reservoir of multi-drug resistant bacteria according to the most recent study of four poultry farms in Uttar Pradesh by the Centre for Science and Environment which found rampant use of antibiotics for growth promotion and disease prevention. The WHO recognizes the non-therapeutic use of antibiotics in feed and water in food-producing animals to contribute to the development of AMR in humans. Pinky realised this was possible only after she joined the backyard poultry (BYP) farming initiative to empower women and enhance food security and in-



comes implemented by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) under their aspirational district programme. After being trained by them in poultry farming techniques, biosecurity, and disease management using proven herbal and natural formulations to prevent the development of antibiotic resistance, Pinky, then in her second

trimester of pregnancy, understood that the benefits of being a poultry entrepreneur were more than just being economically empowered. "It was an opportunity to take charge of my own health and destiny and that of my unborn child," says Pinky. It is not just Pinky who is bringing change.

Like her, 60 women from margin-

alised communities in 120 villages in four blocks in Bahraich trained as poultry farmers by AKF are making a difference in their lives and communities through sustainable and ethical poultry farming practices after each was given 50 pre-vaccinated 21-day-old Sonali breed chicks free along with support for feeding and constructing chicken coups.

It was the AKF strategy to impart rigorous, yet easy-to-understand hands-on demonstration and training on using commonly found medicinal plants and herbs as alternatives to antibiotics that helped the women, mostly uneducated; understand the importance of adopting ethnoveterinary methods or traditional practices for treating animal health and illness. "I used to give antibiotics to keep my poultry healthy before I met the AKF team. Yet, many died.

After joining their programme, I gave a health tonic of turmeric water mixed with jaggery, chirata for deworming and azola, a protein rich fern, to boost their immunity. None of my chicken fell ill," shares a Rambha Devi, a poultry farmer in village Samroha. Raghvendra Singh,

AKF district coordinator, skill development, who is closely associated with the BYP programme, contends the 10 per cent mortality rate normally associated with chicks has come down to 4.5 per cent among the 3000 chicks given to AKF poultry farmers because of their use of natural feed and traditional herbal remedies.

Consequently, almost 90 per cent of their chicken was sold and the remaining was used for home consumption. The health of families, especially children, consuming these antibiotic-free poultry and eggs, has improved say frontline health workers working in these villages. Further, an AKF evaluation shows that each poultry farmer made a profit ranging between Rs 10,000-14,000.

This success has prompted the women to invest in another 50 chicks even if it means taking a loan from their self-help group as it will no longer be given free.

But this isn't stopping them, especially Pinky, who is buying 100 chicks. "The benefits I have gained from being a poultry farmer cannot be measured only in monetary terms. It has changed my life."

PLA overhaul is in line with Chinese ambitions

China's ongoing reform process is the biggest military shake-up ever witnessed in generations. It is well aligned with the national goals and objectives. Beijing's aggressiveness, especially after Xi came to power, is evident from its military activities in South China Sea, across the Taiwan Strait and along the LAC against India. Cognisant of PLA's lack of operational experience, the Communist leadership is using these forays to battle-harden its military.

THE People's Liberation Army (PLA), which is set to complete 95 years of existence, has played a pivotal role in China's emergence as a major power. It traces its roots to the 'Nanchang Uprising' of August 1, 1927, the day Communist revolutionaries like Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai revolted against the Kuomintang National Forces. In 1929, Mao defined the PLA's role as the military of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

The two most powerful organs of People's Republic of China — CPC and PLA — share a symbiotic relationship. The PLA is well represented in the Politburo and Central Committee, the apex policy-making bodies of the party. The Communist leadership of the day has accorded top priority to defence modernisation as the military is seen to be a vital component of the State's 'Comprehensive National Power'.

On assuming the mantle of 'Fifth Generation Leadership' in 2012, President Xi Jinping initiated the process of transforming the military with twin objectives; prepare the armed forces for China's expanding global role and establish firm control of the party over PLA. The transformation process entailed a review of the role, war-fighting doctrines and organisational structures.

For strategic direction, a 'White Paper on National Defence 2015' was issued with focus on 'active defence' and shift in naval strategy from 'coastal defence' to 'offshore waters defence with open sea protection'. In 2017, during the 19th CPC meeting, timelines for PLA's reorganisation were formalised i.e., achieve mechanisation by 2020, basic modernisation by 2035 and transformation into a world class force by 2050. As per the 'White Paper on National Defence 2019', the thrust was on 'defence in the new era'. The 14th Five Year Plan and Vision 2035 envisaged the creation of high-level strategic deterrence, integrated employment of armed forces and cultivate a new type of military talent. The PLA has adopted a comprehensive approach towards new ways of war fighting; entails bal-

ancing 'war preparation' and 'war prevention', besides waging 'Grey Zone Warfare' alongside conventional warfare. The PLA has gone in for harnessing disruptive technologies, especially Information Warfare, strategic space, cyber, electronic and psychological warfare capabilities. A revised fighting doctrine based on 'Informatisation and Intelligentisation' reflects the centrality of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotic technologies.

To implement the new doctrines, the Central Military Commission, the apex defence body, was restructured, with Chairman Xi designating himself as Commander-in-Chief to exercise direct control over the PLA. At the operational level, the erstwhile 17 army, air force and navy military regions were reorganised into five theatre commands. The Western Theatre Command, responsible for manning the entire border with India, covers Tibet and Xinjiang too. In addition, 84 corps-size formations were created which included 13 operational corps, further organised into combined arms brigades capable of rapid deployment.

The revised mission for PLA Air Force (PLAAF) entailed shift from 'territorial air defence' to encompass both defence and offence, besides building 'air space defence force' and power projection capabilities. It is expected to have around 1,300 4th-5th generation fighters, including a few squadrons of J-20 and F-31/J stealth fighter in its inventory in the next couple of years. The PLA Navy (PLAN) is in quest to acquire outreach to 'far seas'. Its ships now regularly sail in the waters around Europe. PLAN is also turning attention to the Arctic (Polar Silk Road), the next maritime frontier. Numerically, China already has the largest navy in the world with more than 350 ships, although it lags behind the US in terms of capability. By 2035, PLAN plans to have over 450 ships. The Chinese Coast Guard is the largest in the world with over 100 ocean-going platforms. China's 'Rocket Force' arsenal, estimated to be 250-300 earlier, is expected to scale up to around 700



by 2027. China has nearly 100 Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles, including DF-41, capable of delivering up to 10 warheads with a range of over 12,000 km. The number of DF-21 and DF-26 medium-range missiles has increased from 16 to 200 during the last few years. China is also known to have developed 'Hypersonic Glide Vehicle' and 'Hypersonic Cruise Missile'. China's defence budget has increased almost ten-fold in the last two decades, from \$22.93 billion in 2000 to \$230 billion in 2022. Given that Beijing has historically under-reported its military expenditure, actual spending is estimated to be far higher. China's ongoing military reform process is the biggest military shake-up ever witnessed in generations. It is well aligned with the national goals and objectives. Beijing's aggressiveness, especially after Xi came to power, is evident from its military activities in South China Sea, across the Taiwan Strait and on the LAC against India. Cognisant of PLA's lack of operational experience, the Communist leadership is using these forays to battle-harden its military. The hyper pace of defence infrastructure development, forward deployment of war-waging assets in

