

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ      Tuesday, 18 February, 2025      UNIQUE GIFT OF KRIYAYOGA ASHRAM AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO GIVE IMPETUS TO WORLD BUILDING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

### Cautious investors seen avoiding 'risk on' trades

**MUMBAI:** Market players are keeping their fingers crossed as investors are weighed down by the continuing bearish sentiment due to a combination of domestic and global factors. Continuous foreign fund selling, weakness of the rupee, the escalating tariff war that was started by the US and a not-so-good quarterly corporate results have pulled the sensex and nifty down by around 2.5% each last week. Investors do not see any positive trigger that could stop the slide."These declines stem from concerns over US tariff policies and slowing corporate earnings, leading to widespread sell-offs, particularly in small-cap stocks," said Krishna Appala, senior research analyst, Capitalmind Research in a note. On Friday, while the sensex ended at 75,939 points, the nifty ended at 22,929 points. Foreign funds have been the largest sellers in the Indian market so far this year with the net outflow already over Rs 1 lakh crore, data from NSDL and BSE showed.Of the total in Feb so far, the net outflow is nearly Rs 21,300 crore. Next week's trading trend, like in the past few weeks, is expected to be determined by trading pattern by foreign fund managers, market players said.The ongoing tariff war that was started by US President Donald Trump after assuming office on Jan 21, is yet to take a definite shape. So the related uncertainties are weighing heavily on markets around the world. Till there is some stability or certainty relating to US's trade relations with its other major trading partners, investors will remain cautious and prefer to avoid 'risk'.

### Stampede: No steps taken despite early signs of trouble

**NEW DELHI:** A day after the devastating stampede at New Delhi Railway Station, there were many questions but few answers. While the lack of measures that could have prevented such a situation was apparent, passengers also flagged a range of lapses ranging from absence of proper communication from railway staff to non-availability of trained medical help. There were early signs of trouble. Around 8.15pm, two hours prior to the stampede, several X users began posting about the growing crowd near the platforms. Yet, no measures were taken to manage the situation, it has been alleged. Despite clear warning signs, the congestion only worsened. One user posted, "Shiv Ganga Express-12560. New Delhi - Overcrowded Platform No. 12 (last-minute change from 14). Despite having a ticket, we can't enter the coach. The first-class TTE has locked the door, but no one is managing the other AC coaches." Many passengers claimed that they were caught off guard by the last-minute platform change which contributed to the chaos. Stranded passengers rely on each other for help in chaos Railway



officials were quick to refute allegations that there was a last-minute change in platform. "The matter is being investigated by a high-level committee. No train was cancelled, nor was there any change in platform... Let the committee submit its report and findings," said a senior railway officer. The sale of around 1,500 general class tickets every hour in such a situation also raised serious questions about accountability. Many passengers claimed that the influx should have been halted in time. The lack of clear announcements regarding train arrivals was another major concern raised by passengers, with many believing it contributed significantly to the stampede - particularly in the case of the special train. Passengers at the station claimed that the

announcements were unclear due to background noise. There was little to no visible medical assistance available on the platforms. Stranded passengers were left to fend for themselves, relying on each other for help in the chaos. Several families that spoke to said that doctors or trained responders could have made a real difference. "Even on normal days, when the station is crowded, there's no one to assist those in need. Getting a wheelchair for the elderly or disabled is always a struggle. Sometimes, porters are paid extra to carry elderly passengers on the trolley," said a vendor who didn't wish to be named. Eyewitness Sharda Devi, a resident of Bijwasan, said there was a frantic rush at platforms 13-14. Seeing the chaos.

### 3 deportees arrested on arrival for murder, sex assault

**PATIALA /KURUKSHETRA:** Deportees in the second batch of 116 illegal immigrants brought back to India by a US military aircraft late Saturday were arrested on arrival at Amritsar airport - two from Punjab for alleged murder and another from Haryana on charges of sexual assault on a minor. A fourth deportee, son of a Punjab cop, was detained in connection with two pending FIRs against him for dacoity

and snatching. Cousins Sandeep Singh and Pardeep Singh from Punjab's Rajpura, both named in a murder case registered in June 2023, were remanded in police custody for three days in Patiala. Sahil Verma of Pehowa in Haryana's Kurukshetra stands accused of fleeing the country after the sexual assault case against him was filed in 2022. He spent time in Vietnam and then in Italy before entering the US

illegally last month, SHO Janpal Singh of Pehowa city police station said. Haryana police took Sahil to Kurukshetra. Besides rape, he faces multiple other charges, including criminal intimidation, under IPC and Pocso Act. The FIR against the Punjab duo was based on a complaint by Harmajot Singh of Mandoli village in Patiala, accusing them of murdering a relative of the latter. Gurwinder Singh, 27,

### DOGE plans to replace of Education contract workers with AI chatbots

**NEW DELHI:** Trump DoE to replace human workers with AI: The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), spearheaded by Elon Musk, is reportedly considering replacing contract workers in the Department of Education with AI chatbots. Internal department documents reveal that Musk's allies within the Education Department are exploring the use of generative AI to manage student and parent inquiries, according to a New York Times report.

This initiative aligns with President Trump's broader efforts to shrink the federal workforce and modernize public services using artificial intelligence. Currently, 1,600 call center agents handle over 15,000 student loan inquiries daily, but the introduction of AI could drastically reduce the need for human workers. The chatbot system would replace or supplement existing services, such as Accenture's help desk contract, valued at over \$700 million.

### Odisha HC grants bail to thief with 'sapling plants' condition

**Orissa** An Orissa HC judge has granted bail to a man facing prosecution for alleged theft on the condition that he plant 200 saplings of local varieties such as mango, neem, and tamarind around his village in Jharsuguda district and maintain them for two years, reports Lalmohan Patnaik. Manas Ati had been in judicial custody since December 25 last year for allegedly stealing six electric poles in villages under Kolabira police.

### Dollar dreams dashed: Third US aircraft lands with 112 migrants

**AMRITSAR:** A third American aircraft ferrying 112 illegal Indian immigrants landed in Punjab's Amritsar at 10.05pm on Sunday, taking the number of arrivals over the weekend to 228 and the total number of people sent back to India since the start of the current deportation exercise on February 5 to 332. The latest batch comprised 44 natives of Haryana, 33 from Gujarat, 31 of Punjab, two from UP,



and one each from Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, sources said. There was no official confirmation of the break-up. The US military plane that landed in Amritsar Saturday night brought back 116 deportees, 65 of

them from Punjab. After Punjab govt's criticism of Haryana sending jail vans to transport the deportees back to their native places, the BJP-led govt sent a Volvo bus to pick up the new arrivals. No member of the Bhagwant Mann-led Punjab govt was at the airport Sunday night, unlike the previous two occasions. There were no family members of the returnees either. Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal

### BJP's legislative party to meet on February 19: Who will be Delhi's next CM?

**NEW DELHI:** After a historic victory in the Delhi Assembly elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is now gearing up for a major decision: who will become the next chief minister of Delhi? The party secured a commanding 48 seats out of 70, sweeping the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) aside and ending its decade-long rule in the capital. BJP Legislature Party meeting scheduled for tomorrow, February 17, was postponed. Now this meeting will be held on February 19. The swearing-in ceremony of the chief minister will also be held on 20th February instead of 18th February, ANI reported quoting sources. BJP's return to power in Delhi after 27



years has raised anticipation over the leadership choice. While several names have been floated, sources suggest the party is likely to select a leader from among the winning MLAs to avoid the necessity of byelections. Parvesh Verma has emerged as a strong contender following his victory

over Arvind Kejriwal in the New Delhi constituency. The son of former chief minister Saheb Singh Verma, Parvesh has twice won the West Delhi Lok Sabha seat and is seen as a strong representative of the Jat community, which played a crucial role in the BJP's electoral success.

Vijender Gupta, the leader of the BJP in the outgoing Assembly, is also being considered. Gupta secured his third consecutive victory from Rohini and is seen as an experienced leader capable of leading the state government. Additionally, former Delhi BJP chiefs Satish Upadhyay and Virendra Sachdeva have been named as potential choices. The BJP has a history of making unexpected choices for key leadership roles, often selecting lesser-known figures to introduce fresh perspectives. This has fuelled speculation that the party might opt for an unconventional pick. Some reports suggest the possibility of appointing two deputy chief ministers.

### Post election crack-down: CBI arrests 6 Delhi Transport Department officials in corruption case

**NEW DELHI:** In a significant post-election crackdown, the CBI has arrested six officials from the Delhi Transport Department on charges of corruption and bribery, marking the first major action in the capital after the Aam Aadmi Party's recent electoral defeat, officials said on Wednesday. The agency had been receiving multiple complaints about rampant corruption within the department, prompting an extensive surveillance operation to verify the allegations before making the arrests, they said. Following the verification process.

### Assam to book Pak man who 'worked with Congress MP's wife'

**GUWAHATI/NEW DELHI:** The row over alleged Pakistani links of Gaurav Gogoi's wife escalated on Sunday with the Congress MP saying he would initiate legal proceedings in the matter and Assam govt asking state police to register a case against Ali Tauqueer Sheikh, an advisor of the Pakistan Planning Commission, for his alleged attempts to interfere in domestic matters of the state. Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma had earlier said a police case was likely to be registered to probe the allegations of Pakistani links of Gogoi's wife Elizabeth Colburn, who is a British national, but the cabinet on refrained from ordering a case against her. Apart from his engagement with the Pakistani

govt, Sheikh also founded Lead Pakistan, a non-profit organisation working on climate change, Sarma said, claiming that Elizabeth was an integral part of Lead Pakistan during her time in Islamabad. tnn Cong accuses Assam govt, BJP of launching anti-Gogoi smear campaign, vows legal step In recent days, multiple news reports, social media posts, and other information in the public domain have surfaced regarding certain comments made by Pakistani national Ali Tauqueer Sheikh aimed at disrupting communal harmony in Assam," Himanta Biswa Sarma told the media. He added that a perusal of his social media activity included.

### It's wild that I have never been to Delhi before: Ed Sheeran

**NEW DELHI:** After his opening song, the Photograph singer shared how, until now, all his performances in India had been limited to Mumbai. "In 2015, we played in Mumbai. The next time we came, we played in Mumbai. And the next time, we played in Mumbai. So the last time, I said, 'Why don't we play anywhere else? From now on, let's play everywhere except Mumbai!'" Expressing his excitement about finally performing in other cities, including Delhi, he went on to share his experience of exploring the capital while shooting for music videos, Sheeran said, "It's amazing to see everything. We went to Old Delhi, and it's been an incredible experience." With just his guitar and loop station.

### Allow Saarc meet, blocked since Uri hit: Dhaka to Delhi

**Foreign minister S Jaishankar** met Bangladesh foreign adviser Touhid Hossain on the sidelines of Indian Ocean Conference in Muscat on Sunday amid tense bilateral ties over the presence of ousted ex-PM Sheikh Hasina in India since last August. While Jaishankar said the conversation was focused on the bilateral relationship and cooperation under Bimstec, a Bangladesh readout

said Hossain requested India to consider a huddle of Saarc standing committee that hasn't met since the 2016 Uri attack when India decided to block the process because of Pakistan's support to cross-border terror. Sunday's talks come ahead of a possible meeting between PM Modi and Bangladesh chief adviser Md Yunus on the margins of Bimstec summit in Thailand on April 3-4.

India attempts to promote Bimstec, which excludes Pakistan. If it happens, it would be the first bilateral meeting between the two after Yunus assumed office. Both Modi and Yunus are likely to attend the Bimstec summit in person. Modi had discussed concerns related to Bangladesh in the meeting with Trump last week. In his meeting with Jaishankar, Hossain.



## Shri Ghanshyam Prasad, Chairperson, Central Electricity Authority, Visits MUNPL Meja

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Meja. On February 15th, 2025, Shri Ghanshyam Prasad, Chairperson, CEA (Central Electricity Authority), visited MUNPL Meja. He took interactive session with the MUNPL Executives on Operation & Maintenance (O&M) performance of Meja Stage-I, as well as the progress of Meja Stage-II. He visited the MUNPL Pavilion located at Arail Ghat during the Maha Kumbh, conducted an inspection, and appreciated the branding efforts.

