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History-Sheetter shot dead in Jaunpur, area gripped by panic

Jaunpur: A history-sheetter was shot dead by unidentified assailants while attending a thirteenth-day death ritual (terahvi) in Jaunpur district, creating panic in the area, police said on Wednesday. The incident took place in Babura village under the Badlapur police station limits. The deceased has been identified as Swadheen Singh alias Chhotu. According to reports, Chhotu had gone to attend a terahvi ceremony in the village on Tuesday night. After the meal, while he was returning home, he received a phone call and walked a short distance away while talking. Moments later, gunshots were heard.

Adityanath, Rajnath offer prayers at Hanumangarhi, Ram Temple

Ayodhya: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday prayed at Ram temple and Hanumangarhi. Amidst chants of "Jai Shri Ram" and other mantras, the Defence Minister and Chief Minister, after performing the rituals, hoisted the religious flag on the spire of the Maa Annapurna Temple. First both the leaders prayed at Hanumangarhi temple. After leaving Hanumangarhi, the Defence Minister and Chief Minister went directly to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi complex.

Resolution for a developed, secure, empowered India on New Year: Thakur

Hamirpur: Former union minister Anurag Thakur on Wednesday extended his heartfelt New Year greetings to the people of the state and his constituents in Hamirpur.

Congress flags China mediation claims on Operation Sindoor, seeks PM's response

New Delhi (UNI)

The Congress on Wednesday sought an explanation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi over claims by China that it mediated between India and Pakistan during the abrupt halt of Operation Sindoor in May 2025, saying such assertions raise serious questions about India's national security and contradict what the government has led the country to believe.

Congress general secretary in charge of communications Jairam Ramesh said the Prime Minister's continued silence on repeated claims by US President Donald Trump—and now similar claims by China—was deeply troubling.

"President Trump has long claimed that he personally intervened to halt Operation Sindoor on May 10, 2025. He has made this



claim 65 times in various forums across at least seven countries. The Prime Minister has never broken his silence," Ramesh said.

He added that the issue had taken a more serious turn with the Chinese Foreign Minister also asserting that Beijing had played a mediating role.

"Now the Chinese Foreign Minister makes a similar claim and says China also mediated. Given that China was decisively aligned with Pakistan, such claims are not just concerning—they make a joke of our national security itself," Ramesh said.

Operation Sindoor was a major military operation launched by the Indian Armed Forces in the early hours of May 7, 2025. It was a retaliatory response to a terrorist attack that occurred in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, on April 22, 2025, which killed 26 innocent civilians. The operation followed heightened tensions with Pakistan, with the government later announcing that military operations had been halted after objectives were achieved. However, opposition leaders have repeatedly ques-

tioned the circumstances under which the operation was stopped and whether external pressure played any role.

Ramesh pointed to a public statement made on July 4, 2025, by Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Rahul Singh, who said that during Operation Sindoor, India was "actually confronting and combating China."

"If that is the case, and if China was aligned with Pakistan, then Chinese claims of mediation directly contradict what the people of India have been told," Ramesh said.

Placing the controversy in the broader context of India-China relations, the Congress leader said recent re-engagement with Beijing had taken place "largely on Chinese terms."

ED attaches Rs 150 cr London property in bank fraud case

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED), Indore Sub-Zonal Office, said on Wednesday that it has attached a high-value property worth Rs 150 crore located in a prime area of London, near Buckingham Palace. The immovable property is held under the beneficial ownership of Nitin Shambhukumar Kasliwal and his family members. Nitin Shambhukumar Kasliwal, former chairman and managing director of S. Kumars Nationwide Limited, is accused of defrauding a consortium of Indian banks of approximately Rs 1,400 crore, according to multiple FIRs. During the investigation, the ED conducted searches and seized various incriminating records along with digital devices. A detailed analysis of the material revealed that Nitin Kasliwal had established a complex network of trusts and companies in multiple offshore tax havens, including the British Virgin Islands (BVI), Jersey, and Switzerland.

Sleeper bus catches fire on Agra-Lucknow Expressway in Kannauj; all 50 passengers safe

Kannauj (UNI)

A major accident was averted late Tuesday night when a moving sleeper bus caught fire on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway in Kannauj district, police said on Wednesday.

The bus was carrying around 50 passengers, all of whom managed to escape safely, though a few sustained minor injuries while jumping out in panic, police said.

The incident occurred around 11 pm in the Tirwa police station area, near the Fagua Bhatta Toll Plaza. The sleeper bus was traveling from Panipat in Haryana to Bihar.

According to initial reports, smoke began rising from the engine area as the bus approached the toll plaza. Within minutes, the smoke spread inside the bus and flames erupted, triggering panic among the sleeping passengers. As smoke filled the bus, passengers woke up coughing and



screaming. Those seated near the front managed to exit through the door and ran to safety, while passengers at the rear broke windows and jumped out to save their lives.

The bus driver showed presence of mind and stopped the vehicle on the roadside, instructing passengers to get out immediately.

Seeing the burning bus, passersby stopped their vehicles and alerted the police. Police and fire brigade teams rushed to the spot and began rescue operations. Firefighters battled the blaze for nearly two hours before bringing it under control. Traffic on the expressway was disrupted for a long time due to the incident.

India's economy set for resilient growth

RBI's financial stability report

New Delhi: Amid global volatility, the Indian economy remains a beacon of strength, poised to maintain its robust growth trajectory. According to the Financial Stability Report (FSR) released by the Reserve Bank of India on Wednesday, the nation's economic resilience is anchored by surging domestic demand, controlled inflation, and prudent macroeconomic steering.

