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NIFTY 50	BSE SENSEX	Bitcoin INR	NIFTY FINANCIAL SERVICES	NIFTY BANK	\$1 (USD)	€1 (EURO)	Gold (24K) 10gm	Silver (1 Kg)	Petrol/L	Diesel/L	LPG/14.2Kg
25,665.60 ▼ -66.70 (-0.26%)	83,382.71 ▼ -244.98 (-0.29%)	8,735,131.20 ▲ +130,394.20 (+0.09%)	27,501.40 ▼ -84.60 (-0.31%)	59,580.15 ▲ +1.35 (+0.00%)	₹90.34 ▼ +0.07 (+0.08%)	₹105.27 ▼ +0.16 (+0.16%)	₹142,634.00 ▲ +602.00 (+0.42%)	₹278,486.00 ▲ +9516.00 (+3.54%)	₹94.77	₹87.67	₹853.00

Large-Ticket Deals Power Industrial & Warehousing Leasing to 36.9 Mn Sq Ft in 2025

Hyderabad / New Delhi, Jan 14 (FN Reporter)

India's industrial and warehousing real estate market recorded its strongest performance in recent years, with 36.9 million sq ft of leasing in 2025, registering a 16% year-on-year growth, according to a report released by Colliers India. The momentum was largely driven by large-sized transactions, which accounted for 45% of total leasing activity, underlining occupiers' preference for scalable, Grade A logistics assets, the report revealed. Delhi NCR and Chennai emerged as the leading markets, together accounting for over 45% of the total

leasing volume during the year. Delhi NCR led with a 24% share, followed closely by Chennai at 22%, supported by strong manufacturing clusters and improving infrastructure connectivity, the report said. Leasing activity gained pace in the final quarter of 2025, with Q4 alone contributing 10.4 million sq ft. Chennai and Pune together made up 56% of the quarterly demand, signalling renewed occupier confidence after a relatively muted third quarter. From an occupier perspective, Third-Party Logistics (3PL) players continued to

dominate demand, accounting for 32% of Grade A space uptake, or nearly 12 million sq ft during the year, it said. Engineering and e-commerce occupiers also remained active, and collectively contributed about 35% of the annual leasing activity. Large-format warehousing requirements were particularly evident in the e-commerce segment, where 61% of leasing occurred through transactions exceeding 200,000 sq ft, driven by the expansion of fulfilment centres and delivery hubs. In contrast, FMCG and retail occupiers preferred mid-sized facilities, reflecting the

growing adoption of hyperlocal distribution models.

At the micro-market level, Bhiwandi (Mumbai) led leasing activity with approximately 4.9 million sq ft of Grade A absorption, followed by Chakan-Talegaon (Pune) and Oragadam (Chennai), each recording over 2.5 million sq ft of demand. On the supply side, developers remained bullish on long-term prospects. New completions touched 41.7 million sq ft in 2025, marking a 15% annual increase and the highest supply addition in recent years. Commenting on the outlook, Vijay Ganesh, Managing Director, Industrial & Logistics Services, Colliers India, ▶ **Cont. to Page-7**



'Cities need to be prepared for accommodating, enabling rapid economic growth'

New Delhi, Jan 14 (Reporter)



Cities are important when it comes to supporting and driving economic growth of a nation, playing pivotal role as growth hubs in an economy. Speaking to UNI, retired IAS Dr OP Agarwal, a known expert on urban transport, climate change, and public policy, said that all those economies that have witnessed rapid growth, have seen expansion in the manufacturing and services sector, adding that these activities usually happen in the urban areas. He emphasized that urban areas need to be prepared to accommodate and also enable the rapid growth of the economy in the journey to becoming a developed one. To realise the right balance of growth and development in the major cities, he stated that the planning of infrastructure needs to be based on an economic vision and not as per the traditional process, which is incremental, and does not take into account future economic growth as a driver. He stated that a very important aspect related to a city is the vulnerability to disasters, which is much higher in the cities, given their density and the need is to prepare the urban areas for these challenges. It was the Covid pandemic, earthquakes, or floods that clearly proved how urban areas are vulnerable to emergencies and disasters, making them susceptible to damage. Talking of efficient and future-proof master planning for cities, Agarwal said that factors like key economic drivers that determine the infrastructure needs must be taken into account, and also the land requirements for such needs. He suggested that what has been recognised is that there is a need to build capacity at the municipal level, state level, and the national level to deeply understand these challenges and also look at how these can be dealt with. Throwing light on the issue of increase in the population in bigger cities like Delhi, he said that good planning is very important. He also laid emphasis on the importance of knowing what kind of physical and social infrastructure is required in the city, and also how much land is required ▶ **Cont. to Page-7**

Wholesale inflation rises to 0.83 pc in Dec on higher manufactured goods prices

New Delhi, Jan 14 (FN Bureau)

India's wholesale price inflation edged higher in December 2025, with the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) based inflation rising to 0.83 per cent year-on-year, reflecting increased prices in manufactured goods and select primary articles, according to official data released on Tuesday. On a monthly basis, wholesale prices increased by 0.71 per cent in December compared to November, indicating a mild build-up in price pressures at the producer level. The overall WPI stood at 157.0 during the month, based on

the 2011-12 base year. Manufactured products, which carry the highest weight in the WPI basket, recorded an annual inflation of 1.82



per cent, driven by higher prices of machinery and equipment, textiles, food products, chemicals, and transport equipment. The rise in manufactured goods inflation suggests firm demand

conditions and higher input costs across industrial segments. Primary articles showed mixed price movements, with moderation in some food items even as prices of minerals and non-food articles registered increases. Fuel and power prices remained largely stable, offering some relief to overall wholesale inflation during the month. The food index, which includes food articles and food products, recorded zero inflation on a year-on-year basis in December, indicating stable food prices compared to the same period last year. Prices of cereals such as wheat and paddy showed varied trends, helping contain food-related inflationary pressures.

Japanese PM likely to call snap poll, plans to capitalise on personal popularity

Tokyo, Jan 14 (Agency)

Japan's PM Sanae Takaichi is preparing to call a snap general election, aiming to capitalise on her strong personal approval ratings and secure a clear mandate for her government, according to her coalition partner. Takaichi informed senior colleagues on Wednesday that she intends to dissolve the lower house of parliament shortly after it reconvenes on January 23, Hirofumi Yoshimura said. Yoshimura leads the Japan Innovation Party, which entered a governing coalition with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party in October.

While no election date has currently been finalised, Japanese media, citing

senior LDP figures, reports that a timeline between February 8-15 is the most likely scenario, as per Financial Times. LDP Secretary-General Shunichi Suzuki said Takaichi would set out further details at a press conference on January 19. Yoshimura said the coalition had discussed the election as an opportunity for the new government to seek public endorsement. "The current administration has not yet received a mandate through a general election," he told reporters, describing a snap poll as a way to build legitimacy and trust. Takaichi took office late last year after winning the LDP's leadership race, becoming Japan's first woman PM, marking a historic milestone in Japanese politics. ▶ **Cont. to Page-7**

IIT-Bhubaneswar research team develops satellite remote sensing tech for bauxite prospecting



Bhubaneswar, Jan 14 (FN Representative)

A group of researchers from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Bhubaneswar identified potential bauxite depositional sites at a regional-scale across Odisha's Koraput and Rayagada districts using advanced hyper-spectral satellite remote sensing.

The study conducted by Ashim Sattar, Assistant Professor and his research group integrated hyper spectral satellite data, field surveys, geochemical and petrographic assessments, and laboratory spectral studies. Together, these techniques provide a robust framework for first-order mapping of potential bauxite deposits. This pioneering study marks ▶ **Cont. to Page-7**

Today's youth no longer just job seekers, but job creators: Rekha Gupta

New Delhi, Jan 14 (Bureau)

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday said that India's youth is no longer limited to seeking jobs, but is increasingly emerging as a generation of job creators, driven by innovation, skills and entrepreneurship. She was speaking at the inauguration of the "Campus to Market - Delhi Startup Yuva Festival 2026" at the Dr Ambedkar International Centre. The festival was inaugurated jointly by union Minister of State for Skill Development

and Entrepreneurship Jayant Chaudhary and the Delhi Chief Minister. The programme is being organised by the Directorate of Training and Technical Education (DTTE), Government of Delhi. On the occasion, Rekha Gupta and the union Minister interacted with young innovators, teachers, investors and startup founders from universities, colleges and technical institutions. They also visited the startup exhibition, where student-led innovations, prototypes and business models were showcased. Jayant Chaudhary said that India is a young nation with enormous youth power, which gives the

country strong working capacity. However, he said the demographic advantage can deliver results only when young people are given opportunities, their talent is recognised and their skills are strengthened. He noted that earlier, the education system focused

mainly on textbook-based learning, often leaving little room for students who did not fit into traditional academic models. Rekha Gupta said that student startups in Delhi are demonstrating remarkable creativity and innovation, offering practical solutions to social, environmental and technological challenges. She said that a strong startup and innovation ecosystem has been developed across the country, enabling young people to move from ideas to enterprises. "Delhi Government is working to integrate education, skills and entrepreneurship to position the capital as ▶ **Cont. to Page-7**

Ayurveda-based panchakarma therapy to be launched at Ayushman Aarogya Mandirs

New Delhi, Jan 14 (Representative) Delhi Health Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh on Wednesday announced the launch of Ayurveda-based Panchakarma therapy at Ayushman Aarogya Mandirs, marking a significant step towards integrating traditional Indian medicine with primary healthcare services in the national capital. The initiative aims to provide holistic, preventive and therapeutic care to citizens through evidence-based Ayurvedic treatments, further strengthening Ayushman Aarogya Mandirs as comprehensive wellness centres offering accessible and affordable healthcare. Singh inaugurated a newly established Ayushman Aarogya Mandir at Bhimnagar in Malviya Nagar. Developed as a fully equipped modern primary health facility, the centre offers a wide range of services including General OPD, ▶ **Cont. to Page-7**

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Punjab to launch 'Our Elders, Our Pride' campaign from Mohali

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Mitchell's unbeaten 131 powers NZ to series-levelling win

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PM Modi greets nation on harvest festivals, celebrates India's unity in diversity

Yamaha announces Pongal festival offers across various models

Chennai, Jan 14 (Agency)



Auto major Yamaha ushered in Pongal festivity with special offers across various models for motorcycles and scooters. The festival offers covers Fascino 125 Fi Hybrid, Ray ZR 125 Fi Hybrid, FZ-S Hybrid and R15 in Tamil Nadu, a company statement said here today. As the golden harvest season arrives, Pongal brings with it warmth, gratitude, and new beginnings. Embracing the spirit of this auspicious festival, India Yamaha Motor invites customers to celebrate Pongal by riding home on a Yamaha, with specially curated festive offers across its popular range of motorcycles and scooters. Designed to add joy to the celebrations, these limited-period Pongal benefits make owning a Yamaha more rewarding than ever. Special price on the new Yamaha XSR 155--experience modern retro design with a limited-time special offer, featuring a introductory ex-showroom price of Rs. 1,51,493 only. 70th Anniversary Celebration offers on Yamaha R15--special price savings of Rs. 6,000 on the on-road price, clearly showcasing the old price versus the new festive price for greater value transparency. On Yamaha Fascino 125 Fi Hybrid--Insurance benefits worth Rs. 3,000, with down payment starting at just Rs. 4,999 bringing style, comfort, and festive value together.

On Yamaha Ray ZR 125 Fi Hybrid Scooter--save up to Rs. 7,000 on the popular Yamaha RayZR 125cc hybrid scooter along with down payment starting at Rs. 4,999. Yamaha FZ-S Hybrid--step into the future of motorcycling with a down payment starting from Rs. 7,999*, combining performance, efficiency, and advanced hybrid technology. These exclusive Pongal offers are available for a limited time only, making this the perfect moment for customers to align festive prosperity with Yamaha's performance, innovation, and riding excitement. Yamaha's diverse product portfolio includes premium motorcycles such as YZF-R15M (155cc), YZF-R15 V4 (155cc), YZF-R15S V3 (155cc), MT-15 V2 (155cc), Yamaha XSR155 (155cc) and the FZ series that comprises of FZ-S Fi Hybrid (149cc), FZ-S Fi (149cc), and FZ-X Hybrid (149cc), FZ-X (149cc). Additionally, Yamaha offers a range of scooters including Aerox 155 version S (155cc), Aerox 155 (155cc), Fascino S 125 Fi Hybrid (125cc), Fascino 125 Fi Hybrid (125cc), RayZR 125 Fi Hybrid (125cc), and RayZR Street Rally 125 Fi Hybrid (125cc).