The visit included the

Meja Stage-II project site, Stage-I Wagon Tippler Area of Coal Handling Plant and the Central Control Room (CCR) of Stage-I. The interactive session also encompassed the Safety Practices at MUNPL, highlighting their impact on the life of Associates Manpower working for MUNPL. The interactive session was held in the presence of the Shri Asesh Kumar Chattopadhyay, CEO (MUNPL), along with CGM(TS), all GMs, all AGMs, HoDs, Head of Sections and other Executives.

## Rajnikanth demands better amenities for devotees

Prayagraj: BJP NGO Cell's State Co-ordinator Rajnikanth said that on the occasion of Maha Kumbh, devotees continue to come and the administration should remove the deficiencies that are left for the convenience of the devotees. From COD Chaka Block to Naini Station, Malhara Over Bridge, via Chakdodi Kasai Mohalla, Arel Sangam Marg, alternative toilets and tanker water arrangements should be made for the devotees from Saraswati Hi-Tech to Chheoki Station. Alternative toilets and tanker water arrangements should be made. From Shastri Bridge to Andav. Alternative toilets and tanker water arrangements should be made on all the routes of movement of the devotees. Local citizens, voluntary organizations, lawyers, doctors, residents of Prayag have been requested to support the devotees as per their capacity, by doing bhandaar or whatever is available with you, show your spirit of service, Water is life, all of you should do this by distributing water and jaggery and get the benefit of Purna (complete benefit).

# Maha Kumbh: SRN Hospital saves life of Nepali devotee suffering from brain stroke

## DR. KAMLESH SONKAR AND HIS TEAM TOOK QUICK DECISIONS

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Mahakumbh Nagar: Doctors of Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital have once again succeeded in saving a patient's life through timely and correct treatment. 85-year-old Ramdhani, who is a resident of Lumbini, Nepal and was staying at Shanti Kutia (Mauni Baba Ashram) of Maha Kumbh for the last one month, was brought to the Trauma Center of Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital in a critical condition. The patient complained of weakness in the right side, difficulty in speaking (aphasia) and mild fainting. She had a problem of hypertension, and all these symptoms were present for the last two hours.

Senior neuro physician Dr. Kamlesh Sonkar and his team took quick decisions and got the patient's CT scan and other necessary tests done, which revealed that the patient had suffered an ischemic stroke. If the stroke is treated at the right time, the patient's condition is more likely to improve. Therefore, Dr. Sonkar's team



started the thrombolysis procedure without delay, which removed the blockage in the patient's blood vessels and restored blood flow. Due to quick medical assistance, the patient's condition became stable, which increased her chances of survival and speedy recovery.

According to Dr. Kamlesh Sonkar, brain stroke is a medical emergency in which the supply of oxygen is disrupted due to blockage in the blood ves-

sels of the brain. This condition includes paralysis, difficulty in speaking and in serious cases it can even cause death.

He said that if the patient gets medical help within four and a half hours of the stroke, then his/her chances of survival and complete recovery are high. It is very important to identify brain stroke early and start treatment.

It is very important to recognize the symptoms of

brain stroke. Dr. Sonkar, who has also served at Sanjay Gandhi PGI, Lucknow, said that the common symptoms of stroke include weakness or numbness on one side of the body, face becomes crooked, difficulty in speaking or understanding things, sudden dizziness or loss of balance and includes trouble seeing in one or both eyes. If any of these symptoms appear, the patient should be immediately taken

to the nearest hospital.

According to Dr. Rajkumar Chaudhary, conodal officer of the Trauma Center, the modern imaging technology, experienced doctors and emergency services available here are proving to be extremely beneficial for the patients. As per the instructions of the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath ji, keeping in mind the Maha Kumbh 2025, the facilities of the Trauma Center have been

continuously improved, due to which patients are getting high level medical services.

Some important precautions should be taken in case of brain stroke. The patient should be kept calm and lying down. His blood pressure should be checked and he should be taken to the hospital immediately. Aspirin or any other medicine should not be given without doctor's advice, because it can worsen the condition.

The patient's daughter Rita expressed her gratitude to Dr. Kamlesh Sonkar, Dr. Prabhat Singh, Dr. Archana Ojha, Dr. Sandeep, Dr. Sujit, Dr. Tej Pratap and the entire neurology team. It was because of their promptness and efficiency that Ramdhani's life could be saved. The family thanked the doctors and the hospital administration and said that this incident proves that by getting the right treatment on time, a serious condition like brain stroke can be controlled and the patient can be given a new life.

## Fuzail Hashmi inaugurates Dry Fruits Showroom

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Prayagraj: The grand inauguration of the luxurious dry fruits showroom Delight Dry Fruits Air Conditioned Showroom was held on Sunday afternoon in the western area of the city. Chief guest former MLA Vijay Prakash and member of the State Congress Working Committee Fuzail Hashmi jointly inaugurated the show by cutting the ribbon amid thunderous applause. On the occasion of inauguration, both the leaders



said that in the modern era, health conscious people are consuming more dry fruits. It is a healthy and convenient snack full of nutrients, especially fiber. They are rich in vitamins, minerals and fiber, whose consumption provides many benefits to the body. It was said that along with being a good source of nutrients, hemoglobin, it helps in preventing cancer, strengthens bones, promotes weight loss. It also benefits heart health and blood sugar control along with improving memory and skin quality. Healthy hair is a great source of nutrients which also helps us to stay healthy. The showroom's proprietors are Mohd. Adnan and Mohd. Kamran while welcoming everyone, assured the customers that they will provide high quality material at reasonable prices. He claimed a great way to increase nutrition. He said that our doorstep delivery is available 24 hours in areas like Sulemsarai, Transport Nagar, Mundera, Bamrauli, Air Force, Airport etc. During this, Haji Mohammad Hafiz, Kamrasaid, Rampujan, Ghulam Waris, Arshad Ali, Mohd. Gufran, Shamshad Ahmed, Mohd. Arif, Zahid Neta, etc. were present.

## ICAR Director visits SHUATS Seed and Farm

Prayagraj: Dr. Sanjay Kumar, Director of ICAR-National Seed Science and Technology Institute, Mau, visited the notified State Seed Testing Laboratory and Seed Processing Plant of SHUATS. During this, Professor Dr. B. Mehera, Director Seed and Farm / Pro Vice Chancellor Administration, Professor Dr. Vaidurya Pratap Sahi, Head of Department, GPB, Dr. Prashant Kumar Rai, Associate Professor, Dr. Bazil Avinash Singh, Assistant Professor, along with officers and PhD scholars were present. Dr. Sanjay Kumar appreciated the progress made by the university in quality seed production, processing work and implementation of government schemes.

## Airtel powering high-speed internet connectivity nationwide

Lucknow: Bharti Airtel has awarded a contract to Nokia, and Qualcomm focusing on the expansion of 5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) and Wi-Fi solutions to facilitate high-speed internet access to millions across India. As part of the arrangement, Nokia will supply Airtel with its 5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) outdoor gateway receiver and Wi-Fi 6 Access Point, utilizing Qualcomm® Modem-RF and Wi-Fi 6 chipsets. This initiative will enable Airtel to provide superior broadband services in areas where fiber connectivity is either scarce or challenging to implement. The deployment of fixed wireless broadband access via 5G networks stands out as a significant application of 5G technology, especially in India, which faces low fiber penetration and a high demand for digital services.

Airtel will leverage Nokia's FastMile 5G outdoor receivers, which are tailored for multi-dwelling units and capable of serving two households concurrently, thus facilitating a reduction in connection expenses. These receivers feature high-gain antennas that enhance broadband access over extended distances while efficiently managing radio resources. Furthermore, the FastMile 5G outdoor receiver utilizes Power-over-Ethernet (PoE) technology, enabling simple installation on various surfaces such as walls, balconies, or poles. Airtel will implement Nokia's Wi-Fi 6 access point within residences to enhance the in-home experience. This solution offers intelligent mesh capabilities and self-optimizing network features, ensuring that customers can enjoy an exceptional broadband experience throughout their homes. Nokia's 5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) and Wi-Fi 6 access point devices will be produced in India and packaged in fully recyclable materials.

# High-Level Political Summit: Equity in Action - Driving Progress in Cancer Care at SHUATS on Feb 20-21

## Bridging Divide: Asia-Pacific Unites for Equitable Precision Oncology

Prayagraj: Global leaders will convene in Prayagraj on 20-21 February 2025 for the High-Level Political Summit: Equity in Action - Driving Progress in Cancer Care. This Summit is being organized by the International Cancer Patient Coalition (ICPC) and will be hosted by Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences (SHUATS) under the guidance of Vice Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) Rajendra B. Lal. This landmark event aims to address stark disparities in cancer care across the Asia-Pacific region through collaboration, innovation, and policy alignment. The inauguration will be held on 20th February, 2025 at 9.30 AM at University Auditorium, SHUATS. Various national and international delegates, police makers, doctors, educationalists, specialists, including His Excellency Kevin Kelly, Ambassador of IRELAND and His Excellency Maya Jaouhari Tissafi, Ambassador of SWITZERLAND

will take part in the high level summit. The Convenors of the Summit are Prof. (Dr.) Jonathan A. Lal, Pro VC [Board Member, ICPC] and Prof. Denis Horgan, Secretary General, ICPC & Executive Director, EAPM. Prof. Jonathan A. Lal shared the importance of the conference. Prof. Denis Horgan Secretary General, ICPC, Prof. Gabriella Pravettoni, Full Professor of Cognitive Psychology, European Institute of Oncology, Milan, Prof. Heshan Elghazaly, President, Egyptian Cancer Society & Head, MASRI Medical Research Centre, Dr. Adela Maghear, Independent Senior Health Policy Advisor, Advancing early screening and diagnostics also online joined the Press Conference and shared various technical suggestions and strategies for driving progress in cancer care. Dr. Ramakant Dubey, Director Public Relation, Prof. (Dr.) C.J. Wesley, Addl. Registrar, Dr. Akhilesh Bind, Dr. Vijay Tripathi shared various is-

sues to be addressed in the international conference.

With over half the world's population residing in Asia-Pacific, the region faces a dual challenge: high-income countries (HICs) like Japan, South Korea, and Australia lead in cutting-edge diagnostics and treatments, while low- and middle-income countries (LMICS) grapple with fragmented healthcare systems, late-stage diagnoses, and limited access to life-saving therapies. The summit seeks to harmonize these extremes, leveraging advancements in precision oncology (PO) to ensure equitable care for all.

The Urgency of Precision Oncology in Asia-Pacific: Precision oncology, which tailors treatments to individual genetic profiles, has revolutionized cancer care globally. However, its implementation remains uneven.

According to recent global analyses (Horgan et al., 2024): High-income Asia-Pacific nations (e.g., Japan, South Korea) have

centralized genomic databases, reimbursement for next-generation sequencing (NGS), and robust research ecosystems.

LMICS, including India, Indonesia, and the Philippines, face systemic barriers: inadequate infrastructure, prohibitive costs, and a shortage of trained professionals. For instance, while China's Precision Medicine Initiative is advancing rapidly, access remains concentrated in urban academic hubs, leaving rural populations underserved.

In India, where cancer is projected to claim 1.57 million lives annually by 2025 (Siegel et al., 2023), initiatives like the Genome India Project and National Digital Health Mission aim to democratize genomic testing. Yet, challenges persist—only 30% of advanced non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) patients in South-east Asia receive biomarker testing, compared to 70% in the EU and US (IQVIA, 2021).

