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

'The foundation of India's spiritual tradition is based on the penance'

New Delhi

Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan inaugurated the silver jubilee celebrations of the Brahma Kumaris' Om Shanti Retreat Center in Gurugram on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the foundation of India's eternal spiritual tradition is based on



the penance and meditation of sages and saints. According to the Vice President's Secretariat,

Radhakrishnan said that the center, established 24 years ago, has now entered its 25th year of service

and that it is a matter of pride that the Brahma Kumaris, under the leadership of women, is playing a significant role in the spiritual upliftment of the country. He explained that people from various fields, including scientists, doctors, administrators, and politicians, are joining the center and

receiving the message of meditation and peace. He said that practices like Raja Yoga and Vipassana prove that true power and clarity come from within. He said that in the Amritkaal, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resolution of "Developed India 2047," inner peace, happiness, and

balance must become an essential part of life. Radhakrishnan praised the Om Shanti Retreat Center's environmental protection initiatives and said that the center is working in line with the Prime Minister's Mission Life initiative. He commended efforts such as the 1 MW hybrid solar project, rainwater harvesting.

The 58,000-crore private coaching industry is becoming a burden on families



New Delhi

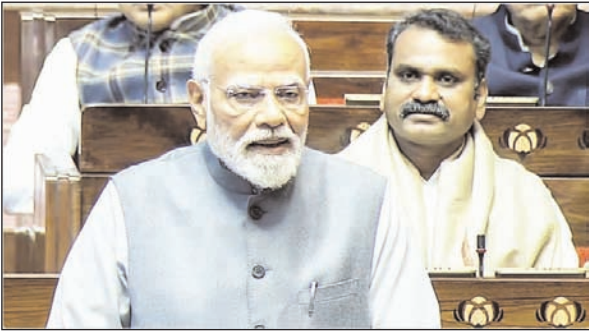
The government informed the Rajya Sabha that education is a subject on the Concurrent List. The central and state governments are working together to ensure quality and development in the education sector. The Union Education Ministry stated that in light of the increasing number of unregulated private coaching centers and the incidents of excessive fees being charged from students, guidelines for the regulation of coaching centers were issued to states and union territories on January 16, 2024. The government stated that these guidelines cover several

important aspects, such as registration of coaching centers, fee transparency, safety standards, code of conduct, student support, grievance redressal mechanisms, and the process for deregistration. Many states have also enacted guidelines and laws to regulate coaching centers on their own. Union Minister of State for Education, Sukanta Majumdar, in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, stated that several initiatives have been taken to strengthen school-based education. Under the Samagra Shiksha and National Education Policy 2020, emphasis is being placed on basic literacy, numeracy, conceptual understanding, and crit-

Parliament will discuss the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram

New Delhi

The winter session of Parliament is underway. A special debate has been organized in Parliament on December 8th to mark the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram. During this, several important and historically unknown facts related to the national song will be presented in the House. News agency ANI, quoting sources, reported that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will open the debate in the Lok Sabha at 12 noon on Monday. Defense Minister Rajnath Singh will also conclude the debate with his final speech. Home Minister Amit Shah is expected to initiate the discussion in the Rajya Sabha. Eight Congress leaders will also speak. Eight Congress leaders will also speak in the Parliament dur-



Vande Mataram: Amit Shah will take charge in Rajya Sabha

The Home Minister will initiate the discussion in the Rajya Sabha, while Leader of the Upper House JP Nadda will also participate. Regarding the discussion on electoral reforms, sources said it will cover all aspects of the broader topic and not just the limited topic of the SIR. The discussion will focus on electoral reforms, not just the SIR. The decisions to hold discussions on these two topics were taken after meetings of all parties.

ing the debate on Vande Mataram. This list includes Lok Sabha Deputy Leader of the Opposition Gourav Gogoi, Priyanka Vadra, Deepender Hooda, Bimole Akoiyam, Praniti Shinde, Prashant Padole,

Chamala Reddy, and Jyotsna Mahant. 150th Anniversary of Vande MataramThe winter session of Parliament began on December 1st and will continue until December 19th. November 7th also marked the 150th anniversary of the

Parliament deadlock ends

It is worth noting that the proceedings of the monsoon session were completely disrupted due to the clash between the ruling party and the opposition on the issue of SIR. Even before the winter session began, the opposition had made its stand clear on the ongoing Rakaf in 12 states and the death of BLOs in it. At the beginning of the session on Monday, its effect was visible inside the House as well and due to the uproar, the proceedings had to be adjourned repeatedly. However, the government had indicated on Monday itself that it was ready for discussion.

national song, Vande Mataram. Composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, 'Vande Mataram' was first published in the literary magazine 'Bangadarshan' on November 7, 1875.



On Armed Forces Flag Day, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami appealed to the people of the state to contribute.

