

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Title Code - UPENG04488

NATIONAL ENGLISH DAILY

MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

Monday, 06 April, 2026

UNIQUE GIFT OF KRIYAYOGA ASHRAM AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO GIVE IMPETUS TO WORLD BUILDING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

Briefs

MOTIHARI Bihar hooch tragedy toll rises to nine

The toll in the hooch tragedy in Bihar's East Champaran district rose to nine on Sunday after three more people who had consumed spurious liquor died, officials said. The first death was reported on Thursday, they said. 15 people have been arrested in connection with the deaths in Turkauliya and Raghunathpur areas of Motihari, district magistrate Saurabh Jorwal said.

ANUPPUR (MP) MP lodge collapse toll reaches three

The death toll in the collapse of a four-storey lodge in Madhya Pradesh's Anuppur district has risen to three, with three others seriously injured, a police official said on Sunday. Relief and rescue operations by agencies, including the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), are ongoing at the site in Kotma town, as some persons are still feared trapped under the debris, he said. He said the injured have been sent to Shahdol for better treatment.

AMARAVATI Andhra terror module unearthed

A terror module with suspected links to foreign handlers and extremist organisations, including ISIS, allegedly involved in radicalising youth in India has been unearthed, an intelligence department source said on Sunday. Earlier, the Andhra Pradesh police deployed teams across Bihar, Delhi, Karnataka, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Telangana and Rajasthan to arrest a dozen suspects including three from the southern state linked to the network. Police said prime accused Rahamathullah Sharif and his associates were in contact with operatives engaged in spreading jihadi propaganda and motivating youth through online videos. Investigators suspect that women were encouraged to join a separate 'Khawateen' wing as part of the group's expansion strategy.

CHANDIGARH 1 held with grenades, pistols

Punjab police on Sunday claimed to have arrested a man and recovered two hand grenades, two pistols and as many magazines from his possession in Punjab's Tarn Taran district. The accused has been identified as Sarabjit Singh, a native of Amisha village of Tarn Taran district. According to police, the accused was nabbed while transporting the arms from Tarn Taran towards Gurdaspur when a police team - which had a tip-off and set up a checkpoint - intercepted him and recovered the arms and ammunition from his possession.

PATNA 3 held from madrasa with firearm

Three suspects were detained following a raid at Islamia madrasa in Gawandra village, East Champaran, after police recovered a country-made pistol and live cartridges. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) is now probing the source of the weapon and why it was stored at the premises. Local resident Asgar Ali alleged the madrasa has long been a hub for illegal weapon deals.

DIDI ADVISORY | Mamata urges people to protect EVMs, feels Central force can insert chips inside machines to fix results

Vote 'without fear', PM urges voters in Bengal

KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged the voters of the state not to get afraid if Trinamool Congress (TMC)'s alleged goons try to intimidate them during elections.

Addressing a public rally in North Bengal's Cooch Behar, Modi said that after the 2026 Assembly elections, 'fear will go out of Bengal'.

POLL WATCH WEST BENGAL

"No matter how much the TMC goons intimidate you on polling day, you must have trust in the law. On one side, there is fear of cut money and syndicates of TMC and on the other side people will have to trust Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which can accelerate development in the state. Trinamool Congress has cheated the people of Bengal. After May 4, justice will be done to every sin committed by TMC goons," said Modi.



PM Narendra Modi being felicitated by MoS and BJP leader Sukanta Majumdar during a public meeting in Cooch Behar, West Bengal, on Sunday

The Prime Minister also mentioned that the central government had called for a special session of Parliament on April 16, 17 and 18 to get bills passed for implementing the Women's Reservation Act.

"After Brigade rally in Kolkata, people of Cooch Behar have shown that they are ready to bring in change in the state. Central government has enacted a law to provide 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. Efforts are being made to ensure that sisters across the country, including West Bengal get the benefit," further added Modi. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee urged people to protect EVM machines as she feels that the central force can insert chips inside the machines. "Check all EVM machines thoroughly. Booth agents should also check the EVMs thoroughly. After voting, under the watch of CRPF and central forces, they might enter the strong rooms and change the machine, so we need to keep strict surveillance," mentioned Mamata.

UDF will win 100 seats: Satheesan

KOCHI

Claiming a strong anti-incumbency sentiment across Kerala, Leader of the Opposition VD Satheesan on Sunday asserted that the Congress-led UDF is

POLL WATCH KERALA

poised for a decisive victory in the April 9 Assembly polls, predicting that the coalition will secure over 100 of the 140

'BJP distributing illegal kits'

Allegations of kit distribution by BJP triggered clashes between saffron party activists and those from UDF and LDF in Manaloor on Sunday. Protesters besieged a godown in Vadanappally, claiming kits were being prepared there, and briefly prevented BJP leader and actor Devan from leaving. UDF candidate TN Prathapan claimed the site contained 4,000 ready kits and materials for 10,000 more. Local leader Pallan alleged the BJP was distributing food kits and liquor coupons to sway voters, demanding a probe.

constituencies in the state. There is a "powerful wave in favour" of the UDF across the state, driven by public anger against the ruling LDF and rising expectations for change, he said while addressing reporters at Paravur. "The people of Kerala have placed their faith in the UDF and are looking forward to a change," he claimed.

Vijay files fresh affidavit, lists criminal cases

Chennai: Amid scrutiny, TVK chief Vijay, who had earlier filed an election affidavit with no pending criminal cases, has declared two pending FIRs in a fresh affidavit filed before the returning officer for the

Tamil Nadu Assembly elections to be held on April 23. The fresh affidavit, notarised on April 3, was filed on April 4 by a representative, according to sources. It lists two cases in Chennai and Madurai that were not included in the previous document notarised on March 30. The actor disclosed FIR registered for alleged public disturbance during election campaigning on March 30.

Wangchuk calls for unity, equal rights for Ladakh

KARGIL

Climate Activist Sonam Wangchuk was accorded a warm welcome in Kargil on Sunday, where he called for unity across Ladakh and the country and reiterated the demand for democratic and constitutional rights for the Union Territory.

This marked the first visit of Sonam Wangchuk to Kargil after his release on March 14, following nearly six months of



detention in Jodhpur jail under the National Security Act (NSA). His release came after the Centre revoked the grounds of his detention, subsequent to a habeas corpus petition filed by his wife in the Supreme Court of India. Leaders of Kargil

Democratic Alliance (KDA) and Leh Apex Body (LAB), which are spearheading an agitation in support of their demands including statehood for Ladakh and extension of sixth scheduled to the region, pressed for the next round of talks with the High Powered Committee set up by the ministry of Home Affairs, while warning that continued delays and lack of concrete action could intensify the ongoing movement.

Kerala woman missing in K'taka found

BENGALURU

A 36-year-old woman who went missing while trekking in the Tadiandamol hills of Kodagu district four days ago has been found, the office of Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre said on Sunday. Officials said she is safe and is being brought back. GS Sharanya had travelled alone from Kerala for the trek and was staying at a private homestay in Kakkabe village.

She had set out for the high mountain range of Tadiandamol hills on April 2 with a guide and 15 other trekkers, but went missing that afternoon. Earlier, the minister said additional personnel and drone cameras had been deployed to search for her, following Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's instructions.

Shankaracharya slams RSS chief over population remark

BARCELONA

Swami Avimuktেশ्वaranand Saraswati on Sunday criticised Mohan Bhagwat's remarks on having three children, suggesting that those advocating population growth should lead by example by marrying and having children. He noted a contradiction between the government's population control efforts and such statements from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief.



Easter Sunday
Christians offer midnight mass prayers on Easter at Kurji Holy Family Church, in Patna on Sunday

SNIPPETS

NIA visits house of affected officer

An NIA team on Sunday visited the affected officer's house in connection to the Mothabari incident in Malda where seven judicial officers, including three women, were held hostage for several hours during voter list revision work. The team spoke with the affected officer, eye witnesses and also the car drivers. On Saturday, the NIA team had also collected CCTV footage from inside the BDO office and Mothabari Chowrangi more. The officers termed the footage as 'core asset'.

Cash, liquor worth ₹650cr seized

Enforcement authorities across the four poll-goog states and Puducherry have seized over Rs 650 crore worth of illicit cash, drugs and liquor meant to allure voters, the Election Commission said on Sunday. According to data shared by the poll authority, Rs 319 crore of illicit cash, drugs, liquor and valuable metals have been seized from West Bengal, followed by Rs 170 crore in Tamil Nadu. Over 5,173 flying squads have been deployed to ensure that the complaints are attended to within 100 minutes.

'BJP won't project CM face in Bengal'

Amid speculations on the BJP's chief ministerial face in the West Bengal assembly polls, state BJP president Samik Bhattacharya said the party had not taken any decision on the matter and would instead seek votes in the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his "development agenda".

All Indian seafarers in Gulf safe: Govt

NEW DELHI

All Indian seafarers in the Persian Gulf region are safe, and no incident involving Indian-flagged vessels has been reported in the past 24 hours, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways on Sunday. A total of 17 Indian-flagged vessels with 460 Indian seafarers remain in the western Persian Gulf region, with Director General (DG) Shipping, in coordination with ship owners, placing agencies and Indian Missions, actively monitoring the situation, the statement said.

The Ministry also said it continues to closely monitor shipping movements, port operations and the safety of Indian seafarers, while ensuring continuity of maritime trade. The DG Shipping Control Room remains operational 24x7 and has handled 5,088 calls and 10,547 emails since activation; in the past 24 hours, 73 calls and 122 emails have

The Burden of Books Pales in Comparison to the Burden of Inflation

The commencement of a new academic session typically brings with it a sense of enthusiasm and fresh hope; however, this time around, the start has brought with it the looming anxiety of rising inflation for both parents and students. While the physical weight of books in children's schoolbags was once the primary cause for concern, the financial burden now weighing on parents' pockets feels far heavier. From school fees, textbooks, and notebooks to uniforms—and now digital devices—every requirement associated with education is becoming increasingly expensive. In particular, the sharp surge in the prices of computers, laptops, and other electronic resources has compounded the difficulties faced by middle-class and low-income families. Today, education is no longer confined to traditional methods; rather, it has become heavily reliant on online classes, projects, and technological tools. Consequently, the rising cost of these resources is directly



Anoop Mishra (Editor)

impacting students' academic pursuits. This inflationary pressure is not limited solely to domestic factors; global circumstances also bear significant responsibility. The impact of ongoing international tensions and disruptions within supply chains is clearly visible in Indian markets. As a result, even essential educational resources have fallen victim to the grip of inflation. This situation poses a grave risk of further exacerbating social inequality. While economically well-off families may somehow manage to absorb the increased costs, for children from underprivileged sections of society—and their families—

this could become a formidable obstacle to continuing their education. The apprehension that a lack of access to digital resources will widen the educational divide is also growing. In such times, the responsibility of the government and relevant institutions becomes all the more critical. It is imperative to take concrete steps to ensure that education remains both accessible and affordable. Measures such as regulating the prices of textbooks and educational materials, providing relief on the cost of digital devices, and implementing assistance schemes for needy students could prove effective in this regard. Education is not merely a vehicle for individual advancement; it serves as the very bedrock for the development of both society and the nation. If this burden of inflation continues to mount unchecked, it will cast a deep shadow—not only over the economic well-being of families but also over the future of the country itself.

Congress slams govt's delimitation proposal

NEW DELHI

The Congress launched a scathing attack on the Modi government on Sunday over its delimitation proposal related to the implementation of the women's reservation law, saying it will benefit larger and populous states more and is nothing but a "weapon of mass distraction".