Summit Objectives:

Aligning Global Insights with Regional Action - Drawing from the Precision Oncology: A Global Perspective report, the summit will translate evidence-based strategies into actionable frameworks for Asia-Pacific. Key themes include:

- Strengthening Regional Collaboration:** The summit will launch a Regional Task Force to harmonize cancer policies and share best practices. This aligns with recommendations from the European Alliance for Personalised Medicine (EAPM), which emphasizes cross-border data sharing and standardized guidelines. For example, South Korea's K-MASTER program, a nationwide genomic profiling initiative, offers a model for scalable collaboration. Similarly, India's Marathon of Hope Cancer Centres Network underscores the value of pan-regional biobanks and clinical data integration. Prof. (Dr.) Jonathan A. Lal, Pro-Vice Chancellor, SHUATS &

Board Member, ICPC said, "Equity is not optional—it is a moral imperative. The Asia-Pacific Declaration will hold nations accountable to deliver lifesaving care to underserved communities."

Prof. Denis Horgan, Secretary General, ICPC said, "Collaboration is the cornerstone of progress. By uniting policymakers, clinicians, and patients, we can dismantle silos and build systems that prioritize equity."

**2. Promoting Innovation in Diagnostics and Treatment:** Artificial intelligence (AI), liquid biopsy, and NGS are transforming cancer care, yet LMICs often lack the infrastructure to adopt these tools. The summit will spotlight success stories, such as:

Thailand's AI-driven early detection programs, which reduced cervical cancer mortality by 20% in pilot regions. Vietnam's partnerships with international biobanks to enhance genomic research on locally prevalent cancers like liver

and nasopharyngeal carcinoma. Interactive Segment: A live polling session will identify priority technologies for LMICS, such as portable sequencing devices or AI-powered pathology platforms.

**3. Mobilizing Resources Through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Sustainable financing remains critical. The EU's Innovative Health Initiative (IHI) and Australia's \$193 million PROSPECT project demonstrate how PPPs can scale precision oncology. In Asia-Pacific, initiatives like Malaysia's partnership with AstraZeneca for affordable targeted therapies and India's generic drug industry offer blueprints for cost-effective innovation.

**Case Study:** The African Cancer Coalition's model leveraging global pharma partnerships to expand access to genomic testing will inspire similar frameworks for Asia-Pacific.

**4. Empowering Patients and Communities:** Patient advocacy groups, such as the Philippines' Cancer

Coalition Foundation, will highlight the need for culturally sensitive education campaigns. Late diagnoses in rural areas where 60% of Asia-Pacific's population resides underscore the urgency of community engagement. The summit will endorse patient-led "molecular tumor boards" to democratize treatment decisions.

"Patients are not passive recipients; they are partners. Their voices must shape policies." - Dr. Sadhana Dwivedi, Palliative Care Lead, Kamla Nehru Memorial Hospital.

**5. Formalizing Commitments:** The Asia-Pacific Declaration on Cancer Care: The summit's cornerstone will be the adoption of a binding declaration, committing signatories to:

Integrate precision oncology into national cancer control plans by 2030.

Allocate 5% of health budgets to genomic infrastructure and training.

Establish regional hubs for NGS testing and data sharing.



## Service is greatest virtue: Rajendra Mishra

### BJP members organized Kumbh Mela devotees service camp

Prayagraj: The Kumbh Mela devotees camp was organised by the BJP Bhardwaj Mandal under the Bharatiya Janata Party Prayagraj Metropolitan area by the Mandal President Ajay Anand. On this occasion,



BJP Metropolitan President Rajendra Mishra organized free refreshments and food distribution to all the devotees coming to the Kumbh Mela area and distributed Prasad. On this occasion, he said that serving Ganga devotees is equivalent to taking a bath in the Ganga and serving them is the biggest virtue. BJP spokesperson Rajesh Kesarwani said that apart from this, devotees are being served continuously through service camps in Civil Line, Beni Madhav, Shivkuti, Khuldabad, Pritamnagar, University Circle. On this occasion, workers of the Mandal like Rajesh Kesarwani, Arun Singh Patel, Anjani Singh, Piyush Singh, Kritagya Narayan, Rakesh Bharti, Kuldeep Mishra etc were present.

## Forestry initiatives will lead to river revival: Kanchan Devi

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Prayagraj: Under the guidance of Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, Ecological Restoration Center, Prayagraj organized a one-day seminar on the subject of river revival and environmental improvement through tree plantation in the ongoing Prakriti Mahakumbh - Environment and Forestry Awareness Camp in Mahakumbh-2025. Chief Guest of the seminar Kanchan Devi, Director General, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education and Chancellor Forest



Research Institute Deemed University, Dehradun gave a detailed lecture regarding the initiatives of the Council to revive 14 major rivers across the country for river revival and environmental improvement. Also, the efforts being made by Prayagraj Center on the revival of Ganga River in eastern Uttar Pradesh were appreciated. Center Head Dr. Sanjay Singh, while discussing the role of forestry in river revival and environmental improvement, said that forest and river ecosystems are interconnected. Conservation of forests and increasing forest area ensures cleanliness and continuity of rivers. Camp coordinator and senior scientist Alok Yadav took the Director General and the dignitaries present on a tour of the exhibition set up. Senior scientist Dr. Anita Tomar gave the vote of thanks. About 50 scientists and environmentalists participated in the above-mentioned seminar. The program was successfully conducted by the centre's senior scientist Dr. Anubha Shrivastava.

## Who is accountable for creating hysteria, causing people to die?

### Quips Vinay Kushwaha

## Due to chaos and traffic jam, life became difficult for people

Prayagraj: Divine grand Maha Kumbh after 144 years, meeting of such a suitable constellation, appeal to come to the confluence of Ganga and Yamuna to drink Amrit, was publicized extensively with ministers and guards in the entire country and abroad, which created a frenzy among the people, old people, women, children, young, all set out towards the confluence to drink Amrit, the result of which is that today the crowd is not stopping, people are dying due to stampede everywhere, some are known, some are not known at all. Who is accountable for all these deaths and whose responsibility is it. The above words were said by SP state secretary and MP Representative Vinay Kushwaha. He said that inciting someone to commit suicide is also a crime legally, so where hundreds of people have died due to stampede, then who should be responsible for this, those who incited people, made money in frenzy and those who invited the whole country to come to Prayagraj by showing the dream of grand divine Maha Kumbh amidst half-hearted preparations but did not make any arrangements, such people should resign from their posts because they were calling people but they failed to protect their lives and property.



## Fire official's timely response averts major tragedy at Mahakumbh, no casualties reported

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Prayagraj: Two incidents of fire were reported from Mahakumbh 2025 on Monday at the camps of Shri Kapi Manas Mandal and the Consumer Protection Committee. However, the fires were promptly brought under control before it could cause any major damage. No loss of life occurred in either incident. Notably, comprehensive fire safety and security arrangements have been implemented for the Mahakumbh, ensuring an immediate response to such emergencies. Mahakumbh's Nodal and Chief Fire Officer Pramod Sharma reported that on Monday morning, a fire broke out in two tents at the Shri Kapi Manas Mandal camp all of a sudden. Upon receiving an alert, the Fire unit swiftly arrived at the scene and brought the blaze under control. While dousing the flames at the Shri Kapi Manas Mandal, the fire team noticed smoke billowing from Sector 8. Upon reaching the location, they discovered that the Consumer Protection Committee camp had also caught fire. The team quickly acted using water spray from pumping vehicles to douse the flames completely. In both the incidents, F S Bhardwaj, in charge of Fire Station Koteswar Mahadev, led the firefighting efforts with his unit. His swift response helped prevent casualties. Thanks to the prompt action of the Fire services, the flames were brought under control in time, and no loss of life was reported.

# Maha Kumbh: Confluence of science, health and innovation

## Workshop on 'Fundamentals of Nuclear Medicine' organized at SRN Hospital

**AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH**

Prayagraj: The Department of Medicine of MLN Medical College, under the leadership of Head of Department Dr. Poonam Gupta, organized a workshop on 'Fundamentals of Nuclear Medicine' under 'Mahakumbh-25' at Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital. Maha Kumbh is a symbol of a global confluence not only from religious and cultural, but also from scientific and educational point of view. Carrying forward this spirit, the workshop had an in-depth discussion on Nuclear Medicine, an advanced branch of modern medical science.

Dr. Bhavana Rathore (MBBS, MD) from Trinity Medical College, New England, Connecticut, USA, participated as the keynote speaker in this workshop. She is a senior radiologist, medical director of nuclear medicine and chairperson of the Radiation Safety Committee. Dr. Bhavna Rathore said in the workshop that

just as Maha Kumbh is a confluence of faith, tradition and medicine for the devotees, in the same way Nuclear Medicine is a sacred confluence of modern medicine, which is helpful in accurate identification and treatment of complex diseases like cancer, heart disease, thyroid and brain dead.

He said that in view of the increasing cancer, heart diseases and lung related diseases in India, the demand for nuclear medicine is increasing rapidly. At present, this facility is available only in SGPGI Lucknow, RML Lucknow and BHU Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, whereas it is available in abundance in America and Europe. In view of the lack of this facility in the center of faith of crores of people like Prayagraj, there is a need to develop it.

Medical utility of nuclear medicine: Dr. Bhavana Rathore explained in detail about thyroid

nuclear scan, iodine scan in hyperthyroidism, V-Q scan for lungs, nuclear scan in heart diseases and its utility in identifying brain dead. She also explained that ra-

Adityanath, the entire state is undergoing all-round development and the government will definitely establish a Nuclear Medicine Centre in view of the

three months. The aim of this initiative is to make young doctors aware of the latest technologies and prepare them for high level medical services.

understand the nuances of nuclear medicine and become aware of modern techniques. We will continue to organize such educational programs in future as well, which can give a new direction to the medical world."

On this occasion, Dr. Manoj Mathur, Dr. Ajit Chaurasia, Dr. Sujit Kumar, Dr. Jitendra Shukla, Dr. Anand Singh, Dr. Rajneesh Tiwari and other teachers of the department and a large number of medical students were present. During the workshop, the modern use of nuclear medicine and its medical importance were discussed in detail.

Maha Kumbh is not just a festival of bathing and meditation, but it is also a confluence of knowledge, science and medicine. Through this workshop, awareness about nuclear medicine will increase in Prayagraj, and the need for government and private institutions to invest together for its expansion was emphasized.



diation damage can be reduced to a great extent through nuclear scan as compared to radiology, making it a safer option.

There is a need for a nuclear medicine centre in Prayagraj: She said that during this great festival of Prayagraj, Maha Kumbh 2025, crores of devotees came, many of whom also seemed to need medical facilities. She said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi

number of crores of devotees visiting Prayagraj, so that not only the local patients but also the devotees visiting here will be able to avail the latest medical facilities.

Dr. Bhavana Rathore said that she will start a free online training program for resident doctors of the Department of Medicine, in which she will provide information on various aspects of nuclear medicine through Google Meet every

Dr. Poonam Gupta, Head of the Department of Medicine, while expressing her gratitude said,

"Mahakumbh-25 is not just a religious event but also a confluence of science, health and innovation. Nuclear medicine is an important field of modern medical science, which is helpful in the diagnosis and treatment of various diseases. Through this workshop, students and doctors have got an opportunity to

## HUDSA Seva Camp holds massive bhandara

Prayagraj: Bhandara was organised by HUDSA Seva Camp located at Mahakumbh sector-12, Shankaracharya Marg on Monday, in which a large number of devotees participated. On the occasion, senior advocate Rajendra Mishra 'Babuan' said that Bhandara is a unique example of service to humanity and mutual brotherhood. Providing free



food and hospitality to the people who have come from far away places in the Mahakumbh area is a unique experiment of Sanatan tradition, this tradition has been going on for centuries. Dr Akhilesh Dwivedi told that it is a traditional belief that by donating food and bhandara in the Mahakumbh area, one gets the blessings of lord Shiva and Annapurna Mata. Dr Vikram Shukla said that by organizing Bhandara in the Mahakumbh area one attains inexhaustible virtue. Prayagraj is the king of all pilgrimages, hence it's important becomes more here. Organizers Secretary of HUDSA Dr Mani Shankar Dwivedi welcomed the guests. Rajesh Shukla conducted the program and Ekta Chaturvedi expressed her gratitude to everyone. Dr Babli Dwivedi, Dileep Malviya, Dr Madhukaracharya Tripathi, Dr Ambika Pandey, Prabhat Shukla, Arpit, Mrinal Jatin, Vinod Yadav, Rakesh Yadav etc. were present in this occasion.