Singapore, Jan. 14 (Representative)

Botsync, a Singapore-based robotics automation company specializing in Autonomous Mobile Robots (AMR) and vendor-agnostic automation orchestration, has received additional funding from SGInnovate as part of its extended Series A round. Robotics startup Botsync secures additional Series A funding from SGInnovate. This new investment further strengthens Botsync's position as one of the fastest-growing robotics players in Asia, enabling the company to enhance product R&D and ramp up deployments for existing customers. Botsync has observed strong demand from customers in the FMCG, F&B, and Automotive industries, driven by the region's growing need for scalable automation solutions. Over the past year, the company has expanded into Australia and South Africa through strategic partnerships to

support existing customers with their automation deployments. Botsync also partnered with SK International as part of its expansion into the United States. Additionally, the company has seen 240% growth in production trips, crossing a million live production trips in 2025. 230% growth in revenue, driven by strong expansion by existing customers. Successful deployments with Ford, Caterpillar, Kimberly Clark, Coca Cola, Aquaporin, Nestle and other global corporations. With the added funds, Botsync will accelerate its product and technology development, focusing on integrating its SyncOS™ platform with a larger network of robotic and software products, and investing deeper into the platform's AI analytics and optimization capabilities. The company will also aim to further optimize the MAG AMRs' throughput capacity and ability to handle more dynamic real-world scenarios. Botsync is also preparing to deepen its footprint in Southeast Asia and India, while building out strategic

New Delhi, Jan 14 (Representative)

India set for 7.4 per cent growth in FY26 as inflation eases: SBI Caps

and tax reforms, while government capital spending has risen sharply up 28 percent year-on-year in the first eight months of FY26, with roads and railways leading the push. Globally, growth has proven more resilient than initially feared despite heightened trade tensions. While tariff announcements by the US had earlier triggered sharp downgrades to global growth forecasts, expectations have since stabilised, with global output projected to expand by 3.2% in calendar year 2025, supported by steady growth in the US, China, and India. On the policy front, easing

inflation has allowed central banks to cut rates, though long-term bond yields remain elevated.



In India, inflation slipping below the Reserve Bank of India's comfort

band prompted a surprise rate cut in December 2025, capping a year marked by aggressive monetary easing. Food and energy prices have been key contributors to the disinflation trend, while core inflation remains relatively sticky. Financial markets, however, reflected mixed signals. Foreign portfolio investors recorded net equity inflows during the year, even as domestic institutional investors stepped in, helping capital markets deliver a resilient performance. Equity IPO fundraising rose 8% year-on-year to Rs 1.72 trillion, while infrastructure

investment trusts (InvITs) and REITs attracted record inflows. Looking ahead, SBI Caps cautions that FY27 could test growth momentum as fiscal constraints tighten for both the Centre and states. The report underscores the need for stronger pickup in private sector capital expenditure to sustain medium-term growth, especially in emerging and technology-led sectors, as public finances face increasing pressure. The outlook for 2026 is described as one of "tempered optimism," less volatile than recent years, but still vulnerable to global shocks ranging from geopolitics to commodity price swings.

Bank of Baroda Cuttack Region celebrated World Hindi Day 2026

Cuttack, Jan 14 (Bureau)

Bank of Baroda, Cuttack Region celebrated World Hindi Day 2026. On the occasion of World Hindi Day 2026, an Official Language Seminar was organized by Bank of Baroda, Cuttack Region on



January 13, 2026. Professor (Dr.) Shri Satyanarayan Panda, Principal of the Hindi Teachers Training Institute, Cuttack, and a scholar of Hindi and Odia

languages honoured the program as chief guest. At the outset of the seminar, executives welcomed chief guest, with a shawl and a book. Subsequently, staff members presented their speech at the seminar. Following this, the chief guest delivered a comprehensive address on the topic "Hindi Language: Our Cultural Identity."

On this occasion, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Behera, Regional Head of the Cuttack region, and Mr. Gautam Pal, Deputy Regional Head, also addressed the gathering. Staff members who gave outstanding presentations were felicitated by the chief guest and other executives. The program concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by the Official Language Officer.

Dr Reddy's launches first to market OTC antihistamine eye drop

Hyderabad, Jan 14 (Agency) : Dr. Reddy's Laboratories on Wednesday announced the first-to-market U.S. launch of Olopatadine Hydrochloride Ophthalmic Solution USP, 0.7% (OTC), the generic equivalent of Extra-Strength Pataday® Once-Daily Relief, following approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The over-the-counter (OTC) antihistamine eye drop is indicated for the temporary relief of itchy eyes caused by pollen, ragweed, grass, animal hair, and dander, the Hyderabad based pharma Giant said in a release. The product is available in a 2.5 mL bottle. With this launch, Dr. Reddy's expands its OTC eye-care portfolio, which already includes olopatadine ophthalmic solutions in 0.1% and 0.2% strengths. The company highlighted the launch as a milestone in its strategy to deliver store-brand equivalents of leading OTC products in the U.S. market. According to NielsenIQ data, the Pataday® brand recorded approximately \$69.9 million in U.S. sales over the latest 52-week period ending December 27, 2025.

Reliance denies bottlenecks, confirms that Battery Manufacturing on track

Mumbai, Jan 14 (Reporter)

Reliance Industries has officially announced that its plans to manufacture lithium-ion battery cell storage in India remain unchanged and are progressing in line with target timelines, in response to reports in a section of the media that the company has backtracked from plans announced earlier after it failed to secure Chinese technology. The Mukesh Ambani-led group, which planned to begin cell manufacturing in 2026, was in discussions with Chinese firm Xiamen Hithium Energy Storage Technology to license battery cell technology, but a recent report had claimed that these plans were put on

hold after the talks failed. The report had suggested that negotiations came to a standstill after Xiamen withdrew from the proposed partnership in response to China's restrictions on knowledge transfers abroad in important areas.



However, it has now emerged that Reliance is in a position to draw upon

the expertise of its US subsidiary Lithium Werks, which is well versed in LFP (lithium-iron-phosphate) batteries, as well as its UK subsidiary Faradion, to manufacture higher-performance lithium-ion automotive batteries.

"We would like to categorically affirm that there has been no change in our plans for creating a world-leading battery storage manufacturing ecosystem from cell to containerised ESS, and they are progressing well in line with our target timelines," according to a statement issued by a company spokesperson. Previously, Reliance had indicated 2026 as the target when it would begin manufacturing battery cells in India. Reliance Industries

Chairman & Managing Director Mukesh Ambani told shareholders in August

last year that Reliance's battery giga factory would start in 2026, beginning with a 40 GWh per year capacity and then expanding it to 100 GWh per year. "You will note that BESS manufacturing, battery pack manufacturing and cell manufacturing have always been part of our energy storage plans, and we are progressing well in their execution, as already shared earlier," according to the Reliance spokesperson. Reliance has committed Rs 75,000 crore to establish an integrated manufacturing ecosystem for the solar value chain, battery energy storage systems (BESS) and electrolyzers at Jamnagar, Gujarat at its Dhirubhai Ambani Green Energy Giga Manufacturing Complex. The facility is what Reliance says is the world's largest, most modern, modular and integrated manufacturing ecosystem at a single site.

Reliance noted that early signs of external risks in 2025, including unpredictable trade policies, geopolitical tensions, and slowing growth among major trading partners, prompted timely policy intervention. Measures such as tax exemptions, policy rate cuts, and GST rationalisation were introduced to stimulate demand, while favourable inflation trends provided additional support to economic activity. On the trade front, India undertook significant recalibration efforts. The country signed key free trade agreements with the UK, New Zealand, and Oman, initiated negotiations with Israel, and operationalised the EFTA trade deal in 2025, aimed at export diversification. India also strengthened trade and investment engagement with emerging economies across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, aligning with the broader Global South shift, Deloitte said.

Robotics startup Botsync secures additional Series A funding from SGInnovate

Singapore, Jan. 14 (Representative)

partnerships to launch its solution in the ANZ and US markets. Additional market development is already underway. "The support from the Singapore ecosystem has been a strong factor in our growth so far, and we are very excited and grateful to have SGInnovate onboard in this next stage of our journey. Over the past year, we have seen rapid growth in market demand for robotics and a very active expansion among our existing customers from initial deployment to large scale rollouts. With this growth of robotics adoption, our ability to integrate and orchestrate a multi-vendor fleet of robots has become a game changer. We strongly believe the next frontier of robotics won't be in just making smarter robots, but building intelligent systems that can orchestrate different robots together more effectively," said Rahul Nambiar, CEO and Co-Founder of Botsync. "SGInnovate is excited to support Botsync in this next phase of

growth. Their approach to robotics automation addresses real and urgent industry needs, and Botsync

exemplifies how home-grown deep tech companies can scale regionally to deliver meaningful impact. We look forward to supporting their continued

expansion across APAC and beyond," said Hsien-Hui Tong, Executive Director - Investments, SGInnovate. Botsync's long-term ambition seeks to establish SyncOS™ as the essential orchestration layer for any enterprise looking to automate industrial operations at scale. As it works towards achieving this goal, the company is looking to forge more partnerships with technical solution providers and system integrators within the manufacturing and logistics industry. About Botsync: Botsync is an industrial automation company headquartered in Singapore, and with offices in India, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong SAR, and Australia. The company helps enterprises automate their factory and warehouse processes through their industry-first no-code automation platform and fleet of autonomous mobile robots. With over 200 systems deployed and 30 enterprise clients in 6 countries and territories, Botsync seeks to build automation systems that not only run themselves, but also constantly update themselves to be more productive, efficient, and adaptive to current demands. Connect with us at botsync.co. About SGInnovate: SGInnovate is a Deep Tech ecosystem builder and investor, backed by the Singapore Government. Our expertise and approach combines investments, talent development and community-building to catalyse the translation of emerging technologies into tomorrow's opportunities. Through our flagship Deep Tech Central platform, we connect individuals, founders and companies to specialised resources and opportunities across all technological domains and stages of growth. Our portfolio of emerging tech startups comprises some of the most promising companies leading the commercialisation of research developed from Singapore's RIE ecosystem.

Union Min Dharmendra Pradhan takes part in Pongal fest at IIT-Madras

Chennai, Jan 14 (Representative)

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan celebrated Pongal, the traditional harvest festival of Tamils, at IIT-Madras on Wednesday. He celebrated the festival by preparing the sweet Pongal made of rice, jaggery and milk with the staff, faculty and students of IIT-Madras and also served to them. The traditional Pongal celebration was jointly organised by the Staff Club, IIT Madras and the Muthamizh Mandram, IIT Madras, under the leadership of the Institute's administration. The event underscored the Institute's commitment to celebrating India's rich cultural traditions alongside academic excellence. Prof. V. Kamakoti, Director, IIT Madras, welcomed Mr Dharmendra Pradhan at the Community Hall, where he was accorded a traditional Tamil cultural welcome, featuring folk art forms such as 'Parai', 'Madattam', 'Mayilattam' and 'Poi Kaal Kuthirai', among others.

Attired in traditional dhoti and white shirt, the union Minister also witnessed an elaborate rangoli ('kolam') created by members of the IIT Madras campus

community, reflecting the festive spirit of the harvest festival. Conveying his Pongal greetings to the IIT-Madras community, Mr Dharmendra Pradhan said, "Today, it is the



beginning of harvest year. Many parts of the country celebrate the same festival of harvest, festival of sustainability, festival of our agricultural background in different names." In Assam and North East, it is known as 'Bihu', In Punjab it is known as 'Lohri' and in Western parts of the country such as Gujarat and Maharashtra it is known as 'Uttarayan'. In my part of the country, in Eastern parts, it is known as 'Makar Sankranti'. The entire South India celebrates today as Pongal", he said. "I thank Prof. Kamakoti for this event. I am happy to celebrate Pongal in Tamil Nadu. I wish all

success in all of your careers", he added. Thanking the union Minister for taking part in the Pongal celebrations on campus, Prof. Kamakoti said, "The Pongal festival honours the farmer and the cow. It ushers in a fresh energy of hope to all of us. The campus community is extremely happy to have celebrated this event with our Hon'ble Minister Shri Pradhan ji." A key highlight of the programme was the Minister's personal participation in the preparation of Pongal pot, symbolising gratitude to nature and the farming community. He also took part in 'Uriyadithal'--breaking a dangling 'treasure pot', tied in a horizontal bar to two poles, with a stick--a traditional festive activity, engaging closely with students, staff and campus residents. Following this, the Minister distributed 'Pongal Thoguppu' (Pongal kits) to members of the IIT Madras campus community, reinforcing the values of sharing and togetherness that define the festival. The Pongal celebrations at IIT Madras reflect the Institute's ongoing efforts to integrate cultural values, community participation and national ethos within its academic environment, while providing students and staff an opportunity to collectively celebrate one of Tamil Nadu's most significant festivals.