The opposition party also alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is "hoodwinking" people by claiming that the strength of the southern states in the Lok Sabha will not go down under the proposed changes as the gap in the number of seats between the more populous states and others will increase.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary in-charge communications **Jairam Ramesh** said, "The PM is up to his usual tricks of making misleading statements that are meant to deceive. He says South Indian states will not be hurt in any way if the strength of the Lok Sabha is increased by 50% and the number of



seats of each state in the Lok Sabha is also increased by 50%.

"This is hoodwinking the people of the country in which the PM has unique expertise," he said.

For example, the difference between Uttar Pradesh and Kerala's seats in the Lok Sabha is now 60 and Modi's proposal will increase it to 90, he said.

Similarly, the difference between Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu will increase from 41 to at least 61, Ramesh said, adding that such examples can be multiplied.

"Mr. Modi is bulldozing a proposal that will work more to the benefit of larger and populous states since their already large numbers will get further magnified," the Congress leader said.

Akhilesh calls for women's quota bill only after census

LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday questioned the basis of the proposed women's reservation, asserting that a fresh census must be completed before taking up the issue of reserving seats for women in Parliament and state assemblies.

In a post on X, Yadav said any policy must rest on accurate data, arguing that the women's reservation framework is flawed if it relies on outdated population figures of the 2011 Census.

"The basis of reservation is one-third of total seats, which is purely a mathematical issue depending on numbers. Numbers, in turn, must be derived from population data, and that comes from a census. If old 2011 data is used to determine the women's population, the very foundation of the reservation becomes incorrect," the Samajwadi Party chief said.

EAM talks to Qatar PM, UAE FM on energy crisis

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar spoke with Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani on Sunday to discuss the West Asia conflict and its impact on global energy supplies. The external affairs minister also held a phone conversation with the Foreign

Over 6,000 UP workers in Israel safe: Govt

LUCKNOW

More than 6,000 workers from Uttar Pradesh in Israel are safe despite ongoing tensions, the state government said on Sunday. On the directions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, officials are monitoring the situation with Indian authorities.

Principal Secretary, Labour and Employment, Dr Shanmuga Sundaram is in continuous touch with the Indian Embassy, Ambassador JP Singh informed Sundaram on March 11, 17 and 28 that all Indian workers are safe and no emergency has been reported.

Ambassador Singh noted that some workers recently hosted Indian journalists, indicating stable conditions. While First Secretary Dr Garima Tejashwar confirmed some traders and students returned via Jordan, no workers have requested repatriation so far.

Main accused in BJP office blast case held

CHANDIGARH

Punjab police, in a joint operation with the Chandigarh and Haryana police, on Sunday nabbed two main perpetrators from Haryana's Rewari district for lobbing a hand grenade outside the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) office in Sector 37 on April 1. The suspects were identified as Gurtej Singh and

Amanpreet Singh, both residents of Rupnagar district. Amanpreet Singh has a prior criminal record.

Addressing newsmen, Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav said that with these arrests, all seven suspects involved in the case are in custody. On Saturday, the police arrested five others and recovered a hand grenade and a .30 bore Zigana pistol. DGP Yadav said that ISI-

DGP said ISI-backed foreign-based handlers had promised the suspects Rs 2 lakh each for the attack

backed foreign-based handlers Baljot Singh, alias Jot, in Portugal and Harjeet Singh Laadi in Germany had promised the suspects a

reward of Rs 2 lakh each for the attack.

On April 1, after conducting a recon, Amanpreet Singh hurled the grenade while Gurtej Singh recorded the act on his mobile phone. A low-intensity blast had occurred around 5 pm on Wednesday when a crude explosive device was hurled near the party office. While splinters hit parked vehicles, no casualties were reported.

Infantry Patrolled by Inspector Rupam Hazarika in Hajo-Suwalkuchi LAC, Assam

Assam



Inspector Rupam Hazarika, the officer in Charge of Hajo Police station in Assam Kamrup district, today discharged the 'Area Domination Duty' throughout the day. The foot Patrolling operation was concentrated in sensitive areas of Polling Stations in Hajo-Suwalkuchi Assembly Constituency (LAC), where security arrangements were beefed up. In this important duty, under the leadership of Tinkujyoti Choudhury, Deputy Superintendent of Police, APS (DSP, Headquarters, Kamrup), Personnel of 393 companies of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), G-44 Company of Uttar Pradesh Police and E-16 Company of Jharkhand Police Provided full support. All these forces were deployed from camps at Kalitakuchi and Suren Das College, which come under the

jurisdiction of Hajo Police Station. Intensive Patrolling was carried out in the vicinity of Polling Stations, markets and major intersections through joint Patrolling, which enabled Prompt response to any possible threat. The situation remained completely normal for a while. Inspector Hazarika said, "Our team also took feedback from the local people during the foot Patrolling. No complaints or unusual activity were reported so far. We have our eyes on every corner.

In this sequence, the Static Surveillance Team (SST) and Hajo Police conducted a Checking operation at various entrances of

the Hajo-Suwalkuchi LAC. Along with SST, check-up was also conducted by Flying Squad Team (FST) teams under Hajo police station. Prompt checking of vehicles, interrogation of suspicious Persons and scanning of goods vans further strengthened the security net and many suspicious items were recovered. The Hajo-Suwalkuchi LAC is one of the Politically sensitive areas of Assam where deployment of central and state forces has been increased in view of the assembly elections. This joint operation is in line with the guidelines of the Election Commission, which focuses on ensuring Peaceful Polling.

Rising Drug Trafficking Across Indo-Nepal Border

Bahraich

The area along the India-Nepal border, Particularly Rupaidiha, is increasingly emerging as a major hub for drug trafficking, with narcotics easily crossing into Nepal Banke district and reaching Nepalgunj. Significantly, According to Angur GC, Superintendent of Police of Banke district, traffickers are exploiting the open border between India and Nepal to run their operations with minimal obstruction. He warned that drugs entering through this route are not only affecting Nepalgunj but are also being transported further to Kathmandu and the Karnali region. He further stated that discussions will soon be held with Vishwajit Srivastav, Superintendent of Police, Bahraich, to strengthen coordination between law enforcement agencies of both countries and curb the growing Menace. Despite Periodic crackdowns by local Police and the SSB



in Rupaidiha, which result in the arrest of small-scale traffickers, larger networks continue to evade action. Locals allege that while minor offenders are frequently caught, key operators behind the trade often escape enforcement. Data from the Banke Police highlights the severity of the issue. In just the first seven months of 2025-26, a total of 62 individuals, including 20 Indian nationals, were arrested in drug trafficking cases. Seizures during this period included over 845 grams of smack, 9 kilograms of cannabis, large quantities of Corex syrup, thousands of Nitrazepam tablets, and Tramadol capsules. A review of the past three years shows a steady rise in such cases: 2022-23: 157 cases, 236 arrests; 2023-24: 177

cases, 264 arrests; 2024-25: 213 cases, 319 arrests. Recovered substances have included hashish, opium, cannabis, smack, and pharmaceutical drugs. Notably, the involvement of Indian nationals has been consistently observed. Experts and local sources reveal that traffickers procure narcotics from Indian markets and smuggle them into Nepal via the Jamunaha border checkpoint, from where they are distributed to various parts of the country. Meanwhile, social organizations in Nepalgunj have also stepped up efforts to combat the growing threat. Activists are conducting awareness campaigns in schools and colleges to educate youth about the dangers of drug abuse.

Char Dham Yatra Route to Become Safer, Major Works Approved on NH-134



Dehradun

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama has expressed heartfelt gratitude to Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari and the Central Government for approving 461 crore for the treatment and repair of landslide-affected sites in Uttarakhand. The Chief Minister described this decision as significant and far-reaching, which will strengthen the state road infrastructure and ensure the safety of Travelers. The Chief Minister Stated that under this approval, 233 crore has been sanctioned for the treatment of 17 landslide-affected locations on National Highway-134 in Uttarkashi District, While 228 Crore has been approved for three sensitive sites on the Tawaghat-Ghatiabagarh Stretch of National Highway-09 in Pithoragarh District. This initiative will not only help reduce disaster risks but also improve connectivity in remote and border areas of the State. He further mentioned that National Highway-134, a key route for the Char Dham Yatra, connects Dharasu and Kuthnori to Yamunotri Dham in Uttarakhand. This route has been highly Prone to landslides, often causing traffic disruptions and difficulties for Pilgrims. With the completion of the Proposed works, the Stability of this route will improve, making the Char Dham Yatra safer and Smoother. It will also Provide better facilities for religious tourists.

Major Action by the Pradhan Regarding MGNREGA Scam in Kheruwa Gram Sabha

Major Action by the Pradhan Regarding MGNREGA Scam in Kheruwa Gram Sabha: Chief Secretary Takes Strict Cognizance, Deputy Secretary, UP Government, Initiates Action and Demands Inquiry Report Questions Raised Over Block-Level Inquiry; Complainant Alleges Block Officials Attempted to Cover Up Corruption—Government's Strict Stance Creates a Stir

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Saidabad: A case of corruption under the MGNREGA scheme in Kheruwa Gram Sabha, located within the Saidabad Development Block of Prayagraj district, has now escalated significantly. Following a long-standing series of complaints, the government administration has finally adopted a strict stance on the matter. Taking cognizance of the complaint submitted to the Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh, directives were issued to the Principal Secretary of Rural Development. Acting on these directives, Deputy Secretary Mr. Chandrika Prasad dispatched a letter to the Commissioner of Rural Development (Lucknow), formal-



ly requisitioning a detailed inquiry report from the District Magistrate of Prayagraj. The entire matter revolves around alleged irregularities and the misappropriation of funds within the MGNREGA scheme by the Gram

Pradhan (Village Head), Virendra Singh. **Allegations of Collusion with the Pradhan Leveled Against Block Officials** The complainant, Mr. Dilip Prajapati, has alleged that offi-

cial from the Saidabad Development Block—specifically Dayashankar Patel and Rakesh Yadav—conducted a mere "eye-wash" in the name of an inquiry. He claims that, without even hearing the complainant's side of the story, these officials submitted a misleading and biased report in an attempt to shield the Gram Pradhan.

Termining this "misleading inquiry" as completely erroneous, the complainant filed a fresh complaint with the Chief Secretary, substantiating it with concrete evidence. He demanded that an impartial investigation into the matter be conducted by a district-level team and that strict departmental action be initiated against those officials who attempted to

cover up the corruption.

Government Letter Sparks Turmoil

Following the government's intervention, the moment the orders for an inquiry reached the district, it created a stir at the block level. Anxiety has mounted among those implicated in the corruption, while discussions regarding the matter have intensified among the villagers. It is noteworthy that questions regarding MGNREGA works in Kheruwa village have been raised on numerous occasions in the past. Allegations at the local level suggest that fraudulent payments were made in the names of laborers and that gross irregularities were committed in the execution of works. Dilip Prajapati—District Minister

(PIMO) of the BJP—has also long been vocal in exposing the corruption plaguing the Gram Sabha and highlighting the suspicious role played by officials. However, despite previous complaints, an impartial inquiry failed to materialize, thereby raising questions regarding the conduct of the local administration.

This time, the complainant, Dilip Kumar, has demanded that the government take stringent action against the culprits. Now, all eyes are fixed on the district administration's inquiry report, which will ultimately determine the truth behind the alleged scam committed in the name of MGNREGA in Kheruwa and decide what action will be taken against the guilty parties.