## Overwhelmed by being part of largest religious event globally: Biplab Deb Shankaracharya Adhokshajanand Devtirtha a source of inspiration

**AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH**

Prayagraj: Senior public representatives, administrative officials and devotees are continuously arriving at the Shankaracharya camp of Govardhan Math Puri. In this sequence, former Chief Minister of Tripura MP Biplab Deb and Haryana Minister of State for Youth Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Gaurav Gautam also came to the camp and offered sacrifices in the Maha Yagya. Before this, these people bathed in the holy water of Sangam and received blessings from Shankaracharya Swami Adhokshajanand Devtirtha. MP Biplab Deb said that he is overwhelmed by coming to Maha Kumbh. He praised Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for the world's largest religious event.

It is noteworthy that Maha Yagya is being organized in Shankaracharya Camp of Govardhan Math



Puri on Harshvardhan Marg in Sector 18 of Kumbhnagar since Basant Panchami. A large number of devotees are offering sacrifices in Maha Yagya here every day under the supervision of learned Acharyas. In this work, former Chief Minister of Tripura Biplab Deb, Haryana Minister of State Gaurav Gautam, Odisha's Nawarangpur Lok Sabha MP Balabhadra Manjhi and his

wife, Uttar Pradesh Minister Dr. Raghuraj Singh, former Education Minister of Arunachal Pradesh and BJP leader Tabatadir ji, former DGP of Uttar Pradesh and Chairman of Subordinate Services Selection Commission Satyanarayan Sawat came to Shankaracharya Camp after bathing in Sangam. These people worshipped the Charan Paduka of Adi Shankaracharya and

received blessings from Shankaracharya Swami Adhokshajanand Devtirtha.

On this occasion, Shankaracharya Adhokshajanand Devtirtha said that politicians should follow the path of religion. If politics is done in accordance with religion, then public welfare starts happening automatically. Walking on the path of religion inspires one to take everyone along. MP Biplab Deb expressed his gratitude towards Shankaracharya and said that his thoughts are inspiring. Shankaracharya Swami Adhokshajanand Devtirtha's contribution in the development of Sanatan culture is important. Inspired by the thoughts of Shankaracharya, misguided people are again adopting Sanatan culture. By coming to Maha Kumbh, they have got a new vision of life. This is a big asset of their life.

## On initiative of Minister Nandi, financial assistance of Rs 2.35 cr given to 114 patients

Prayagraj: In the months of November, December and January, despite discharging departmental responsibilities and the busy schedule of Maha Kumbh, Uttar Pradesh government's Industrial Development Minister and Prayagraj City South MLA Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi is continuing his campaign to help the economically weak and people affected by serious diseases. In the months of November, December and January, Minister Nandi provided financial assistance of Rs. 2 crore 35 lakh 5, 900 from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to 114 people from his area as well as for the treatment of serious diseases. With the help of which many patients got a new life, while many lives could be saved. In the months of September and October, Rs. 1 crore 69 lakh 90 thousand 962 were provided for the treatment of 76 patients. Minister Nandi said that seriously ill people are helped on a priority basis.

Financial assistance of two to six lakh rupees is being provided on a priority basis from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to people suffering from diseases such as cancer, heart and bone operations, kidney problems, etc.

With the efforts of Minister Nandi, financial assistance of one crore three lakh five thousand rupees was provided to 54 patients in the month of November, 74 lakh 42 thousand 500 rupees in the month of December and 57 lakh 58 thousand 400 rupees to 27 patients in the month of January for the treatment of serious diseases like arthritis, heart disease, cancer, kidney, bone disease etc. Along with Prayagraj City South Assembly Constituency, an amount of Rupees two crore 35 lakh 5, 900 was made available in three months to 114 victims of other districts and areas. With the help of which people got themselves treated. These include people from Akbarpur, Ahmedganj, GTB Nagar, Mutthiganj, North Malaka, Naini,

Shahganj, Sadiapur, Kanshiram Awasthi, Himmatganj, Malviya Nagar, Khushal Parvat, ADA Colony Naini, North Malaka, Gaus Nagar GTB Nagar, Kareli, Diara Shah Ajmal, Katghar, Meerapur, Kidganj, Tulsipur, Qazipur Naini, Dariyabad, Naini of Prayagraj City South Assembly Constituency as well as people from other Assembly constituencies and districts. Minister Nandi said that the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh considers 24 crore residents of the state as his family. This is an effort to stand with them in their most difficult times. We wish for the speedy recovery of all those who are undergoing treatment. Chief Minister Yogi has opened the government treasury so that people suffering from incurable and serious diseases and financially weak people do not have to wander and face trouble for treatment. The amount received from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund is proving to be life-saving for seriously ill people.



## Editorial

### Fiscal capacities in national growth

India's economic progress is a composite reflection of the growth trajectories of its states. Given the federal structure of the country, each state operates with a degree of autonomy in implementing policies that drive their individual economies. This results in a broad spectrum of growth rates across states, highlighting significant disparities. For the nation to achieve holistic growth, it is imperative for all states to experience economic advancement. Despite this, there is a notable discrepancy in the attention paid to fiscal matters at different levels of government. The Union Budget, detailing the central government's finances, often garners substantial scrutiny and debate for its potential impacts on the nation's economic direction. In contrast, state budgets, which are crucial for addressing local needs and fostering regional development, do not attract a similar level of public and analytical scrutiny. Fiscal capacity, the government's ability to generate revenue from available tax and non-tax bases, is crucial for several reasons. First, it underpins a government's ability to provide essential public goods and services. These range from healthcare and education to infrastructure and defense, which are fundamental for the welfare of the citizenry and the smooth functioning of the economy. Without adequate fiscal capacity, governments may struggle to maintain these services at levels that meet public demand and expectations, potentially leading to social unrest or a decline in the quality of life. Second, fiscal capacity is vital for economic development and growth. Governments need resources to invest in infrastructure projects like roads, bridges, and digital networks, which are critical for enhancing productivity and competitiveness. Such investments not only improve current living standards, but also set the stage for future economic expansion. The Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) in 2017 and the World Bank in 2015 highlighted the risk of economies falling into a 'middle-income trap' where they are unable to transition to high-income status due to inadequate fiscal capacity among other factors. Moreover, fiscal capacity is essential for macro-economic stability. It allows governments to manage economic cycles more effectively, applying fiscal stimulus in downturns and restraint in booms to maintain economic stability. The Covid-19 pandemic's impact on Indian states underscored this point, as reduced fiscal capacities constrained their ability to respond effectively to the crisis and its economic repercussions. Finally, a robust fiscal capacity enables equitable social development. It allows for redistributive policies that can mitigate income inequality and fund social safety nets for the vulnerable. Studies have shown that factors such as high per capita income, education levels, and low corruption contribute to higher fiscal capacity, which in turn can be used to foster a more inclusive society. Given that state governments account for over 60 per cent of general government expenditure in India, enhancing their revenue-generating capacity is imperative for the needed investment in areas such as education, research and development, and skill development.

The Reserve Bank of India recently released a report on state finances, which gives an insight into the state budgets of 2023-24. It has some important findings. First, revenue mobilisation in Indian states comprises both tax and non-tax revenues, with a significant portion coming from state's own tax revenues (SOTR). Over the years, there has been a noticeable increase in SOTR, growing from 5.7 per cent of GDP in 2003-04 to 6.9 per cent in 2022-23. This growth, particularly in the post-GST era, reflects a shift in the composition of tax revenues. with the State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) becoming a predominant source.



# Movements were either crushed badly by this government which suppressed democracy

This time, the first phase of voting for the Lok Sabha elections is to be held on April 19 and the entire BJP lobby including the Modi government at the Center is trying to win more than 400 seats. But it seems that by giving the slogan of 'This time we cross 400', BJP does not want to win so many seats but wants to snatch them. Otherwise, any government would not only get nervous due to so many protests from different sections of the people all over India, but would also try to pacify the angry people and also accept their legitimate demands. But despite opposition on many issues across the country, not only the Modi government at the Center and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but even a single BJP worker is not ready to bow down. Not only this, the Modi government at the Center is eager to come to power at the Center for the third time by crushing every protest, every movement and every person who opposes its policies like an intoxicated elephant. In fact, if we look at the two tenures of the Modi government at the Center in the last 10 years, we find that it has not refrained from crushing any movement, any protest or any opposition. Be it the movement by ex-servicemen demanding One Rank One Pension, be it the movement of farmers, be it the



movement of the country's daughters and women wrestlers, or any demonstration by unemployed youth demanding jobs, Be it the movement of women employees of Anganwadi centres, or the protests against EVM Tehelka, or the movements in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh to the North-Eastern states. In this way, if we look at the last 10 years of the tenure of the Modi government at the Centre, about twenty types of movements took place at various places; But most of the movements were either crushed badly by this government which suppressed democracy or they were suppressed to such an extent that their voice could not reach the country and abroad. The remaining work in ending these movements was done by a special group of Modiya and those people who have got contracts for various odd jobs in the country. However, if we look

at the movements going on in the country in the last 10-12 years, then first of all we have to look at the protests that took place across the country against the Anna movement and the Nirbhaya incident, due to which the UPA central government was ousted. However, the UPA central government of that time also tried to crush both types of movements; But not to the extent that the Modi government at the Center has done anything to crush all the movements. If we talk about the time after Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power at the Centre, then the Patel movement of Gujarat, Maratha movement of Maharashtra, farmers movement of Maharashtra, farmers movement of Tamil Nadu, Anganwadi movement, teachers' movements in different states.

Apart from the movement of unemployed youth and the movement of

women wrestlers, all the farmers' movements across the country and the farmers' movement that started in the year 2020 have been crushed by the Modi government at the Center and the BJP state governments. Their demands and problems have been ignored. And the agitators and protesters have been kicked and water cannons have been used. In the first farmer movement against the three agricultural laws, an attempt was made to end the movement by putting all kinds of pressure on the farmers, and this time, when the central government did not fulfill its promises, the farmers decided to march to Delhi. So the attack on them was intensified. Attempts were made to harm them in every possible way, which again led to the martyrdom of 16 farmers. There is still a ban on farmers coming to Delhi as if they are not food providers but terrorists. Recently, Section 144 was imposed in Delhi for more than a month to stop the farmers and even today Section 144 is applicable at some protest sites in Delhi. For example, after the protest by women wrestlers was crushed at Jantar Mantar, Section 144 is still in force and no victim can sit there and raise his voice. Recently, regarding crushing the farmers' movement, Rajasthan's Jat leader Hanuman Prasad Beniwal

wrote on Twitter handle '@narendramodi ji, the way he arrogantly wrote on India Is!

Let me remind you that you did not fulfill the promise made to the farmers during the farmers' movement. Therefore, the step to agitate again for the farmers and their rights was forced to be taken. On one hand you say that violence has no place in democracy. Farmers are being shelled at the behest of the other government, keeping in mind the current situation after the Rashtriya Lok Dal, which fought for the farmers of Western UP, joined hands with the BJP, it is your utmost responsibility to Take cognizance yourself and agree to the demands of the farmers! Leader of the main opposition Congress, Rahul Gandhi has spoken many times about suppressing the voice of the people by the Modi government at the Centre. Fearless and impartial journalists and intellectuals of similar nature are also unhappy with this attitude of the government.

Experts and scholars belonging to the rural context are also continuously opposing the policies of the government. But the government does not care about all this. In fact, now even the police pick up people sitting in any protest and put them in jail, even if.