Tibet and Xinjiang, provocative activities along the LAC, incorporation of new defence and border laws amply manifest the Dragon's evil designs. Beijing apparently has no intention of resolving the boundary issue, obvious from the progress of politico-diplomatic and military level talks.

The PLA is likely to continue with its "nibble-and-negotiate" policy in the realm of 'Grey Zone Warfare'. Given the gravity of the situation, it is time for our policymakers to get the strategic direction right by putting in place the national defence policy and joint war-fighting doctrines as also structures to prosecute limited operations in multiple scenarios. Anomalies with regards to the role of CDS, theatre commands, border management, integrated development of military infrastructure and 'procurement-cum-acquisition procedures' need to be ironed out on priority. The PLA is undergoing deep-rooted transformation with aspirations to take on extended global missions, which will dramatically alter the balance of power matrix. The world must be prepared to face an even more aggressive China in the coming times. For India, it is potentially a wake-up call.

Black Sea deal to ease global food challenge

ON July 22, in an unprecedented thaw, the Black Sea Grain Deal was signed in Istanbul (Turkey) by the Russian and Ukrainian ministers in the presence of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. It shows that if negotiations are given a chance, any contentious issue can be resolved. The seed was sown by Guterres' visit to Russia and Ukraine in late April. It underscores the role of the 'good offices' of the UNSG for the peaceful settlement of international disputes among the UN member-states. It also provides a pathway for finding an amicable compromise on the Russia-Ukraine stand-off after the "special military operation". The Russian action in Ukraine has entered the sixth month. The UNSG has aptly described the Black Sea deal as the "agreement for the world" since it paves the way for food exports from the three key Ukrainian ports in the Black Sea — Odessa, Chernomorsk and Yuzhny. The deal offers prospects for a new window of peace monitored through the Joint Coordination Centre in Istanbul comprising representatives of Ukraine, Russia and Turkey. The Black Sea agreement will immediately lead to easing of the global food prices and help in reducing global hunger. The shipments of food and fertilisers reaching the markets will control spiralling food prices and stave off global famine affecting millions of people. "Today, there is a beacon on the Black Sea... a beacon of hope, a beacon of possibility — a beacon of relief — in a world that needs it more than ever," the UN Secretary-General optimistically said. There has been unprecedented rise in food and fuel prices, as well as supply chain issues as the mountains of grain stocks remained stuck in silos. It shows the enormous cost of allowing the conflict to rage on, supplying arms to Ukraine as well as using the sanctions stick to beat and isolate Russia, a permanent member of the UN Security Council. As rival egos took centre stage and crippling sanctions and geopolitics took priority in place of peace, the world has paid a heavy price. Russia has remained central in the last four centuries for the European peace and stability. "Failure to restart negotiations with Russia and the further alienation of the Kremlin would have dire long-term consequences for stability in Europe," Henry Kissinger (98), former US Secretary of State, warned in his May 23 iconoclastic video address to the World Economic Forum in Davos. Russia, a Eurasian nuclear and space power, has a 20% share (2020) in the global wheat exports. Ukraine also accounts for 8% of the wheat supply. It annually supplies 45 million tonnes of wheat and some 20 million tonnes are already stuck in Ukrainian warehouses and containers. It is no less significant that some 50 countries around the world import 30% of their wheat requirements from Russia and Ukraine. Ukraine also exports 16% corn (fourth largest) and grows 46% of sunflower seed and sunflower oil (world's largest). In was no coincidence that early in July 2022, a report on the state of world hunger and nutrition was released at an online event. It has been a multi-agency laborious task coordinated by five UN agencies: Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UN Children Emergency Relief Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organisation (WHO). Similarly, the UN Security Council (UNSC) held an unprecedented ministerial-level open debate on May 19, 2022, on conflict and food security. It took place amidst reports that conflicts have been the primary driver of hunger for 139 million people in 24 countries and territories.

Global heating scorches 'Cool Britannia'

Global heating caused by the use of fossil fuels creates a vicious circle. One example is the use of ACs to cope with heat. Even the users who understand that the AC is bad for the planet feel helpless. ACs account for a fifth of the electricity used around the world. Much of this electricity comes from power plants using fossil fuels, which emit greenhouse gases and lead to greater rise in temperatures.

APOCALYPSE is no longer the dystopian scenario of science fiction after what happened on July 19 in the UK. It was a historic turning point in the global spread of overheating. The word 'global heating' is being used in the UK instead of 'global warming' because warming suggests slow heating while what is happening is accelerated heating. The maximum temperature in the UK last Tuesday breached the 40°C threshold. It touched 40.3°C. The UK Met Office had issued its first "red warning" earlier in the week, fearing this heat upsurge. In the British public imagination, the temperatures in the 40s are associated with the 'Third World' or some parts of southern Europe. The normal social practice of greeting even strangers on a sunny day by saying 'what a lovely sunny day' would, perhaps, undergo a change now.

The consequences of what happened that day in the UK is a case study of the future the world will face if global heating is not reversed on an emergency basis. The country appeared to have turned into a frightening inferno. Right from London to Yorkshire, the UK witnessed wildfires sparked by tinder-dry grasslands. The parched land was so vulnerable to fires that even a carelessly thrown cigarette butt could ignite a blaze. The government spokesperson confirmed that 41 properties had been destroyed by fires in London, besides 14 in Norfolk and five in Lincolnshire.

The firefighting services were so overstretched that London Mayor Sadiq Khan said that firefighters in the capital had endured their busiest time since the Second World War. Off-duty officers had to be requisitioned. The regular training sessions had to be cancelled, thus further weakening the technical human resources' prowess to fight future blazes. Mark Hardingham, chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council, said the blazes resembled the fires in California, Australia and southern Europe encompassing Portugal, Spain and Greece. Train services were disrupted because the tracks in many places buckled, and overhead cables were damaged by excess heat. At least in one airport, the runway was melting, making it unsafe for planes. Hospitals reported increased admissions of dehydrated persons, some of them vulnerable due to other health conditions.