Hearing on the petition challenging the detention of Sonam Wangchuk today

New Delhi

The Supreme Court will hear on Monday a petition challenging the detention of jailed environmental activist Sonam Wangchuk. The petition, filed by Sonam Wangchuk's wife,

Geetanjali J. Angmo, challenges Wangchuk's detention under the National Security Act, alleging it to be illegal and a violation of fundamental rights. A bench of Justices Arvind Kumar and N.V. Anjaria is expected to hear the

matter. Earlier, on October 29, the Supreme Court had sought responses from the Central and Ladakh administration on Angmo's amended petition. However, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Central

and Union Territory of Ladakh, sought time to respond to Angmo's petition, following which the Supreme Court adjourned the hearing on November 24. The petition filed by Sonam Wangchuk's wife states.

Parliamentary committee strict on Indigo crisis

New Delhi

A parliamentary committee may summon top officials of private airlines and the aviation regulator, as hundreds of IndiGo flight cancellations have left thousands of passengers stranded at airports across the country. The standing committee is expected to seek explanations from top airline officials, as well as officials from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Ministry of Aviation, regarding the causes and solutions to the disruption. A commit-

tee member stated that the committee has taken seriously the inconvenience caused to thousands of passengers by the disruption. The member added that MPs in the national capital for the winter session of Parliament also faced IndiGo flight cancellations and delays by other airlines. Several MPs have complained to them that airfares have risen significantly due to this situation. CPI(M) Rajya Sabha member John Brittas has demanded the formation of a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) or a judicial inquiry.

New Delhi

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)'s Class 7 textbook has expanded information about the Ghaznavid dynasty. It states that Mahmud Ghazni invaded several Indian cities, killing numerous people and looting their treasures. It mentions the killing of people from diverse groups, including Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and even Muslims. This six-page



section is titled "The Ghaznavid Invasions." It states that Mahmud Ghaznavi led 17 invasions of India, returning with large sums of treasure each time. The old Class 7 NCERT history textbook contained only one para-

graph about Mahmud Ghaznavi. The new book, titled "Discovering Societies: India and Beyond," was released on Friday. It describes in detail the plunder of cities like Mathura and Somnath. Mahmud

conquered parts of India in the 11th century. He defeated Jaipal and, after a prolonged battle in 1008, also defeated Jaipal's son. The book states that Mahmud's campaigns not only resulted in destruction and plunder, but also the killing of thousands of Indian civilians and the capture of many captives, including children, to be sold in the slave markets of Central Asia. The book portrays him as a powerful, yet barbaric and ruthless.

Sitharaman praised Omar Abdullah's efforts

New Delhi

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has praised the efforts of Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to revive the state's economy. Sitharaman made this statement while discussing India's economic journey since 2019 at a newspaper's leadership summit here on Saturday. Addressing the event, she described it as a time marked by many difficulties both globally and within the country. She described Jammu and Kashmir as a prime example of economic strength and specific policy interventions. She said that

Delhi airport was hit by a cyber attack in November!

New Delhi

The issue of a technical glitch in the Air Traffic Control (ATC) server in November was raised in Parliament. Rajya Sabha MP Vivek Tankha recently raised a question about this in the Rajya Sabha, to which the government responded by acknowledging the technical glitch and stating that an investigation is underway. The government stated that central investigative agencies



are investigating the incident and steps are being taken to prevent such incidents in the future. Congress MP Vivek Tankha asked a question in the Rajya Sabha. Congress MP

Vivek Tankha, in a written question, asked whether it was true that approximately 800 flights across India were disrupted on November 6-7 due to a technical glitch.

Under the leadership of CM, Yogi, Uttar Pradesh has become the new heartbeat of Startup India

Lucknow

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Uttar Pradesh is emerging as the new heartbeat of Startup India. The state government's determined efforts and industry-friendly policies have given rise to a new startup culture in the state. The startup ecosystem has seen qualitative and quantitative growth over the



past few years. Uttar Pradesh holds a special place in the country when it comes to its startup ecosystem. This transformation is not only accelerating the state's economic

progress but also channeling youthful energy. The vision of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's government is to transform the state's youth from job seekers to job cre-

ators. Startups are present in all 75 districts of the state, spanning sectors such as agri-tech, AI, drones, and fin-tech. With the support of the Yogi Adityanath government, the number of startups in Uttar Pradesh has grown rapidly. Currently, 18,568 startups are actively operating in the state. This number is a testament to Uttar Pradesh's status as a strong hub for entrepreneurship.

Briefs

NEW DELHI

Central portal closes uploads on waqf assets

The UMEED Central Portal for management of Waqf Properties in India, launched by Union Minister of Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju on June 6, officially closed for uploads on December 6 completing its six-month window, as per the UMEED Act, 1995 and the clear directions of the Supreme Court of India. According to a statement from the Ministry of Minority Affairs, in the final count, the momentum significantly accelerated as the deadline approached. Many review meetings, training workshops, and high-level interventions even at the Secretary level injected renewed pace into the process, making the upload surge in the last hours.

CHANDIGARH

BJP slams AAP govt over law & order

Punjab BJP president Sunil Jakhar on Sunday slammed the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government over, what he alleged, the worsening law-and-order situation in the state and questioned the "excesses of the police administration." Addressing newsmen here, Jakhar recalled that on 7 November 2025 in Tarn Taran, AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal had warned gangsters to leave Punjab within seven days or face consequences. "But instead of leaving, gangsters have openly accepted his challenge and are committing crimes every single day - while Kejriwal himself has not been seen in Punjab since then," he said.