## Why China Blocks the Dalai Lama's Sri Lanka Visit

China has been blocking His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visits to Sri Lanka. Recently, a renowned Sri Lankan Buddhist monk revealed this in a media interview. When asked about China's view on the Dalai Lama, the most venerable Dr. W a s k u d u w e Mahindawansa said, "We respect him and invited him to Sri Lanka, but China did not like that. China pressed against our government as well, we don't like that. He is a Buddhist leader, he has freedom, and we have the freedom to invite." This incident wasn't an exception; China has been blocking His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visits to Sri Lanka since 2015. In fact, China has never shied away from expressing its displeas-

ure whenever the Dalai Lama moves from one place to another or meets any person of repute. For China, the Dalai Lama, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, is a 'separatist'. China has even called him 'wolf in monk's robes'. Why does a benevolent exiled leader agitate an aspiring superpower so much? The answer lies in the complex history of Tibet and the Chinese subjugation of the same over the last 70 years Tibet lies in the confluence of Central, South and East Asia. It has a recorded history dating back to 602 AD when Namri Songsten became the first king of Tibet, uniting the central Tibetan states. There are records of conflict between China and Tibet, which was ended by the China-

Tibet Peace Treaty 821 AD. The treaty famously mentions, "Tibetans shall be happy in Tibet, and Chinese shall be happy in China." After more than 700 years, China and Tibet both sustained subsequent Mongol invasions. In the latter half of the 16th century, Altan Khan, the Mongol ruler, gave the title of Dalai Lama to Sonam Gyatso, leader of the Gelugpa school of Buddhism. In return, the Dalai Lama decreed that Altan Khan be reincarnated as Kublai Khan, which gave legitimacy to his rule. This event marks the founding of modern Tibet. For the next two hundred years Chinese tried to take hold of Tibet but could not succeed, and their influence declined in the first half of the 20th century.

## Iran's counter-attack last week wasn't exactly unpredictable

"Unprecedented" is the adjective used in almost every global newspaper's description of Iran's retaliatory attack against Israel on 14 April, which the Benjamin Netanyahu government responded militarily by firing missiles at an Iranian airbase in Isfahan morning. Iran's counter-attack last week wasn't exactly unpredictable—Tehran made it pretty clear it would respond to a suspected Israeli attack on its consulate in Syria on 1 April that killed two of its senior military commanders. It named its operation "True Promise", reflecting its vow to punish those who attacked its diplomatic mission. But the barrage of Iranian drones and missiles—approximately 300—had no precedent. Neither did the suspected Israeli strike near an Iranian military base that followed. It was the first time, after 45 years of an icy shadow war, that we saw a direct confrontation between the regional archenemies. And that is why the new arc of violence in the Israel-Iran conflict, now marked by direct confrontation, is ThePrint's Newsmaker of the Week. Some view Iran as dealing the first hand or lighting the first match. But certain analysts suggest Tehran's calculation involved not just sending a message to Israel but also to its own proxies in the region. Sanam Vakil, Director

of the Middle East and North Africa programme at the Chatham House think tank, told The Guardian: "Iran's calculation was that if [it] didn't respond, Israel will keep trying to push back and degrade the axis of resistance across the region. This was about reinforcing its red lines and some measure of deterrence." For five days, the world waited with bated breath for Israel's response. The German and British foreign ministers flew into Israel earlier this week in efforts to prevent an escalation of the conflict, but it was clear that Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu was going to strike back. It was just a matter of when and how. By launching direct attacks on each other's soil after decades of covert operations, cyber attacks and proxy wars, Israel and Iran have diverted from long-standing foreign policy strategies. On the one hand, Iran had always followed a policy of "strategic patience", which involves propping up proxy forces in the Middle East to fight off Israel and its Western allies, while also projecting power in the region. Hezbollah in Lebanon is a prime example of this. In 1982, when Israel invaded Lebanon to expel the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) sent in

what was known as the "Prophet Mohammad Corps" to Syria, which was then sent to Lebanon to fight against Israeli forces. This was the birth of Hezbollah. "The Islamic Republic is a survivalist regime," explains Arman Mahmoudian, a lecturer of Russian and Middle Eastern Studies and a PhD candidate in politics and international affairs at the University of South Florida, in an article for Gulf International Forum.

"Hezbollah's foundational purpose raises the question: why has the militant group thus far avoided confrontation? The brief answer is that Hezbollah is too valuable an asset to be deployed recklessly," he adds. By launching 300 drones and missiles into Israel, Tehran effectively abandoned this policy and any previous reluctance it had in attacking Israel directly. Similarly, Israel seems to have diverted from its "reverse periphery doctrine". Previously, under Israel's first prime minister David Ben-Gurion, Israel followed the "periphery doctrine" in a bid to end its isolation in the Middle East. The idea was to pursue relations with non-Arab states at the 'edges' of the Middle East, mainly Iran and Turkey. With Iran and Israel diverting from their traditional strategies, the big question is whether an all-out war is on the horizon.

## Beyond Politics: Protecting Sanatana Dharma from Misguided Extremism

What this means is that Sanatana Dharma has allowed for differences of opinion within its fold, including trenchant criticism of some aspects of it, by its own followers. The Hindu faith had not one but six systems of philosophy attempting to understand the truth behind the vast and bewildering plurality of the cosmos. Each of them had a different interpretation. In addition, there is the Lokayita Charvaka school, which cogently argued the materialist school of thought, denied the existence of God,

and considered the Vedas, regarded as Shruti or revealed texts by many Hindus, as devoid of all sanctity. But the Charvakas were not ostracised, or worse, beheaded for blasphemy. Instead, they enriched the dialogic debate within Hinduism and were countered in a civilised manner by those opposed to them. In the 8th century CE, Adi Shankaracharya, who is considered the 'reviver' of Hinduism, could say without fear: na manro na teertham na veda na yajnah: neither mantras, nor pilgrimages, nor the Vedas or yajna (rituals),

matter. What matters is: Chidananda roopam, Shivo hum, Shivo hum: bliss and awareness, I am Shiva, I am Shiva. In many religions, the declaration of equating oneself with God would be considered blasphemy. For instance, in Persia, a Sufi mystic, Al Hallaj (858-922 CE), almost contemporaneous with Shankaracharya, was put to death for having the temerity to say: 'Ana'l Haq: I am the Truth'. But not so in Sanatana Dharma. The basic point is Sanatana Dharma is eternal for the grandeur of its philosophical vision, and not only

for its religious practice; it is eternal for the diversity it allows for in thought, and not necessarily its rituals. Therefore, narrowing the interpretation of Sanatana Dharma to exclude all differences of opinion is distorting its greatness and, indeed, the very reason for survival. Unfortunately, this is precisely what we see happening today. Anybody and everybody is 'hurt' by anyone who does not blindly endorse everything that is deemed by the 'hurt' to be a part of Sanatana Dharma, including those ills that urgently need reform.



## Ecuador's conservative president announces tariffs on Mexican exports



**Ecuador's** conservative president said Monday that he is raising tariffs on Mexican imports in a move that echoes the trade barriers that U.S. President Donald Trump announced - but then paused - against Mexico. Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa said Monday that the 27% tariff to be applied on Mexican goods was aimed at boosting local manufacturers. But the conservative leader may also be seeking favor with Washington, where the Trump administration said

Saturday it would impose its own 25% tariffs on Mexico. Top 10 winners and losers in Delhi elections Trump and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum announced Monday that the tariffs would be halted for now to give the two sides more time to negotiate. Trump has demanded that Mexico do more to crack down on illegal immigration and fentanyl smuggling across the border. Noboa, who took time away from a re-election campaign to attend Trump's inaugu-

ration last month in Washington, has hailed Trump's win as a victory for Latin America. Ecuador's announcement comes amid the South American country's separate and bitter diplomatic dispute with Mexico, which last year severed diplomatic ties after Ecuadorian police broke into the Mexican Embassy to arrest Ecuador's former Vice President Jorge Glas. Ecuador's move was widely condemned as a breach of international law, while Ecuador said that Glas was wanted for fraud

## Bitcoin, Trump's meme coin tumble after US tariff announcement

**Bitcoin, Trump's meme coin** tumble after US tariff announcement on Canada, Mexico, China. An advertisement of Bitcoin, one of the cryptocurrencies, is displayed on a building in Hong Kong, on November 18, 2021. (AP Photo) Cryptocurrency prices fell after President Donald Trump announced new tariffs on goods from Canada, Mexico, and China. Bitcoin dropped from around \$105,000 on Saturday to about \$92,000 on Sunday night. However, it later recovered to over \$100,000 on Monday after Trump paused tar-



iffs on Mexican and Canadian goods. Other Cryptocurrencies hit hard, including Trump's meme coin. While bitcoin showed some recovery, other cryptocurrencies saw larger losses. Ethereum, dogecoin, and other digital assets declined sharply. Trump's own meme coin traded at

around \$19 on Monday, about 75 per cent below its peak when he launched it before his second inauguration. Also Read: Donald Trump Tariff News "These are riskier cryptos than bitcoin," Garrick Hileman, a cryptocurrency analyst was quoted as saying by news agency .

## Bajaj Auto to ride into e-rickshaw segment by end of ongoing fiscal

**NEW DELHI:** Bajaj Auto is gearing up to enter the domestic e-rickshaw segment by the end of this fiscal to tap a 'sizeable opportunity' in a fast-growing but highly unorganised market, according to a top company official. The company expects to get reg-

ulatory clearances towards the end of the ongoing quarter for its e-rickshaw that will enable it to enter the segment which is about 45,000 units a month, Bajaj Auto Executive Director Rakesh Sharma told analysts. "By the end of this financial year, we also

intend to launch a modern 'e-rick', which will set an absolutely new standard in the segment and bring a very high level of satisfaction to both owners and passengers. The e-rick segment is almost as large as the auto segment and the new e-Rick .

## Statistics ministry should focus on district-level data: Amitabh Kant

**NEW DELHI:** The statistics ministry must now shift focus to districts and unveil district-level socio-economic data, which can drive comprehensive improvements in outcomes, Amitabh Kant, India's G20 Sherpa, said on Friday. "Whether it is district-level GDP, or district-level socio-economic data, the time has come to generate district-wise data for better targeting and design of policies," Kant said at an event organised by the ministry of statistics and programme implementation (Mospi) to mark 75 years of the National Sample Survey (NSS). Kant called for continued innovation in the statistical field to keep data a power-



ful tool for growth, inclusivity, and competitiveness and urged that adoption of new technologies will make India globally more relevant. "Technologies such as AI and ML (Machine Learning) can significantly improve data collection methods by automat-

ing processes. For instance, the UK's Office for National Statistics (ONS) is exploring AI to enhance data collection and analysis, aiming to improve the timeliness and quality of official statistics," said Kant. He said incorporating non-traditional data

sources, such as satellite imagery and mobile data, can complement existing survey data. "The success of the next 25, 50, or even 100 years of India's growth will depend on how well we continue to collect, interpret, and use data," Kant said. Rao Inderjit Singh, MoS for statistics & programme implementation, pointed out how NSS surveys have influenced key areas like employment, consumption, health, and education, driving critical policy decisions. He emphasised govt's ongoing commitment to advancing NSS, integrating new technologies, and ensuring it remains relevant in the years to come.

## Media and travel dominate political parties' poll expenses



**Delhi:** According to Election Commission audited reports, political parties spent 2023-24 on ads, helicopter flights, and media consultants. Offering insights into their spending during a year of many state elections. The reports may only cover part of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections' spending patterns, announced on March 16. Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Mizoram had assembly elections during this time. With a budget of

₹1,754 crore, the BJP prioritized media presence, spending roughly 58% on commercials and electronic media. Party advertising and publicity costs were 591.39 crore and electronic media 434.84 crore. Press conference expenses increased to ₹90.99 lakh from

₹71.60 lakh last year. From April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, the party won three state assembly elections and lost Karnataka. With 240 Lok Sabha seats, it returned to power as part of the National Democratic Alliance coalition without a majority.