UP Commission Promotes Skill Development via iGOT Portal

Prayagraj

Under the guidance of Chairman Dr. Prashant Kumar, a group discussion was organized at the Uttar Pradesh Education Service Selection Commission, Prayagraj, during "Sadhana Week." As Part of the "Developed India 2047" vision and under the Mission Karmayogi Program run by the Capacity Building

Commission, officials and staff were informed about various courses, learning modules and Skill development Programs available on the iGOT Karmayogi

Portal. During the Program, officials Stated that Mission

Karmayogi aims to bring significant improvement in the capacity and efficiency of government Personnel. On this occasion, all Present officers and employees took a Pledge to complete as many courses as Possible within the stipulated time frame to enhance their work efficiency. Under "Sadhana Week," being observed from April 2 to April 8, 2026 by the Government of India and the Government of Uttar Pradesh, it has been mandated for all officers and employees to complete a minimum of four hours of course-work. Officials/ employees completing at least three AI-relat-

ed courses will be awarded the "AI Proficiency Badge," while those completing at least one course available on the iGOT Marketplace will receive the "Karmayogi Utkarsh Badge." Additionally, completing at least one AI course has been made mandatory. The discussion emphasized skill enhancement, work efficiency and digital capacity building of officers and employees through thousands of online courses available under Mission Karmayogi. The Commission also announced that Personnel demonstrating outstanding Performance will be Rewarded.

Amit Shah Backs BJP Himanshu Shekhar Baishya in Palashbari, Assam. Spotlights Vikas Yatra

Assam

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday offered his opinion in favour of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Himanshu Shekhar Baishya while attending a massive election rally held in Palashbari constituency in the context of the Assam Assembly elections 2026. Joining the meeting, Shah said that the main goal of the BJP is Public welfare and that every worker of the Party has been working with a sense of dedication. He informed the gathering about the development-oriented journey of Assam and called upon everyone to move forward unitedly. His eclectic speech infused enthusiasm in the



minds of BJP workers. Himanshu Shekhar Vaishya thanked the people of Palashbari constituency and the Party satith for their invaluable contribution and enthusiasm. This meeting further strengthened the supporters of the BJP in the election at-

mosphere. Amit Shah Presence gave a new impetus to the BJP campaign at the local level.

A huge crowd gathered in the Palashbari constituency, which is a testimony to the Party popularity. Referring to the development work

done in Assam, the BJP leader said the state is now touching new heights. He urged the workers to work harder for the welfare of the people. BJP Candidate Himanshu Shekhar Baishya said that with the guidance of Amit Shah, we will move forward with a winning

resolution. This meeting Shows the strong Position of the BJP in the Assam elections. Apart from Union Minister Amit Shah, Guwahati Lok Sabha MP Bijuli Kalita Medhi and many other NDA leaders were Present in this meeting.

Notorious Robbery Suspect Arrested in Police Encounter

Police Recover Country-made Pistol, Ammunition, and Motorcycle from Injured Suspect



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kaushambi:

On Saturday night, police arrested Amit Pasi—a notorious criminal who had been spreading terror through a series of Mangalsutra snatchings in the

Karari and Sarai Akil police station areas—following a police encounter. The injured suspect was immediately transported to a hospital for medical treatment. Police officials stated that the accused had been actively involved in robbery incidents within the Sarai Akil and Karari

jurisdictions for a considerable period and was a wanted fugitive in connection with numerous snatching cases. Acting under the directives of the Superintendent of Police, specialized teams established a cordon near the Hazipurwa intersection late at night. Upon arriv-

ing on a motorcycle late in the night, the suspect spotted the police, attempted to flee, and opened fire on the police team. In a retaliatory action, a police bullet struck the suspect in the leg, injuring him; the police subsequently apprehended him at the scene. The injured suspect

has been sent to the District Hospital in Manjhanpur for treatment. From his possession, the police recovered a .315 bore country-made pistol, both live and spent cartridges, a motorcycle, and cash. During interrogation, the accused confessed that he used a stolen motorcycle to

carry out the snatchings. Multiple criminal cases are registered against him across the districts of Prayagraj and Kaushambi. The Sarai Akil police and the SOG (Special Operations Group) team played a pivotal role in this entire operation.

Prayagraj Division's Initiative Towards World-Class Museums: Commissioner Visits Bengaluru and Patna



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. Taking a significant step towards developing museums in accordance with global standards, Smt. Soumya Agarwal—Commissioner of the Prayagraj Division and Director of the Allahabad Museum—visited prominent museums in Bengaluru and Patna on April 4 and 5, 2026. During this visit, she toured the Museum of Art & Photography (MAP) in

Bengaluru and the Bihar Museum in Patna, where she assessed their modern curation techniques and the application of technology. During the tour, the Commissioner held detailed discussions with Anjani Kumar Singh, Director General of the Bihar Museum, and Abhishek Poddar, Founder of MAP. These interactions focused on topics such as elevating museums to world-class status, integrating digital technologies, and preserving cultural

heritage through cultural exchange. The primary objective of this visit was to understand how museums can be made more engaging and enriching—while simultaneously preserving local cultural heritage—by adopting international standards. Accompanying the Commissioner on this tour were Dr. Sanju Mishra, Assistant Curator at the Allahabad Museum, and Sunil Kumar Pandey, Administrative Officer.

Rajan Maharaj's Discourse Concludes with Shri Ram's Coronation and a Grand Community Feast



Dhanupur

The grand Ram Katha (discourse on Lord Ram), organized at Devbara Dham, concluded on Sunday amidst an atmosphere filled with reverence, faith, and devotion. Over the course of this nine-day religious event, hundreds of thousands of devotees from the region participated, immersing themselves in the divine narrative of Lord Shri Ram. During the program, the narrator, Rajan Maharaj, used his melodious and soulful voice to shed light in great detail upon the life, ideals, moral conduct (Maryada), and the significance of Dharma

(righteousness) as embodied by Lord Shri Ram. Throughout the discourse, he vividly recounted episodes such as the birth of Ram, his exile to the forest, the abduction of Sita, and the slaying of Ravana; these narrations left the assembled devotees deeply moved and overwhelmed with emotion, while the entire atmosphere resonated with resounding chants of "Jai Shri Ram." Throughout this religious event, thousands of devotees gathered daily to listen to the discourse. With the active participation of women, men, and the youth, the entire region remained steeped in a devotional



atmosphere. On the concluding day, special Pujan (worship rituals), Havan (sacred fire ceremony), and the distribution of Prasad (sacred food offerings) were organized, in which thousands of devotees participated with great enthusiasm. The success of this event was made possible through the commendable contributions of the organizers—including Radhe Mohan Pandey and Vikas Allahabadi—as well as the committee members, local villagers, and the youth. Together, they played a pivotal role in managing the arrangements, maintaining cleanliness, ensuring the

comfort of the devotees, and facilitating the smooth execution of the program. The event was brought to a successful conclusion through the tireless efforts of numerous individuals present on the occasion, including former MLA Prashant Singh, social worker Garun Pandey, Pappu Pandey, Jatin Pandey, Nilesh Tiwari, Pratyush Pandey, Raju Singh, Durgesh Shukla, Sumit Tiwari, Nitin Mishra, Devtadeen Tiwari, Shivkumar Tiwari, Rameshwar Tiwari, Anurag Pandey, Anshuman Shukla, Nishant Tiwari, Adarsh Pandey, Adarsh Dubey, and Avinash Mishra.

High Court Takes Strict Stance on Plea of Prisoner Jailed for 20 Years; Seeks Response from State Government

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: The Allahabad High Court has adopted a strict stance regarding a petition for the premature release of a convict currently serving a life sentence at the Central Jail, Varanasi—a sentence he has been undergoing for nearly 20 years. The Court has sought a response from the State Government within two weeks and has scheduled the next hearing of the matter for April 17. The Division Bench clarified that no prisoner can be detained in jail indefinitely without their case for premature release being considered. This order was issued by



a bench comprising Justice J.J. Munir and Justice Tarun Saxena

during the hearing. The case pertains to Baiju, son of Ganga

Kohar, an inmate at the Central Jail, Varanasi, who is a resident

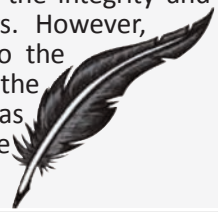
of the Purandarpur police station area in the Maharajganj district. The petitioner filed on behalf of the petitioner states that his application for premature release has been pending with the jail administration since September 22, 2025; however, no decision has been taken on it to date. The petitioner's counsel argued that, in accordance with the State Government's standing policy, a time-bound decision ought to be taken in such cases. Furthermore, citing the Supreme Court's *Laxman Nakur* case, the counsel submitted that keeping a life convict incarcerated for an indefinite period without con-

sidering their application for release is not justifiable. It is pertinent to note that a case was registered against Baiju at the Purandarpur police station under various sections, including charges of dowry death. In 2013, the Court of the Additional Sessions Judge, Maharajganj, sentenced him to life imprisonment along with a fine of ₹20,000. Subsequently, the High Court also upheld the sentence while dismissing his appeal. The Court has directed that a copy of the order be forwarded to the concerned officials within 48 hours to ensure expeditious action in the matter.

Editorial

Civil servants are running India's regulatory bodies. It dilutes institutional independence

Looking back at India's reform story of more than three decades, it is worthwhile to recall that economic liberalisation of the 1990s had a few implicit assumptions of how an economy should function and grow on a sustainable basis. One of those assumptions followed from the government decision to allow the private sector to operate in areas that were hitherto monopolised by state-owned enterprises. Under such liberalisation, it was assumed that while the government would continue to frame policies for areas opened up to the private sector, the regulation or enforcement of those policies would be undertaken by independent regulators through rules framed by them. A classic example of this thinking was India's telecommunications sector that was opened up to the private sector in the early 1990s. This was followed by the setting up of the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of India or Trai a few years later. Subsequently, the business of basic telephone services, run in large parts of the country by a government department, was hived off to a newly created state-owned enterprise. Something similar, in varying degrees, happened in other areas such as the insurance, airports, and power sectors. In addition, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) was set up to regulate and adjudicate upon issues of market dominance and practices that undermined competition in various sectors. The principle was clear: Let the government frame the policy (and not run a business), while independent regulatory bodies could enforce the policy by framing necessary rules. Another implicit assumption behind such a separation of responsibilities between the government and the regulators was about who should steer those regulatory bodies. To impart autonomy and independence to these institutions and insulate them from government interference, the pool of talent for hiring key personnel was widened. Experts and private-sector professionals in related fields, along with even retired members of the judiciary (though under some pressure as was seen when the legislation for setting up the CCI was framed), were among those the government believed could be hired to head these regulatory institutions. Thus, the first chairperson of the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission was an economist. Trai was set up under the chairmanship of a retired judge and its next chairperson was a former banker. Even the first capital market regulator was a banker in the late 1980s, and the first chairperson of the insurance sector regulator was a former chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes. The first full-fledged chairperson of the CCI was a retired Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer. So, there was a mix of regulatory heads chosen from a pool of experts from both the government and the private sector. In spite of a few civil servants heading these institutions, the idea that continued to be pursued was to insulate regulation from the stranglehold or influence of the political executive. The third significant aspect of regulation in the early days of economic reforms was the framing of rules for appointing heads of regulatory bodies in a way that effectively ruled out conflicts of interest. Thus, a regulator would usually not be considered for another job in the government system after the completion of his or her term. The idea was that the regulator should be able to act freely and fairly without any expectation of future assignments from the government or the private sector. Indeed, one of the regulators under the law was, until recently, barred from accepting any government job after having served in that regulatory post. These were guardrails to preserve the integrity and independence of regulators. However, the situation with regard to the last two assumptions behind the regulatory framework has changed significantly in the last few decades.