Raj: Dr Karan Singh's biography to be unveiled at JLF 2026 on Thursday

Jaipur, Jan 14 (Representative)

A much-awaited book on the life and legacy of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir princely state's royal and renowned statesman, Dr Karan Singh, will be unveiled at Jaipur Literature Festival 2026 that begins here tomorrow. The book, "The Extraordinary Life and Legacy of Dr Karan Singh", is authorised biography of the nonagenarian Statesman and public figure. The book is authored by Harbans Singh. This examines the remarkable journey of one of India's most distinguished public figures—a statesman, scholar, humanist and spiritual seeker—whose story is inextricably linked not only to Jammu and Kashmir's journey, but also to India's journey as a nation and a society since Independence. The book will be unveiled on January 15 under JLF's First Edition segment by festival directors Namita Gokhale, William Dalrymple and Sanjoy K. Roy, followed by a conversation between Dr Karan Singh, author Harbans Singh and publisher Ravi Singh. While this

will mark the book's first public presentation, it will be officially released and made available to readers nationwide on February 10, 2026, a festival communiqué stated here. Karan Singh was just 18 years old, and had barely recovered from a mysterious illness that left him bedridden for over a year, when he was catapulted into political life in 1949. His father, the last King of Jammu and Kashmir who had recently signed the Instrument of Accession to India, appointed him Regent and left the State, never to return. Over the next 18 years, Karan Singh presided over J&K's difficult transition to a modern but troubled democracy—first as Regent, then as Head of State (Sadr-e-Riyasat) and finally as Governor. In 1967, he resigned as Governor of J&K and joined Indira Gandhi led Congress government, becoming India's youngest cabinet minister. He had served as union Minister of Tourism and Aviation, Health, and Education and Culture. Singh was also India's Ambassador to the USA, head of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations

(ICCR), Member of the Rajya Sabha, Chairman of the Auroville Foundation and member of the UNESCO Executive Board. Throughout, he has remained of independent mind and spirit—a gentleman and a consensus-builder in the fractious world of Indian politics, and a celebrated scholar of Hinduism who has championed interfaith understanding for over half a century. Together with his political journey, he has made a singular journey as a philosopher and spiritual seeker, trying to understand life's ultimate purpose and meaning. Meticulously researched and both intimate and objective, A Statesman and a Seeker tells the story of Karan Singh's extraordinary life and legacy—and his fascinating encounters with, among others, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Sheikh Abdullah, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi, J.R.D. Tata, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Rajiv Gandhi, Aldous Huxley, and the spiritual gurus Sri Krishnayam and Sri Madhav Ashish. At 94, Dr Karan Singh remains one of India's most remarkable and respected public personalities.

Godrej incorporates subsidiary to enhance financial services presence

Mumbai, Jan 14 (Representative)

Godrej Industries Ltd (GIL) has officially announced that it has incorporated a new subsidiary, called Godrej Investment Ltd, as its financial services arm, which will serve as an umbrella holding company for all group financial operations, including its lending businesses. The incorporation of Godrej Investment Ltd came after the Godrej Industries Ltd board's approval on August 13, 2025 and shareholder approval on September 29, 2025. The move is designed to create a cleaner corporate structure, simplify borrowing, facilitate equity partnerships, and potentially pave the way for future demergers of mature

businesses. Incorporation documents related to Godrej Investment Ltd have outlined objectives which include trading in stocks, debt instruments, Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs), Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and alternative investment funds. Godrej Industries Ltd will subscribe to 100 per cent of the shareholding in Godrej Investment Ltd. While Godrej Investment Ltd is a related party transaction by virtue of being a wholly owned subsidiary, the transaction itself is structured as a cash consideration for the share subscription. The new subsidiary which will operate in the financial services business sector has not yet commenced operations, though it has completed all regulatory disclosures under

SEBI's listing regulations to the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and the National Stock Exchange (NSE). The group's present lending operations, housed under Godrej Capital Ltd, encompass Godrej Housing Finance Ltd as well as Godrej Finance Ltd, which is a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC). As of March 31, 2025, these businesses managed Assets Under Management (AUM) worth Rs 16,930 crore. Earlier, Godrej Capital had announced that it plans to close FY26 with assets under management (AUM) at over Rs 25,000 crore. Godrej Capital's Managing Director & CEO Manish Shah had stated that between FY27 and FY28, the company plans to nearly double its AUM to Rs 50,000 crore.

Cyient founder Mohan Reddy receives living legend award by Geospatial World

Hyderabad, Jan 14 (Reporter)

Cyient, a global Intelligent Engineering solutions company, on Wednesday announced that its Founder Chairman, Dr. B.V.R. Mohan Reddy, has been conferred the 'Living Legend Award' by Geospatial World, one of the world's leading geospatial knowledge organisations. The award recognises Dr. Reddy's pioneering leadership and lifetime contribution to advancing India's geospatial ecosystem and positioning the country as a global hub for engineering and R&D innovation. He was honoured at the 25th edition

of GeoSmart India, a landmark event celebrating the evolution and maturity of India's geospatial sector, the Hyderabad company said in a release. The Living Legend Award is presented to distinguished visionaries who have significantly shaped the global geospatial industry through sustained leadership, transformative innovation, and enduring impact. Over the decades, Dr. Reddy has grown Cyient from a modest startup into one of India's most respected global geospatial and engineering organisations. His entrepreneurial vision and consistent focus on innovation have played a critical role in strengthening India's

geospatial capabilities and global competitiveness. Beyond business, Dr. Reddy is widely recognised for mentoring next-generation leaders at Cyient and across India's education, startup, and industry ecosystems. He has actively contributed to national initiatives spanning education, IT, engineering, and societal development. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Mohan Reddy said, "I am deeply honoured to receive the Living Legend Award from Geospatial World". Sanjay Kumar, CEO, Geospatial World, said, 'Dr. B.V.R. Mohan Reddy has been a founding pillar of the geospatial industry in India.'

Samsung partners with Univ of Madras to launch Samsung Innovation campus in TN

Chennai, Jan 14 (FN Representative)

one of India's oldest and most prestigious universities—followed by 1,500 students from its affiliated colleges. Samsung Innovation Campus was launched in India in 2022 and by 2024 had trained 6,500 students, training a total of 26,500 students by 2025. It now continues to expand its footprint with a strong focus on underserved and semi-urban communities. Samsung has partnered with the Electronics Sector Skills Council of India (ESSCI) under the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to train students through accredited training partners. Nationally, Samsung Innovation Campus has achieved 44% women participation—reflecting Samsung's focus on inclusive and equitable skilling. Beyond technical learning, participants receive soft skills training and placement support to strengthen employability and workplace readiness. Together with its Samsung Solve for Tomorrow and Samsung DOST initiatives, Samsung Innovation Campus underscores Samsung's long-term commitment to democratizing technology, building talent pipelines, and preparing India's youth for a connected, innovation-driven future. The programme now spans 10 States, targeting 20,000 students nationwide in 2025, a six-fold expansion over the previous year.

Stock market ends lower in volatile session

New Delhi, Jan 14 (FN Representative)

The Indian Stock markets ended lower in a volatile session today, with the BSE Sensex falling by 244.98 points or 0.29 per cent to 83,382.71 and the NSE Nifty declining by 66.70 points or 0.26 pc to 25,665.60. The Mid-cap and Small-cap segments also outperformed as the BSE Mid-cap and Small-cap indices closed the day 0.16 pc and 0.25 pc higher, respectively. Among the sectors, those recorded gains were Nifty Metal up by 2.70 pc and PSU Bank up by 2.13 pc. Most of the other sectoral indices ended lower. Nifty IT was down 1.08 pc, Realty, Auto and FMCG declined by over half a pc each. Further, the Nifty Bank ended flat, but the Financial Services index eased by 0.31 pc. Top gainers on Nifty were Tata Steel (3.71 pc), NTPC (3.28 pc), and Axis Bank (2.93 pc) while Asian Paints (2.40 pc), TCS (2.15 pc), and Tata Consumer (1.72 pc) ended as the top losers. Out of 4,344 stocks traded on the BSE, 2,017 advanced, while 2,150 declined and some 177 stocks remained unchanged. Over 150 stocks hit 52-week low. Some of the notable ones on lows were Poly Medicure, Tube Investment, Cohane Life, Godrej Properties, Whirlpool of India, Dixon Technologies, Bata India, IRCTC, Happiest Minds, ITC, Brainbees Solutions. In terms of the realty stocks, Prestige Estates shares fell around 2 pc, Macrotech Developers (Lodha), Brigade Enterprises and Phoenix Mills shares fell over 1 pc, Anant Raj and Godrej Properties shares fell around 1 pc. Tata Elxsi emerged as the top laggard among Nifty 500 stocks, falling 5.3 pc to Rs 5,485 apiece. Polycab India slipped another 3 pc to settle at Rs 7,323 apiece. Market will remain shut on Thursday, January 15, on account of municipal corporation elections in Maharashtra.

'Sanjibani', Senior Citizen Book Launch

Winter is the season for the Book Fair and Book Launches in Kolkata

Kolkata, Jan 14 (FN Representative)

On 3rd January, 2026, a unique Book Launch was held at Sibnanda Hall, Ramkrishna Mission Institute of

80's & 90's who had shown their spirit in venturing into the world of writing even upto the age of 99. He also gave several examples of people living their lives with various problems & physical disabilities and said that he feels blessed in comparison, even at

Ex-Renewer Secretary, Govt. of India & Raja Sabha member, 94 yrs. with his book titled 'Random Writing in my Second Teen', Mr. Rabindranath Mukherjee, Retd. Gen Manager, Internal Audit, 99yrs - 'Memoirs of a Determined Life' & Mr. Ranjit Kr. Bhattacharjee, Ex CAG & still active Auditor at 81yrs - 'Sonar Tori 2', each spoke a few words about their experiences, & what prompted them to start writing so late in their lives. This was followed by a short film on the effect of Movement Psychotherapy bringing out expressions in

Finally, a Fire-side chat between renowned Doctors Dr. Shrikant Atreya, HOD of Palliative Care at Tata Memorial Hospital, Dr. Hrishikesh Kumar, Vice Chairman INK Hospital & Authority on Movement Disorders, with Ms. Maitreyee Bhattacharjee, Director & Co-Founder of Care Continuum rounded off the evening. They emphasised the need of seniors socialising to maintain & improve their Mental state & the positive effect that has on their physical well-being as well as their quality of life. Those who were present, were not only there to applaud the efforts of these path-breaking elders, but their presence, hopefully, would encourage other senior citizens to express themselves, knowing that they have an audience willing to listen.



the age of 90. He requested all the elderlies to similarly count their blessings, comparing their disabilities with that of such unfortunate individuals who survive without limbs & many other faculties that we take for granted. His advice to them is to feel good about themselves, and actually enjoy living a bit longer. The authors, Mr. Debabrata Bandopadhyay,

seniors with significant physical challenges. Following this, a booklet titled 'Expressions during Chronic Care' was released, which contains various forms of expressive outputs in the form of paintings, writings & handicrafts, which were the efforts of elders with dementia & other physical challenges which contributed to improving their mental as well as physical well-being.

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, Jagasinghpur, dt.12/01/2026 I, Raiyan Razza Khan, 19 yrs, S/o-Niyaz Khan, Vill-Jagannathpur, PO-Tiran, Ps-Tiril, Dist- Jagannathpur, declare that my actual Date of Birth is 04.01.2007 but in my Passport No.W7068899 issued on 19.01.2023 my Date of Birth has been wrongly mentioned as 24.01.2007. This affidavit is required to be produced before the concerned Passport Authority for necessary correction of my DOB as 04.01.2007 instead of 24.01.2007.