## Fiscal, monetary steps to help boost consumption, says minister

**NEW DELHI:** Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said Saturday that coordinated fiscal and monetary actions by govt and RBI will help boost consumption and there are initial signs of a good order book for the first quarter of the next fiscal year, which will help boost private investment. "After the budget, the few inputs I have received from some business leaders is that the orders for fast-moving consumer goods for April-June are already getting booked, and the industry is clearly seeing signs of a possible recovery of consumption," she told reporters after addressing the RBI board. As a result, many companies are looking at reviewing their capacity utilisation, she said, adding



that the triggers for a consumption-driven cycle are clearly being felt by those who have to decide on investments. "So, I see this as a positive sign and with yesterday's (Friday's) decision of RBI, together things can move in alignment and the required traction we made in this course," FM said, while promising to work in coordination with the central bank just as was the case even during Covid-19. In the budget, FM announced income tax relief of Rs 1 lakh crore, while on Friday, RBI cut repo rates by 25 basis points, a first

in five years. With the rupee weakening against the dollar and the central bank ending up sucking out liquidity as it sought to guard against excessive volatility, RBI governor Sanjay Malhotra sought to assure market players saying that it would be "watchful and agile" in responding to the requirements and will "use all tools available". "We will be very, very watchful, alert and very nimble and agile in whatever are the requirements of the banking system to provide liquidity, both transient.

### New I-T bill may be introduced in House on Tuesday

**NEW DELHI:** Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman is likely to introduce the new income tax bill in Parliament on Tuesday, with the legislation likely to be referred to a standing committee for examination. "I hope to have it introduced in Lok Sabha in the coming week. The process is the committee gives its recommendation, it comes back, and then the government, through the Cabinet, takes a call on whether these amendments.

## Our primary objective is price stability: RBI governor Sanjay Malhotra

**MUMBAI:** RBI governor Sanjay Malhotra assured markets that the central bank would provide all the liquidity required to ensure that interest rates are passed on. In his first media interaction, he provided a peek into his thought process. Excerpts: What gives you optimism about growth? We analyse all parameters regularly, including high-frequency indicators. Whether one looks at agriculture - with good reservoir levels - or other sectors,

my detailed assessments in the MPC (monetary policy committee) statement reflect a positive outlook. The recent Nielsen survey shows consumption growth at over 7%, which augurs well. Similarly, manufacturing activity is also picking up, as seen in the PMI. All these factors give us optimism. Is growth a priority over inflation? Unlike other countries with dual objective, RBI Act has given us a clear mandate - our primary objective is inflation

and price stability, while keeping growth in view. We remain focused on meeting these objectives. Since inflation is coming down, we felt we could be more supportive of growth. However, we also maintain a neutral stance, allowing us to proactively respond to evolving macroeconomic conditions. Will RBI be comfortable with inflation within the tolerance band (2-6%)? When you appear for an exam, some may aspire to just pass. At RBI, we aim to be on

top of everything. Our primary objective is price stability: RBI gov. On RBI's decision to use cease-and-desist norms to discipline banks... These measures are taken after great consideration and thorough thought, only after giving the entities an opportunity to comply. We do not wish to use them frequently - this is a measure of last resort, applied in the rarest of rare cases when all other options have failed. These actions are taken in the public interest.



## Tirupati removes 18 employees for not following Hindu practices

**NEW DELHI:** Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam on Wednesday initiated action against 18 employees for participating in non-Hindu religious activities while also taking part in TTD festivals and rituals.

Following the directions of TTD Chairman BR Naidu, the employees are being given the options of either get themselves transferred to other government departments or apply for Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS). Failure to comply will result in further action.

Poll What Do You Think About TTD's Efforts to Preserve Spiritual Sanctity?

It's Essential for Promoting Cultural and Religious Heritage? It's a Great Way to Maintain the Temple's Traditions? The management



said that the decision aligns with TTD's commitment to preserving the spiritual sanctity of its temples and religious. TTD is an independent government trust that manages Tirumala Venkateswara temple in Tirupati - the world's richest Hindu shrine.

Over the years, the TTD Act has been amended three times to stipulate that only Hindus should be employed by the temple board and its affiliated institutions. A government order issued in 1989 also mandated that appointments to

### "Walmart made false promises"

"Walmart made false promises, illegally opened accounts, and took advantage of more than a million delivery drivers," said CFPB director Rohit Chopra. "Companies cannot force workers into getting paid through accounts that drain their earnings with junk fees." Walmart runs the Spark program nationally. Branch, a financial technology company, provides a digital bank account through Evolve Bank & Trust.

## Wall Street shrugs off weak data as Big Tech stocks rally

A rebound in stocks was driven by significant gains in technology giants Tesla and Nvidia, helping the 'Magnificent Seven' megacaps rise over 1%. Despite a weak US consumer confidence report causing a brief dip, experts forecast a likely Santa Claus rally this year. Thin trading marked the holiday-shortened week's start, with volumes down by around 20%. A rally in some of the world's largest technology companies spurred a rebound in stocks, following a brief slide fuelled by a weaker-than-expected report on US consumer confidence. While most com-



panies in the S&P retreated, Tesla and Nvidia drove a gauge of the "Magnificent Seven" megacaps up over 1%. It was still a thin trading session at the start of a holiday-shortened week, with volume roughly 20% below the average of the past month.

"Primary uptrends remain intact for equities despite the recent profit-taking," said Craig Johnson at Piper

Sandler. "Given the short-term oversold conditions, we expect a Santa Claus rally to be a strong possibility this year." Earlier on, stocks lost steam momentarily after data showed US consumer confidence unexpectedly sank for the first time in three months on concerns about the outlook for the economy. "The economic outlook is deteriorating," said Neil Dutt.

### US Federal Reserve cuts interest rate by 25 basis

Recent economic indicators, including Tuesday's robust November retail sales data, align with the Federal Reserve's assessment of a strong economy. The US Federal Reserve cut the interest rate by 25 basis points on Wednesday, according to an official statement following the key FOMC meeting. This

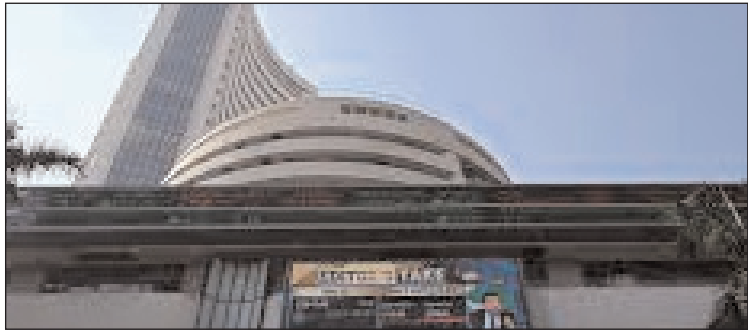


25 basis points cut has led to the central banks benchmark policy rate being in the 4.25% to

4.50% range. This represents a decrease of one full percentage point from its September level, when the Fed initiated the relaxation of stringent monetary measures implemented to address the inflation spike that commenced in 2021. The bank modified a crucial component of its interest rate.

## 10,000% stock rally ends with Sebi suspension over false disclosures

**MUMBAI:** These announcements took the stock price higher than, in turn, was used by the large shareholders to offload part of their holdings. Sebi has now asked the entities named in the order to present their case to the regulator within 21 days. The BSE suspended trading in the stocks of Bharat Global Developers after a Sebi investigation found that an over 10,000% rise in its price between Nov 2023 and Nov 2024 was on the back of false stock exchange disclosures that benefited only a handful of investors directly linked to the company's management. Sebi, through an interim order, has also barred several entities involved in the pump-



and-dump scam from the market. After rising from about Rs 16 in Nov 2023 to an all-time high of Rs 1,703 on Nov 28 this year, the stock on Friday had closed at Rs 1,236. It had hit the 5% lower circuit in Wednesday's and Thursday's sessions, BSE data showed. According to Sebi's investigation report, the company changed its manage-

ment in Dec 2023. Soon after, there were fresh issues of shares through the preferential offer route that eventually resulted in just 41 investors - all preferential allottees - holding 99.5% of the equity shares. These preferential allottees were marked as public shareholders and hence Sebi's shareholding norms for promoters of listed companies

### Apple closes in on record \$4 trillion market cap with AI boost

Apple is closing in on a historic \$4-trillion stock market valuation, powered by investors cheering progress in the company's long-awaited AI enhancements to rejuvenate sluggish iPhone sales. The company has pulled ahead of Nvidia and Microsoft in the race to the monumental milestone, thanks to an about 16% jump in shares since early Nov that has added about \$500 billion to its market cap. The latest rally in Apple shares reflects "investor enthusiasm for artificial intelligence."

There's a certain magic in creating something with your own hands. It's not just about the product—it's about pride, independence, and the joy of saying, "We made this!" Now, imagine scaling that feeling to a national level. That's exactly what Make in India is about—a movement bringing the power of creation back to every Indian. India's leading wind energy company, Suzlon has championed 'Make in India' since day one. Founded in 1995 by visionary entrepreneur Tulsi



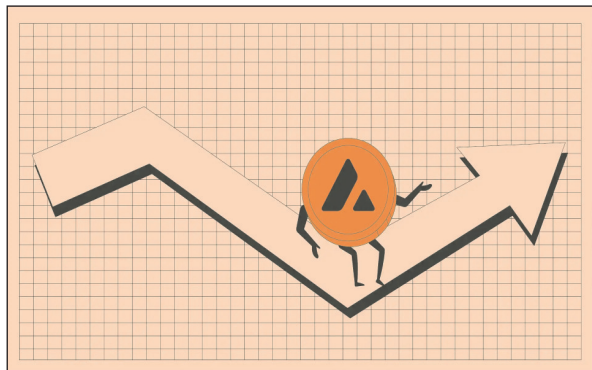
Tanti, the company took a bold leap from textiles to renewable energy. He saw the untapped potential of wind power and believed it must be made in India to drive grassroots impact. His innovative approach earned him the title of 'Wind Man of India.'

1. Power to people: Powering clean and affordable energy for all When we 'Make in

India' in essential industries like power and energy it isn't just about boosting GDP—it's about creating real change, especially in renewable energy. Every wind turbine manufactured in India accelerates the deployment of clean energy, ensuring that millions of Indians can access affordable and reliable power. Over 29 years, Suzlon has built a legacy in India's renewable energy sector, proving how homegrown innovation can reshape industries. Local production isn't just faster and cheaper.

## AVAX bullish momentum fades, as LNX surges to new ATH

**Avalanche 9000,** regarded as one of the most significant upgrades since its inception, has officially launched on the main net. The upgrade introduces key features designed to enhance the ecosystem's functionality and user experience. This could, in turn, boost Avalanche price movement, which has seen a weekly dip of 26%. Despite enhanced volatility, the first half of December has been successful for Ripple's price movement. At the beginning of the month, XRP's price exceeded a multi-year high of \$2.80. However, things have suddenly turned in the past few days, with Ripple plunging around the \$2 region. Meanwhile, a new pre-sale gem, Lunex Network, has continued to record a positive outlook raising over \$5.4M in its presale and seeing a price surge of over 300%.



Lunex Network continues to gain the attention of crypto investors globally. It positions itself as a project with unlimited potential, owing to its successful early-stage ICO that has already raised over \$5.4M. The LNX token has also achieved a current price of \$0.0046, representing a surge of over 300% for early investors. This surge has been attributed to the project's unique DeFi features. Lunex Network sets itself apart by offering a top-of-the-class privacy-focused DeFi experience. The platform's non-custodial foundation gives users

### Adani to buy plane maintenance co Air Works for 400 crore

**NEW DELHI:** The Adani Group, that operates airports in seven cities, including Mumbai and is building a greenfield one at Navi Mumbai, is expanding its presence in the aviation space. It is acquiring India's biggest private sector MRO (maintenance, repair & overhaul) player Air Works for an enterprise value of Rs 400 crore.

complete control of their assets.

## The BSE on suspended trading in the stocks of Bharat Global

**MUMBAI:** The BSE on suspended trading in the stocks of Bharat Global Developers after a Sebi investigation found that an over 10,000% rise in its price between Nov 2023 and Nov 2024 was on the back of false stock exchange disclosures that benefited only a handful of investors directly linked to the company's management. Sebi, through an interim order, has also barred several entities involved in the pump-and-dump scam from the market. After rising from about Rs 16 in Nov 2023 to an all-time high of Rs 1,703 on Nov 28 this year, the stock on Friday had closed at Rs 1,236. It had hit the 5% lower circuit in Wednesday's and Thursday's sessions, BSE data showed. According to Sebi's investigation report, the company changed its management in Dec 2023.