JAIPUR

Corpse stir to draw jail term and fine in Raj

Protesting by keeping a dead body, politicizing the corpse, or failing to perform the last rites without reason will result in a jail term of one to five years and a fine. The family of the deceased will have to accept the dead body. In case they hand over the body for protest, they will also face a one-year sentence. These are the provisions of the 'Rajasthan Respect for Dead Bodies' Act, which was passed during the previous Ashok Gehlot government. The present Bhajan Lal government has notified the rules of the Act. This law will cover everyone from family members to politicians, as the dead body has to be cremated within 24 hours. Failure to do so will allow the police to take possession of the body and perform the last rites.

NEW DELHI

ED to charge realty firm with fraud

The Enforcement Directorate is soon expected to chargesheet a Gurugram-based real estate company and its promoters in a multi-crore money laundering investigation linked to alleged irregularities in the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (PMAY) and fraud with homebuyers, official sources said Sunday. Swaraj Singh Yadav, the MD and "key person" of the company named Ocean Seven Buildtech Pvt. Ltd. (OSBPL), was arrested by the federal probe agency on November 13 and is currently lodged in jail under judicial custody. The ED has alleged that Yadav "fraudulently diverted" and laundered homebuyers' funds worth Rs 222 crore collected under PMAY through cancellation and re-sale of units at inflated prices, collection of substantial cash premiums, and diversion of Escrow proceeds into "shell" (dummy) entities.

GOA TRAGEDY | CM orders probe as nightclub's 'illegal' construction & fire safety violations come under lens

Fire broke out on dance floor, says eyewitness

PANAJI

At least 100 persons were on the dance floor of a nightclub in North Goa when a fire broke out there, and in an attempt to escape, some of them ran downstairs to its kitchen where they got trapped along with the staff, according to an eyewitness.

While the state police said the blaze occurred at the nightclub due to a cylinder blast after midnight on Sunday, some of the eyewitnesses claimed the fire started on the club's first floor, where tourists were dancing.

At least 23 persons were killed in the fire at Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub, a popular party venue at Arpora village, located 25 km from the state capital Panaji, police said.

Most of the dead were the club's kitchen workers, and included three women, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said. There were "three to four tourists" among those killed, he added.

"There was a sudden commotion as the flames started erupting. We rushed out of the club only to see that the entire structure was up in flames," Fatima Shaikh, a tourist from Hyderabad, told PTI at Arpora in the wee hours of Sunday.

The nightclub was jam-



Flames billow after fire engulfed the popular Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub in north Goa on Sunday. The victims included 20 employees of the club and five tourists

packed as it was the weekend, and at least 100 persons were on the dance floor, she said.

Shaikh said that after the blaze erupted, some of the tourists started running downstairs and, in the melee, went to the kitchen located on the ground floor. "They (tourists) got trapped there along with other staff. Many managed to run out of the club," she added.

In no time, the entire club was engulfed in the fire. "There was a temporary construction made up of palm leaves which easily caught fire," she said. The nightclub is situated in

the backwaters of the Arpora river and has a narrow entry and exit. There was no access for the fire brigades to the club because of the narrow lanes and their tankers had to be parked about 400 metres away from the spot.

A senior officer from the Fire and Emergency Services told PTI that the narrow access made it difficult to reach the spot, which in turn made controlling the blaze a challenging task.

He said that the majority of the deaths were caused by suffocation, as the victims

remained trapped on the ground floor. C. M. Sawant, who visited the spot after the incident, told reporters that the nightclub had not followed the fire safety norms.

Sawant said he would order an inquiry into the incident, while action would be initiated against the club management and the authorities who allowed the establishment to function.

Arpora-Nagoa panchayat sarpanch Roshan Redkar said the club was run by Saurav Luthra, who had a dispute with his partner.



Anxious family members and relatives of victims gather outside Goa Medical College and Hospital at Bambolim in North Goa district on Sunday

2 Jharkhand bros dead

Lapung: Three migrant workers from Jharkhand were among those killed in the Goa nightclub fire, their family said on Sunday. Two brothers, Pradeep (24) and Vinod Mahto (20), from Fatehpur village in Lapung, and Mohti Manda (22) from Gohindpur village in Khunti district's Karra block, died in the incident, their families said.

Promoters' shack shut

Panaji: A shack belonging to the promoters of ill-fated Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub at Arpora, where a devastating fire on Sunday killed 25 persons, has been sealed, an official said. District officials visited shack 'Romeo Lane' at Vagator beach this evening, after which the sealing action was taken, he informed.

Prez, PM voice pain

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed deep pain and sadness over the Goa nightclub fire incident and prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured. "My thoughts are with all those who have lost their loved ones. May the injured recover at the earliest," PM Modi wrote on X.