Raiyan Razza Khan
Deponent

EDITORIAL

Tamil Nadu Commissions Integrated Reservoir Management Centre for Chennai



Building on the successful commissioning of the Urban Flood Management Centre (UFMC) in Gorakhpur, the Government of Tamil Nadu has commissioned the Integrated Reservoir Management Centre (IRMC) for Chennai, marking a significant step in strengthening flood preparedness and coordinated reservoir operations. The system powering the centre has been developed and integrated by Canarys Automations Limited (ISIN: INEOQQG301017). The IRMC was formally inaugurated at the Indian Coast Guard Campus, Varuna Salai, Chennai, in the presence of the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru Udayanidhi Stalin, Hon'ble Minister for Water Resources Thiru Duraimurugan, and Hon'ble Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) Thiru P. K. Sekar Babu. The IRMC was formally inaugurated on Tuesday, 6 January 2026, at the Indian Coast Guard Campus, Varuna Salai, Chennai, in the presence of the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Thiru Udayanidhi Stalin, Hon'ble Minister for Water Resources, Thiru Duraimurugan, and Hon'ble Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE), Thiru P. K. Sekar Babu. At the core of the IRMC is the Autonomous Reservoir Decision-Making System (ARDMS), a technology platform that integrates flood early-warning capabilities, SCADA-controlled gate operations, IoT-based field sensors, and AI-ML driven decision intelligence. The system enables end-to-end, real-time reservoir operations in line with the 3R principle of reservoir management – Retention, Regulation, and Release.

Speaking at the inauguration, Mr. Shyam Mantha, Senior Vice President – Sales & Marketing, Canarys Automations, said the commissioning of ARDMS represents a shift from manual and reactive dam operations to a more proactive, data-driven, and climate-resilient water management framework. He added that reservoir operations will now be centrally monitored and coordinated from the newly established IRMC at Varuna Salai, located within the Indian Coast Guard premises in Chennai. The system has been implemented to manage Chennai's three interlinked reservoirs—Poondi, Chembarambakkam, and Red Hills (Puzhal)—as a single integrated hydrological system. It uses inputs such as rainfall data, reservoir inflows, storage levels, gate positions, downstream river conditions, and tidal data to generate early-warning alerts and safe discharge recommendations. This integrated approach enables authorities to anticipate flood risks before they materialise, regulate reservoir releases in a controlled manner, protect downstream communities, and optimise water storage during dry periods. Designed to be scalable and adaptable, the platform can be extended to other dams and reservoirs across Tamil Nadu. With the commissioning of the IRMC, Canarys Automations reinforces its role in supporting state-led initiatives aimed at improving urban flood resilience and long-term water security. The company plans to continue deploying similar technology-driven solutions, combining automation with AI-ML capabilities, across other Indian cities and urban centres in the coming years.

Nash Energy Commissions Prismatic Battery Pack Line Strengthening Indias Energy Storage Ecosystem

Continuing its commitment to building world-class energy solutions, Nash Energy has commissioned a 2 GWh fully automated prismatic battery pack manufacturing line at its state-of-the-art facility in Dobbaspet, Bengaluru. Nash Energy's 2 GWh Prismatic Battery Line The multi-form factor production line is capable of manufacturing battery packs ranging from 100 Ah to 314 Ah and represents the first phase of the company's roadmap to establish a cumulative 10 GWh battery pack manufacturing capacity over the next five years. The newly commissioned automated battery pack line will primarily cater to the battery energy storage system (BESS), electric vehicle, material handling equipment, and electric bus and truck segments. The facility is equipped with advanced manufacturing technologies and stringent quality control systems to ensure that all 'Made in India' products meet global performance

and safety standards. With India making strong progress towards achieving its target of 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030, energy storage has emerged as a critical enabler of the renewable transition. Nash Energy aims to play a pivotal role in making the country self-sufficient in advanced energy storage solutions. According to NITI Aayog, as of November 2025, India—the world's third-largest electricity producer and consumer—continues to rely heavily on fossil fuels for power generation, with coal accounting for 67.77 percent of the energy mix, while solar and wind together contribute around 15 percent. As the share of renewable energy accelerates, the demand for reliable energy storage solutions is expected to grow exponentially.

Nash Energy has already created history by becoming the first company to mass-manufacture LFP cells in India. Building on this foundation, and in addition

to its existing R&D centre in Japan, the company is setting up

and make India self-sufficient in



a dedicated India Engineering Centre to further strengthen the country's fast-growing energy storage ecosystem. "We are making long-term investments

on building a strong foundation that can support India's clean energy ambitions." As renewable energy becomes a larger part of the national grid, a robust energy storage ecosystem is not optional—it is essential," he added. Industry estimates further reinforce this opportunity. According to the India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA), BESS capacity additions in India are expected to increase nearly tenfold to approximately 5 GWh from 507 MWh. MarkNtel Advisors projects the Indian BESS market to reach USD 1.2 billion by 2030, growing at a CAGR of 27 percent. About Nash Energy Nash Energy is part of NASH Group and is India's first mass-scale LFP cell manufacturer with a manufacturing unit in Bengaluru. It is a leader in renewable energy solutions, committed to delivering sustainable power technologies globally. It also owns a R&D Centre in Japan and concentrates on making India self-reliant in the energy storage sector.

REPLUS Engitech Powers Team Predators Racing from DY Patil College of Engineering at eBAJA SAEINDIA 2026

Engitech has announced its first-ever industry academia partnership in motorsports by powering Team Predators Racing, the student electric racing team from DY Patil College of Engineering, Pune for eBAJA SAEINDIA 2026. The collaboration underscores REPLUS' commitment to fostering hands-on learning, innovation, and nurturing the next generation



of engineers shaping India's electric mobility ecosystem. REPLUS Engitech Powers Team Predators Racing from DY Patil College of Engineering at eBAJA SAEINDIA 2026, scheduled from 7th to 12th January 2026, is among India's most prestigious collegiate engineering competitions, bringing together some of the brightest student teams to design, build, and race electric all-terrain vehicles under real-world engineering constraints. Through this partnership, REPLUS Engitech is supporting Team Predators Racing with advanced electric power solutions and technical expertise, enabling students to gain practical exposure to EV systems, power electronics, energy management, EV battery and performance optimisation bridging the gap between classroom learning and industry application. Commenting on the same, Hiren Pravin

Shah, Founder, Managing Director & CEO, REPLUS Engitech, said, "At REPLUS, we strongly believe that the future of electric mobility will be driven by engineers who learn through hands-on innovation and real-world problem solving. Our association with Team Predators Racing reflects our commitment to empowering young talent with industry-grade technology and mentorship. Platforms like eBAJA SAEINDIA play a crucial role in shaping engineers who are ready to lead India's EV transition." Adding to this, Vinay Dwivedi, Business Head – EV, REPLUS, said,

"Student-led competitions such as eBAJA SAEINDIA are incubators for future-ready EV talent. By working closely with Team Predators Racing, we aim to expose students to practical challenges in electric mobility from system integration to efficiency and reliability. This partnership aligns with our larger vision of building a strong, skilled ecosystem to support India's rapidly evolving EV industry." Faculty members and students from DY Patil College of Engineering welcomed the collaboration, highlighting its role in strengthening industry exposure, technical competence, and innovation-driven thinking among aspiring engineers. As India's electric mobility ecosystem continues to gain momentum, partnerships like this reflect the growing importance of industry-academia collaboration in developing skilled talent and accelerating the shift towards sustainable transportation.

VIBGYOR Group of Schools Announces the First Edition of Its Literature Festival

VIBGYOR High, Malad East, will host the inaugural edition on Saturday, 17 January 2026. Renowned author Dr. Devdutt Pattanaik to inaugurate the festival and engage in a Meet & Greet Author Session. Sessions include author interactions, book reviews, creative workshops and storytelling zones. VIBGYOR Group of Schools, one of India's leading K-12 education networks, is set to host the first edition of the VIBGYOR Lit Fest, a dedicated literature festival at VIBGYOR High, Malad East, on Saturday, 17 January 2026, from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. The festival reflects the Group's commitment to creating learning spaces that nurture curiosity, creativity and meaningful engagement beyond the classroom with Dr. Devdutt Pattanaik as the Guest of Honour. Designed as a celebration of literature and ideas, the VIBGYOR Lit Fest will bring together students, parents, educators and creative professionals to engage with stories through interactive and participative formats. The festival aims to strengthen reading habits while enabling learners to think critically, articulate perspectives, and explore storytelling across genres. The inauguration will be done by Founder and Chairman, Mr. Rustom Kerawala and Vice Chairperson, Ms. Kavita Kerawala. Dr. Devdutt Pattanaik will address students at the opening session. The event will also feature a line-up of speakers, including Dr. Mickey Mehta, Ms. Savitha Rao, Ms. Sanaya Irani and Mr. Rahul Saini, who will participate in sessions across the day, contributing diverse perspectives on literature, creativity and learning. Dr. Devdutt would be the guest of honour. The day-long programme will feature a variety of interactive formats, including author conversations



exploring the craft of storytelling, book review sessions to strengthen analytical thinking and creative workshops where students can visually

and narratively express their ideas. Activities

such as comic creation studios, book cover

design workshops and dedicated writing zones

will offer hands-on learning experiences, while

book exchanges and curated shows will introduce

learners to a wide spectrum of

literary genres. Commenting on the initiative, Ms. Kavita Kerawala, Vice Chairperson, VIBGYOR Group of Schools, said, "At VIBGYOR, we see

literature as a powerful tool for

shaping independent thought, empathy and expression.

The VIBGYOR Lit Fest is an extension of our belief in

experiential learning where

students engage deeply with

ideas, stories and creativity.

Through this platform, we

hope to nurture a genuine love for reading while

giving children the space to imagine, question

and create beyond the confines of textbooks

and screens." Adding a modern and experiential

dimension, Myra Multimedia will conduct

workshops that enable learners to explore

storytelling through visual and multimedia

formats, offering new ways to interpret and present

narratives. Amar Chitra Katha (ACK Comics) will

also conduct workshops on Creative Writing and

Comic Making, where students will write and

draw alongside the artist while gaining insights

into the history and creation of characters from

Tinkle, including Supandi and Shambu. As the

inaugural edition takes shape, the VIBGYOR Lit

Fest stands as a celebration of language, ideas and

creativity, bringing learners closer to the timeless

power of storytelling while giving them the space

to explore their own narratives.

Colgate-Palmolive's Integrated CSR and ESG Initiatives Create an Impact on Health, Dignity and Community Well-Being

True social impact is not created in silos, it emerges when health, education, livelihoods and the environment are addressed as part of a connected ecosystem. Guided by this belief, Colgate-Palmolive continues to advance its purpose of 'Building good Oral Health Habits for Life', strengthening communities across India through sustained, inclusive and prevention-led interventions. Rooted in long-term partnerships and aligned with national priorities, the company's initiatives are designed to create meaningful outcomes that endure across generations. Colgate-Palmolive's Integrated CSR and ESG Initiatives Create an Impact on Health, Dignity and Community Well-Being. At the heart of this commitment is Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Futures, Colgate-Palmolive's flagship oral health education initiative. Since inception, the programme has reached over 195 million children, making it one of the country's largest preventive health movements. Annually, it engages with 10 million children across 25,000 schools, in partnership with Anganwadi workers, ASHA Didis, NGOs and state governments. Aligned with Ayushman Bharat and Poshan Abhiyan, the initiative extends to

remote and underserved geographies including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, Goa, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, and Puducherry, embedding lifelong oral health habits and strengthening India's public health ecosystem. As children grow into young adults, Colgate-Palmolive supports aspiration through the Keep India Smiling Scholarships, launched in 2019. The programme removes financial barriers for deserving Dental and STEM students, helping build a future-ready healthcare workforce. Since inception, 7,000+ scholarships have been awarded, with 25% of scholars scoring above 90% academically and a 60% diversity ratio, ensuring representation across gender, geography and socio-economic backgrounds. Beyond health and education, Colgate-Palmolive focuses on strengthening community resilience and dignity. Its water conservation initiatives, aligned with the Jal Jeevan Mission and Atal Bhujal Yojana, are reviving local water sources and enabling doorstep access to clean

water; benefiting 530+ villages and 3,00,000+ people, while replenishing 450 million litres of water to support health, agriculture and livelihoods. Complementing this, the Financial and Digital Literacy Programme, launched in 2023 and aligned with



Digital India, have empowered 1,50,000+ beneficiaries across 300+ villages, unlocking ₹1,505+ crore in benefits, with 96% learning to open savings bank accounts. Through 800+ Digital Sakhis, women and persons with disabilities are becoming active participants in India's digital economy. In parallel, Rural Waste Management initiatives, aligned with the Swachh