Appointments for some cancer patients needing radio therapy were cancelled and the IT systems at some hospitals crashed, leading to denial of access to patient records. Primary schools in some places had to be closed early and children were advised to go home. The National Farmers' Union reported crops "being parched to the bone".

The excess heat led to the disruption of farmers' crop-sowing plans, growth of rampant weeds and paucity of water for vegetable-growing. There were ugly scenes of over-ripening strawberries rotting in the fields as an adequate number of farm workers and pickers were not available due to many feeling unwell and taking a day off. Cattle also suffered from excessive heat. Livestock farmers reported that inadequate grass growth during the heatwave was creating problems for feeding sheep and cows. Cows were reported as yielding less milk. Pet animals, especially dogs, suffered too. High levels of the heat have a cascading effect. Renewable power generation through wind decreases

because high pressure on sizzling summer days generates less wind. It may sound counter-intuitive that solar plants also become less efficient in hot weather. It is estimated that depending upon the installed location of the solar panels, excessive heat over the 25°C mark, for which the photovoltaic panels are normally tested, can reduce output efficiency by 10-25 per cent. However, it is important to emphasise that in the long run, solar panel-generated energy is relatively efficient. However, even solar energy is not the perfect solution to the challenge of global climate change because the production of solar panels requires the use of energy and, eventually, all solar panels become pollution-generating waste. Excessive heat also leads to a drop in the hydropower generation because the water reservoirs — the sources of this energy — get dried up. The global heating which is caused by using fossil fuels (oil, coal and gas) creates a vicious circle. Two examples best illustrate this. One is the use of air conditioners (ACs) by institutions and households to

cope with heat and the other is the growth of forests to absorb carbon emissions. Not all users of ACs understand that the AC is bad for the planet. Even those who understand this feel helpless. Air-conditioning accounts for about a fifth of the electricity used around the world. Much of this electricity comes from power plants that use fossil fuels, contributing to further emissions of greenhouse gases and leading to greater rise in the average global temperatures. This, in turn, creates more reliance on air-conditioning. Forests and trees are nature's built-in system to deal with human excessiveness in creating nature-destroying carbon emissions. I must add, however, that environmentally uninformed tree-planting campaigns can have an adverse effect on the environment. Tree plantations and forests are not the same thing. Naturally regenerated forests are rich sources of biodiversity, but some tree plantation exercises can invade species-rich grassland and wetland areas which are important for carbon dioxide storage.

With semifinal berth at stake, Australia's pedigree meets Afghanistan's panache

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES: Eyeing a semifinal spot, Australia's historic pedigree in cricket's biggest tournaments will count for nothing when they run into an Afghanistan side that is fast cementing its place in the game's top table, in the Champions Trophy here on Friday.

Basking in the afterglow of their memorable win over England at the Gaddafi Stadium on Wednesday, Afghanistan have a realistic chance of making their second successive semifinals of a global event, less than a year after their entry into the last four stage of the T20 World Cup in the Americas.

On the other hand, a win for Australia will secure their passage to the semifinals of the tournament while eliminating Afghanistan with a game to spare.

However, it is easier said than done. For one, for all their firepower in batting, Australia are without their three leading fast bowlers in Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood. The trio's absence was



felt as England racked up a 350-plus total in their tournament opener before the Aussies rode on Josh Inglis's counterattacking hundred to emerge victorious by five wickets and 15 balls to spare.

Two-time winners Australia are seeking to regain the Champions Trophy title after a gap of 15 years. They had won back-to-back titles in 2006 and 2009 but have failed to reach the finals in the 2013 and 2017 editions, after which the event was discontinued.

In the absence of their big fast bowlers, Australia know that their strengths in batting with the likes of Travis Head, Steve Smith, Marnus Labuschagne and Glenn Maxwell capable of inflicting

plenty of damage on the opposition bowling attack.

While there is no doubt the absence of regulars has weakened the team, it has also provided an opportunity for the young turks to impress, cement their place in the side, and carry forward the rich Australian legacy in marquee events.

Australia are expected to produce a strong performance with the bat but for people like Ben Dwarshuis, Spencer Johnson, Nathan Ellis, and Adam Zampa, who will shoulder the responsibility with the ball in challenging conditions, they are aware that they will have to put their best foot forward if they are to progress from the group

stage.

Dwarshuis and Johnson were profligate against England (the match against South Africa was washed out), and they will look to make amends on Thursday, and in Zampa, Australia have a spinner capable of exploiting the conditions in Pakistan.

As far as Afghanistan are concerned, their batting will be spearheaded by swashbuckling opener Ibrahim Zadran, whose 177 against England is now the highest individual score in the Champions Trophy.

Having lost to the Afghans in the T20 World Cup last year, Australia will not take their upcoming opponents lightly, and Afghanistan head coach Jonathan Trott acknowledged that in the press conference after the victory over England.

But Trott has no reasons to worry as he also has a formidable bowling attack at his disposal with Azmatullah Omarzai leading the pace unit besides the spin trio of Rashid Khan, Mohammad Nabi and Noor Ahmad.

Praggnanandhaa draws with Navara, Aravindh escapes against Dai Van

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES:

Indian Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa splits points with Czech hero David Navara while compatriot Aravindh Chithambaram escaped with a draw with another local star Nguyen Thai Dai Van in the first round of the Prague Masters.

German Vincent Keymer, who was famously part of D. Gukesh's team during the World Championships, scored the first big upset of the tournament, taking down top seed Wei Yi of China.

American Sam Shankland was the other winner of the day as he defeated Gurel Ediz of Turkey while the game between Quang Leim Le of Vietnam and Anish Giri of Holland ended in a draw.

Keymer and Shankland emerged as early leaders after round one with



Shankland stealing the limelight in his first outing against Ediz.

Praggnanandhaa, Aravindh, Giri, Le, Dai Van and Navara share the third spot on a half point each and they are followed by Wei Yi and Ediz who will look forward to opening their account in the next round.

Praggnanandhaa did not get much to have a go in the middle game.

It was a timely pawn sacrifice by Navara that equalised the position and after the trade of queens,

looked as though the game would end soon.

Dai Van ran lower on time when Aravindh blundered and landed himself in a lost position.

Left with just a few seconds on the 70th move, Dai Van decided to play it safe and steered the game to a draw through perpetual checks.