India's defence output now a record ₹1.51L cr, says Rajnath

LEH

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said India's defence production has risen from Rs 46,000 crore in 2014 to a record Rs 1.51 lakh crore and the country that was import-dependent has emerged as a producer-exporter.

He said India once lacked a robust system to manufacture arms and equipment domestically but has witnessed a paradigm shift due to sustained efforts over the last decade.

"Due to our hard work in the last 10 years, our defence production, which was approximately Rs 46,000 crore



in 2014, has now grown to a record Rs 1.51 lakh crore.

Spread across the Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir, and seven state, these projects -- 28 roads, 93 bridges and four miscellaneous works -- have been completed at a cost of Rs 5,000

crore.

Commenting on operation Sindoor, the Defence Minister said the armed forces "could have done much more" during Operation Sindoor in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack, but deliberately opted for a "restrained" and "calibrated" response.

"During Operation Sindoor, the coordination we witnessed among our armed forces, the civil administration, and the citizens of the border areas was incredible. I express my gratitude to every citizen of Ladakh as well as the border areas for extending their support to our armed forces," the defence minister said.

Vijayan ready for debate on UDF MPs' role

Kozhikode: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday said he was ready for a public debate on the performance of UDF MPs from the state in the Parliament and urged the opposition front to fix a date and time for the same.

Earlier, AICC General Secretary K C Venugopal had said if Vijayan was ready for an open debate on the matter.

Venugopal's statement was followed by the Left veteran's recent criticism that the UDF MPs had failed to raise Kerala's development issues in Parliament and took a stand against the state's interests on many occasions.

Tewari brings bill to end 'whip tyranny'

NEW DELHI

Congress MP Manish Tewari has introduced a bill in Lok Sabha that seeks to allow parliamentarians to take an independent line in voting on bills and motions other than those affecting the government's stability in a bid to free them from "whip-driven tyranny" and promote "good lawmaking".

The bill, introduced by Tewari for the third time in Lok Sabha after 2010 and 2021, seeks to give parliamentarians the freedom to toe an independent line in voting on bills and motions other than

a confidence motion, no-confidence motion, adjournment motion, money bills and financial matters that could affect the stability of a government.

"This bill seeks to return conscience, constituency and common sense to the eche-lons of the legislature so that an elected representative actually functions as the representative of the people who elected him and not as an instrument of a whip issued by his party, transforming lawmakers into mere lobotomised numbers and dogmatic ciphers responding to a division bell," Tewari told PTI.

TN cops deny nod to Vijay's rally in Erode

ERODE

Police declined permission to hold TVK chief Vijay's public meeting in Erode on December 16, after former minister K A Sengottaiyan, who recently joined the party, submitted a petition on Sunday, sources in the department said. Erode is the home turf of Sengottaiyan, a nine-time MLA and former minister, who joined the actor-politician's party after being expelled from AIADMK. The meeting would have been an opportunity for him to prove his strength in organising a meeting of this scale.

Girl's tip exposed J&K 'doctor' terror module, says Omar

SRINAGAR

Chief Minister of UT Jammu and Kashmir Omar Abdullah on Sunday revealed information regarding the events that led to the dismantling of a doctors' module linked to the recent terror attack in Delhi. In a press interaction, Abdullah shed light on how the investigation came about, stating that it all began when a young girl approached the police following the end of her relationship with a boy. She alerted the authorities about separatist posters that had appeared in parts of Srinagar, claiming they were posted by this same boy.

The police detained the boy, who, during questioning, indicated that he was not acting alone and named several others involved. This led to

further arrests, including a cleric known as Molvi Irfan, who subsequently pointed investigators towards a doctor, unveiling what has since been referred to as the doctors' module.

Abdullah emphasized that his account was based on informal discussions and not official security briefings, noting his lack of access to sensitive information. He stressed that he could not independently verify the details he shared.

According to police sources, this doctors' module was found to have connections beyond the Valley, directly tying it to the tragic Delhi Red Fort blast that resulted in multiple casualties. The ongoing investigations into such networks are reported to follow rigorous verification processes.

Mega Gita recital held in Kolkata, TMC rebel pledges Quran event

KOLKATA

Religion politics is at the top in West Bengal ahead of 2026 Assembly elections as after 'Panch Lakkho Konthe Gita Path', was organized by Sanatan Sanskriti Sansad, which the TMC dubbed as BJP's political campaign, now suspended TMC MLA Humayun Kabir who laid foundation stone of Babri Masjid-like mosque in Murshidabad claimed recitation of Quran by one lakh people in Murshidabad.

On Sunday several BJP leaders along with saints and monks from other states attended Gita recital at Kolkata's iconic Brigade Parade ground.

Attending the programme, BJP MP and MoS Sukanta Majumdar said that Gita recital has become the symbol of 'unity' of the Hindus. BJP state president and Rajya Sabha MP Samik



Bhattacharya slammed the TMC government stating that TMC only supports 'fundamentalists'.

On the other hand, TMC leader Kunal Ghosh termed the event as BJP's poll plank.

TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee said, "No matter how much the saffron camp conducts such events, people of Bengal will not accept the uneducated, uncultured BJP Bengal leaders."