Bharat Mission 2.0, are driving cleaner, healthier villages across 50+ locations. The programme promotes waste segregation and community awareness while creating dignified, sustainable livelihoods for Safai Saathis, benefiting 1,50,000+ people. By formalising and strengthening the work of informal waste pickers and fostering shared responsibility at the village level, these efforts are improving public health, protecting the environment, and building cleaner communities that can sustain themselves over time. Prabha Narasimhan, Managing Director & CEO, Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited, said, "Sustainability is not a destination for us, it's a way of showing up for communities every single day. When water brings back farmers to their land, when a child carries the baton of oral health from their school to communities, when a student becomes a dentist and returns to serve in their own community, when a woman stands not just as a beneficiary but as a leader, that's where we stand proud. This is when we know change and change are no longer a program; it is a ripple that carries forward on its own. At Colgate, we just don't build projects. We build to enable pathways to dignity, opportunity and hope. Because when a smile returns, confidence

education. We also as part of our CSR efforts, work with women to teach them digital and financial literacy, and in Rajasthan, to ensure that we bring water to the water-parched areas of the state. In this nine decade journey, what we have learned is that it's really important for us as a company to have intent in what we do and make sure that we keep our mission of building a healthier India one smile at a time, at the heart of everything we do." Shilpashree Muniswamappa, Director – Communications & ESG, Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited, said, "Sustainability is not a destination for us, it's a way of showing up for communities every single day. When water brings back farmers to their land, when a child carries the baton of oral health from their school to communities, when a student becomes a dentist and returns to serve in their own community, when a woman stands not just as a beneficiary but as a leader, that's where we stand proud. This is when we know change and change are no longer a program; it is a ripple that carries forward on its own. At Colgate, we just don't build projects. We build to enable pathways to dignity, opportunity and hope. Because when a smile returns, confidence

returns, futures are secured, and communities come alive and together. And that for us is the real meaning of making India smile." Colgate-Palmolive is transforming lives, one smile at a time, for lasting impact across communities! About Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited Colgate-Palmolive is a caring, innovative growth company that is reimagining a healthier future for all people, and the planet. Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited is the market leader in Oral Care in the country, committed to delivering sustainable, profitable growth for its shareholders, while fostering an inclusive workplace for its people. With a primary focus on science-led innovations in Oral Care & Personal Care in the Indian market, the company is recognized for its leadership and innovative efforts in advancing sustainability and community well-being. Among its recent accomplishments, the company has made significant strides in reducing plastic waste and promoting recyclability, conserving water and energy at its manufacturing facilities, empowering women with financial and digital literacy and enhancing children's oral health through its flagship, Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Futures® program.

From soil to muslin: Farmers' lives mapped at Students' Biennale in Kochi



Kochi, Jan 14 (Agency) A textile-based artwork that reflects the labour, memory, and lived experiences of Indian farmers is drawing attention at the 'Arthshila' venue of the Students' Biennale 2025. Titled 'Inheritance of the Hand', the work is a collaborative effort by artists Mohammad Riyaz and Aman Kumar Riyaz, hailing from Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh, has completed his Master of Fine Arts from the Government College of Fine Arts, Gwalior. Shaped by his rural upbringing, his artistic practice centres on the everyday struggles of Indian farmers, a theme that runs through his current exhibits at the Students' Biennale. Recalling his childhood in a farming environment, Riyaz said he had witnessed repeated crop losses due to rain and fire, followed by prolonged and often unsuccessful efforts to secure compensation from government offices. "These experiences stayed with me and became questions I wanted to work through," he said. In 'Inheritance of the Hand', Riyaz employs tailoring techniques to stitch painted muslin, a material historically linked to India's colonial past. Sleeves shaped like hands form the central visual motif, symbolising labour, endurance, and effort. Through layered fabric and reconstructed garments, the work reflects both the dignity and burden carried by rural communities. The artwork was completed in Gwalior over a period of about one month. Riyaz said the technical process was the most challenging aspect, particularly handling the sewing machine and assembling the many sleeves, though the conceptual foundation came naturally from his personal experiences.

The collaboration also features Aman Kumar's practice of weaving and painting on muslin. Drawing from stories and memories passed down by his grandmother, Kumar's work explores themes of generational loss. Together, the artists bring distinct personal histories into a shared visual narrative. According to Riyaz, visitors at Arthshila have been engaging closely with the work, with many spending time to reflect and ask questions. He described the response as encouraging and expressed gratitude to the Kochi Biennale Foundation and its curators for providing space and trust for his work. The Students' Biennale, a key educational initiative of the Kochi Biennale Foundation, offers a platform for young artists from public institutions across India to develop and present their work to a wider global audience. The Students' Biennale 2025-26, which opened on December 13, 2025, is being held alongside the sixth edition of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale. The programme is led by curators and collectives who mentor students from over 150 institutions across seven regions of the country, engaging with them, shortlisting exhibition participants, and working closely to develop projects for display in Kochi.

IIT-Madras' Saarang 2026 sets new benchmark with digital credentials for over 5,000 students

Chennai, Jan 14 (Representative)

The Indian Institute of Technology Madras' annual cultural festival, Saarang 2026, concluded on a high note, marking a significant milestone in the way student participation and achievement are recognised at large-scale events. Over 5,000 students who took part in competitions, workshops, performances, and organising committees received verifiable digital credentials, signalling a progressive shift from traditional paper certificates to future-ready recognition. Issued through the digital credentialing platform of Headstream Technologies, the credentials provide students with a secure, tamper-proof, and lifelong record of their involvement at one of India's most prestigious cultural festivals. Each digital badge is stored in a personal

digital wallet and can be instantly shared on professional networks, resumes, portfolios, and academic or job applications. As education and employability increasingly move beyond classroom learning, digital credentials are emerging as a powerful bridge between skills, experience, and opportunity. Unlike conventional certificates that are easy to misplace or difficult to verify, these credentials are instantly authenticated, globally accessible, and designed to stay relevant throughout a student's career. For Saarang participants, the credentials capture more than attendance—they document creativity, collaboration, leadership, problem-solving, and cultural excellence. Students noted that a verifiable digital badge from a nationally reputed platform like Saarang adds tangible credibility when applying for internships, higher education programmes, creative roles, and corporate opportunities where

demonstrable experience is valued. By adopting digital credentials at scale, Saarang 2026 significantly

enhancing long-term value for students. Commenting on the initiative, Pramod Damodaran, Managing Director,



reduced its dependence on paper certificates, aligning with IIT Madras' broader commitment to sustainability and innovation.

The initiative also reflects a growing trend among leading institutions to embrace technology that is environmentally responsible while

Headstream Technologies, said "Learning today extends far beyond classrooms—onto stages, collaborative workshops, and real-world experiences. At Headstream, we believe every creative milestone and extracurricular achievement deserves recognition that is permanent, verifiable, and future-



CPI(M) leaders Brinda Karat, right, and Subhashini Ali during a session at the 'Kolkata Literary Festival 2026', in Kolkata, West Bengal.

PNG for 250 homes ready in 100 days, Surya inaugurates

Bengaluru, Jan 14 (Bureau)

In a rare example of fast-tracked urban infrastructure delivery, a piped natural gas (PNG) network connecting 250 homes at SBI Colony in JP Nagar 1st Phase was completed in just 100 days and inaugurated on Wednesday by Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya. The City Gas Distribution project, implemented by GAIL India,



has brought clean and safe piped natural gas directly to households, ending residents' dependence on LPG cylinders. The rapid execution of the project has drawn attention as a model for time-bound delivery of civic infrastructure in the city. Speaking at the inauguration, Surya said completing the project within 100 days demonstrates what coordinated efforts between government agencies, elected representatives and citizens can achieve. He

said PNG connectivity not only improves safety and convenience but also strengthens Bengaluru's urban energy network. The project, initiated in September 2025, has been fully funded by the Central Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to provide a cost-effective energy solution for households. Surya said Bommanahalli and BTM Layout areas have already achieved near-total PNG coverage and that the success of the JP Nagar project will accelerate expansion to other parts of Bengaluru South. He added that the aim is to ensure widespread PNG connectivity by 2029, particularly benefiting senior citizens and homemakers by improving ease of living in multi-storeyed buildings while keeping energy costs affordable. He further said the NDA Government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri, is steadily expanding access to safe and sustainable piped gas across the country. MLA CK Ramamurthy and GAIL Chief General Manager Sanjay Singh were present at the event.

Kerala Startup Mission launches 'Thirike' campaign for brain gain

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 14 (Reporter)

Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) is launching a campaign to create job opportunities and bring talent back home. The 'Thirike' campaign is designed for IT and non-IT professionals working outside Kerala who wish to return to the state for better prospects. Kerala, with its advanced technology and skilled workforce, offers a favourable industrial climate. KSUM aims to create opportunities for both IT and non-IT employees to return to Kerala and work. It believes that good living conditions and a supportive investment environment will attract professionals. To facilitate this, a database of professionals interested in returning to Kerala will be compiled through a digital survey. Finance Minister KN Balagopal launched the 'Thirike' website during the recent Huddle Global 2025 event. Companies and entrepreneurs in need of top talent can select suitable professionals from this database, streamlining the recruitment process.

It will also provide information about job opportunities from companies relocating to Kerala. CEO Anoop Ambika stated that KSUM is exploring opportunities in the new era and developing innovative projects. "Many technical professionals from Kerala have migrated to other states and abroad in search of better opportunities," he said. "Unofficial

estimates suggest that 20 percent of the 50 lakh IT professionals in India are Malayalis."

The 'Thirike' campaign targets those who want to return, considering the improved living conditions and job opportunities in Kerala. Kerala's existing startup ecosystem offers growth opportunities for professionals. We are poised for significant growth, which could create thousands of job opportunities," Ambika said. An international company coming to Kerala can access experienced and skilled professionals through the database created as part of the campaign. This database will be shared only with companies that are willing to invest in Kerala."

A substantial number of job opportunities will be generated through Global Capability Centres (GCCs), where multinational companies can find the talent they require. More than 40 leading companies have already established GCCs in Kerala, and several global companies are planning to follow suit. This presents promising job opportunities for professionals returning to Kerala. According to a report by First Meridian Business Services, GCCs are expected to create 30 lakh jobs in India by 2030, with 150,000 jobs projected for 2026 alone. Kerala attracts businesses for its knowledge economy, talented professionals, quality of life, world-class infrastructure, academic-industry linkages, and a strong startup ecosystem.



Punjab to launch 'Our Elders, Our Pride' campaign from Mohali

Chandigarh, Jan 14 (Representative)

The Punjab Government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, is set to formally launch a state-level campaign titled 'Our Elders, Our Pride' on January 16, 2026, from SAS Nagar (Mohali), with the objective of ensuring the welfare, security and dignified living of senior citizens. Sharing details of the campaign, Punjab's Minister for Social Security, Women & Child Development, Dr Baljit Kaur said, "The primary objective of the Our Elders, Our Pride campaign is to connect senior citizens with essential health services, legal awareness and government welfare

schemes so that they can lead a secure and dignified life." She informed that the campaign is being implemented under the State Action Plan for Senior Citizens for the financial year 2025-26, with district-wise camps to be organised across Punjab to strengthen the overall well-being and social security of older persons. Explaining the services to be provided, the Minister said, "During these camps, the Health Department will provide free general health check-ups, orthopaedic care, ENT services, eye check-ups, as well as homoeopathic and ayurvedic treatments for senior citizens." She added that the Social Security Department will facilitate on-the-

spot enrolment for social security pensions, issuance of Senior Citizen Cards and ALIMCO (Artificial Limbs



Manufacturing Corporation of India) cards, and provide assistance and information related to the Rashtriya Yojana.

Vayoshti Yojana. The Minister further stated, "The State Legal Services Authority will create awareness among senior citizens about the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, along with other legal rights, so that they feel protected and empowered." She said that with the support of the AYUSH Department and the Department of Youth Affairs, yoga sessions and street plays will also be organised to promote health awareness, strengthen inter-generational bonding and reinforce the spirit of social security.