The last time the high command named an out-of-the-box candidate as state president

On June 9, 2024, as the Modi 3.0 government was set to swear in, Rajeev Chandrasekhar came up with a cryptic tweet: "Today, curtains down on my 18-year stint of public service, of which three years I had the privilege of serving with PM Narendra Modiji's Team Modi 2.0. I certainly didn't wish to end my 18 years of public service as a candidate who lost an election, but that's how it has turned out". The tweet was deleted after a day, and the amended version conveniently laid the blame for the confusion on an "intern". It was an emotional response, a mark of Chandrasekhar's utter disappointment with not finding a place in Modi 3.0. It also signified how the 'technocrat' was not a run-of-the-mill politician who believed in rehearsed or curated responses. Less than a year since then, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) high command has now sprung a surprise by naming Chandrasekhar as its new Kerala state president. By no means was Rajeev Chandrasekhar the frontrunner. Incumbent K. Surendran, who overstayed his term by two years, was tipped to get another year's extension, until the assembly elections in the state in 2026. There were other contenders too, such as firebrand Sobha Surendran and veteran MT Ramesh. Even conventional wisdom suggested that social engineering compulsions would go against Chandrasekhar, a Nair hailing from Thrissur. With the two Malayalis in Modi's third ministry being a Nair and a Syrian Christian—Suresh Gopi and George Kurian—an



Ezhava/Hindu OBC candidate would've been the more practical option. But the high command had enough reasons to pick Chandrasekhar. The BJP in Kerala is a divided house with multiple factions, and none of the frontrunners would have been able to function smoothly on account of internal dissension. Even K. Surendran's five-year term was marred by friction with the PK Krishnadas-led faction, as well as his running feud with Sobha Surendran. The BJP leadership reckons that Rajeev Chandrasekhar can carry all the factions together. He is not a natural politician, but the central leadership deems that this very characteristic will become Chandrasekhar's USP. It is very much a repetition of the 'K. Annamalai' experiment in Tamil Nadu.

True, Chandrasekhar's acceptability cuts across factions. But there are various other considerations at play. For all the gains it made elsewhere, the BJP has hardly had any electoral impact in Kerala, despite a steady rise in vote share. Even after faring reasonably well in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, cornering nearly 20% votes and Suresh Gopi's win from Thrissur, it did badly in the Palakkad by-election last November. That loss probably

put paid to Surendran's hopes to stay on until the assembly polls, as he had turned the issue into a battle of prestige. The central leadership also cannot quite understand why the BJP does so poorly in a state where the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has the second-largest network of shakhas (branches) in the country. For a long, the RSS in Kerala had been deeply involved in the functioning of the state BJP, though the party's ideological mentor has taken a backseat in recent times. This was meant to afford more autonomy to the state party president, but it ultimately culminated in RSS organising secretary K. Subash's resignation, with the Sangh not naming a replacement in his stead for an extended period.

Now, Rajeev Chandrasekhar's appointment is likely to be followed by the RSS naming an organising secretary to assist the new president in his functioning. The last time the high command named an out-of-the-box candidate as state president was in the run-up to the 2016 assembly polls, when veteran Sangh leader Kummanam Rajasekharan, whose hardliner image and association with the Nilakkal protests of 1982

had proved to be a baggage for the party in the past. The central leadership also believes that Chandrasekhar can cater to sections of Kerala's aspirational middle class that are yearning for change and are unhappy with both the ruling Left government and the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF).

Since Chandrasekhar doesn't fit the mould of a regular politician, he may be able to connect better with this class and some increasingly 'apolitical' sections of voters that support, say, a Shashi Tharoor. In many ways in fact, it was the spirited contest that he put in against Tharoor in the Lok Sabha election in Thiruvananthapuram, despite being a late entrant, that may have propelled Chandrasekhar to the coveted position today. Giving a tough fight to Tharoor, a lot of people were left wondering whether Chandrasekhar could have emerged victorious had he been pencilled in sooner. "Ini Karyam Nadakkum" ('Now things will move') was Chandrasekhar's campaign slogan. This may well be called Chandrasekhar's second coming in Kerala politics. Contrary to what many may believe, the contest

in Thiruvananthapuram wasn't his initiation in state politics, even if he was based in Bengaluru until then. Much before that, he had been a key mediator for getting the Bharat Dharma Jana Sena (BDJS), affiliated to the Ezhava community outfit Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP), to join the National Democratic Alliance

(NDA) in 2016. That is when Chandrasekhar was named the NDA's vice-chairman for Kerala, despite being a Rajya Sabha MP from Karnataka. Now, he may be expected to act as a bridge to the Christian clergy and cater to their grievances. The Christian community in Kerala has traditionally stood with the Congress, although cracks have begun to appear in recent times. Chandrasekhar may be expected to utilise issues such as the controversy surrounding the Munambam suburb of Ernakulam, where some 600 LChristian and Hindu families are protesting against the Wakf Board's claim over the area. Notably, Chandrasekhar was a key figure in getting veteran leader PC George to merge his splinter party with the BJP. Shone George, the latter's son, is also expected to emerge as an important leader during Chandrasekhar's term. It would also be remiss not to mention Chandrasekhar's ownership of Asianet News, which has consistently topped BARC (Broadcast Audience Research Council) ratings for Malayalam news channels. He is the majority shareholder of the news channel through the holding company Jupiter Capital. While some BJP leaders think that with the channel maintaining an independent editorial line Chandrasekhar's business interests may backfire on him, that could be a thin reading of the situation. This view got amplified recently when he had to tweet an apology on account of the channel's alleged slighting of the Maha Kumbh on a news show.

Why's Turkey erupting for Ekrem Imamoglu? He's the biggest threat to Erdogan yet

In Turkey, the vox populi is rising once again, reminiscent of the Gezi uprising that occurred 12 years ago. After a week of continuous protests in multiple cities—against the arrest of Istanbul mayor Ekrem Imamoglu—authorities have put a ban on gatherings and detained close to 2,000 individuals. The unlawful and unconstitutional arrest of Imamoglu is the culmination of over two decades of political erosion under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's increasingly autocratic governance. It has systematically undermined democratic institutions, silenced dissent, and played up the Islamist agenda internationally, particularly on the matter of Kashmir. Now, in the streets of Turkey's major cities, thousands of people, mostly students and youth, are pushing back against Erdogan, and their defiance is growing louder by the day. At the heart of this unrest lies the struggle for Turkey's political future—and the figure leading this charge—Ekrem. Imamoglu, a calm and charismatic mayor, was arrested

under politically motivated charges of corruption and embezzlement—accusations that many see as a pretext for silencing a rising political star. His arrest was an absurd spectacle. Taken from his walk-in closet while calmly adjusting his tie, Imamoglu was detained merely hours before he was set to be nominated as the presidential candidate by Turkey's Opposition in the 2028 elections. For a leader with immense support across Turkey, this act of political repression has galvanised protests not just in Istanbul but across the nation. But why has one figure—mayor of Istanbul since 2019—become the focal point of such a significant crisis. Obscurity in 2019, defeating the candidate supported by Justice and Development Party (AKP) by 13,000 votes—when no one thought he could. Before Imamoglu, conservatives from the AKP had ruled Istanbul for 25 years. Erdogan himself owes the foundations of his political career to his mayorship of Istanbul in the 1990s.

BJP has a new Muslim strategy up its sleeve. Saugat-e-Modi isn't just about Bihar election

This Ramadan, a quiet gesture from the Narendra Modi government has stirred conversation. Eid kits for 32 lakh underprivileged Muslims, described as a goodwill initiative timed with the holy month. The offering appears festive, including familiar Eid ingredients such as dry fruits, semolina, vermicelli and sugar. The kits also include kurta-pyjamas for men and suit fabrics for women, all neatly packaged to reach Muslim households before Eid. At first glance, it appears to be a thoughtful cultural outreach by the Bharatiya Janata Party, an attempt to bring warmth and festivity into homes that might otherwise go without. But as with most things in Indian politics, the surface is rarely the whole story. The move hasn't gone unnoticed by political observers. Why this sudden and massive outreach to Muslims—by a party that has so far built much of its narrative on distancing itself from appeasement politics? This is the same BJP whose leaders have routinely criticised political opponents for attending Iftar parties, framing such gestures as opportunistic pandering. And yet, here we are, with the ruling party preparing curated Eid hampers not just for a symbolic few but for over 30 lakh Muslim households. For many, the question is not whether the gesture is kind—but why now, and why like this? The BJP's 'Saugat-e-Modi' kits have not only surprised political commentators but also drawn scathing remarks from the Opposition. For some, it's a clear contradiction of the BJP's usual stance on such gestures. But for political analysts watching the timing closely, the move seems less like a change of heart and more like a strategic calculation—with Bihar in mind. The upcoming Bihar assembly election has raised concerns within the BJP that rising Opposition

momentum could impact not just the party, but also its key allies—Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United), Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), and Jitan Ram Manjhi's Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular). In that light, the Eid outreach feels less like an act of cultural generosity and more like a political buffer—an attempt to soften the blow in a state where coalition math can shift quickly. That analysis may hold some truth—but it also seems to overlook the broader outreach pattern the BJP has been steadily building, particularly toward poor Muslims, Pasmanda communities, and Muslim women. Over the past few years, the party has made targeted efforts to create an opening within sections of the Muslim electorate long seen as distant. In the 2023 urban local body elections in Uttar Pradesh, the BJP went as far as fielding Pasmanda Muslim candidates—a move once considered politically unthinkable. Of the 395 Muslim candidates it fielded, 54 went on to win. These numbers may seem modest when seen in the larger national context, but they speak to a subtle shift in the party's approach. One that goes beyond gift boxes and hints at reimagining of BJP's political strategy—at least on the surface. BJP's effort to engage with Pasmanda and poor Muslims isn't new. In UP, Danish Ansari, a Pasmanda Muslim, was appointed as Minister of State for Minority Welfare, Muslim Waqf, and Haj in Yogi Adityanath's second cabinet—which was seen by many as a symbolic but politically significant move. The party and its spokespersons often claim that it was the BJP that made APJ Abdul Kalam the President of India, citing it as proof of its inclusive credentials. Added to this are a number of welfare schemes that directly or indirectly.

Trump should withdraw USCIRF's authorisation. It's interfering in India's domestic governance

In a strongly worded statement, Government of India has condemned and refuted the findings of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom report as "biased and politically motivated, and continuation of persistent attempts to misrepresent isolated incidents and cast aspersions on India's vibrant multicultural society which reflects USCIRF's deliberate agenda rather than a genuine concern for religious freedom". Though this is not the first time such reports have painted India as a coun-

try highly intolerant of its religious minorities, the March 2025 report is the first time a recommendation has been made for India to be designated as "country of particular concern". It alleges that minorities in India are facing 'deteriorating treatment'. Fifteen other countries, including Afghanistan, Russia, China, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, have been found to be treating their respective minorities badly. Three aspects of this report should be of concern to New Delhi, and it should be brought to

the attention of those the report is supposedly submitted to. The first is the report's mention of the assassination of separatist Sikh elements in Canada posing as members of the Sikh religious community and the alleged attempt on the life of another Khalistani separatist. "The Indian government also continued to expand its repressive tactics to target religious minorities abroad, specifically members of the Sikh community and their advocates... International reporting and intelligence from the Canadian govern-

ment corroborated allegations linking an official in India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and six diplomats to the 2023 assassination attempt of an American Sikh activist in New York," the report has said. It's important to note that these radical elements do not represent the Sikh community. While the Government of India has categorically rejected the allegation, the Canadian government and the prosecuting authorities in the then Biden dispensation initiated legal actions against Indian officials.