Meanwhile, suspended TMC MLA Humayun Kabir

announced that he will conduct a recital of the Quran by one lakh people in Murshidabad in February.

"I had initially thought of resigning from my post but the people of my constituency had asked me not to resign as they had voted for me and is benefitted from me. Soon I will go to Hyderabad as I had a talk with Asaduddin Owaisi of AIMIM. I will float my new party joining hands with him," mentioned Kabir.

Skip personal events, focus on SIR, UP CM tells BJP lawmakers

LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed BJP MPs and MLAs to suspend all personal engagements including attending weddings and social functions and focus entirely on the ongoing Special Intensive Revision of the voter list (SIR).

He instructed that not a single Rohingya or Bangladeshi infiltrator's name should remain on the electoral rolls.

The Chief Minister issued the directions through a video conference from his official residence recently. The interaction included BJP MLAs, district presidents, office bearers, and heads of urban local bodies and panchayati raj institutions.

Yogi said that the next few days must be devoted exclusively to completing the SIR exercise. He assigned both Deputy Chief Ministers the responsibility of monitoring progress in 25 districts each.

Progress in list review

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh has completed the SIR of electoral rolls in 34 of the state's 403 assembly constituencies. Officials said that BLOs continue to remain on duty even on Sundays to ensure no eligible voter is left out of the list. The revision work is scheduled to conclude on December 11. Chief Electoral Officer Navdeep Rinwa said that SIR work has been completed at 91,441 polling booths across the state. More than 15.43 crore enumeration forms, nearly 99.93 percent of the targeted count, have been distributed. Of these, over 14.52 crore forms have already been digitised, marking around 94.04 percent completion of the digital process.



Assam row grows as protesters threaten to keep Tezpur univ shut until VC's ouster

TEZPUR

Agitators at Tezpur University on Sunday vowed to enforce a shutdown at the institution, which has been witnessing sustained protests since mid-September against alleged irregularities by Vice Chancellor Shambhu Nath Singh, till a formal communication from the Centre regarding the VC's removal is received.

The picturesque campus on

the north bank of the Brahmaputra in Sonitpur district of Assam witnessed high voltage drama from Saturday afternoon till early on Sunday as a top delegation from the Union Ministry of Education, led by Secretary Vineet Joshi, could not leave the premises around midnight and was stuck inside their vehicles for more than three hours.

The high-level team was allowed to leave post midnight following a written assurance

on a blank paper by the Department of Higher Education's Joint Secretary Saumya Gupta, who was a part of the delegation.

The hand-written assurance, accessed by PTI, said that VC Singh will not administer the central varsity till a "strict and time-bound inquiry against him" is completed.

Students, teachers and non-teaching staffers, under the aegis of a joint platform Tezpur University United Forum,

(TUUF), have been protesting against the beleaguered VC since mid-September over alleged corruption and other irregularities committed by him, and demanded his removal along with an inquiry against his actions.

The TUUF expressed disappointment that even after 79 consecutive days of peaceful protests, no concrete resolution or actionable assurance had been provided to remove

The bodies of a mother and son were found on a cot under suspicious circumstances



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kaushambi. The bodies of an elderly mother and her son were recovered under suspicious circumstances on Sunday afternoon on separate cots inside their home in Barah Haveli Khalsa village, within the Kada Dham police station area. It is suspected that the elderly woman and her son died after being poisoned.

When people in the vicinity learned of the incident, a crowd gathered at the scene. The police station was informed of the matter. Upon receiving the information, the police

station, along with Circle Officer Sirathu Satyendra Tiwari, arrived at the scene. After inspecting the scene, the police took the mother and son's bodies into custody and sent them for post-mortem. It is suspected that the mother and son died due to poisoning. The deceased's wife lived with her son at her parents' home in Bharwari. She also arrived upon learning of the deaths. According to information, Vijay Mishra, 55, son of Siyaram Mishra, and his mother, Maula Devi, 75, wife of Siyaram, lived in the house. Vijay Kumar's wife, Meeta



Devi, lives with her son, Ratnesh Mishra, at their parents' home in Bharwari. Vijay Kumar and his elderly mother, Maula Devi, 75, live in the house with Vijay Kumar.

It is said that when Vijay Kumar and his mother Maula Devi did not come out of the house on Sunday afternoon, the neighbours started getting suspicious and informed the police. The police reached the spot and entered the house using a ladder. When the people nearby also reached the spot, they saw that the bodies of the mother and son were lying on

separate cots inside the house. The police took the bodies of both the deceased into their custody and sent them for post-mortem. The death of both the people remains a mystery. Both the bodies were lying on separate cots inside the house. Foam was coming out of their mouths. Both were dead. There is a lot of discussion going on in the area. People are unable to believe that how the mother and son died suddenly inside the house. It is said that the deceased's wife Meeta Devi lives with her son in her maternal home in Bharwari.

District President Anuragini Singh distributed authorization letters after the formation of the Sahaso Block



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. The authorization letter distribution ceremony for the Sahaso Block unit of the Uttar Pradesh Mahila Shikshak Sangh, District Prayagraj, was celebrated with great pomp.