Highlighting the focus on the special needs of the elderly, Dr Baljit Kaur said, "Essential assistive devices such as near-vision spectacles, hearing aids, walking aids, cervical collars, belts and wheelchairs will be distributed on the spot during the camps." She emphasised that the campaign goes beyond service delivery, adding, "This initiative is about making our senior citizens feel that they are not merely beneficiaries, but the most valuable treasure and guiding force of our society." Referring to the success of similar efforts in the past, the Minister said, "In previous years, thousands of senior citizens have directly benefited from these camps, which clearly reflects the effectiveness of this initiative." She also informed that a toll-free helpline

number 14567 is operational to assist senior citizens. Taking into account the prevailing winter conditions, Minister Dr Kaur said, "While the campaign will commence on January 16, the next phase of health camps in other districts will be rolled out systematically after January 26, keeping the safety and well-being of senior citizens in mind while ensuring quality service delivery." Appealing to senior citizens and their family members, the Cabinet Minister urged, "I appeal to all senior citizens and their families to participate in large numbers in the district-level camps starting January 16 and avail maximum benefit of the free health, legal and welfare services being provided by the Punjab Government."

Pakistan aware high taxation drove out firms, govt pushing ahead with structural reforms, says Finance Minister

Islamabad, Jan 14 (Agency) P



Pakistani Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Wednesday acknowledged that the govt is aware that a number of companies have either shut down, or otherwise halted operations in the country because of high taxation and expensive energy, and insisted that the government is pushing ahead with much needed structural reforms in order to mitigate the mounting tensions plaguing various businesses in the country. Speaking at the Pakistan Policy Dialogue in Islamabad, Aurangzeb said some departures were unavoidable, given the dilapidated economic situation. "There are firms which are also leaving, that is true," he said. "If the taxation is high or the energy cost is high, or the financing cost is always moving in the wrong direction, those have been real issues." However, he also noted that 20 new foreign investors, including Google, Aramco, Wafi Energy, Turkish Petroleum, and others had entered the Pakistani market in the last 18 months. The finance minister argued that the survival or exit of multinational firms often depended on how successfully they adapted their business models. Some companies, he said, had shifted to local sourcing, stabilised margins and even begun exporting from Pakistan, stating "Because of that their margins are fine, they are now able to export, therefore they stay." Others that failed to adapt, he added, needed to "think through" their approach.

Aurangzeb said structural reforms were under way across the economy, with particular emphasis being placed on the overhauling of the Federal Board of Revenue. He stressed that while tax policy now sits with the Ministry of Finance, the FBR's core responsibility is revenue collection. "Compliance and enforcement are essential to ensure implementation of tax laws," he said.

Turning to state-owned enterprises, Aurangzeb said inefficiencies were costing the country nearly PKR1 trillion (about \$3.6 billion) a year. "According to a report, we are losing close to a trillion rupees every single year, and we can put it to much better use," he said. As part of cost-cutting and reform efforts, he said several entities, including Utility Stores, the Pakistan Public Works Department and PASCO, had been shut down due to what he described as corruption in subsidy schemes. He added that 24 organisations had been handed over to the Privatisation Commission, noting that the privatisation process for Pakistan International Airlines had attracted interest from local investors. Regarding the outstanding public debt,

Aurangzeb said interest payments remained the single largest expenditure item, but recent steps were beginning to yield savings. A newly established Debt Management Office, he said, has helped the country save PKR85 billion (\$300 million) in interest payments last year, with similar savings expected in the current fiscal year.

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AL exclusion won't allow free and fair elections in Bangladesh: UK MPs warn

London/Dhaka, Jan 14 (Representative)

Highlighting the ban on Bangladesh's largest party Awami League, four MPs in the UK have raised serious concerns over the upcoming February 12 elections, warning that without the inclusion of all major players, the polls cannot be considered as democratic. The document, issued under the banner of the House of Commons, bearing the names of UK MPs Bob Blackman, Jim Shannon, Jas Athwal, and Chris Law, warns that the deregistration and prohibition of such a major player in the Bangladeshi political field automatically sidelines the voices of millions of voters,

undermining public confidence in the electoral process. While the statement does not constitute official UK government policy, it nonetheless reflects growing unease in London regarding Bangladesh's democratic environment, especially in its current volatile landscape. In their joint statement, the UK MPs said that without inclusive participation and impartial international observers, the polls risk disenfranchising large segments of the population. At the centre of their concern is the interim government of Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus, as the MPs noted that no unelected administration had the power to impose restrictions on political parties – especially those with mass following – as it undermines



noted that elections held without the participation of all major political forces can't be considered either free or fair, and cautioned that the

decision to ban the Awami League had curtailed political pluralism, effectively disenfranchising millions of Bangladeshi citizens, generating voter apathy and eroding public confidence in the electoral process. Beyond electoral mechanics, the MPs noted various "credible reports" highlighting the ongoing trend of mass detentions and arbitrary arrests of journalists and media workers due to political motivations. Underscoring structural weaknesses within the political and judicial system, these developments raise serious questions about civil liberties and the rule of law during the interim period. The statement comes amid London's own long-standing financial ties with Dhaka, which has

viewed Bangladesh as an important trade partner and thus consistently emphasised democratic stability as a cornerstone of sustainable economic growth and international cooperation. The statement underscores this relationship, framing the current situation not as a partisan issue, but as a matter of regional stability and democratic norms. Importantly, the MPs stopped short of endorsing any specific Bangladeshi political party, and directed their appeal towards the political process itself, while urging both the British government and international bodies such as the United Nations to continue pressing the interim administration to fulfil its democratic commitments, protect civil rights, and ensure the upcoming

election is inclusive and internationally credible. The broader implication of the statement lies in its timing, as the upcoming February 2026 polls have been subject to increasing global scrutiny. Noting Bangladesh's history as one fraught with political tensions, the MPs noted that national reconciliation and economic recovery depend on governance rooted in the genuine consent of the people. Political stability, they argued, cannot be imposed – it must be earned through transparent, participatory processes. While the statement remains a political expression rather than a formal diplomatic action, it reflects a growing international chorus calling for restraint, inclusivity, and adherence to democratic principles.

US Senators introduce Bill to stop Trump seizing Greenland

Washington, Jan 14 (Representative)

US Senators have introduced a Bill aimed at preventing President Donald Trump from taking any action to invade a NATO member or territory, including Greenland. The bipartisan NATO Unity Protection Act, introduced on Tuesday, would bar the Department of Defense and the Department of State from using funds to "blockade, occupy, annex or otherwise assert control" over the territory of any NATO member state. Moreover, Don Bacon of the Republican Party joined House Democrats to introduce legislation seeking to preemptively block the President from using military force to acquire Greenland. "The No Funds for NATO Invasion Act, introduced

Monday, would prohibit the use of federal funds for an invasion of any NATO member state or NATO-protected territory," they wrote in a statement. The members touted the 80-year NATO alliance as "the foundation for peace and cooperation between the United States and our European allies," saying it has led to greater economic opportunity, enhanced safety and more peace with allies. "We must cease the inflammatory rhetoric, work together to take advantage of our shared opportunities, and, most importantly, to counter the real threats from those who do not share our values," they said in the statement. "Earlier this evening I introduced the bipartisan No Funds

for NATO Invasion Act, prohibiting the Trump administration from invading the territories of any NATO



ally. NATO has been the foundation for peace between the US and Europe for almost 80 years, and it has made Americans safer and strengthened our defense against those who wish us harm. I appreciate my colleagues' support as we move this legislation

forward," Bill Keating wrote on X. "This is about our fundamental shared goals and our fundamental security, not just in Europe, but in the United States itself," said Rep. Bill Keating (D-Mass.), who is leading the legislation along with retiring centrist Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.), Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), and Rep. Brendan Boyle (D-Pa.). Keating said lawmakers began rounding up support for the legislation on Monday night and hope more Republicans will join the effort. Keating said he believes targeting funding is a more effective way to pressure the administration. "War powers are important, but we've seen with Democratic and Republican presidents that that's not as effective,"

he said. "It's hard to get around having no funds or not allowing personnel to do it." The new legislation comes as Democrats on Capitol Hill search for ways to constrain further military action by the Trump administration following the ousting of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. The Senate could clear a war powers measure on Venezuela later this week, though it faces an uncertain future in the House. Trump administration officials are openly weighing options, including military force, to take control of Greenland, a Danish territory. Such an action would violate NATO's Article V, which states that an attack on one member is an attack on all. Keating told lawmakers that "this legislation takes a clear stand against such action and further supports NATO allies and partners," Politico reported.



A super wolf moon rises over Pando stream in El Pinar, the Canelones Department of Uruguay.

Important task is to fight against online scams: Cambodian PM

Phnom Penh, Jan. 14 (Bureau)



Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet has said that the fight against cyber scams was one of the government's key tasks at present. Hun Manet said maintaining security and social order and combating crime were among the government's prioritized tasks to ensure the peaceful living of citizens. "And the fight against online scams is a key task at this time in addition to other national prioritized tasks," he said in a message posted on his official social media platforms late Tuesday. He said that given the danger to society posed by cybercrime and the complexity of this technology-based crime, which has interconnected networks from one country to another, the government has taken a number of measures against this crime and achieved many positive results. He said the strict measures against online scams in the past were a testament to the government's political commitment to combat this transnational crime, which is a common concern for Cambodia, the region, and the world. Hun Manet called on authorities at all levels and people from all walks of life to join together to eradicate online scams in order to restore Cambodia's image on the international stage.

Indonesia stresses preparedness, vigilance, realism in diplomacy amid fragile global order

Jakarta, Jan 14 (Agency)

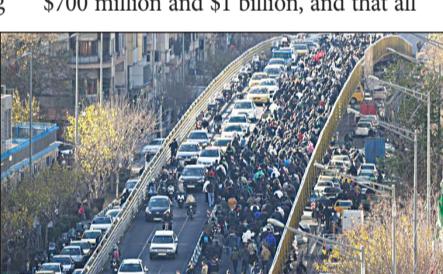
Indonesian Foreign Minister Sugiono said on Wednesday that Indonesia's diplomacy must be built on preparedness, vigilance, and realism, as the current global order grows increasingly fragile and the world enters a dangerous "gray zone" marked by sharper competition, deeper fragmentation, and blurred boundaries between peace and conflict. Speaking at the 2026 annual press briefing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jakarta, Sugiono said narrow national interests are overriding collective security, while international law, long regarded as a cornerstone of global stability, is being misused and frequently violated without consequences. "When jointly agreed rules are broken without accountability, what collapses is not only a single rule, but trust in the entire order itself," he said. Sugiono noted that global governance mechanisms established to manage crises are struggling to keep pace with rapidly changing geopolitical realities. He added that several key countries have withdrawn from their global responsibilities, further weakening international cooperation. According to him, the global landscape is moving toward sharper competition and deeper fragmentation, characterized by economic interdependence and the growing influence of non-state actors. Against this backdrop, Sugiono stressed that countries lacking clear strategies risk being swept along by global turbulence. Indonesia, he said, must not fall into that category. "We must see the world as it is, harsh, competitive, and increasingly unpredictable," he said, adding that Indonesia's diplomacy must be grounded in preparedness, vigilance, and realism to safeguard national interests and resilience.

Iranian authorities developing new project to fully control nationwide internet flow

Tehran, Jan 14 (Reporter)

Iranian authorities are rapidly proceeding with launching a new comms project, engineered specifically to impose a total internet blackout on the country for as long as it deems fit, in a bid to fully control information flow and establish an iron chokehold on all essential services, as some parts of the country are still able to get internet service, while others are using patchy net services via accessing Starlink satellites. According to Iran International, the project aims to build a nationwide communications network on a Huawei-based platform, doing work similar to services provided by Iranian cloud firm ArvanCloud (Abr Arvan) but on a far larger scale, and intended to host widely used public services as well as banking and payment platforms and other critical infrastructure. The full extent of Huawei's role, or the specifics are largely under wraps, as the Chinese electronics giant refused to comment on the matter. According to the information received, the project is in its final stages and is being brought online under ArvanCloud's management, through a company called Ayandeh Afzay-e Karaneh. The project is linked to individuals, and state entities who have been targeted by US sanctions, including Fanap and its CEO Shahab Javanmardi – sanctioned by the US Treasury in August over alleged ties to Iran's intelligence

ministry and the country's notorious IRGC paramilitary force. As per sources, Huawei has stealthily supplied the required materials and equipment, largely hiding its presence in order to avoid having its name appear on any related documentation of the project, to prevent global scrutiny. President Masoud Pezeshkian visited the construction site of the project in March 2025, which were also visited by China's ambassador. Sources said the project is estimated to cost between \$700 million and \$1 billion, and that all equipment – supplied by Huawei in China – entered Iran after the 12-day war, shipped in 24 containers. The established data center would have capacity for about 400 server racks and would incorporate ArvanCloud technologies, with much of the country's core digital infrastructure eventually moved to the national cloud service provider. Reportedly, the facility is located beneath Fanap's administrative building in Pardis IT Town, about 20 km northeast of Tehran, in a place designed specifically to avoid missile strike damages.