HC grants Delhi 10 weeks to address EWS fee violations



Fees will be regulated for all Delhi private schools

Delhi: Delhi High Court ordered the Directorate of Education (DoE) to determine within 10 weeks on a case against various private schools for allegedly charging EWS and DG pupils fees. A panel of chief judge DK Upadhyay and justice Tushar Rao Gedela noticed that the Wazirpur JJ Colony Association had previously sent a representation to DoE on the subject, but the department had not acted on it. The court dismissed the petition and ordered the group to file a new, full representation within four weeks. It further ordered DoE to investigate and respond within 10 weeks of receiving the new representation. In its suit, the group accused numerous Delhi private schools of violating the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, by charging EWS/DG pupils and expelling those who couldn't pay. The RTE Act and Article 21A of the Constitution guar-

Delhi: The minister predicted the passage of the Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) Bill, 2025, during the Delhi Assembly's Monsoon Session. He said the bill's largest benefit is halting a "decade of unchecked profiteering" by private institutions through equitable application. A toothless, reactive framework is replaced by a proactive, empowered, and transparent one by this bill. Previously, the DoE

could only approve school fee increases under the land clause, but hundreds of smaller private schools raise tuition unchecked. Although parents of larger schools may object, a fee rise of ₹1,000 to ₹1,500 for a small private school in Najafgarh is a 50% increase. This is a significant hardship for that school's parents, yet they rarely complain, Sood added. He claimed that the land clause applies to 350 of 1,443 schools and that the Department of Education .

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Aiming for Defacement-Free DUSU Elections with a Rs 1 Lakh Bond



Delhi: In order to enforce order and avoid property damage during the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) election campaigns, the University of Delhi (DU) has released stringent regulations. A fair and disciplined election process is ensured by these new guidelines, which also seek to maintain the cleanliness and decency of the campus atmosphere. A Rs 1 lakh anti-defacement bond is required of all candidates nominated for any position in the DUSU. By posting this bond, the candidate promises that while campaigning, he or she will not engage in any behavior that could cause harm to or vandal-

ize college or university property. The amount of the bond will be lost if it is determined that the candidate or their supporters have violated these restrictions. This technique highlights the gravity of enforcing discipline on campus, much like the anti-ragging affidavit that students sign when they enroll. All academic units are

required by the university to hold orientation and sensitization workshops where students will learn about campus environmental preservation and the electoral code of conduct. By educating the public on the consequences of vandalism and promoting civil protest, these initiatives hope to counteract the problem.

Academics fear FYUP may dilute relevance of UG in DU

Delhi: The academic community in India is concerned that the New Education Policy's (NEP) proposed four-year undergraduate program, FYUP, contains flaws that will lower the bar for higher education in the country. Professor Seema Das of Political Science at Hindu College, Delhi

University, believes that removing four required courses from the three-year bachelor's degree program would significantly water down the curriculum. "Reduction in core papers would not allow a graduating student to master the respective subject," according to Das. When picking up elec-

tives or research papers, it's likely that a select few fields will be favoured. Some classes might end up being scrapped entirely as a result of this, rendering the instructors obsolete. Rajesh Jha, a professor of political science at Rajdhani College, has stated that this might go against the NEP's principles.

With an improved score, Delhi University achieves NAAC's top A++ grade



Delhi: In its most recent round of institutional assessment and accreditation, the University of Delhi was declared to have achieved the highest possible grade of A++ by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) on August 8. The accreditation is effective for five years, until 2029, according to the varsity's statement. The school achieved a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.55. Following DU's A+ rating and 3.28 cumulative grade point average in 2018, Vice Chancellor Yogesh Singh extended congratulations to the university's staff, students, alumni, and other stakeholders. He stated that the dramatic uptick was evidence of the university's dedication to excellent teaching, ground-breaking research, and responsible administration. Singh expressed enormous pride for the entire fraternity, stating that obtaining the NAAC A++ grade is a landmark moment in the university's history. Our faculty, students, non-teaching staff, alumni, and all stakeholders have worked tirelessly, and their unfaltering dedication has paid off. He spoke about how it will inspire them to "expand the horizons of excellence in teaching, research, and service to society" by setting even higher standards.

Mid-Entry Window Opens Until August 10; More Than 9,000 Undergraduate Spots Remain Available at Delhi

Delhi: According to the list of open seats issued by the university's admissions division, there are over 9,000 undergraduate seats that are still vacant, thus students who have not yet obtained admission to colleges at Delhi University still have a chance. The institution has opened the mid-entry window for the 2025-26 academic session, giving applicants another chance to apply for undergraduate admissions using the Common Seat Allocation System (CSAS). A one thousand rupee (Rs.) non-refundable application fee is due



when submitted via the university portal. Before submitting their applications, students can use this window to see which seats are available, revise their course and college choices, and more. It is important to note that during the mid-entry

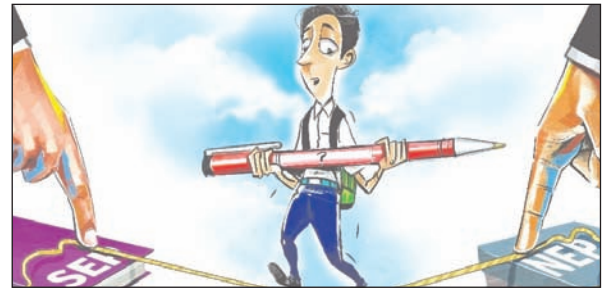
window, only candidates who were denied in Round 1 or Round 2 owing to faulty subject mapping, non-fulfillment of program-specific eligibility, or invalid documents will be allowed to fix their subject mapping and edit their preferences.

Irish education minister invites Indians for education, research

NEW DELHI: James Lawless, Ireland's Education Minister, on Monday said his country is "very welcoming" for students and has a supportive post-study employment visa arrangement. "Ireland is a very welcoming country. We have a very cosmopolitan culture. We have many nationalities now in Ireland, and many people have made their home, including many, many Indians," the Irish minister said, when asked whether his government is considering any changes in post-study work or immigration policies to retain skilled talents.

Test formats between the NEP and the SEP in Tamil Nadu

Delhi: The state of Tamil Nadu has defied the federal government's National Education Policy (NEP) by releasing its own policy on education, which is called the State Education Policy (SEP). When Chief Minister MK Stalin introduced the new strategy, he made it plain: Tamil Nadu's educational system will go its own way. Under Justice Murugesan's leadership, a fourteen-person group developed the Tamil Nadu SEP. This strategy upholds the two-language policy, rejects important NEP provi-



sions, and gives English, science, and artificial intelligence top priority. Up to the tenth grade, Tamil is a requirement for all students, regardless of whether they attend a state-run school or adhere to the CBSE, ICSE, or any other national board. It is quite evident that the state is against impos-

ing any language on its citizens. The NEET is strongly opposed by this person. Concerned about stress and inequity, Tamil Nadu has fought against it for a long time. As a result of the state's insistence on using NEP and NEET, the federal government allegedly withheld Rs 2,152 crore (Samagra Shiksha).

Legislation to Regulate School Fees Adopted by the Delhi Assembly

Delhi: The 2025 School Fee Regulation Bill was approved by the Delhi State Assembly. A parent can now veto a decision to increase school fees, thanks to a recently passed bill. This prevents school administrations from making the decision to increase fees all at once. Even if just one parent objects to the proposed fee increase, it will not be authorized, according to Ashish Sood, Delhi's minister of education. The decision cannot be enforced by management, and parents will have the power to veto it. In addition, the measure specifies that institutions that are determined to have imposed excessive fees may be subject to fines or even the revocation of their future ability to submit fee modifications.



CBSE loosens regulations on adding new sections

Diviya Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has revised its affiliation rules to permit section growth based on built-up carpet area instead of land size, in an effort to alleviate space restrictions caused by the increasing demand for school admissions. The board took this action in response to comments made by schools that are having trouble meeting the demand for new admissions despite having more sections than allowed. According to CBSE's circular, children's health, social and psychological development, and sense of belonging could be negatively affected if they had to travel significant distances to attend school because there aren't enough seats in their neighborhood. Officials and school administrators stated that the decision will alleviate admission pressure.

in 20 business days if more than the allowed school's fees are limit.

J&K bans 25 books for 'false narrative' and 'glorification of terrorism'

Delhi: In an unprecedented action, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has ordered the seizure and prohibition of 25 books, stating they promote secessionism, glorify terrorism, and threaten national integrity and public order. On August 5, the Home Department issued S.O.203 to declare the books "forfeited," noting their "false narrative" and involvement in "misguiding the youth" of Jammu and Kashmir. Azadi by writer-activist Arundhati Roy, The Kashmir Dispute 1947-2012 by constitutional expert A.G. Noorani, and Kashmir at the Crossroads by political scientist Sumantra Bose are prohibited. David Devadas, Hafsa Kanjwal, Ather Zia, Anuradha Bhasin, and Tariq Ali all have novels on the list. After a thorough investigation, officials decided the content was "objec-



IGNOU July 2025 registration deadline extended again

Delhi: The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has extended the deadline for admission and re-registration for the July 2025 session. Students now have until August 15, 2025, to complete the process. The applies to both new admissions and re-registration for continuing students. IGNOU offers courses in both distance learning (ODL) and online mode, and the application must be completed through its websites.

tionable" and "potentially harmful to public peace and the unity of the nation." The Home Department reported

that investigations and intelligence inputs showed that these publications radicalized adolescents.

Controversy over the Maratha map prompts NCERT commission to review content

Delhi: A group of specialists was assembled by the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to review comments made regarding the subject matter of many textbooks. According to officials, the group consisting of



esteemed faculty members and domain specialists from prestigious universities would be chaired by Ranjana Arora, head of NCERT's Curriculum Studies and Development (DCSD). Several textbooks' instructional content has recently been reviewed and provided feedback to NCERT. Therefore, in keeping with previous procedure, a Committee consisting of prominent specialists is being formed. In a statement, NCERT stated that the committee will review the feedback based on the evidence that is currently available and will deliver its report as soon as practicable. Three days prior to NCERT's announcement, former Jaisalmer royal family leader Chaitanya Raj Singh voiced his disapproval of one of the organization's recently published textbooks, citing what he saw as historical mistakes. In an X post, Singh took issue with a social studies map for eighth grade that showed Jaisalmer as an outpost of the Maratha Empire. Due to the lack of "any Maratha dominance, invasion, taxation, or authority" mentioned in "any authentic historical sources," he asserted.

Actresses who rule the screen with their dance

Over the years, several actresses have stood out by commanding the screen not just through acting, but through movement and expression

Whether in classical or commercial numbers, their dance has added depth and impact to their performances. Here are five actresses who have successfully balanced both acting and dance on screen.

MADHURI DIXIT

Madhuri Dixit remains the gold standard for dance in Hindi cinema. Trained in classical Kathak, her performances are marked by flawless technique, expressive storytelling, and effortless grace. Songs like Ek Do Teen, Dhak Dhak Karne Laga, and Dola Re Dola are iconic not just for their choreography but for how Madhuri brought emotion and character into every movement. Alongside her celebrated acting career, she redefined how dance could become central to a film's narrative.