The block head, village head, and divisional officials attended. The program was presided over by Anuragini Singh, District President of the Uttar Pradesh Mahila Shikshak Sangh, District Prayagraj. The program began with the lighting of

lamps, garlanding the statue of Goddess Saraswati, and Saraswati Vandana. The welcome song was performed with great emotion by Aashi Yadav, a former student of the school. Aashi Yadav also sang a very inspiring song, satirizing society.

Thereafter the election process started and Mrs. Shikha Pandey ji was elected as the Block President and Rekha Mishra ji was elected as the General Secretary and thereafter the entire executive was

elected. The authority letter was distributed by the District President and all the newly elected executive members were administered the oath of office and secrecy. The program was organized very grandly and during this the teachers of the block were also present. Mandal President Aparna Bajpai ji, District President Madam Anuragini Singh ji and District Minister Ritu Singh ji and City General Secretary Mrs. Sarita Sinha were also present in the program.

Husband and father-in-law arrested for murdering married woman



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kaushambi. On December 6, in the Sarai Akil police station area, a married woman was harassed



by her in-laws for demanding additional dowry. When the dowry was not met, she was murdered. The married woman's brother Shaktiveer son of

Ramharsh resident of Marufpur Amha police station Kokhraaj informed the police station that my sister was murdered. On the basis of the com-

plaint, FIR No. 333/25 under section 80(2)/85 BNS and 3/4 DP Act was registered at police station Sarai Akil.

In the above sequence, on

07.12.2025, while taking action by the police team of police station Sarai Akil, on the basis of information from a special informer, 02 wanted accused Sonu Singh son of Jaikaran Singh and Jaikaran Singh son of Ram Lakhan residents of village Tarni Tarni Gaderian ka Purwa police station Sarai Akil were arrested in connection with the above case. After legal proceedings, the accused were sent to the court.

Abhimanyu Manglik Takes Salute at Parade

Bhadohi

Superintendent of Police Abhimanyu Manglik took the salute at the weekly parade on inspected the parade. Personnel from the police lines, those posted in various offices and recruit police officers participated in the parade. A run was organized to ensure physical and mental fitness. During the parade, necessary instructions were given to the concerned officers to make the squad-wise drill procedures, conducted for discipline and uniformity, more effective. The newly selected constables undergoing training were briefed on discipline and rules after inspecting



their PT/parade. After the parade, necessary instructions were given to the training instructors to ensure that the trainees are thoroughly acquainted with all important points and instructions. The Dial 112 PRV vehicles and equipment participating in the parade were checked by the Superintendent of Police, Bhadohi and necessary

instructions were given to the concerned personnel. After the inspection, Superintendent of Police Abhimanyu Manglik inspected the building under construction in the police lines premises and the police lines itself, paying special attention to cleanliness and giving necessary instructions to the concerned personnel. During the orderly.

Preparations are underway to develop UP into a honey hub in collaboration

Ashan Jayawardene, Manager- Trade Plan Implementation, Ministry of Agriculture, New Zealand, met with Dinesh Pratap Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Horticulture, Agricultural Marketing, Agricultural Foreign Trade and Agricultural Exports, at his residence in Lucknow, to promote and export Uttar Pradesh honey to national and international markets and to exchange technology under the New Zealand-India Agriculture and Honey Productivity Partnership Program. This meeting was aimed at preparing and finalizing a cooperation program in the agricultural sector under the proposed free trade agreement. The New Zealand High Commission in New Delhi has designated Jayawardene to outline this cooperation program. New Zealand's "Manuka" honey brand is world-renowned. To bring the state honey to the same level, honey has been included as a key cooperation product



under this partnership. It was also decided to establish a "brand name" to recognize the state honey. The meeting noted that Uttar Pradesh is the largest honey-producing state in the country with a wide variety of honey varieties, including natural, wild, organic, herbal, multi-flora, mustard and eucalyptus. India and New Zealand have extensive cooperation opportunities in the areas of quality improvement, certification, technology transfer, value addition and export promotion. During the visit, Jayawardene will inspect honey collection and harvesting centers and interact with producers, beekeepers, collectors and exporters. He will also assess opportunities for technology

exchange, capacity building, standards harmonization and strengthening the production-export chain. Following the meeting, the delegation held detailed discussions with honey producers and exporters at the Horticulture Directorate, chaired by Additional Chief Secretary B.L. Meena. The meeting discussed further strategies for export promotion, quality improvement, certification processes and global market expansion. Present on the occasion were Sandeep Saha (Regional Trade APEDA, Northeast and Ladakh), Director Horticulture B.P. Ram, Joint Directors Sarvesh Kumar and Rajiv Kumar Verma, honey producers Nimit Singh, Ajit Kumar Verma and other bee-

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kaushambi. Sushil Jai Hind, the former Chail Assembly candidate and convener of Jai Jawan Jai Kisan Manch, held a meeting with his organization's colleagues in Chail Tehsil on Sunday. While presiding over the meeting, Sushil Jai Hind said, "I contested the recent assembly elections solely because I wanted to visit every village, to see the problems and pain of every village. Winning or losing an election is a different matter, but I have seen that even today, laborers, farmers, and unemployed youth in every village are on the verge of starvation. Youth are



deprived of employment, farmers are not getting fair prices for their crops, farmers are not getting fertilizers and water, and laborers are ready to migrate.