Meanwhile in the Challengers section Divya Deshmukh, the lone girl and the only Indian, ended on the losing side against Ivan Salgado Lopez of Spain.

RESULTS ROUND 1:

Vincent Keymer (Ger) beat Wei Yi (Chn); Aravindh Chithambaram (Ind) drew with Nguyen Thai Dai Van (Cze); Sam Shankland (Usa) beat Gurel Ediz (Tur); R Praggnanandhaa (Ind) drew with David Navara (Cze); Le Quang Leim (Vie) drew with Anish Giri (Ned).

Sarwate haunts Vidarbha with bat after Kerala seamers make merry with ball

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES:

There is something about Aditya Sarwate, Ranji Trophy finals and the VCA Stadium.

He was the player-of-the-match for Vidarbha in the 2018-19 final here. Six years later, he is playing an innings that could go a long way in deciding another final. Except that he is playing against Vidarbha now.

Sarwate, coming in at one-drop for the first time, batted with grit, as well as some flair, to lead Kerala's reply to Vidarbha's first innings score of 379. His new side finished the second day at 131 for three -- a considerable improvement from 14 for two.

Kerala will want Sarwate to bat for long on the third day. After Darshan Nalkande yanked the openers Akshay Chandran and Ro-



han Kunnummal, it was his third-wicket partnership of 93 with the young Ahammed Imran (37) that steadied the Kerala innings.

But, in the final hour, Imran was guilty of playing according to Vidarbha's plan: he pulled Yash Thakur's short ball to the fielder at mid-wicket, who was placed for just that shot. The 18-year-old, however, had been batting sensibly and responsibly till then.

Sarwate, though, continued his vigil and his drives on the off-side were delightful.

Earlier, Vidarbha's hopes of making a massive first-innings total were dashed by the Kerala seamers. After resuming at the overnight score of 254 for four, the host suffered a major setback when Danish Malewar (153, 285b, 15x4, 3x6) was bowled through the gate -- a big one at that -- by N.P. Basil, who got one to nip

back to clip the off stump. Basil, who may not be that quick but bowls steadily, then sent back the nightwatchman Thakur with a ball that kept low and came in sharply. In the very next over, Vidarbha lost its most prized wicket of the season.

Yash Rathod, who arrived in the middle with 933 runs and five hundreds against his name, fell to a fine, low catch at slip by Rohan Kunnummal off Eden Apple Tom's ball that moved away. Suddenly, the former champion found itself at 297 for seven.

A gritty last-wicket stand between Harsh Dubey and Nachiket Bhute, however, was worth 44. The duo even survived the half-hour that was added to the opening session.

IPL 2025: Kevin Pietersen joins Delhi Capitals as a mentor

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES:

Former England cricketer Kevin Pietersen has been appointed as the team mentor for Delhi Capitals ahead of the 2025 season of the Indian Premier League.

Pietersen will join Hemang Badani (head coach), Matthew Mott (assistant coach), Munaf Patel (bowling coach), and Venugopal Rao (director of cricket) as part of the support staff for DC.

This will be Pietersen's first coaching stint in the IPL. He last played in the league in 2016 for Rising Pune Supergiant. He has



previously played for Delhi (then called Daredevils) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru and also captained both franchises across 17 games.

"I'm so excited to come home to Delhi! I have the fondest memories of my

time with Delhi," he wrote on social media.

"I love the city, I love the fans and I'll do everything I can to support the franchise in our quest for the title in 2025!"

Delhi Capitals has strengthened its batting

after signing K.L. Rahul, Faf du Plessis, Harry Brook, and Ashutosh Sharma. It also retained Jake Fraser-McGurk and brought in pacer Mitchell Starc during the 2025 IPL auction.

The IPL begins on March 22, with defending champion Kolkata Knight Riders taking on RCB at Eden Gardens.

DC will start its campaign against Lucknow Super Giants at the ACA-VCA Cricket Stadium in Visakhapatnam on March 24. The Capitals finished sixth last season, missing out on a playoff spot.

Shikhar Dhawan reveals Dhoni's key role in Rohit Sharma's rise as opener

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES:

Former opener Shikhar Dhawan believes Rohit Sharma has matured as a leader over the years and shares a close bond with his teammates, which augurs well for the Indian team.

Dhawan, who was Rohit's opening partner for a considerable period of time, said the Mumbai batter is experienced enough to handle the team.

"From 2013 to 2025, 12 years of experience is a lot. Rohit has been through a lot. He knows how to work in a pressure situation, how to gather the boys.

"As a leader, he has become mature, he knows when to be lenient and when to pull back. It's a fine balance and Rohit's bond with the boys is amazing. We are in a great situation," Dhawan said in a special series titled 'The Shikhar Dhawan Experi-



ence' on Star Sports and JioHotstar.

Dhawan also spoke about his 2013 ICC Champions Trophy journey, and recollected his nine-year long opening partnership with Rohit, which also began at the same tournament.

The 39-year-old former left-hander said it was Mahendra Singh Dhoni's idea to promote Rohit as an opener alongside him.

"This opening pair decision was made half a day prior to that match. At that time, I was also new, and I was in my own world. I

had made a comeback and needed to perform well. But MS Dhoni took this decision and instructed Rohit to open," Dhawan said.

"So I didn't think much about it. I thought if Rohit opens, we'll enjoy batting together. We got such a great start in the first match. We were at 100 without losing a wicket.

"We didn't score 30-35 runs up to the 10th over because the wicket was seaming. But I never thought that our pair would be so massive and we would play together for

10 years," he added.

Dhawan also talked about his camaraderie with Rohit and said their friendship dates back to junior days.

"We trust each other and our understanding and level of communication was very high. On the field and off the field our bond is same. We played together, we have partied together after winning so many series. We have played as a team," he said.

"That whole journey and even before playing in India, when Rohit was 16-17 years old, I played in the Under-19 World Cup. So, we have been together and have been friends since then."

With two wins from as many matches, India have already qualified for the semifinals of the Champions Trophy and will play New Zealand in an inconsequential final group game on Sunday in Dubai.

Pakistan's campaign ends on winless note after tie vs Bangladesh called off due to rain

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES:

Pakistan's campaign in the Champions Trophy ended on a winless note after their match against Bangladesh was called off without a ball being bowled due to incessant rain here on Thursday.

The match was effectively a dead-rubber, with both teams already out of contention after failing to secure a win in their two previous matches. Pakistan, hosting an ICC tournament for the first time in 29 years, had hoped for a strong finish but ended their disastrous campaign without a victory.