The nationwide internet and phone disruptions in the meanwhile are continuing as the protests wage on, severely restricting the flow of information, especially regarding the dire human rights situation on the ground right now as the state crackdown shows no signs of halting or mitigating. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said he was deeply disturbed by reports of violence during nationwide protests and expressed concern about internet and communications shutdowns, calling on authorities to restore service. NetBlocks said on Wednesday

that Iran remained largely offline as the nationwide blackout passed its 132nd hour, adding that limited connectivity was obscuring the scale of casualties, though 12,000 have reportedly been killed and thousands arrested between the nights of Jan 8-9. Fars news agency, which is affiliated with the IRGC, argued that internet restrictions should continue as protests persist, linking the limits to what it described as security concerns. Iranian government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani said decisions on internet and phone cuts were outside the control of government ministries in a security situation.

Iran plans to create closed National Internet Network

Iran, Jan 14 (Agency) Iran plans to create a closed internal internet network, where only a limited set of domestic websites will be accessible, The Guardian newspaper reported, citing Iranian digital rights expert Amir Rashidi. On January 8, the NetBlocks internet monitoring service said that Iran had experienced its first nationwide internet blackout since the start of the current protests. The report read on Monday that the IRIB state broadcasting company had previously published a list of websites that would be accessible in Iran, including domestic search engines, navigation services, messaging apps and even a proprietary streaming service similar to the US's Netflix. All these sites are part of Iran's effort to create a national internet service, Rashidi said. This "skeleton" version of the web is significantly more restricted than even China's, is government-controlled and largely cut off from the outside world, the expert added. Protests erupted in Iran in late December 2025 amid concerns about rising inflation triggered by the weakening of the local currency, the Iranian rial. Since January 8, following calls from Reza Pahlavi, the son of the Shah of Iran, who was overthrown in 1979, protest marches have intensified in Iran. On the same day, internet access was blocked in the country. In several Iranian cities, protests turned into clashes with police as demonstrators shouted slogans critical of the government. There have been reports of casualties among security forces and protesters.

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Mitchell's unbeaten 131 powers NZ to series-levelling win

Rajkot, Jan 14 (FN Representative)

A commanding unbeaten century by Daryl Mitchell overshadowed a fighting batting effort from India as New Zealand produced a clinical chase to register a seven-wicket victory and level the series in the second One-Day International of the New Zealand tour of India at the Niranjan Shah Stadium here on Wednesday. Chasing 285, New Zealand were steered home by Mitchell's masterful unbeaten 131, but the foundation of the contest was laid earlier by India's recovery to 284 for seven after early and middle-order setbacks. Asked to bat after losing the toss, India began cautiously before Rohit Sharma fell for 24, edging Kristian Clarke to Will Young. Skipper Shubman Gill looked fluent during his 56 off 53 balls, striking nine fours and a six, but his dismissal to Kyle Jamieson triggered a wobble. India soon slid from 99 for one to 118 for four as Virat Kohli (23) was bowled

and Shreyas Iyer (8) edged behind, both falling to Clarke, who emerged as New Zealand's most incisive bowler in the middle overs. With India in trouble, KL Rahul produced a mature and composed innings to hold the lower order together. The wicketkeeper-batsman absorbed



pressure during a prolonged boundary drought, rotated the strike smartly and reached his half-century with a thick edge past third man. As the innings progressed, Rahul expanded his range with crisp drives through extra cover, confident sweeps and assured footwork against the spinners. Rahul found support in Ravindra Jadeja, who contributed 27, before Nitish Kumar Reddy added late momentum with a brisk 20. In the 49th over, Rahul brought up his eighth ODI hundred in style, launching a full toss from Kyle Jamieson over long-on

for six. He finished unbeaten on 112 off 92 balls, striking 11 fours and a six, as India added 93 runs in the final 12 overs to post 284 for seven. New Zealand's reply was anchored by Mitchell after early wickets left the visitors at 46 for two. Alongside Will Young, who made a solid 87, Mitchell stitched together a decisive 162-run partnership for the third wicket that effectively took the game away from India. After Young fell to Kuldeep Yadav, Mitchell remained in complete control. Mitchell went on to register a superb unbeaten 131 off 117 balls, striking 11 fours and two sixes, while Glenn Phillips provided finishing support with an unbeaten 32 off 25 balls. New Zealand crossed the target in 47.3 overs, finishing on 286 for three to seal a seven-wicket win and square the series. For India, Kuldeep Yadav, Harshit Rana and Prasidh Krishna picked up a wicket each, but the bowlers struggled to contain Mitchell once he was set. A clinical chase from New Zealand ensured the series was levelled, with Mitchell's innings standing out as the defining performance of the match.

58th Senior National Kho Kho Championship: Security forces field a strong combined contingent

New Delhi/Kazipet, Jan 14 (FN Reporter)

From the icy heights of our borders to the bustling streets of the cities, our security forces stand as the nation's shield, disciplined, courageous and ever vigilant. The same spirit of commitment and sacrifice takes the playfield at the 58th Senior National Kho Kho Championship at Kazipet, Telangana. For the men and women athletes from our paramilitary and police forces, this is more than a sporting contest; it is a reflection of their daily mission. Every stride, every dive, and every team effort echoes the values they live by, dedication, unity, resilience and service to the nation. At the 58th

Senior National Kho Kho Championship, a combined Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) team (in both men and women category) comprising personnel from the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) competed, and also men's and women's teams of the All India Police Sports Control Board (AIPSCB), with players drawn from nine state police forces - Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Punjab, also participated.

Twenty-six-year-old Damor Reetaben, a Constable with the ITBP, shared that during her high-altitude posting in Kibithu, Arunachal Pradesh, where the terrain is not

conducive to playing Kho Kho, still she never gave up on her commitment to the sport. "When I was posted to Haldwani, Uttarakhand, I resumed my practice. Later, I was called to Alwar, Rajasthan, where the team was finalised. Kho Kho is a passion that runs through my veins," said Reetaben. Her colleague and contemporary, Anjali Devi, also a 26-year-old ITBP Constable who hails from Haryana, said she has been playing Kho Kho since her school days and pursued it even more earnestly after joining the force. "My training was completed on August 10, 2022. When the team was being formed, I expressed my interest as I have always been naturally inclined towards the game. I have played in the Senior Nationals

held in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, in 2017," said Anjali. Twenty-three-year-old Aditya Mohod, a Constable with the Maharashtra Police posted in Amravati district, said sports runs in his family. "We are four brothers and all of us play Kho Kho. This is my third Senior National Championship. I secured my job through the Kho Kho sports quota and I am as dedicated to sports as I am to my police duty," he said. This championship is a testament to the unwavering commitment and passion for the game", said Sudhanshu Mittal, President of Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI). The championship started on January 11 is being played in a league-cum-knockout format, with the semi-finals and finals scheduled for January 15.

Continued from Page-1

Large-Ticket Deals Power...

said the government's sustained push on manufacturing and logistics infrastructure is expected to further boost demand in the coming years. Meanwhile, Vimal Nadar, National Director & Head of Research, Colliers India, noted that Delhi NCR, Chennai, Mumbai, and Pune are likely to collectively account for 70-80% of industrial and warehousing demand in 2026, driven by strong occupier interest in Grade A assets.

Cities need to be prepared...

for that. All these factors can make the master planning effective and also prove to be beneficial looking at a city's future. He also pointed out the urban mobility factor, which also supports the economic growth of a city, enabling people and goods to move around smoothly. According to his suggestion, having a lead empowered agency for handling all multiple transport modes can make thing better.

Japanese PM likely to...

If called, the vote would be the country's second general election in under 18 months, reflecting a period of political flux after a string of setbacks for the long-dominant party. The LDP lost its majority in the lower house in 2024 under former Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, and the following year its coalition also lost control of the upper house. Those defeats left the party weakened in parliament, even as it retained power. Since taking office, however, Takaichi has enjoyed unusually high personal approval. While overall support for the LDP hovers around 35%, cabinet approval ratings linked to the prime minister herself have reached as high as 76% in some polls. Analysts say that this gap is what has encouraged her to consider an early election, betting that voters will respond more to her leadership than to party labels. Her standing as premier has been significantly bolstered by a string of high-profile moments, which include the internationally covered high-profile visit by US President Donald Trump shortly after she was sworn in, as well as her hardline stance on Chinese adventurism over Taiwan and the Senkaku islands. As Takaichi has doubled down on Chinese aggression - in turn leading to a significant degradation of bilateral relations between Tokyo and Beijing -- her uncompromising stance on national security, and her overall assertive and strong style of leadership has given her position a notable boost in popularity.

Still, the decision carries with it significant risks, because amid

fickle voter loyalties, and smaller opposition factions rising to prominence, personal popularity, as her analysts may not be good enough to double down on, when it comes to securing a durable guarantee for parliamentary majority. The whole scenario becomes a bold gamble, more so when taking into account that the LDP, for decades has relied on a stable partnership with Komeito to secure victories in closely contested constituencies.

IIT-Bhubaneswar research...

the first large-scale remote sensing-based assessment of bauxite zones in Odisha. Odisha holds an estimated 2.3 billion tonnes of bauxite reserves, accounting for over 50% of India's total resources. However, much of this mineral lies in challenging terrains of the Eastern Ghats, making traditional exploration time-consuming, expensive, and environmentally intensive. Using hyperspectral imaging, the IIT Bhubaneswar team leveraged the concept of spectral signature which is a distinctive pattern of electromagnetic response of earth materials to detect potential bauxite-bearing zones across two districts. This technique can offer a cost-effective, rapid, and eco-friendly approach to support sustainable mineral exploration.

India held to a draw by Bangladesh in SAFF Futsal Championship

Nonthaburi (Thailand), Jan 14 (Agency)

The Indian men's team were held to a pulsating 4-4 draw by Bangladesh in their opening match of the SAFF Futsal Championship 2026 at the Nonthaburi Stadium here on Wednesday. K Roluahpuia scored a brace for the Futsal Tigers in the 27th and 36th minutes after Anmol Adhikari (12') and Lalsawmpuia (20') scored in the first period. For Bangladesh, Md Moin Ahmed (9', 31') and Md Rahbar Wahed Khan (16', 37') netted a brace each. India began on the front foot, pressing high and moving the ball quickly across the court. Early chances fell to Anmol Adhikari and Tijo Job, but Bangladesh survived the initial pressure through disciplined defending and sharp counter-attacks. The breakthrough came in the ninth minute when Md Moin Ahmed skipped past Seon Dsouza on the left and finished from a tight angle to put Bangladesh ahead.

India responded swiftly. In the 12th minute, Hafis AM wriggled free under pressure and slipped a precise pass to Adhikari, who kept his composure to fire in the equaliser. The game remained open and intense, with

chances at both ends. Bangladesh regained the lead in the 16th minute after a slick passing move between

Moin Ahmed and captain Md Rahbar



move involving Roluahpuia and Tijo Job. After exchanging passes, Roluahpuia forced his way through tight marking and finished calmly to restore India's lead at 4-3. However, the advantage was short-lived. Adhikari failed to control a loose ball and gifted possession to Rahbar Wahed Khan, who unleashed a powerful right-footed shot in the 37th minute to draw Bangladesh level once more. The closing moments were frantic. India went close to snatching a winner when Jonathan Lalrawngbawla failed to convert a rebound from close range after a sharp save from the Bangladesh goalkeeper. The final whistle confirmed a high-quality 4-4 draw, leaving India with both positives and regrets as the tournament got underway. India's match squad: 1 Ozen Silva (GK), 7 Nikhil Mali, 5 Seon Dsouza, 10 Lalsangkima, 13 Jonathan Lalrawngbawla, 2 Aleef Rahman Mollah (GK), 3 Vincent Lalluangzela, 4 Palash Barber, 6 Lalrinzuala, 8 Lalsawmpuia, 9 Hafis AM, 11 Anmol Adhikari, 12 Tijo Job, 14 K Roluahpuia.

Health Min unveils...

Minister also launched 'The Delhi Model: Healthy Liver, Healthy Delhi', an 18-month screening and awareness programme for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease. A handbook on common diagnostic and therapeutic procedures in hepatology, prepared by ILBS experts, was also released to improve patient understanding of liver treatment. Singh stressed the need to expand support for economically weaker sections so that advanced treatment is within reach of all. The launch of the Liver Gyan Helpline is expected to serve as an important bridge between citizens and medical experts, encouraging early care and informed decision-making on liver health in Delhi.