TAMANNAAH BHATIA

Tamannaah Bhatia has emerged as one of the most impactful performers when it comes to combining a strong screen presence with memorable dance numbers. Her performances in chartbusters like Kaavaalaa, Aaj Ki Raat and Ghafoor showcased her ability to balance sensuality, rhythm, and expressive storytelling, making the songs widely popular across audiences. Tamannaah's dance style is defined by fluidity, confidence, and strong expression, enabling her to command attention while staying true to the narrative. Alongside her acting career across industries, dance remains a key strength that enhances her on-screen appeal.



KATRINA KAIF

Katrina Kaif carved her own space as one of Bollywood's most consistent and powerful performers in dance-driven songs. Known for her precision, stamina, and stage presence, she has delivered multiple chart-topping numbers such as Sheila Ki Jawani, Chikni Chameli, Kamli, and Kala Chashma. Over the years, Katrina has balanced dance & acting, proving that discipline and performance energy can turn dance into a defining strength.



LAUREN GOTTLIEB

Lauren Gottlieb is one of the most accomplished dancers in mainstream Indian cinema. Her global presence was highlighted by her performance at the 95th Academy Awards on Naatu Naatu. Trained in contemporary and commercial styles, she blends strength, fluidity, and emotion in every performance. From the iconic Tattoo in ABCD 2 to the graceful Sadda Dil Vi Tu (Ga Ga Ga Ganpati in ABCD), she turns choreography into storytelling, captivating audiences on screen, stage, and reality shows alike.



JACQUELINE FERNANDEZ

Jacqueline Fernandez is known for her infectious energy and versatility as a dancer. Whether it's upbeat party tracks like Ek Do Teen (reprise), Genda Phool, or Lat Lag Gayee, her performances are marked by confidence and strong screen appeal. Jacqueline balances glamour with performance ease, making her dance numbers widely popular while continuing to evolve as an actor in commercial cinema.

Anupam Kher lauds security guard's honesty



Anupam Kher was impressed by the honesty of a security guard who returned his lost credit card, misplaced during a morning walk in Mumbai a few days ago

Veteran actor Anupam Kher was left impressed by the honesty of a security guard who came to his Mumbai home to return a credit card he had lost during a morning walk a few days ago. He said that when he got home, the guard, Sanjay Yadav, who works nearby, had found the card. After making some inquiries, he somehow managed to reach Anupam's house and returned it to him.

On Sunday, February 8, Anupam shared a video on his social media with the guard Sanjay, praising his honesty. In the video, the actor, standing alongside the guard, said, "Sanjay Yadav ji, aap bada mahaan aadmi hain. Mera subah morning walk jaate samay, credit card gir gaya tha, aur main bada dhundha, kaafi pareshaan tha, because us par PIN nahi tha. Phir mujhe Dattu ji ka phone aaya ki kisko credit card mila. What a beautiful thing to do! He found my credit card and he returned it."

Sharing the video, Kher wrote, "Imaandari zinda hai!" He recounted how last week he had dropped his credit card and searched for it everywhere but couldn't find it. Later, when he returned home, a nearby security guard, noticing his name on the card, had found it and personally delivered it to his home. Anupam added, "Sabse mazedaar aur



impressive baat yeh thi ki woh apni imaandari ko lekar bilkul casual the. Jab maine tareef ki toh bole, 'Ismein kaunsi badi baat hai! Wah Yadav ji, bahut accha laga! Jai ho!'"

Anupam will next star in the highly anticipated sequel, Khosla Ka Ghosla 2, marking his 550th film.

The original cast returns, including Anupam Kher (Khosla), Boman Irani (Khosrana), Ranvir Shorey, Parvin Dabas, Tara Sharma, and Kiran Juneja, with Ravi Kishan joining as a new addition.

The release date of the sequel is yet to be announced. It is directed by Umesh Bisht.



Vidhu Vinod Chopra's son denies reports

Bollywood director and producer Vidhu Vinod Chopra and film critic Anupama Chopra's son Agni Dev Chopra shared a social media post and denied reports of him registering for the upcoming season of Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2026

Agni Dev Chopra's name has appeared on the list of players who registered for the 11th edition of the PSL. He has been registered as a US citizen on the list with the base price of PKR 6,00,000.

Agni Dev's mother Anupama shared his Instagram Story on her social media account in which he stated that the reports are misleading and that he has not enrolled to play in the Pakistani tournament. The list can be checked on the official web-

Fake and misleading reports are being circulated in my name regarding a tournament. I would like to clarify that I have not enrolled for the PSL. I remain fully focused on my cricket journey in the USA and my long-term career goals. I request everyone not to fall prey to misinformation.

I remain fully focused on my cricket journey in the USA and my long-term career goals. I request everyone not to fall prey to misinformation."

His mother shared the screenshot from Agni Dev's Instagram Story and did not say anything. There is no response from the Munna Bhai MBBS producer and his father Vidhu Vinod Chopra so far. Agni Dev is US citizen and can participate in the leagues worldwide.

One year later, the words still echo

shift made a huge difference and gave me the freedom to experiment without fear."

"What makes the film special is that it's not just a father-son story it reflects every relationship shaped by ego, silence, and miscommunication. I'm grateful to everyone who watched the film and reached out to say how deeply it resonated with them. That love means everything to me." He further added

In The Mehta Boys, Avinash delivered one of his most restrained and intimate performances, a struggling junior architect in Mumbai who has spent nearly a decade trying to prove his worth, both to the world and to himself. It was characterised by his portrayal of imposter syndrome with unnerving accuracy.

The film's emotional core lay in its central relationship: an estranged father and son forced to spend 48 hours together in a small apartment after the death of Amay's mother. Opposite Boman Irani's stubborn, gruff Shiv Mehta, Avinash's Amay carried years of unspoken resentment, disappointment, and longing. Their involuntary togetherness became a crucible for generational

conflict - one shaped by silence, authority, and the inability to articulate love. Across the film, Avinash charts Amay's journey of emotional reckoning alongside professional awakening, as he slowly learns to confront his father, his grief, and ultimately, his own voice.

As The Mehta Boys completes a year, the film stands as another reminder of Avinash Tiwary's instinct for choosing characters that highlight his versatility. While the celebration of the film's first anniversary is ongoing, his upcoming film O Romeo already generating buzz for his fierce and transformative turn. The actor also has Imtiaz Ali's O Saathi Re and Prashant Jha's Ginny Weds Sunny 2 lined up, reinforcing his position as one of the most exciting and dependable talents of his generation.



Briefs

Publisher of Washington Post resigns

'Washington Post' publisher Will Lewis said on Saturday he's stepping down, three days after the troubled newspaper said it was laying off one-third of its staff. Lewis sent an email to the Post's staff, saying that "difficult decisions have been taken in order to ensure the sustainable future of The Post." Lewis and the newspaper's billionaire owner Jeff Bezos, did not participate in a meeting with staff announcing the layoffs this week. The Post's chief financial officer, Jeff D'Onofrio, was named acting publisher and CEO. He joined the newspaper last June. UK-born Lewis was a former top executive at 'The Wall Street Journal' before taking over at The Post in January 2024.

Starlink's entry into Pak delayed

The licence to Starlink to enter Pakistan's satellite internet market is delayed over data security concerns, the Musk-Trump fallout and competition from Chinese firms, local media reported on Sunday. Starlink, owned by tech billionaire Elon Musk, is among several companies seeking approval to operate in Pakistan, but officials say unresolved security and geopolitical considerations have slowed the approval process. The government has come to know Starlink could transmit certain data bypassing monitoring, regulatory and safety checks.

Shooter of general held, says Russia

Russia's Federal Security Service said on Sunday the man suspected of shooting a deputy chief of Russia's military intelligence agency in Moscow was detained in Dubai and handed over to Russia. Federal Security Service said a Russian citizen, Lyubomir Korba, was detained in Dubai on suspicion of carrying out the shooting. FSB said it had also identified two "accomplices", one of whom was detained in Moscow and another who "left for Ukraine".

Anchor ready to pay for mom's return

US news anchor Savannah Guthrie and her family have released a video pleading for the safe return of their mother. "We received your message, and we understand," Guthrie said in the video posted to Instagram, flanked by her two siblings. "We beg you now to return our mother to us so that we can celebrate with her." "This is the only way we will have peace," she continued. "This is very valuable to us — and we will pay." Her video did not provide any details about the message she referenced. Nancy Guthrie disappeared in the middle of night from her home in Arizona, US, last weekend. Officials say she was taken against her will.

Man drives car into US pedestrians

A vehicle plowed into and injured pedestrians at the entrance of a grocery store in a scenic California mountain town on Saturday, police reported. Four people, including some children, were hurt when the 49-year-old man drove into the front of the Truckee Safeway in the afternoon, town police said. Their injuries were said not to be life-threatening. Police said they believe the man, from San Joaquin Valley city of Coalinga, intentionally struck the pedestrians and the store.

SNAP ELECTION | Japanese electors brave snowfall to cast votes

Landslide win for PM Takaichi: Polls

TOKYO

Japanese PM **Sanac Takaichi's** governing coalition is almost certain to win a single-party majority in a key parliamentary election on Sunday, NHK public television and other networks say, citing their exit poll results.

NHK says Takaichi's ruling coalition, led by her Liberal Democratic Party, could win more than two-thirds of the 465-seat lower house, the more powerful of two-chamber parliament.

People across Japan braved snow to vote in the country's first mid-winter poll in 36 years. Japan's transport ministry said 37 train lines and 58 ferry routes were closed and 54 flights cancelled as of Sunday morning. There was rare snowfall in Tokyo as



people headed out to vote.

The huge jump from the pre-election share could allow Takaichi to make progress on a right-wing agenda that aims to boost Japan's economy and military capabilities as tensions grow with China, and she tries to nurture ties with the US.

The ultraconservative Takaichi, who took office as Japan's first female leader in

October last, pledged to "work, work, work", and her style, seen as both playful and tough, has resonated with younger fans.

Surveys indicated a landslide win in the lower house for LDP. The opposition, despite the formation of a new centrist alliance and a rising far-right, is seen as too splintered to be a real challenger. If the LDP fails to win a majority, "I will step down," she said.

Counting on, Thailand faces hung House

Bangkok: Vote counting was underway in Thailand's early general election on Sunday, seen as a 3-way race among competing visions of progressive, populist and old-fashioned patronage politics.

The battle for support from 5.3 crore voters comes against a backdrop of slow economic growth and heightened nationalist sentiment. While 50+ parties contested the poll, only three— People's Party, Bhumjaithai, and Pheu Thai—have the nationwide organisation and popularity to gain a winning mandate.

A simple majority of the 500 elected lawmakers selects the PM. Polls project no single party will gain a majority, necessitating the formation of a coalition govt. Pheu Thai Party is latest political vehicle for billionaire former PM Thaksin Shinawatra. Thaksin-backed parties repeatedly made comebacks, to be ousted by courts and watchdog agencies. —AP

Iran minister strikes hard line on US talks

Araghchi says Tehran's power comes from saying 'no'



NOBEL LAUREATE SENTENCED

Iran sentenced Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi to over seven more years in prison after she began a hunger strike, supporters said on Sunday. Narges's supporters cited her lawyer, who spoke to her: "She has been sentenced to six years in prison for gathering and collusion" and one and a half years for propaganda and two-year travel ban," Mostafa Nili said on X.

Dubai: Iran's minister insisted on Sunday Tehran's strength came from its ability to "say no to the great powers", striking a maximalist position after negotiations with the US over its nuclear programme and in the wake of nationwide protests.