Persistent downpour left the ground soaked, with covers in place and puddles forming around the field. With weather not improving, match officials called off the game nearly two hours after the scheduled start time. The gloomy weather prevented even the toss from taking place.

As a result, the two teams shared one point each, though both Pakistan and Bangladesh finished the tournament winless.

This is the second match in Rawalpindi to be called off without a ball being bowled, following the washout between South Africa and Australia earlier this week.

The rain-induced abandonment left the home fans frustrated, as they hoped for play at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. Pakistan have faced criticism for their poor showing in the tournament, having suffered defeats to New Zealand and India (by six wickets).

"We wanted to do well and perform well in front of our nation. The expectations are very high. We didn't perform well and it is disappointing for us," Pakistan captain Mohammad Rizwan said.

Reflecting on the road ahead, Rizwan said: "You

can learn from your mistakes. We have made mistakes in the last few games. Hopefully, we can learn from these.

"We are next going to New Zealand and, hopefully, we can perform there and the mistakes that we did against New Zealand here in Pakistan, we can learn from that. And we will do better in New Zealand."

Pakistan's assistant coach, Azhar, who hails from the city, attributed his team's poor show in the tournament to injuries to key players, and the fact that the team took too much pressure.

"We haven't played well in this tournament. We have played good cricket in this format, but in the tournament it has not gone well because of injuries. Against India, we put a lot of pressure on ourselves," he said.

"We know where we need to improve. It is all

about adapting and taking responsibility. The results have also been a surprise for us," he added.

The former Test all-rounder said that the people need to keep faith in the players. "We have to stick with the talent we identify for it to come good over the months," said Mahmood.

Pakistan had lost two top players -- Fakhar Zaman and Saim Ayub -- to injuries, affecting their campaign. "The guy who has been performing from the last few months in Australia, South Africa, Zimbabwe... the team was combined and then suddenly when someone is injured, the team will be disturbed," added Rizwan.

"As a captain, you can look forward to that as well. One side you can say that the team is disturbed, but this is no excuse. Yes, Fakhar Zaman and Saim Ayub were injured, but we will learn from this," the captain added.

Afghanistan is never going to be taken lightly ever again: Head coach Trott

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES:

Afghanistan is "never going to be taken lightly" by any team after his "resilient" side knocked England out of the Champions Trophy with a memorable win, head coach Jonathan Trott has asserted.

Ibrahim Zadran's majestic 177 and pacer Azmatullah Omarzai's fifer trumped Joe Root's masterful hundred, as the Afghanistan registered a thrilling eight-run win against England here on

Wednesday.

Looking ahead to their next must-win game against Australia, Trott also said that Afghanistan team will take confidence from their fine showings against the Aussies in recent World Cup outings.

"Since I've been coach we've played against Australia three times and we've been in the game each of those games. So, we should take a lot of confidence from that.

"And I think certainly

what happened in the World Cup, T20 World Cup, and I say this to the players as well, that Afghanistan's never going to be taken lightly ever again," Trott said at the post-match press conference.

"I see every game that we play is going to be competitive and every game we go into I expect to win," the Englishman added.

Wins by Afghanistan against established Test nations are no longer seen

as upsets and recent performances on the world stage mean they cannot afford to fly under the radar.

"Australia aren't going to take us lightly," Trott said.

Trott is hoping for strong support for his team on Friday. "Hopefully Friday will be a massive sell out and people will turn up or take the day off work and come and watch us from two o'clock onwards. I think it's great for the guys.

Markets open higher, turn volatile later on foreign fund outflows, weak global cues

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES:

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty began the trade on a positive note on Thursday but later faced volatile trends amid unabated foreign fund outflows, monthly derivatives expiry and weak global market cues.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 231.97 points to 74,834.09 in early trade. The NSE Nifty went up by 65.75 points to 22,613.30.

Later, the indices faced volatile trends and were trading between highs and lows.

From the Sensex pack, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, Nestle and Tata Steel were the biggest gainers.

UltraTech Cement, Mahindra & Mahindra, NTPC, HCL Tech, Tech Mahindra and Tata Motors were among the major laggards.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) of-



flooded equities worth Rs 3,529.10 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Stock markets were closed on Wednesday for 'Mahashivratri'.

"Volatility is likely to be the hallmark as traders roll over their February F&O contracts which expires today. Worries over tariffs will continue to weigh on domestic stocks with plenty of uncertainties surrounding the timing and the size, while re-

lentless FII selling leaves investors to worry a lot as they fear the brutal sell-off is likely to get worse," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

He further said on the positive front, WTI oil prices falling towards USD 69 a barrel provides some cheer in an uncertain global market.

In Asian markets, Tokyo quoted in the positive territory while Seoul, Shanghai and

Hong Kong traded lower. US markets ended on a mixed note on Wednesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.33 per cent to USD 72.77 a barrel.

The Sensex climbed 147.71 points or 0.20 per cent to settle at 74,602.12 on Tuesday. The Nifty, however, fell for the sixth day, slipping 5.80 points or 0.03 per cent to finish at 22,547.55.

Tractor, PV sales to grow in Feb while 2Ws, CVs may struggle, says Nuvama Institutional Equities

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES:

India's automobile sector is expected to deliver a mixed performance in February 2025, with strong growth in tractors and passenger vehicles (PVs) offset by weakness in two-wheelers (2Ws) and commercial vehicles (CVs), according to Nuvama Institutional Equities.

Tractor sales are projected to see double-digit growth of around 10 per cent year-on-year, driven by positive farmer sentiment, better Rabi sowing, and a favourable base effect. Mahindra & Mahindra (MM) is expected to outperform, with an 11 per cent rise in volumes to 24,000 units, while Escorts (including Kubota) may see 5 per cent growth to 8,100 units, lagging due to lower exposure in western and southern markets.

The PV segment is set to maintain its momentum, growing at around



5 percent YoY, led by strong demand in northern and western India. MM-Auto is likely to see a 14 per cent rise in volumes to 83,000 units, while Maruti Suzuki (MSIL) may post a 4 per cent increase to 205,000 units. Hyundai is forecast to grow 2 per cent to 62,000 units, but Tata Motors' PV sales may decline 2 per cent to 50,200 units.

Meanwhile, CV sales are expected to remain flat, as improved freight availability—reflected in higher E-way bill generation—is offset by selective financing and stable fleet utilization levels.

Among key players, Eicher Motors (EIM-VECV) may see an 8 per cent increase to 8,050 units, Ashok Leyland (AL) could rise 3 per cent to 18,000 units, but Tata Motors' CV sales may slip 1 per cent to 34,600 units.