If farmers are not

empowered in an agricultural country, the country will not be able to become strong." On this occasion, a protest was held to raise the voice of every poor farmer and laborer. During the

protest, he said that the dark darkness of illiteracy still looms large. While his home district of Kaushambi has given the state a Deputy Chief Minister, today everything is devoid of development. District President Vipin Patel, Bharat Lochan Patel, Devraj Pal were present in the meeting. Dinanath Pal Yesu and Ajay Patel Abhishek Surendra Saroj Bhanu Pratap Virendra Chaurasia Advocate and colleagues of Saiglu organization expressed their views. The program was conducted by Vipin Chauhan Advocate High Court. Hundreds of farmers and youth of the area were present on this occasion.

Strengthening farmers is essential for the nation's strength: Sushil Jai Hind

Sarai Akil Police Arrest Accused of Fatal Attack

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kaushambi. On December 4th, in the Sarai Akil police station area, Ram Bahore's son was warming himself by a fire in the courtyard of his house when Shubham, a

resident of the village, assaulted him with an iron rod and a cement brick over a family matter, seriously injuring him. Based on the complaint, FIR No. 329/25, Section 109(1) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), was regis-

tered at Sarai Akil Police Station. On December 7, 2025, Sarai Akil Police Station took action in connection with the above case and arrested the wanted accused, Shubham, son of Tersu, resident of village Tilhapur, Sarai

Akil Police Station, from the Hajipur Mod culvert. The cement bricks and cans used in the incident were recovered at the accused's location.

After legal proceedings, the accused was sent to court.

Editorial

The role of state fiscal capacities in national growth

India's economic progress is a composite reflection of the growth trajectories of its states. Given the federal structure of the country, each state operates with a degree of autonomy in implementing policies that drive their individual economies. This results in a broad spectrum of growth rates across states, highlighting significant disparities. For the nation to achieve holistic growth, it is imperative for all states to experience economic advancement. Despite this, there is a notable discrepancy in the attention paid to fiscal matters at different levels of government. The Union Budget, detailing the central government's finances, often garners substantial scrutiny and debate for its potential impacts on the nation's economic direction. In contrast, state budgets, which are crucial for addressing local needs and fostering regional development, do not attract a similar level of public and analytical scrutiny. Fiscal capacity, the government's ability to generate revenue from available tax and non-tax bases, is crucial for several reasons. First, it underpins a government's ability to provide essential public goods and services. These range from healthcare and education to infrastructure and defense, which are fundamental for the welfare of the citizenry and the smooth functioning of the economy. Without adequate fiscal capacity, governments may struggle to maintain these services at levels that meet public demand and expectations, potentially leading to social unrest or a decline in the quality of life. Second, fiscal capacity is vital for economic development and growth. Governments need resources to invest in infrastructure projects like roads, bridges, and digital networks, which are critical for enhancing productivity and competitiveness. Such investments not only improve current living standards, but also set the stage for future economic expansion. The Asian Development Bank Institute (ADB) in 2017 and the World Bank in 2015 highlighted the risk of economies falling into a 'middle-income trap' where they are unable to transition to high-income status due to inadequate fiscal capacity among other factors.

Moreover, fiscal capacity is essential for macro-economic stability. It allows governments to manage economic cycles more effectively, applying fiscal stimulus in downturns and restraint in booms to maintain economic stability. The Covid-19 pandemic's impact on Indian states underscored this point, as reduced fiscal capacities constrained their ability to respond effectively to the crisis and its economic repercussions. Finally, a robust fiscal capacity enables equitable social development. It allows for redistributive policies that can mitigate income inequality and fund social safety nets for the vulnerable. Studies have shown that factors such as high per capita income, education levels, and low corruption contribute to higher fiscal capacity, which in turn can be used to foster a more inclusive society. Given that state governments account for over 60 per cent of general government expenditure in India, enhancing their revenue-generating capacity is imperative for the needed investment in areas such as education, research and development, and skill development. The Reserve Bank of India recently released a report on state finances, which gives an insight into the state budgets of 2023-24. It has some important findings. First, revenue mobilisation in Indian states comprises both tax and non-tax revenues, with a significant portion coming from state's own tax revenues (SOTR). Over the years, there has been a noticeable increase in SOTR, growing from 5.7 per cent of GDP in 2003-04 to 6.9 per cent in 2022-23. This growth, particularly in the post-GST era, reflects a shift in the composition of tax revenues. with the State Goods and Services Tax.