### "After the lock-in of shares allotted in the preferential offer ended, the company started making false disclosures to the exchanges about winning big orders"

Soon after, there were fresh issues of shares through the preferential offer route that eventually resulted in just 41 investors - all preferential allottees - holding 99.5% of the equity shares. These preferential allottees were marked as public shareholders and hence Sebi's shareholding norms for promoters of listed companies were not broken. After the lock-in of shares allotted in the preferential offer ended, the company

started making false disclosures to the exchanges about winning big orders from Reliance Industries, Tata, UPL and McCain India. These announcements took the stock price higher than, in turn, was used by the large shareholders.

to offload part of their holdings. Sebi has now asked the entities named in the order to present their case to the regulator within 21 days.

### Bitcoin first weekly decline since Trump's victory

The largest digital asset was down more than 7per cent for the seven-day period through 2:50 pm Sunday in New York, the biggest such drop since September. A wider crypto market gauge, encompassing smaller tokens such as Ether and meme-crowd favorite Dogecoin, suffered a sharper decline of about 10per cent.

The Fed on Wednesday delivered a third straight interest-rate cut while signaling a slower pace of monetary easing next year to keep inflation in check, sending global stocks into a tailspin. The hawkish pivot also damped the speculative spirits unleashed in the crypto market by Trump's pledge of friendly regulations and his backing for a national Bitcoin stockpile.

The original cryptocurrency changed hands at about \$95,000, about \$13,000 below the record high set on Dec. 17. The token is up more than 40per cent since the presidential election on Nov. 5. Choppy price action near term ahead of a "bullish trajectory" into the first quarter of 2025 is still the "most likely scenario," David Lawant, head of research at crypto prime broker FalconX, wrote in a note. Lawant said a "low-liquidity environment may bring more volatility as we enter into the final days of the year, especially because on December 27 crypto is likely going to see the biggest options expiry event of its history."



## Trump withdrawing US from several UN organizations

**US President** Donald Trump on Tuesday signed an executive order to withdraw US from several UN organisations, including the Human Rights Council (UNHRC), while initiating a comprehensive assessment of US financial contributions to the multinational organisation.

The White House also withdrew from the primary UN relief organisation for Palestinians (UNRWA), alongside a planned evaluation of involvement with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). White House staff secretary Will Scharf explained these actions were taken in response to perceived "anti-American bias" within these UN agencies. The United States, amongst 47 members elected by the General Assembly for three-year terms in the UN Human Rights Council, was set to conclude its current term on December 31, main-



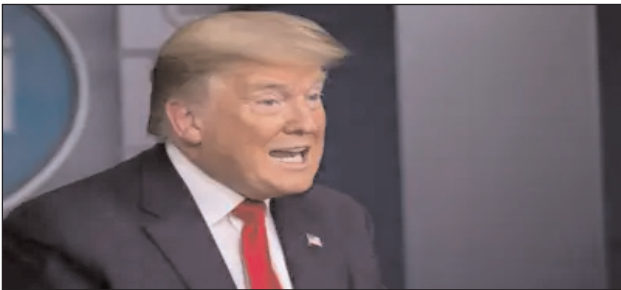
taining observer status at present. The directive issued on Tuesday appears to terminate all American engagement in council activities, encompassing both country-specific human rights assessments and investigations into particular rights violations. "More generally, the executive order calls for review of American involvement and funding in the UN in light of the wild disparities and levels of funding among different countries," Scharf said. The Republican has consistently criticised Washington's substantial financial contributions to international organisations, particu-

### Balaji's mother opens up on his death: 'It doesn't look normal'

**Balaji**, who played a key role in organising data for OpenAI's models, resigned in August, calling its practices unfair. By November, The New York Times' lawyers named him as a key figure in their copyright case against OpenAI. However, on November 26, shortly after his 26th birthday, Balaji was found dead in his San apartment. Authorities ruled his death a suicide, yet his family remains unconvinced, pushing for a deeper investigation.

## Trump orders advisers to destroy Iran if it assassinates him

**US President** Trump on Tuesday said that he has directed his advisers to destroy Iran if it attempts to take his life. "If they did that they would be obliterated. I've left instructions if they do it, they get obliterated, there won't be anything left," Trump said to reporters while signing an executive order calling for the US government to impose maximum pressure on Tehran. For years, American authorities have been monitoring Iranian threats targeting Trump and other administration officials. In 2020, Trump authorised the elimination of Qassem



Soleimani, the commander of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force. A credible Iranian threat to Trump's safety prompted increased security measures before a July campaign rally in Pennsylvania where Trump sustained an ear wound. However, officials indicated that Iran was not believed to be involved in that

attack. In November, the Justice Department revealed they had prevented an Iranian scheme to assassinate Trump prior to the presidential election. According to the department, Iranian officials instructed Farhad Shakeri, aged 51, in September to conduct surveillance and plan Trump's assassination.

## MAGA Civil War: Why Indian-Americans, the new Jews, are irking Donald Trump supporters

**There's a** theory out there—wild, audacious, but surprisingly hard to dismiss—that just about everything worth celebrating in Western civilization was dreamed up, built, or perfected by Jews. From splitting the atom to decoding life itself, from rewriting the

rules of music to redefining what it means to be human, Jewish brilliance turned the world into their intellectual playground. Let's take a stroll down the hall of fame: J. Robert Oppenheimer, the "father of the atomic bomb," quite literally blew the lid off 20th-

century science. Albert Einstein, the cosmic poet, bent time and space to his will. Jonas Salk saved millions from polio, and Rosalind Franklin cracked the code of life itself with her DNA discoveries. And that's just the lab coats.

## Ebola-hit Uganda begins vaccination trial: Who

**GENEVA:** Uganda on Monday started a vaccination trial for the Sudan species of the Ebola virus four days after an outbreak was confirmed, the world health organization announced.



It is the sixth time Uganda has been hit by an outbreak of the Ebola Sudan virus, for which there is no approved vaccine. Of the five other Ebola species, just one has licensed vaccines. The deadliest Ebola epidemic killed more than 11,300 people in west Africa between 2013 and 2016. The UN health agency said it had supported Ugandan health authorities in getting the trial ready in the days following the announcement that a 32-year-old male nurse had died of Ebola in Kampala. "This vaccination trial was initiated with record speed," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on X. He said the trial, launched at a ceremony in Kampala by Uganda's health minister, "demonstrates the importance of investing in R&D for vaccines and treatments and outbreak response preparedness".

### 'Critical achievement'

This trial marks how good this candidate vaccine is at preventing disease caused by the Sudan Ebola virus. Previous phase 1 and 2 trials had already been conducted to ensure the candidate vaccine's safety and ability to provoke an immune response from those receiving the jab, the WHO said. A system was put in place to test candidate vaccines during a previous outbreak of the Ebola Sudan virus in Uganda in 2022, paving the way for a trial during the next outbreak, the WHO added. The WHO said Friday the first 2,160 doses of the candidate vaccine were already in the capital Kampala as part of the preparations for another outbreak. It said those deemed "at highest risk" were eligible to join the trial.

## Over 20,000 federal employees opt for Trump administration's severance package: Report

**Over 20,000 federal employees** opt for Trump administration's severance package: Report. Several federal employees have reportedly agreed to take up the Trump administration's severance package, which includes eight months' worth of salary and benefits for leaving their government positions, reports The New York Post. Approximately 20,000 federal workers have accepted the deal, comprising less than 1% of the total government staff, according to Axios' Tuesday report. "I can tell you the 20K number isn't current, the number of deferred resignations is rapidly growing, and we're expecting the largest spike 24 to 48 hours before the deadline," a



White House official told The Post. Staff members have until Thursday to opt for the proposal, with the White House aiming to decrease the federal workforce by 5% to 10%. The severance package is thought to encompass at least 2.3 million federal staff members. Should the administration achieve its target of 5% to

10% acceptance rate, it anticipates taxpayer savings of nearly \$100 billion. The standard annual departure rate for federal workers stands at roughly 6%, though it remains unclear how many package recipients had already planned to leave their positions. Elon Musk, who leads the Department of

Government Efficiency (DOGE), had previously suggested the possibility of a severance package during the final stages of the 2024 campaign and subsequent weeks. Working alongside Musk, President Trump has been eager to substantially restructure and reduce the size of the federal government. Some critics dispute the legality of these severance offers, arguing that such a significant staff reduction would require congressional approval. Public sector unions have cautioned their members against accepting the package. The American Federation of Government Employees, the largest federal union, advised its members.

## Pregnant teenager among five Ukrainians killed by Russian missile

**IZYUM:** A Russian ballistic missile strike on Tuesday killed five people including a pregnant teenager and wounded more than four dozen others in the east Ukrainian town of Izyum, officials said. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said after the attack that it was "impossible to reconcile with this cruelty" and urged allies to pile pressure on Moscow to end its nearly three-year invasion. Oleg Synegebo, governor of the wider Kharkiv region, said 55 people had been wounded in the Russian strike, and that two young women



were among the dead. "They were 18 and 19 years old and one of them was pregnant," he wrote on social media. An AFP journalist at the scene saw tearful women consoling each other after identifying one of the victims laid out in a body bag lined up by police. Larysa Chygrynets was at work in the local tax office

when she heard the air raid siren sound and then the missile strike seconds later. "Everything was covered in blood and the windows were smashed," the 51-year-old told AFP of the scenes in her office. She said that life in Izyum some 40 kilometres (25 miles) from the front line had been relatively calm and that residents had been returning. "Everything was calm, nothing indicated trouble. We thought everything would be fine by now. But you can see what they have done," she said.

## Rice shipment from India, first for Yunus government, to arrive today

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh is set to receive its first consignment of rice imported from India since the formation of the new interim government even as it looks to be drawing closer to Pakistan than to its immediate neighbour India, which stood beside Bangladesh in 1971 through shared sacrifices. Bangladesh had witnessed ships coming from Karachi twice in recent days. On Nov 13, for the first time since independence, a container-carrying ship sailing directly from Karachi had docked at Chhattogram (Chittagong). This time the ship "MV Tanais Dream", carrying 24,690 metric tonnes of parboiled rice imported from India under the open tender agreement, will arrive at Chaudhagram port at 5.30am on Thursday. This is also the first consignment



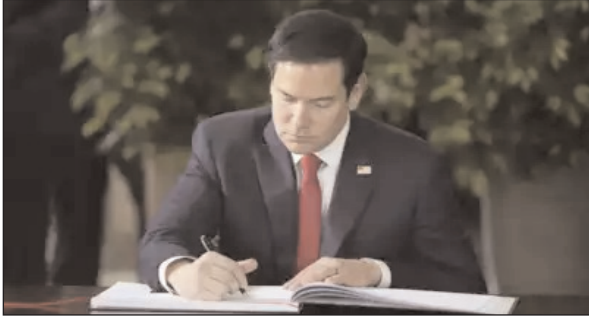
of parboiled rice imported from India under the Nov 11 agreement. The unloading of the rice will start soon after samples of the rice are collected and after physical examination, said a senior Bangladesh food ministry official. Talking to diplomatic correspondents in Dhaka recently, Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma had said he was optimistic about Dhaka-Delhi relationship, despite changes happening around. "This is how we look at the relationship.

### Ramaswamy-critic Ann says H-1B workers are indentured servants

**Author** and Conservative commentator Ann Coulter, who once said she would not vote for Vivek Ramaswamy only because he is of Indian origin, has commented on the ongoing H-1B row and said that H1B workers can't leave a company, unlike American workers. And that's what tech like Elon Musk, Vivek Ramaswamy, Sriram Krishnan want -- she implied. "American workers can leave a company.