The 2W segment is expected to contract by 2 per cent YoY, affected by a high base and financing challenges. However, exports to Latin America and Africa are expected to grow in double digits. Among key brands, Eicher Motors' Royal Enfield (EIM-RE) is set to surge 13 per cent to 86,000 units, TVS Mo-

tor (TVSL) may grow 6 per cent to 390,000 units, and Bajaj Auto (BJAUT) could post a 4 per cent increase to 360,000 units. In contrast, Hero MotoCorp (HMCL) is likely to see a 3 per cent decline to 455,000 units.

Analysts remain constructive on the tractor and two-wheeler segments, forecasting high single-digit growth in these categories over FY25-27, outpacing PVs and CVs. Top stock picks include TVS Motor, Mahindra & Mahindra, Eicher Motors (RE), Samvardhana Mother-son (SAMIL), and Uno Minda.

The Nifty Auto index closed at 21,335, lower by 1.5 per cent from the last close. Maruti Suzuki, M&M, Tata Motors, Bajaj Auto, and Hyundai Motor India were the top losers on the index. The Nifty Auto index has tanked 18 per cent in the last six months.

HDFC Life Launches Click 2 Achieve Par Advantage to Enable Dreams and Goals for Everyone

CHANDIGARH/LUDHIANA:

HDFC Life, one of India's leading life insurers, has launched its latest product HDFC Life Click 2 Achieve Par Advantage. This participating product has been designed keeping in mind milestones associated with the different life stages of an individual. As one continues to save for their growing aspirations/goals, it is observed that there is a preference for early liquidity (for short term needs), flexibility and financial security for the future.

Speaking on the product launch, Anesh Khanna – Head Products & Segments, HDFC Life, commented, "We, at HDFC Life, believe that life insurance products need to be designed to fit the

specific needs of every individual, depending on their age, life stage, current income and future plans. Every individual dreams of a financially secure future for their loved ones and

also of achieving goals such as buying a home, sending their children for higher education to a prestigious institute, etc. These dreams need long-term planning with an instrument that offers flexibility, liquidity and financial security. HDFC Life Click 2 Achieve Par Advantage has been designed to offer a solution to individuals who endeavour to create a better future and protect their dreams against uncertainties with a financial safety net."



HDFC Life Click 2 Achieve Par Advantage comes with following key features:

- Policy Continuance Benefit (PCB) – Through this option, future premiums are waived in case of death of the Life Assured. The Death Benefit is paid out as a lump sum immediately and also the future benefits under the plan continue for the nominee or survivor.

- Choice of Death Benefit Multiple – This option enables one to choose a customised Death Benefit Multiple – 5x, 7x or 11x – as per their need.

- Paid Up Addition – Through this option, one can convert partial or the entire cash bonus payable into Paid-Up Additions which can be encashed anytime during the term of the policy.

Customers can choose any combination from the above options as per their future

needs. Along with life insurance cover for financial security of the family, the plan also offers:

- Additional Life Coverage – One can choose to cover one's spouse

- Tax benefits – As applicable for an individual, based on prevailing tax laws

Life insurance is a necessity for every working individual with financial responsibilities. HDFC Life has been an innovator in the life insurance space offering customisable products that meet the ever-evolving needs of Indian consumers. The Company offers a robust digital platform that provides multiple servicing options to customers as per their convenience. HDFC Life's commitment to customers is reflected in its consistently high claim settlement ratio, which was 99.50% for FY24.

Prestige Estates sees inventory buildup in luxury housing, calls for more mid-income, premium supply

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES:

Prestige Estates Projects Ltd expects luxury housing demand to remain healthy despite industry concerns over a potential inventory buildup due to flattening demand even as it gears up to take on competition in markets beyond its Bengaluru stronghold.

"It is possible. Having said that, in the past five months in the Bengaluru market, we have launched more than 2,000 apartments in the Rs 4 crore-Rs 6 crore category in Whitefield, and we have already sold more than 1,100 of them. I think demand is very healthy. By the look of it, there is a little bit of inventory buildup happening in the luxury segment," Praveer Shrivastava, head of residential sales at the Bengaluru-based real estate firm, told Moneycontrol.

However, some ticket sizes, such as mid and premium, need more supply to match up to demand, he added. "The situation is fine till absorption is good, but if it slows down, it will become a bit of a problem. We actually need more supply in the mid-income and premium segment, between Rs 1.5 crore and Rs 4 crore. That is where the real gap in demand-supply is," Shrivastava said during the interaction.

Market observers have warned of a slowdown in the luxury housing segment, particularly in the above-Rs 4 crore category, with registration data showing a decline in sales pace for marquee projects in markets like Mumbai.

According to rating agency India Ratings and Research, sales growth is expected to moderate in FY26 to 9 per cent, from the FY25 estimate of 17 per cent, with an "inventory risk" in the luxury segment, priced Rs 4 crore and higher.

The largely southern India based Prestige Estates is now looking to take the fight to other large developers in markets such as the Mumbai metropolitan region and the National Capital Region (NCR), including in coveted micro-markets. The company is also seeking to dip its toe in other competitive markets, such as Pune, while retaining Bengaluru as its largest market.

In NCR, the company is planning to launch its integrated township format Prestige City project in Ghaziabad's Indirapuram, on a 62.5-acre land parcel with a gross development potential of around Rs 11,000 crore. The project also includes a shopping mall from the group's Forum brand. The company has spent around Rs 1,000 crore on land and initial ap-

proval costs, Shrivastava added, with total spending of up to Rs 8,000 crore possible for the project.

The company also sounded bullish on the NCR market despite increasing competition in the premium housing categories, with strong, local players such as DLF being challenged by developers such as Macrotech (Lodha), Birla Estates, and others, and is maintaining business development plans in key micro-markets.

"We are looking at acquiring more partnerships and land that we can work on. We are working on two land parcels right now. One is at KG Marg in Delhi, and one is at Sector 150 in Noida. However, we are looking for more regions to explore, such as Gurugram, and we would like to pick up some more land parcels in Noida. We need to have a wider footprint in Delhi NCR," said Shrivastava.

However, he warned that despite a demand-supply gap existing in the NCR market, most new launches in the area are in the above-Rs 4 crore category, dubbing it "not sustainable", which keeps a lot of demand in lower ticket sizes unserved. He also noted "frothiness" in some markets, such as Gurugram, which has prompted some develop-

ers to come up with easier payment plans to attract more customers.