Ayurveda-based panchakarma...

Dental OPD, Eye OPD, laboratory services, pharmacy, health education and vaccination services, including child immunisation. The facility also houses a dedicated Dental Care Unit, a Yoga and Wellness Room, and comprehensive preventive-care services. At present, it conducts over 100 in-house diagnostic tests, including essential blood investigations and routine screenings, with plans to expand the capacity to more than 200 tests in the coming days. Announcing the introduction of Panchakarma services, Singh said the Ayurveda-based therapy will begin at the Bhimnagarai centre and will be gradually rolled out across Ayushman Aarogyam Mandirs in Delhi, ensuring neighbourhood-level access to holistic and affordable wellness facilities. He added that the Panchakarma unit being introduced at the centre will be among the finest in the country, ensuring high-quality and holistic care for residents.

Today's youth no longer...

the Startup Capital of India. She urged the youth to adopt a solutions-oriented approach so that Delhi and India can lead global innovation." She added Education Minister Ashish Sood said that earlier, startups in Delhi were scattered and lacked a structured ecosystem connecting students with industry, mentors and investors. He said that the Startup Yuva Festival bringing together 11 universities, 12 colleges and 19 ITIs on a single platform for the first time. Under the structured 'Campus to Market' approach, students are being connected to mentorship, funding and market access. Currently, over 75,000 students and young people are associated with entrepreneurship programmes, and more than 470 startups are operating under incubation. These startups have generated revenues of Rs. 500 to 600 crore and created an average of four to five jobs per startup. "Under the NEEEV curriculum at the school level, 5,000 student teams have been supported with Rs. 20,000 each. At the Startup Yuva Festival, the top six startups are being awarded equity-free grants of Rs. 10 lakh each, while the top 100 startups are receiving Rs. 1 lakh each." He added He also announced that the Delhi Startup Policy will be implemented soon, with an outlay of Rs. 325 crore over the next five years and a target of developing 5,000 startups by 2035. Startup Yuva Festival 2026 is organised to take student-led startups from campus to market, the festival aims to convert innovations developed within educational institutions into commercially viable and sustainable enterprises. Under the 'Campus to Market' initiative, students presented their ideas to investors, mentors and industry experts. The programme also featured knowledge sessions, policy discussions and an award ceremony. Out of more than 700 applications, over 60 startups participated in the Startup Expo, with the top 20 selected for live pitching. The top six startups received grants of Rs. 10 lakh each, while the top 100 startups were awarded grants of Rs. 1 lakh each.

PM Modi to inaugurate 28th Commonwealth Speakers' Conference

New Delhi, Jan 14 (Agency)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPC) on Thursday, underscoring India's growing role as a key convener of global democratic dialogue. The Prime Minister will also address the international gathering of parliamentary leaders at the opening session scheduled for 10:30 am at the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan in the Parliament House Complex. The high-level conference will be chaired by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and will bring together 61 Speakers and Presiding Officers from 42 Commonwealth countries, along with representatives from four semi-autonomous parliaments, reflecting the breadth and diversity of the Commonwealth parliamentary community. Officials said the conference will focus on strengthening democratic institutions at a time when legislatures across the world are grappling with rapid technological change and evolving public expectations. "The CSPC provides a vital platform for parliamentary leaders to exchange best practices and collectively reflect on how legislatures can remain robust, transparent and responsive," a senior official said.

A key area of discussion will be the role of Speakers and Presiding Officers in upholding the dignity and effectiveness of legislatures while ensuring smooth conduct of proceedings and protection of members' rights. The agenda also includes deliberations on the use of artificial intelligence in parliamentary functioning, ranging from legislative research and documentation to improving efficiency and accessibility. Participants will further examine the impact of social media on Members of Parliament, including its influence on public discourse, accountability and parliamentary privilege. Innovative strategies to enhance public understanding of Parliament and deepen citizen participation beyond the act of voting are also expected to be a major focus. The CSPC is a long-standing forum of the Commonwealth that convenes periodically to promote parliamentary democracy, good governance and cooperation among member countries. India's hosting of the 28th edition comes at a time when it is seeking to position itself as a bridge between established and emerging democracies within the Commonwealth. Prime Minister Modi has consistently emphasised the importance of strong legislatures and inclusive governance, and his address is expected to highlight India's democratic traditions as well as the need for parliaments to adapt to technological and societal changes while remaining anchored in constitutional values. The conference proceedings are expected to culminate in shared recommendations aimed at reinforcing the relevance and resilience of parliamentary institutions across the Commonwealth in the years ahead.

Kalayatra 2026 begins five-day celebration of Indian classical dance

New Delhi, Jan 14 (Representative)

The Festival of New Choreographies-Kalayatra 2026 was inaugurated at Kamani Auditorium on Tuesday, marking the beginning of a five-day national celebration of Indian classical dance presented through contemporary choreographic works rooted in tradition. Conceived and curated by Padma Vibhushan awardee Dr Sonal Mansingh, the festival brings together ten eminent dance institutions from across India. It is jointly presented by the Department of Art, Culture & Languages, Government of NCT of Delhi, and the Centre for Indian Classical Dances (Shri Kamakhya Kalapeeth), highlighting a collaborative effort between cultural

governance and artistic leadership. The inaugural ceremony was attended by senior government officials, cultural administrators, and noted artistes, including Uma Sharma, Malini Awasthi, Dr Sachidanand Joshi, Geeta Chandran, Saswati Sen, Ranjana Gauhar, and Wasifuddin Dagar. Addressing the gathering, K. Mahesh, Secretary, Department of Art, Culture & Languages, said the Delhi government was proud to partner with Dr Mansingh and emphasised that culture remains a key priority under the government's vision to establish Delhi as a global cultural hub. The festival opened with Amrutan-

Manthan, a large-scale production conceptualised and choreographed by Dr Mansingh and performed by the CICD repertory. Inspired by ancient



Hindu scriptures, the work depicted the cosmic churning of the ocean for nectar, exploring the dualities of good and evil and underscoring the

ultimate triumph of righteousness. The performance, marked by elaborate props and visual design, received a standing ovation from the audience. The second presentation of the evening, Athijeevanam, was a Kathakali production by the International Kathakali Centre, Delhi, directed by Guru T.B. Jagadeesan. The choreography addressed environmental degradation and the need to preserve nature for the survival of future generations. Speaking at the inauguration, Dr Mansingh said, "When governance and culture walk together, platforms like the Festival of New Choreographies become



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and MoS Finance Pankaj Chaudhary during the Pre-Budget meeting with State Finance Ministers of States and Union Territories, in New Delhi.

Delhi CM says 319 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs made operational in 11 months

New Delhi, Jan 14 (Agency) Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday announced the inauguration of 81 new Ayushman Arogya Mandirs across the national Capital, further strengthening neighbourhood-level healthcare services. Addressing a programme in the Hari Nagar Assembly constituency, Gupta extended greetings on Makar Sankranti and congratulated residents on the launch of accessible and reliable health services in their colonies. She said that within 11 months, the Delhi government has operationalised 319 modern Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, offering free healthcare services with improved and modern facilities. The total number of operational Ayushman Arogya Mandirs in Delhi will rise from 238 to 319. The expansion is part of the government's long-term roadmap to establish over 1,100 such centres across the national Capital. Each Ayushman Arogya Mandir will offer free doctor consultations, essential medicines and diagnostic tests.

Only Hindu festivals face such halts: Poonawala slams Kerala govt

New Delhi, Jan 14 (Bureau)

BJP's national spokesperson Sheshadri Poonawala on Wednesday accused the Left government in Kerala of having an "anti-Hindu character" after revenue authorities issued a memo halting the construction of a temporary bridge for the upcoming Maha Magha festival in Thirunavaya. He said the move to stop the bridge work essential for the

festival -- called the Kumbh Mela of the south being restarted after years -- was a deliberate attempt to sabotage the event. Poonawala alleged that such concerns are only raised for Hindu festivals due to vote bank politics, citing past controversies such as the Sabarimala gold and ghee "loot". The memo was issued for the bridge on the Bharathapuzha river, meant for the festival scheduled from January 18 to February 3 on the sandbar near the Nava Mukunda Temple. Poonawala claimed that both the ruling LDF and opposition UDF exhibit "anti-Hindu sentiment" and mock Hindu beliefs while being silent on issues concerning other faiths.

President, Defence Minister salute Ex-Servicemen on Armed Forces Veterans' Day

New Delhi, Jan 14 (Reporter)

President Droupadi Murmu and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh paid tributes to the nation's ex-servicemen on Armed Forces Veterans' Day on Wednesday. President Murmu, in a post on X, saluted the "valour, dedication, and sacrifice of our ex-servicemen," stating their unwavering courage continues to

inspire every Indian. She said such occasions are opportunities to both pay tribute and extend meaningful support to soldiers, expressing confidence that veterans remain deeply committed to the nation. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, also on X, bowed in expressing "deep gratitude to our veterans and serving personnel," acknowledging that their sacrifices form the living shield of



India's borders and preserve the soul of the Republic. He affirmed

the nation's eternal gratitude and an absolute, unwavering commitment to the dignity and welfare of veterans, serving personnel, and their families. The Armed Forces Veterans' Day is commemorated on January 14 every year to honour the legacy and yeoman service of Field Marshal KM Cariappa, OBE, the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, who retired on this day in 1953.

PM Modi greets nation on harvest festivals, celebrates India's unity in diversity

New Delhi, Jan 14 (Representative)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday extended greetings to citizens across the country on the auspicious occasion of Makar Sankranti and other harvest festivals, underlining the festivals' deep roots in Indian culture and their celebration through diverse regional traditions. In a series of messages, the Prime Minister prayed for happiness, prosperity and good health for all, while invoking the blessings of Lord Surya, the Sun God. "Heartfelt wishes to all fellow citizens on the auspicious occasion of Makar Sankranti. May this divine moment, filled with the sweetness of sesame seeds and jaggery, rooted in Indian culture and traditions, bring joy, prosperity, and success to everyone's life. May Lord Surya bless us all," PM Modi said in a post on X.

Highlighting the spiritual significance of the festival, which marks the Sun's transition into the zodiac sign of Capricorn (Makara) and the beginning of the auspicious Uttarayana period, the Prime Minister noted its importance in Hindu belief. "May the Sun God proceed to the heavens; the Lord Sun is in Capricorn.

In the Uttarayana, there is great merit; it destroys all sins. Wishing everyone a happy Uttarayan," he said. Emphasising India's cultural diversity, Modi pointed out that Sankranti is celebrated in different forms across the country, reflecting local customs and traditions. "This sacred occasion of Sankranti is celebrated in various parts of the country according to local customs and traditions. I pray to Lord Surya for everyone's happiness,

prosperity, and excellent health," he added. Extending greetings beyond the pan-Indian observance of Makar Sankranti, the Prime Minister also wished people celebrating



regional harvest festivals. "Happy Magh Bihu to everyone!" he said, referring to Assam's major agrarian festival that

coincides with Sankranti and marks the end of the harvesting season. Makar Sankranti holds special significance as one of the few Hindu festivals observed according to the solar calendar. It is celebrated as Pongal in Tamil Nadu, Uttarayan in Gujarat, Magh Bihu in Assam, and by various other names across the country. The festival symbolises the end of winter, the onset of longer days, and gratitude to nature for agricultural bounty. On Magh Bihu, PM Modi said the festival reflects Assamese culture and embodies "joy, warmth and brotherhood." He noted that Magh Bihu marks the end of the harvest season and encourages gratitude and contentment, while also acknowledging the invaluable contribution of farmers. He extended wishes of peace, good health, and success to all. On Pongal,

the Prime Minister greeted people with a "Vanakkam" and highlighted the festival's celebration of the bond between humans and nature. "Pongal celebrates agriculture, rural life and the dignity of labour, bringing families together and strengthening social bonds," he said. Traditionally associated with rituals such as taking holy dips, flying kites, community feasts and sharing sweets made of sesame seeds (til) and jaggery, the festival underscores themes of harmony, renewal and togetherness. Leaders across the political spectrum and cultural figures also extended greetings on the occasion, with festivities being marked across states in keeping with local traditions, reaffirming the shared cultural ethos that binds the nation despite its diversity. The Prime Minister is scheduled to attend Pongal celebrations at the residence of union Minister L. Murugan in the national capital today.