The report highlights the exceptional health of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs), noting they are currently fortified with multi-decadal low non-performing assets and substantial capital buffers. RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra emphasized that the banking sector's capital adequacy remains well above regulatory requirements, even under hypothetical stress scenarios.

While the domestic outlook is positive, the RBI cautioned against "external spillovers," including geopolitical tensions and trade un-

certainties. However, macro-stress tests confirm that Indian financial institutions, including mutual funds and insurance providers, possess the "shock absorbers" necessary to withstand adverse global shifts. With a projected GDP growth of 6.5% for FY26, the report reaffirms that India's financial system is not just stable but strategically prepared for future expansion.

RBI Governor sets "North Star" for financial stability and innovation

In this Financial Stability Report, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra emphasized that safeguarding the financial system remains the central bank's "North Star." He urged for a resilient ecosystem that balances efficiency with responsible innovation. Malhotra highlighted that while shock resistance is vital, the regulatory focus has expanded to prioritize consumer protection and technological advancement alongside systemic stability.

Kerala CM condoles demise of Mohanlal's mother



Thiruvananthapuram (UNI)

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday visited the residence of veteran Malayalam actor Mohanlal, and paid his last respects to the actor's mother G Shanthakumari, placing a wreath at her mortal remains.

Shanthakumari (90), who passed away at her residence in Elamakkara, Kochi, on Tuesday afternoon, was brought to Thiruvananthapuram by road late Tuesday night. The ambulance carrying the body left Kochi around 10.30 pm and reached the capital city in the early hours of Wednesday. Her mortal remains are being

kept for public viewing from this morning at the family residence, 'Hill View' at Mutavanmukal, Kesavadev Road, in Thiruvananthapuram. The funeral rites will be held later in the afternoon on Wednesday at the same residence.

Several eminent personalities from the film industry, along with relatives, friends and well-wishers, have been arriving to pay their last respects.

On Tuesday evening, during the public viewing held at the Elamakkara residence, noted actor Mammooty, Kerala Minister P Rajeev, Leader of the Opposition V D Satheesan, and many others from the film and political spheres offered their condolences.

Shanthakumari had been undergoing treatment at Amrita Hospital, Kochi, for nearly a decade following paralysis and age-related health complications, including those arising from a stroke she suffered in recent years.

Earlier this year, Mohanlal had celebrated his mother's birthday at their Elamakkara residence in the presence of close friends and relatives, including Major Ravi and Antony Perumbavoor. On a previous occasion, he had paid a musical tribute to her, a video of which had gone viral on social media.

Massive ED raid in Delhi: Rs 5.12 crore cash and luxury jewels seized

New Delhi: In a major strike against money laundering, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) recovered a staggering fortune during an ongoing raid at Sarvapriya Vihar. The operation, which began Tuesday, unearthed Rs 5.12 crore in liquid cash, requiring bank officials and counting machines to tally the haul.

Beyond the currency, investigators seized a suitcase overflowing with gold and diamond jewelry valued at Rs 8.80 crore. The team also confiscated property documents and chequebooks worth an estimated Rs 35 crore. As the search continues, ED officials are meticulously scanning digital evidence and financial trails to identify the masterminds behind this massive illicit wealth accumulation.

Vellappally Natesan predicts 3rd term for Pinarayi Vijayan govt in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram (UNI)

SNDP Yogam General Secretary Vellappally Natesan on Wednesday expressed strong confidence that Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan would return to power for a third consecutive term in the upcoming state assembly elections.

Commenting on the recent local body election results, he said the outcomes clearly reflect public support for the policies and administration of the incumbent government.

He noted that Pinarayi Vijayan's governance, development initiatives, and administrative efficiency have strengthened the position of the CPM-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) across the state.

According to Vellappally, these factors give the LDF a significant advantage over opposition parties in



the next assembly polls.

Vellappally's comments underline growing optimism among certain sections of the political establishment regarding a potential third term for Pinarayi Vijayan. As Kerala gears up for the 2026 assembly elections, political parties are strategizing to consolidate their voter base.

At the same time, Vellappally openly criticized the Communist Party of India (CPI), describing it as

"betrayers" for publicly criticizing the Chief Minister despite their political alignment.

In response, CPI State Secretary Binoy Viswam clarified that Vellappally is not an official representative of the LDF. He emphasized that the Left has never chosen Vellappally to represent the alliance and that the LDF should not be personified as him.

Viswam also criticized Vellappally's public attacks on the CPI, arguing that internal disagreements should be addressed within the party rather than aired in harsh terms publicly.

The exchange highlights growing tensions in Kerala's political landscape between established Left leaders and influential social figures like Vellappally Natesan.

India's SSLV rocket to have improved third stage engine

Chennai (UNI)

Indian space agency has conducted successfully a static test of an improved version of the third stage (SS3) of Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) on Tuesday at the Solid Motor Static Test Facility of Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) Sriharikota.

The SSLV, the latest rocket of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is a three stage all-solid fuel powered satellite launch vehicle with a carrying capacity of 500 kg. The upper stage or third stage solid motor delivers as high as 4 km/s velocity to the launch vehicle and employs a monolithic compos-

ite motor case and a free-standing nozzle divergent to limit the stage inert mass.

The static test validated an improved version of the SS3 stage with a Carbon-epoxy Motor case, which has significantly reduced the mass of the stage, thereby improving the payload performance of SSLV by 90 kg. The stage also features an improved design for the igniter and nozzle system making the system more efficient and robust.

The nozzle control is implemented through a fault-tolerant electro-mechanical actuation system with low power control electronics.

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