Shrivastava said despite the company recently raising around Rs 5,000 crore from a qualified institutional placement (QIP), nearly all of the investment towards the Indirapuram project, as well as two recent launches in Bengaluru, is expected from internal accruals.

The proceeds from the QIP are being deployed towards retiring debt as well as land acquisition across its target geographies, according to the company.

In the Mumbai metropolitan region, Prestige Estates is planning to deliver its first two projects in the ongoing year—the Prestige Jasdan Classic in Mahalaxmi and the Prestige Siesta project—the latter being part of the large Prestige City development in Mulund. The company has expressed a long-term target of western markets delivering around Rs 10,000 crore each year to its overall revenue.

In Mumbai, Shrivastava added that the company is proceeding with its planned ultra-luxury Prestige Nautilus project, located at Annie Besant Road in Worli, where it is targeting an average ticket size of up to Rs 50 crore, with a total gross development value of Rs 10,000 crore.

Nukleus Office Solutions IPO sails through on final day of subscription

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES:

Nukleus Office Solutions' initial public offering (IPO) has managed to get fully subscribed at 1.27 times on the final day of bidding, i.e. February 27.

The company will finalise the IPO share allotment by February 28, and investors can start trading in Nukleus Office Solutions shares on the BSE SME effective March 4.

Investors have bought 13.54 lakh equity shares during February 24-27,



compared to the offer size of 10.65 lakh shares via 1,511 applications, the subscription data published on the BSE showed. The New Delhi-based

co-working and managed office spaces provider launched IPO to raise Rs 31.7 crore at a price of Rs 234 per share. The company intends

to utilise IPO proceeds mainly for the establishment of new centres, and building up technology platform, integration of all centres, online client interaction and mobile application.

Further, the public issue money will also be used for advertisement expenses towards enhancing the brand visibility, and general corporate purposes.

The book running lead manager handling the public issue is Sundae Capital Advisors.

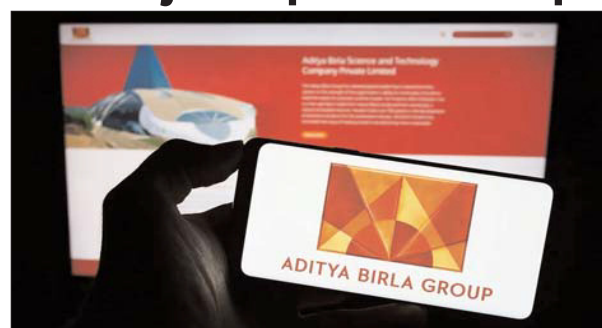
Aditya Birla firm Century Enka's shares crash 11% after fire at Gujarat plant disrupts production

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES:

Shares of Aditya Birla Group company Century Enka crashed nearly 11 per cent to close at Rs 531 apiece on February 27, after the company informed through an exchange filing about production disruption following a fire at its nylon filament yarn (NFY) spinning plant in Gujarat's Bharuch district.

No injuries or casualties were reported in the incident, said the company, adding that the fire was contained at the time of communication to the exchange, but it resulted in a disruption of production.

"There is adequate insurance coverage for said plant and intimation to Insurance Company is



being made. This is not likely to have material impact on the Company's profitability," the exchange filing said.

Century Enka is taking adequate steps to restore the operations at the plant, and is also investigating the cause of the fire and assessing the loss incurred because of the incident.

The affected unit in Gujarat is one of the two

manufacturing facilities of the company which cumulatively have a capacity of around 92,000 MTPA. The other manufacturing facility is located in Pune, Maharashtra.

The Century Enka shares are down over 38 per cent from the 52-week high of Rs 864 apiece, and nearly 41 per cent higher from its 52-week low of Rs 380 apiece.

Ola Electric accelerates profitability drive axing regional warehouses, optimising costs

NEW DELHI/AGENCIES:

Ola Electric has eliminated its regional warehouses across India, and will now leverage its 4,000 retail stores nationwide for maintaining vehicle inventory, spare parts, accessories, and last-mile deliveries.

The strategic move is expected to boost EBITDA margins by almost 10 percentage points, besides improving inventory management and faster customer deliveries, sources directly familiar with the matter said.

Ola Electric is redesigning its distribution network and optimizing vehicle registration process as India's largest electric two-wheeler maker chalks out roughly Rs 30 crore monthly savings in an accelerated profitability drive.



The company has also renegotiated contracts with vehicle registration agency partners to streamline the process and further reduce costs.

While this move temporarily affected the company's registration numbers on the VAHAN portal in February, Ola Electric clarified in a stock exchange filing that actual sales remained unaffected during the month.

Internal sources indicated that the company is

on track to sell over 25,000 units this month, maintaining its leadership in the EV two-wheeler segment.

"The front-end network redesign represents a fundamental rethinking of how we manage inventory and serve customers," shared a senior company executive requesting anonymity.

"Our initial distribution model served its purpose during our early growth phase, and now the company's rapid expansion

necessitated the front-end redesign." The restructured network allows Ola to maintain inventory directly at retail locations, eliminating an entire distribution layer while enabling stores to function as delivery points, reducing last-mile expenses and improving customer experience. The inventory pipeline has also been halved to 15 days from 30 days earlier and the delivery timelines have also been brought down to 4-5 days from an earlier timeframe of 10 days, sources added.

The company's focus on profitability comes at a crucial juncture for India's EV market, which has seen a double-digit growth amid rising fuel prices and increasing adoption in Tier 3 & 4 markets.

Rani Mukerji's cop flick to commence filming in THIS month; makers search for 'strong villain'



Mardaani 3, the next installment in the Rani Mukerji-led cop franchise, was officially announced in 2024. Fans have been eagerly waiting for updates about the movie. It has now been learned that the shooting of the action thriller will commence in June 2025, and the makers are currently searching for an actor to play a 'strong villain.'

According to a recent report in Mid-day, Mardaani 3 is now in the pre-production stage. The portal revealed that the makers are currently having look tests for important characters. Director Abhiraj Minawala reportedly plans to take the film on floors by June of this year.

While Rani Mukerji's character has received a lot of love in the past two movies, the villains, played by Tahir Raj Bhasin and Vishal

Jethwa, have also been memorable. The team is looking for an actor to play a similar menacing antagonist in the third part. The portal's source stated, "Auditions are going on to bring in fresh talent. The emphasis is on finding a strong villain."

The report further mentioned that the main shooting locations have been finalized. The movie will be shot in Mumbai and Delhi. More locations in North India will apparently be locked in the next few weeks.