Speaking to diplomats in Tehran, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi signalled Iran would stick to its position that it must be able to enrich uranium, a major point of contention with US President Donald Trump.

While Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian praised the Friday talks in Oman with the Americans as "a step forward", Araghchi's remarks show the challenge ahead. "I believe the secret of the Iran's power lies in its ability to stand against bullying, domination and pressures from others. They fear our atomic bomb, while we are not pursuing an atomic bomb. Our atomic bomb is the power to say no to the great powers. The secret of the Islamic Republic's power is in the power to say no to the powers," he said.

Pezeshkian, who ordered Araghchi to pursue talks with

peaceful resolution. The Iranian nation has always responded to respect with respect, but it does not tolerate the language of force."

Araghchi noted after multiple rounds of talks last year, the US "attacked us in the midst of negotiations". "If you take a step back (in negotiations), it is not clear up to where it will go," he said, adding, he expected a new round of talks with the US "soon", describing the recent meeting as a positive start, cautioning rebuilding trust would take time.

In an interview with 'Al Jazeera', Araghchi made it clear Tehran would not relinquish its uranium enrichment programme, which he called an "inalienable right".

Meanwhile, Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu's office said he would travel to Washington DC on Wednesday to discuss the Iran-US talks with US President Donald Trump. The two will discuss "the negotiations with Iran", PM's office said, adding, Netanyahu "believes any talks must include restrictions on ballistic missiles and an end to support for Iranian axis." —AP

Portugal chooses between moderate, populist

Lisbon: Centre-left Socialist candidate Antonio Jose Seguro is heavily favoured to defeat hard-right populist Andre Ventura in Portugal's runoff presidential election on Sunday in a vote that will test the depth of support for Ventura's brash style of politics.

Recent opinion polls say Seguro will collect twice as many votes as Ventura in the head-to-head between the two top candidates in last month's first round of voting, when none of the runners captured more than 50% of the vote

RUNOFF PREZ POLL

required for victory.

But making it through to the runoff is already a milestone for Ventura and his Chega (Enough) party, which has quickly grown into a significant force in Portuguese politics during a wider European shift to the right.

Seguro, a longstanding Socialist politician, has positioned himself as a moderate candidate who will cooperate with

Portugal's centre-right minority government, repudiating Ventura's anti-establishment and anti-immigrant tirades.

In Portugal, the president is largely a figurehead with no executive power. Traditionally, the head of state stands above the political fray, mediating disputes and defusing tensions. However, the president can veto legislation from parliament, and the veto can be overturned. The head of state also possesses an "atomic bomb", the power to dissolve parliament and call early elections. —AP

Russia has made £239bn from oil tankers in English Channel: Probe

LONDON

A probe by 'The Sunday Times' has revealed Russia has made £239 billion from oil tankers in the English Channel.

The journey of a sanctioned tanker past British and French shores is not a one-off event. Along the Strait of Dover, it is a story that is unfolding every day, allowing President Vladimir Putin to fund his war in Ukraine — right under the noses of Kyiv's allies.

The Times investigation has uncovered the scale of Russian oil exports passing through British waters. It has revealed how the Royal Navy plans to use drone boats to identify sanctioned ships and, where it can, seize them.

Since early 2022, Russia has shipped 550 million tonnes of oil (nearly 4 billion barrels) through the English Channel,

worth £239 billion.

The analysis is based on data supplied by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, a Helsinki-based think tank that has recorded every oil export from Russia since its invasion of Ukraine four years ago. Researchers also track registered oil trades to calculate exports.

The analysis shows over four years, ships carrying

Russian oil made 9,584 voyages through the Strait of Dover. Numbers have risen sharply during the Ukraine war: in 2022, 958 tankers carrying Russian oil were recorded, jumping to 2,919 in 2023 and 2,987 in 2024, before easing slightly to 2,720 in 2025. In one week alone last December there were 57 shipments. On one day that week 11 ships left Russian ports to

pass unhindered through the English Channel.

As Europe has sought to wean itself off Russian oil and gas, Times investigation has also shown how oil exports to China and India have increased exponentially. The bulk of Russia's oil, worth \$85.5 billion, was sent to India between 2022 and 2025.

While India received 29 million tonnes in 2022, it more than doubled to 67 million in 2023 and peaked at 71.1 million tonnes (521 million barrels) in 2024. However, these revenue streams may finally be cut off, after Trump last week signed a trade deal with India. As part of the tariff-cutting deal, Modi vowed to stop buying Russian oil.

Shipments to China totalled £21.1 billion over the period, jumping from 10.2 million tonnes in 2022 to a high of 18.9 million the following year.

Value of commodities

For Russian ships passing through the Channel by destination

Country	2022 - 2025	Total
India	£12.6bn	£86.2bn
Turkey	£3.7bn	£33.2bn
China	£4.7bn	£22.1bn
Brazil	£0	£16.4bn
Singapore	£19.3bn	£8.5bn

2 die after avalanche near Winter Oly site

Valtellina: Two skiers have died in an avalanche that happened near the site of the Winter Olympics in the Italian alps on Saturday, local authorities said.

Fire and rescue officials said a serious avalanche accident left three skiers caught in the early afternoon, two of whom later died and the third person sustaining injuries.

The avalanche happened on Alpe Meriggio in Valtellina. The risk of avalanches in the area was very high at the time, according to AINEVA, Italy's snow and avalanches risk association. Valtellina is a major hub for the 2026 games, with Bormio hosting men's alpine skiing and ski mountaineering, and Livigno hosting freestyle skiing and snowboarding, valley officials said. Bormio is approximately 40

miles from the site of the avalanche, and Livigno is 60 miles away. A helicopter worked to rescue one of the skiers buried under the snow, but were pronounced dead.

SKIER DIES ON EXPERT RUN AT MAMMOTH

A skier died at Mammoth Mountain on Thursday following a fatal accident in full view of other skiers riding a nearby lift. It was the fourth death at the resort this season.

The unidentified skier was trying a run called Dropout 2, among the steepest marked trails in California, which descends from the summit ridge of the 11,000-ft mountain. The run falls 1,200 vertical feet below a slow, three-person lift that ferries expert skiers to some of Mammoth's most adventurous terrain.

Feels like you are in Pakistan not Dallas: US Congressman

NEW YORK

An American lawmaker has voiced concern over the "Islamisation" of areas in certain constituencies in the US state of Texas, saying visiting local malls there "feels like you're in Pakistan, not Dallas."

"I hear from constituents all the time who are deeply and desperately concerned about the Islamisation of the Dallas area," Congressman Brandon Gill said during an interview with Real America's Voice.

The Republican lawmaker said his constituents are hearing about "mosques that are popping up near land that they or their family have owned for generations."

"We have entire communities who are being transformed. And you hear about

constituents talking about going to their local malls, and you look around, and it feels like you're in Pakistan, not Dallas, Texas. That's a problem," he added. "Mass Islamic migration is killing the America we know and love," he said in a social media post.

Gill represents Texas' 26th Congressional District in the US House of Representatives.

JAILING IMMIGRANTS SANS BOND: COURT AFFIRMS TRUMP POLICY

Trump administration can continue to detain immigrants without bond, marking a major legal victory for the federal immigration agenda and countering a slew of recent lower court decisions across the country that argued the practice is illegal. A panel of judges on the 5th

Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the Dept of Homeland Security's decision to deny bond hearings to immigrants arrested across the country is consistent with the constitution and federal immigration law.

Specifically, circuit judge Edith H Jones wrote in the 2-1 majority opinion the government correctly interpreted the Immigration and Nationality Act by asserting that "unadmitted aliens apprehended anywhere in the US are ineligible for release on bond, regardless of how long they have resided inside the US."

Meanwhile, police arrested several demonstrators outside a federal building in Minneapolis, breaking up a protest marking the one-month anniversary of Minnesota woman Renee Good's death. —PTI/AP

Greenland crisis boosted Danish apps to identify & help boycott US goods

Copenhagen: The makers of mobile apps designed to help shoppers identify and boycott American goods say they saw a surge of interest in Denmark and beyond after the recent flare-up in tensions over US President Trump's designs on Greenland.

"Made O'Meter" app creator Ian Rosenfeldt said he saw around 30,000 downloads of the free app in three days at the height of the trans-Atlantic diplomatic crisis in late January, of more than 100,000 since it was launched in March.

Rosenfeldt, who lives in Copenhagen and works in digital marketing, decided to create the app a year ago after joining a Facebook group of like-minded Danes hoping to

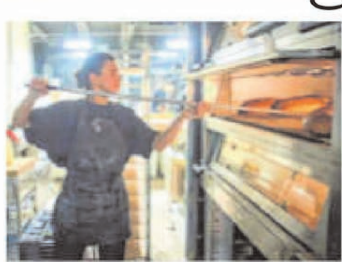


boycott US goods. "Many people were frustrated and thinking, how do we actually do it?" the 53-year-old recalled. "If you use a bar code scanner, it's difficult to see if a product is actually American or not, if it's Danish or not."

In the latest version of "Made O'Meter", which uses AI to identify and analyse products, users can set preferences, like "No USA-owned brands" or "Only EU-based brands". —AP

Ukraine Inc struggles due to power cuts, uncertainty

Kyiv: It is pre-dawn in the historic Podil district of Ukrainian capital Kyiv, and warm light from the Spelta bakery-bistro's window pierces the darkness outside. On a wooden surface dusted with flour, the baker Oleksandr Kutsenko skillfully divides and shapes soft, damp pieces of dough. As he shoves the first loaves into the oven, a sweet, delicate



aroma of fresh bread fills the space.

Seconds later, the lights go out, the ovens switch off, and darkness envelops the room. Kutsenko, 31, steps outside into the freezing night, switches on a large rectangular generator, and the power kicks back in. This pattern is repeated many times as the business struggles to keep working through the power outages

caused by Russia's bombing campaign on Ukraine's energy grid. "It's more than impossible to imagine a Ukrainian business operating without a generator," said **Olha Hrynychuk**, 28, the co-founder and head baker of Spelta.

The cost of purchasing and operating generators to overcome power outages is one of the chal-

lenges facing Ukrainian businesses after four years of war. Labour crisis due to mobilisation and migration, security risks, declining purchasing power and complicated logistics add to the pressure, officials say.

Hrynychuk opened the bakery 10 months after Russia launched invasion in 2022. That winter was the first year Russia targeted Ukraine's

energy system. She says they barely know what it is to work under "normal" conditions, but have never faced such challenges. Production is dependent on electricity, and the generator burns 700 hryvnias (\$16) worth of fuel per hour. "We run on a generator for 10-12 hours a day. You have no fixed schedule, but have to adapt and refuel it." —AP



Game On, India!



Briefs

NEW DELHI
Deshpande in selector's sight: Steyn



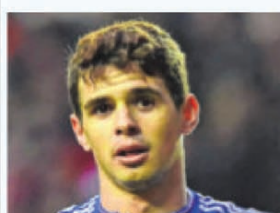
South African pace legend Dale Steyn believes Tushar Deshpande's "fearless" death bowling will place him firmly back on the national radar. Defending 10 runs against Rashid Khan, the Rajasthan Royals seamer's clinical execution of "inch-perfect" yorkers secured a thrilling six-run victory over Gujarat Titans. "His composure in a high-pressure 200-plus chase was exceptional," Steyn noted. Sanjay Bangar also praised skipper Riyan Parag's tactical faith, which allowed Deshpande to soak up the pressure and deliver a career-best final over.