## Rubio will face questions about deal to deport Americans and USAID turmoil

**SAN JOSE:** Secretary of state Marco Rubio will press the Trump administration's priority of cracking down on immigration when he meets Costa Rican President Rodrigo Chaves on Tuesday, a day after reaching an unusual agreement with El Salvador's leader to accept US deportees of any nationality, including violent American criminals. Rubio met with staffers at the US embassy in San Jose as he faces major upheaval at the US agency for international development that has left many at the aid agency and the state department uneasy and fearful for their jobs. America's top diplomat is expected to get questions later at a news conference with Chaves about the turmoil at USAID as well as the offer from a Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele to accept migrant deportees of



all nationalities from the United States as well as violent American citizens imprisoned in the US. "We can send them, and he will put them in his jails," Rubio said Monday of Bukele's offer to accept migrants of all nationalities detained in the US. "And, he's also offered to do the same for dangerous criminals currently in custody and serving their sentences in the United States even though they're US citizens or legal residents." Bukele confirmed the offer in a post on X, saying El Salvador has "offered the United States of

America the opportunity to outsource part of its prison system." He said his country would accept only "convicted criminals" and would charge a fee that "would be relatively low for the US but significant for us, making our entire prison system sustainable." The state department describes El Salvador's overcrowded prisons as "harsh and dangerous." Its country information webpage says, "In many facilities, provisions for sanitation, potable water, ventilation, temperature control, and lighting are inadequate or nonexistent."

## Vietnam's restrictive internet law comes into force

**A new** internet law in Vietnam, Decree 147, gives the government increased control over internet access and content in the name of national security and social order. It mandates tech companies to store user data, verify accounts, and remove deemed illegal content within 24 hours. Critics argue this suppresses free speech and impacts livelihoods. A new internet law that gives the Vietnamese government expanded powers over internet services and people using them is set to officially take effect Wednesday. Decree 147 expands government control over access to information on the internet for reasons of "national security" and "social order." The law requires social media platforms providing services to users in Vietnam to store user data and provide it to authorities on demand. The government issued the decree this November, and it requires organizations to take down anything the authorities consider "illegal content" within 24 hours. Decree 147 has sparked concerns, with researchers and experts tracking the country saying that the law is part of a growing crackdown on civil society. "Because the Vietnamese police treat any criticism of the Communist Party of Vietnam as a national security matter, this decree will provide them with yet another tool to suppress dissent," said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch. The decree requires tech giants like Facebook and TikTok among other organizations, to verify user accounts using people's phone numbers or personal identification numbers.





## Half-siblings control Ratan Tata's interest in group firms

**Delhi:** The Ratan Tata Endowment (RTEF) and Ratan Tata Endowment Trust (RTET) boards, which received the late industrialist's stakes in Tata firms, are reforming. Ratan Tata's half-sisters Shireen and Deanne Jejeebhoy and half-brother Noel Tata are prepared to join as trustees, indicating that the family would continue to oversee his interest in Tata group enterprises. Ratan Tata's financial investments were legally entrusted to RTEF and RTET a few years before his death in October 2024. Ratan Tata owned 0.83% of Tata Sons, the group's parent company. He also owned shares in Tata Digital, Tata Motors, and Tata Technologies. RTEF inherited these shares.

He also invested heavily in startups, which will either be sold and the money given to RTET or transferred to the trust. His estate is worth



approximately Rs 10,000 crore. RTEF is a section 8 corporation; RTET is under the Indian Trusts Act. Both groups encourage education and health-care and help marginalized communities. They reflect the causes dearest to the late businessman and the charity operations he directly financed. The two trusts will vote based on their holdings in Tata group firms.

RTEF will have six trustees and RTET will have seven. Tata Sons chairman Chandrasekaran is anticipated to become managing trustee for both firms, which makes him a guiding force. But the Tata

Sons' articles of association bar the chairman from chairing any Tata Trust, so he can't lead either. Raghavan Shastri, a former Tata Sons executive, and Burzis Shapur Taraporevala, a former Tata Realty and Infrastructure director, are RTEF's current trustees. Darius Khambata and Primit Jhaveri of Tata Trusts are RTET's current trustees. Khambata and Jhaveri will likely resign due to their commitments to Tata Trusts.

Sidharth Sharma, Tata Sons' legal chief, will be an RTET trustee. These are the group's financial and legal experts.

## Cabinet approves revised I-T bill for Parliament

**Delhi:** The Union Cabinet approved the new income tax bill, which will replace the six decades old I-T Act, sources said. The new bill aims to clarify tax law without adding new taxes. It will have no caveats, explanations, or extended phrases. The Cabinet, led by PM Modi, passed the New Income Tax Bill, sources said. Sources said the revised income tax measure will now be tabled in the Parliament next week and will be sent to Parliament's Standing Committee on Finance. The budget session's first leg ends Feb. 13. The session will resume on March 10 and end on



April 4. In Budget 2025-26, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the new tax bill will be submitted in Parliament. In the July 2024 Budget, pledged a full revision of the Income-tax Act, 1961. The CBDT has established an internal committee to oversee the review and make the Act succinct, clear, and easy to comprehend, which

will reduce conflicts, litigations, and provide greater tax certainty to taxpayers. Also, 22 expert sub-committees have been established to study the various parts of the Income Tax Act. Four categories were open to public input: language simplification, litigation reduction, compliance reduction, and redundant/obsolete provisions.

## Ola Electric must sell 50,000 EVs monthly to profit

**Delhi:** Ola Electric's CEO Bhavish Aggarwal stated the homegrown electric two-wheeler producer must sell 50,000 units monthly to be profitable. Aggarwal stated on an investor call after the company's quarter reports that Ola Electric sold 25,000 units in

January, regaining its market leadership in quantities. Aggarwal told analysts, "To break even on Ebitda (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) from our auto sales, we need to sell 50,000 units a month." To address this, we are

diversifying our portfolio by simultaneously offering two versions of our EV scooters to boost profit and volume. We are also expecting the battery cell manufacturing sector to start reaping its benefits in terms of improving our operating margin.

## S Korea holds a meeting on US steel tariffs

**Delhi:** The US's 25% tax on all steel and aluminum imports prompted an emergency meeting of South Korea's industry ministry to analyze its effect on local industries. According to ministry officials, the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Energy met with representatives from major local steel companies, including POSCO Holdings Inc. and Hyundai Steel Co, to discuss the proposed US tariffs. Earlier, US President Donald Trump said he would impose a new 25% tariff on all steel and aluminum imports into the US on Monday. The declaration raised fears that the expected US tariffs will directly affect South Korean firms, unlike the Trump administration's duties on Canadian, Mexican, and Chinese



exports. South Korea contributes roughly 13% of US steel imports, according to figures from the Korea International Trade Association (KITA). In 2018, Trump placed a 25% tariff on all US steel imports for national security. The US abolished tariffs on South Korean steel products in

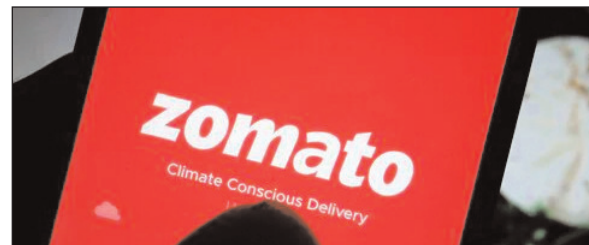
exchange for a yearly import quota of 2.63 million tons, or 70% of Seoul's average export volume from 2015 to 2017. In an emergency meeting, Deputy Trade Minister Park Jong-won said the government will "proactively" respond to the shift in US trade policy by leveraging "all available networks".

## Edme eyes global insurance broking with Birla takeover.

**Delhi:** Samara Capital, along with investors comprising Norwest Venture Partners, Creador, and industry veteran Sanjay Radhakrishnan have purchased a 100% share in Aditya Birla Insurance Brokers for an enterprise valuation of Rs 455 crore. The new promoters of Edme Insurance Brokers want to make it India's first multinational insurance broker.

Edme's retail interface is online only, focusing on retail, corporate, and reinsurance. The corporation is adding AI to its tech stack to better organize data.

**Delhi:** Industry experts say Zomato Ltd's plan to create a separate identity for its parent business will let it pursue its goals without risking everything and give investors more detailed information about the company. Four years after Facebook changed to Meta Platforms Inc. and a decade after Google's parent became Alphabet Inc., Zomato announced that its board had approved the changing of its corporate identity as Eternal Ltd. The name change needs shareholder approval.



Zomato's renaming reflects a long-term growth ambition, focusing on Blinkit (rapid commerce), Hyperpure (restaurant supplies), and District (events platform), industry executives stated. Anupriya Saxena, a partner at JMJA & Associates LLP, a corporate consultancy, said, "The Zomato app and brand are

unchanged, but the new company name indicates diversification and possible future expansions beyond its core food business." Experts said Zomato can now experiment with its various companies without risking one brand's impact on another, and it can also manage IP and prospective acquisitions.

## Air India updates its fleet of planes to operate on US-Canada routes

**Delhi:** Under this interim solution, the airline will install new seat covers, cushions, curtains, and carpets, all aligned with Air India's new logo. Air India has begun updating its Boeing 777s that fly to the US and Canada, while global supply chain concerns have delayed the upgrade, authorities



said. The airline has 13 legacy B777 aircraft operating

on these ultra-long-haul routes, and authorities claimed that all these are scheduled to be refreshed under this temporary configuration. "The cabin's heavy refresh will include basic repairs and sprucing up lavatories, cabin walls, meal tables, armrests, and galleys."

But they won't cover the IFE (in-flight entertainment) or livery change. Air India is boosting its premium services and flight times to lure more US travelers. Once the refurbishment starts, it will take around two years to bring the widebody fleet to international standards, he said.

## Korea's 4 banks to close additional branches by March

**Delhi:** Korea's four major banks would close additional offline branches by March, despite their record interest income in 2024, amid a growing demand for mobile banking services, the lenders' data showed. The country's four largest lenders — KB Kookmin, Shinhan, Woori, and NH Nonghyup — are predicted to operate a combined 3,160 brick-and-mortar branches at the end of March, down from 3,330 at the end of 2023, according to the statistics.

Shinhan will cut 57



branches to have 665 by March 31. Woori aims to shut down 52 offline bank branches over the specified period to run 659 outlets at end-March, with NH Nonghyup and KB Kookmin proposing to cut 36 and 25 outlets, respectively, to 1,064 and 772. Critics warn that closing physical branches may inconvenience older consumers who prefer in-person banking. Last year, KB Kookmin, Shinhan, Woori, and Hana's interest income rose 3.1% to 41.8 trillion won (\$28.7 billion).

But the trend of decreasing offline branches is unlikely to reverse, as more consumers bank online.

## Next fiscal year, small savings schemes may have lower rates

**Delhi:** The government will reduce rates on small savings programs, such as the Public Provident Fund (PPF), next fiscal year after RBI dropped policy rates for the first time in five years. Tired of too many ads? While the next assessment, covering the April-June quarter, is due on March 31, the finance ministry may not go for an immediate cut as the transmission of the lower rate regime is expected to take a few months and banks normally mop up deposits

during the fourth quarter of the financial year. "Now is the best time to deposit." A source remarked, "Next year, even small savings rates will drop." Govt officials say PPF and similar plans are appealing because of tax benefits and compounding. The Centre's estimated net minor savings for next year is Rs 3.4 lakh crore, down from Rs 4.1 lakh crore this year. The Mahila Samman plan, ending in March, has a Rs 20,000 crore refund budget.

**Delhi :** Reliance Jio's AirFiber tiers offer 100 and 200 Mbps. The 899 package includes free OTT services including Disney+ Hotstar, Zee5, and SonyLIV. For ₹1199, consumers get Netflix, Amazon Prime Lite, and other OTT perks.



## The National Critical Mineral Mission gets 16,300 crore from the cabinet

**Delhi :** The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, launched the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) with a 16,300 crore expenditure and a projected 18,000 crore investment from PSUs and other businesses. "Several crucial decisions have created new scientific and technology prospects for our children, future generations, and the economy. Minister told a Cabinet briefing that PM Modi the National Critical Minerals Mission today.

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