In August 2024, Pinkvilla was the first to break the news that Rani Mukerji is gearing up for the next chapter in the Mardaani series. A source shared the actress' excitement about returning as her beloved character Shivani Shivaji Roy. The source stated, "She loves playing

Shivani Shivaji Roy, as it's an empowering and strong character. It's rare for a female lead to spearhead a franchise in India, and Rani is doing that with Mardaani."

Yash Raj Films teased the third part in their video celebrating 10 years of Mardaani. They made the official announcement in December. The caption said, "The wait is over! #RaniMukerji is back as the fierce Shivani Shivaji Roy in #Mardaani3. In cinemas 2026."

Moreover, it will be directed by Abhiraj Minawala, who previously assisted in popular films by Yash Raj Films like Ranveer Singh's starer Band Baaja Baaraat, Gunday, Sultan, and Tiger 3. He is presently working as an associate director for War 2. The film is scheduled to release in 2026.

The Diplomat actor John Abraham opens up on 'propaganda films' and says, 'Don't think we are...'



Bollywood actor John Abraham is gearing up for his return to the big screen with his upcoming thriller The Diplomat, co-starring Sadia Khateeb. Recently, he addressed the topic of certain films being labeled as 'propaganda'. He also expressed his views on secularism, stating that he doesn't believe people in cinema, or society in general, are as secular as they once were.

In a conversation with The Hollywood Reporter India, John Abraham shared, "I don't think we are as secular as we used to be, even as individuals in cinema." Highlighting the importance of maintaining a balanced cultural fabric in India, he noted that the industry is navigating a delicate phase. Addressing the ongoing debate about certain films

being labeled as propaganda, he reflected on the complexities surrounding this issue.

John further discussed the impact of films and how audiences perceive them. He acknowledged that some movies, like The Kashmir Files, have been labeled as propaganda but emphasized their effectiveness in storytelling. He said, "Someone says a particular film like The Kashmir Files or one of those films is a propaganda film. As a normal consumer of cinema, it was effective. The story hit you."

He further added, "I am not here to judge whether that was a propaganda film or not; I am a consumer who is consuming cinema." From his perspective as a viewer, he believes that if a story resonates and leaves an impression, the credit be-

longs to the filmmaker.

In the same interview, The Diplomat actor also praised Chhaava for its success and impact on bringing audiences back to theaters. He shared that he personally congratulated Vicky Kaushal and producer Dinesh Vijan, expressing his happiness over the film's performance. According to him, such efforts in cinema should be celebrated and appreciated.

He also acknowledged the presence of filmmakers and actors in the industry who are striving to create meaningful cinema and drive change.

Expressing his aspirations, John mentioned his hope that The Diplomat emerges as a dark horse and contributes to this positive shift in the film industry.



Krithi Shetty looks absolutely adorable in her latest photo shoot, donning a charming pink outfit. Her poses, captured while enjoying the rain, have become an instant hit and are quickly becoming viral sensations.

Alia Bhatt offers peek into 'favorite kind of chaos' on set; is she shooting for Love & War or something else?

Alia Bhatt is one of the busiest actresses in Bollywood. She has a lot of exciting projects in her upcoming lineup, which includes Love & War. Alia has been shooting for the magnum opus with Ranbir Kapoor and Vicky Kaushal over the past few months. The actress has now shared a new picture from a set, offering a peek into her 'favorite kind of chaos.' We couldn't help but wonder if this is for Love & War or something else.

Today, February 27, 2025, Alia Bhatt took to her Instagram Stories and shared a mirror selfie from what looked like her vanity van. A number of people from her styling team were seen surrounding her as they helped her get ready for her shoot. Alia captioned the picture, "My favorite (sparkle emojis) kind of chaos."

The paparazzi also spotted Alia Bhatt at the set in Mumbai earlier today. She wore an oversized white shirt with denim pants and white slippers. She was seen without makeup and had her hair left open. Alia posed for the paps with a sweet smile and waved at them.

Earlier in the week, Alia Bhatt stepped out with her husband



Ranbir Kapoor for Sanjay Leela Bhansali's birthday celebration. Vicky Kaushal also joined the party. Along with the filmmaker's birthday, they also celebrated Gangubai Kathiawadi's third anniversary and the success of Vicky's film Chhaava.

Alia shared some inside pictures from the party on her Instagram.

The Love & War team posed with SLB's cake in one photograph, while the second slide showed Vicky cutting another cake.

In the caption, Alia wrote, "A quick break from night shoots to celebrate our director. happy birthday magician sir (and happy 3 to our Gangu too) & lastly many many cheers and claps for @vick-

kaushal09 absolutely smashing the box office with chhaava!! Chalo abhi party over ... back to shoot."

Love & War is slated to release in cinemas on March 20, 2026. Apart from that, Alia Bhatt also has the YRF Spy Universe film Alpha, which is locked for a Christmas 2025 release.

Ayushmann Khurrana celebrates film's milestone with the most beautiful letter to himself

Ayushmann Khurrana has proven his versatility and acting skills through unconventional script choices, making him one of the most bankable actors in the industry. One of his acclaimed films is Dum Laga Ke Haisha, which was released in 2015 alongside Bhumi Pednekar.

Looking back at his journey, the Thama actor recently wrote a heartwarming letter to himself as he celebrated 10 years of the film's release.

On February 27, Ayushmann Khurrana posted an old photograph from the sets of Dum Laga Ke Haisha. In the photo, he is seen dressed up as his character with a blank-printed sweater. He holds a paper in his hand and looks towards the camera. He is also seen donning headphones. The text on the photo reads, "A letter to myself 10 years ago..."

The following slide was an endearing note that read, "Slow down you crazy child. You will be fine. You will see the vagaries of life, the ups and the downs and you will emerge stronger. Your bigger plan should be a complete hush. There's absolutely no rush. The goal is not



to only look at scoring a hit. There is a far bigger plan."

He further assured himself to calm the "hardcore hustler" in him to become the "true artiste" that he always aspired to be. He asked himself to not be anxious but grateful to the universe for the life, the moment he has, and being able to follow his dream of becoming an actor.

"Everything will turn out to be ok. Dum Laga Ke Haisha, this small film with a big heart, is going to touch the lives & hearts of countless people across India and tell everyone to fall in love again. Please be true to your roots and true to your gut. You are God's favourite child. Slow down you crazy child," he concluded.

The Thama actor captioned the post, "A decade later, I write back to the one who dared to dream. #10YearsOfDLKH."

Khurrana is currently busy shooting for his first collaboration with Dinesh Vijan's Maddock Films for Thama. Directed by Aditya Sarpotdar, the horror film will feature Rashmika Mandanna in the lead role.