AHMEDABAD
Parag's bold captaincy earns praise



Former India pacer Irfan Pathan believes Riyan Parag's tactical "boldness" in Rajasthan Royals' six-run win over Gujarat Titans will significantly bolster his leadership credentials. Parag's decision to hand Jofra Archer the penultimate over—restricting GT to just four runs—proved masterly, leaving Tushar Deshpande to defend 10 in the final. "Entrusting his experienced bowler with the 19th over was a brave, match-winning call," Pathan noted. Meanwhile, R Ashwin lauded Sai Sudharsan's valiant 73 in Shubman Gill's absence.

SÃO PAULO
Oscar retires 5 months after heart scare



Former Chelsea and Brazil midfielder Oscar has officially retired from professional football, five months after being hospitalised with a heart condition. His club, São Paulo, confirmed on Sunday that the 34-year-old has terminated his contract, which was originally set to run until the end of 2027. The playmaker has been sidelined since November after suffering vasovagal syncope—a condition causing a sudden drop in blood pressure and heart rate—during pre-season testing. Oscar reportedly collapsed, necessitating surgery and extensive medical monitoring.

DAZZLING SHOW | Veteran pacer's masterclass and skipper's unbeaten 68 secure thrilling final-over win over Sunrisers

LSG's Shami, Pant sizzle

HYDERABAD

Mohammed Shami rolled back the years with a spell for the ages before skipper Rishabh Pant produced a measured unbeaten half-century to guide Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) to a thrilling five-wicket victory over Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) on Sunday.

The 35-year-old Shami issued a stern reminder to the national selectors, bowling an astounding 18 dot balls to finish with figures of 2 for 9 in his four overs. His masterclass in seam position and variations was primarily responsible for restricting SRH to 156 for 9, despite a mid-innings counter-attack.

LSG chased down the target with one ball to spare, thanks to Aiden Markram's brisk 45 and Pant's composed 50-ball-68. With nine needed off the final over, Pant finished the game in style, smiting Jaydev Unadkat for successive boundaries—including a signature tennis-like slap—to seal LSG's first win of the 2026 season.

Powerplay Bowling
The "cerebral operator" set the tone during the Powerplay, dismissing the dangerous opening pair of Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head off successive deliveries. Shami's ability to take the pace off on a slowish track deceived both batters: Abhishek was caught at fly-slip off a loopy delivery, while Head miscued a slower ball to mid-off.

Shami was ably supported by young Prince Yadav (2/34), who produced the "delivery of the match" to bamboozle the SRH top order. At one stage, the visitors were reeling at 26



Lucknow Super Giants' Mohammed Shami and teammates celebrate the wicket of Sunrisers Hyderabad's Travis Head in Hyderabad on Sunday. ANI

Scoreboard

Sunrisers Hyderabad: T Head c Markram b Shami 7, A Sharma c Siddharth b Shami 0, I Kishan b Prince 1, L Livingstone c Pant b Rathi 14, H Klaasen c Pant b Avesh 62, N Reddy c Prince b Siddharth 56, A Verma (not out) 2, H Dubey b Avesh 0, S Kumar b Prince 5, H Patel run out (Pant) 4 **Extras:** (B-1, LB-1, W-3) 5 **Total:** 1156-9 (In 20 overs)

FoW: 1-1, 8-2, 11-3, 26-4, 142-5, 144-6, 144-7, 151-8, 156-9 **Bowling:** Mohammed Shami 4-0-9-2, Digvesh Singh Rathi 4-0-46-1, Prince Yadav 4-0-34-2, Manimaran Siddharth 4-0-29-1, Avesh Khan 4-0-36-2.

Lucknow Super Giants: A Markram c Livingstone b Shivang 45, M Marsh c Reddy b Malinga 14, R Pant (not out) 68, A Badoni st Kishan b Dubey

12, N Pooran run out (Kishan) 1, A Samad c Livingstone b Dubey 16, M Choudhary (not out) 2 **Extras:** (B-1, LB-1) 2 **Total:** 160-5 (In 19.5 overs) **FoW:** 37-1, 77-2, 102-3, 105-4, 139-5 **Bowling:** Harsh Dubey 4-0-18-2, Nitish Kumar Reddy 1-0-14-0, Jaydev Unadkat 3.5-0-50-0, Eshan Malinga 4-0-30-1, Harshal Patel 3-0-16-0, Shivang Kumar 4-0-30-1.

for 4, and a sub-100 total looked imminent.

SRH staged a gritty recovery through Heinrich Klaasen (62 off 41) and Nitish Kumar Reddy (56 off 33). The

duo added 116 runs for the fifth wicket in a record stand, briefly snatching the momentum as they plundered 79 runs between overs 11 and 15.

However, the tale had a

third act. Once the set pair departed, Sunrisers Hyderabad suffered another catastrophic collapse, losing five wickets for just 14 runs in the final 14 deliveries.

I will let my bat do all the talking: LSG skipper Pant

Wicketkeeper batter brushes aside critics following match-winning innings; Shami credits domestic grind

HYDERABAD

Rishabh Pant prefers to keep the noise at bay and allow his performances to speak—a philosophy that came to the fore on Sunday as he guided Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) to a nifty five-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad. Amidst mounting scrutiny over his T20 strike rate, the LSG skipper asserted that internal recognition far outweighs external chatter.

"I know I am preparing well. I want to let my bat do the talking," Pant said. "My colleagues and management see how hard I work; that is what matters. I don't want to dwell on the outside talk."

Anchoring the chase
Pant's unbeaten 68 off 50 balls, punctuated by nine boundaries, was the backbone of LSG's successful pursuit of 157. Despite the tension at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, the captain remained composed, sealing the victory with just one ball to spare.

"When it ends well, all is well," Pant remarked. "My focus has been on giving my



Lucknow Super Giants' captain Rishabh Pant plays a shot against Sunrisers Hyderabad on Sunday. PTI

full commitment and preparing in a way that allows me to finish games under pressure. It is a big plus for the team's confidence when you cross the line in a close contest."

Praise for bowlers
Pant was quick to credit his bowling unit for laying the foundation. Mohammed Shami's opening masterclass, supported by Avesh Khan and debutant Manimaran Siddharth, restricted the Sunrisers to a manageable total.

"You have to appreciate the bowlers because they are the ones who set the tone for the night, especially when you bowl first," Pant noted.

"Shami, Bhai, Avesh, and Rathi all contributed, and Siddharth stepped up brilliantly in his role today.

Shami said his performances can fluctuate as he is not a machine, but credited domestic cricket and peak fitness for keeping him match-ready as his decisive showing sealed LSG's crucial win in the IPL on Sunday.

David makes the difference as RCB beat CSK by 43 runs

Tim David's 25-ball 70 and Padikkal's fifty leave CSK bowlers clueless

BENGALURU

Tim David, skipper Rajat Patidar, and Devdutt Padikkal unleashed a marauding display of power-hitting to propel Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) to a formidable 250 for 3 against Chennai Super Kings (CSK) on Sunday.

In response CSK were restricted to 207 all-out in 19.4 overs. Sarfaraz Khan made 50 in 25 balls while Prashant Veer and Jamie Overton made 43 and 37 runs respectively. Bhuvneshwar Kumar took three wickets while Krunal Pandya, Jacob Duffy and Abhinandan Singh picked two wickets apiece.

In an exhibition of sheer range-hitting, the trio gave the

visitors a complete tolling after CSK elected to bowl first on a Chinnaswamy track that initially offered a hint of slowness. The onslaught was headlined by Tim David, who smashed a brutal 70 off just 25 balls, while Padikkal set the tone with a fluent 50 off 29 deliveries. Not to be outdone, skipper Patidar remained unbeaten on a fiery 48 off 19 balls as the hosts exploited CSK's death-bowling frailties.

RCB were 153 for 3 after 15 overs before David and Patidar turned the final five overs into a highlights reel, plundering 97 runs. The pair added an unbroken 99 runs for the fourth wicket in just 36 deliveries. David carted Jamie Overton for four sixes in the 19th over.

Scoreboard

Royal Challengers Bengaluru: P Salt c Noor b Dube 46, V Kohli c Dube b Kamboj 28, D Padikkal b Overton 50, R Patidar (not out) 48, T David (not out) 70 **Extras:** (B-1, LB-3, W-3, NB-1) 8 **Total:** 250-3 (In 20 Overs) **FoW:** 37-1, 93-2, 151-3 **Bowling:** Khaleel

Ahmed 4-0-37-0, Matt Henry 3-0-36-0, Anshul Kamboj 4-0-52-1, Noor Ahmad 4-0-49-0, Jamie Overton 3-0-42-1, Shivam Dube 2-0-30-1. **Chennai Super Kings:** S Samson c Padikkal b Duffy 9, R Gaikwad c Padikkal b Duffy 7, A Mhatre c Patidar b Kumar 1, S Khan



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's captain Rajat Patidar (L) and Tim David greet each other after the end of the IPL match against Chennai Super Kings on Sunday. PTI

st Sharma b Pandya 50, K Sharma c Abhinandan b Pandya 6, S Dube c Sharma b Abhinandan 18, P Veer c Patidar b Kumar 43, J Overton c sub (Bethell) b Suyash 37, A Kamboj, N Ahmad c Kohli b Kumar 8, M Henry **Extras:** (LB 2, NB 2, W 3) 7 **Total:** 207 all-out-8 (In 19.4 overs) **Fall of wickets:** 1-9, 2-10, 3-30, 4-77, 5-84, 6-108, 7-165, 8-178, 9-190 **Bowling:** Jacob Duffy 4-0-58-2, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-41-3, Abhinandan Singh 3.4-0-30-2, Krunal Pandya 3-0-36-2, Suyash Sharma 4-0-21-0, Romario Shepherd 1-0-19-0

Speedster

Vyshak wants to consistently hit the 150kmph mark

KOLKATA

Vijaykumar Vyshak's stock is rapidly rising in the Indian Premier League, but the Punjab Kings pacer is far from complacent. To remain relevant in a highly scrutinised environment, the 29-year-old has set his sights on consistently hitting the 150kmph mark while sharpening his tactical variations.

With five wickets in just two games this season, Vyshak has already sur-

passed his 2023 tally. The Karnataka seamer, who began his IPL journey with RCB before moving to Punjab, has impressed with his execution of wide yorkers and slower bouncers.

His recent performance against CSK in Chennai—where he dismissed the dangerous Ayush Mhatre and Sarfaraz Khan—was pivotal in restricting the opposition and setting up a comfortable chase for his side.

Punjab Kings have utilised Vyshak across all three

phases of the game, a responsibility the pacer is relishing. In an era dominated by granular video analysis, he believes constant evolution is the only path to success.

"I am not as fast as some others right now; people are bowling at 155kmph. I am someone who clocks around 140-144kmph," Vyshak said during a media interaction ahead of Monday's clash against KKR. "But I love challenges. It doesn't matter if I bowl three overs in the

powerplay or four at the death, as long as I am contributing to the team."

National Aspirations
Despite receiving a maiden India call-up for the T20 tour of South Africa in 2024, Vyshak is yet to earn his first cap. While he is currently focused on the shortest format, his ultimate ambition remains the longest version of the game.

"When you start playing, you always dream of playing Test matches for India. It still

gives me chills to think about wearing that Test cap," he admitted. Vyshak also credited his Punjab teammate Arshdeep Singh and his Karnataka seniors for inspiring his recent surge in form.

Vyshak's success this season is the result of a rigorous off-season. Acting as the lead bowler for Karnataka provided the confidence boost required for the big stage.

"I always make sure that whenever a new season comes, I have a new delivery in my locker," he explained.