Trump as the Republican presidential candidate

With his three-time nomination as the Republican presidential nominee, Trump's hold over the party is incontrovertible. FILE PHOTO: Republican presidential candidate and former US President Donald Trump. REUTERS Donald Trump and Narendra Modi are both considered conservative or right-wing leaders. But they could not be more dissimilar. One is flamboyant, the other sober; one shoots his mouth off, the other cannot be found making a single indiscreet statement. Though both are constantly in

the news and are international media personalities in their own right, one is constantly controversial, the other consistently charismatic. One was born well-to-do, already a tycoon in his twenties, the other rose from stark poverty to the heights of political and social power. One is extravagant, living lavishly, the other is abstemious and frugal. One has had a colourful, some would say scandalous love life, with multiple marriages and several children from different spouses, the other is known as a lifelong celibate, despite

being married. One embodies the capitalistic, consumeristic ethos, the other is practically a renunciate. Without disrespecting one, we might even say they are as different as chalk and cheese. But there is one respect in which they are similar.

They have totally upended their respective political parties, the very vehicles of their spectacular success. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is as different from Atal Bihari Vajpayee's as Trump's is from Ronald Reagan's Republican Party. In my last

column I wrote about how Reagan rode to power in 1980 and in two terms established the United States as the dominant power in the world. He adopted a tough foreign policy against the erstwhile Soviet Union, pushing it to what some would say its overdue demise. He also championed free-market capitalism and globalization. Reagan was socially and culturally conservative, coming down heavily against abortion and LGBTQ activism in the name of supposedly traditional American values.

Kinnouri Phulaich Festival: A Confluence of Nature and Culture



In the cultural memory of Kinnaur, there are many festivals where faith manifests as a religious ritual and becomes the foundation of daily life. Among these is Phulaich- a tradition that goes beyond the mere search for flowers and embodies a profound method of understanding the subtle signals of nature. In this festival, the people of Kinnaur do not regard nature merely as a visual spectacle, they read its rhythm, sense its changes, and, based on them, determine the collective direction of their future. Phulaich is not just a festival of flowers, it is a remarkable example of the climate sensitivity of mountain communities. The roots of this tradition go back to a time when Kinnaur had neither formal meteorological knowledge nor an organized agricultural system. The first flower to bloom at high altitudes was considered a sign of the season's progress- the first link in a dialogue between divinity, nature, and humans. Over time, this belief transformed into a social structure, and the

responsibility of flower-seeking was entrusted to individuals whose minds were considered pure and in natural harmony. This notion reflects not a miraculous imagination but a sensitivity through which the community has traditionally regarded nature as its primary guide. When the chosen individuals ascend the mountain slopes in the morning silence, their journey assumes the form of inner meditation rather than a religious ritual. The deep stillness of the mountains, the gentle movement of trees, and the rustling of leaves provide a solemn quietude to the ceremony. And when the first flower appears among rocks or shrubs, it is not merely a botanical speci-

men- it becomes a symbol of the year's possibilities and apprehensions. Upon returning to the village, the flower is examined with the same simplicity and seriousness with which a society assesses its future. The color and moisture of its petals, the number of flowers, and their rarity are all considered signs. In some years, deep colors indicate harsh winters; fewer flowers provoke concern, and an unexpected species is interpreted as a harbinger of a favorable year. This knowledge, while based on careful observation over generations, also aligns with scientific reasoning. The ritual that follows the flower's arrival in the village reveals the

depth of communal life. The flower is offered before the deity's palanquin, and the expressions on the villagers' faces- devotion, hope, fear, and faith- are all visible simultaneously. The subsequent procession may appear like a religious parade, but it is, in fact, a living cultural document. The sound of drums, traditional attire, and the excitement of children give the festival a significance that goes beyond a mere social celebration. The importance of Phulaich is not just cultural but also environmental. The festival subtly demonstrates how closely the local community observes changes in nature. Variations in snowfall, irregularities in seasonal cycles, and temperature fluctuations all manifest first in the blooming of flowers. This allowed the community to understand how the mountains would 'behave' that year. Before the advent of modern meteorology, this knowledge guided the community. It is not mere folklore but a concrete example of environmental intelligence. Today, while

many communities are losing their dialogue with nature under the expansion of modernity, Kinnaur still preserves the delicate line in which humans and nature are interdependent entities, sensitive to each other's language. When the flowering season arrives, the slight anxiety and excitement that spread across the region indicate that nature here is not an external entity but an integral part of the community's soul. Ultimately, when the flower returns to the village, the deepest message of this tradition is revealed- mountains are not mere landscapes; they are conscious beings. They witness human activities, anxieties, and hopes. And in every heartbeat of nature, the divine pulse exists. Phulaich is the festival of this consciousness- a memory that is revived every year in a new form and transforms the person who experiences it from within. Karan Singh Parihar writes and reads about folk traditions and culture. These are his personal views.

Happy to see Indian girls coming up in golf,' says India's first ever female golfer

Among the longest hitters, at 25 years of age, this girl has been wowing golfing fans across the world. Her straight hits cover much ground, leaving onlookers agape. For world no. 41, Aditi Ashok, who has had a spectacular run in the 2023 LET, opens with a much-cherished win on European soil, winning the Ladies Open 2023 season-ending tournament at the Andalucia Costa Del Sol Open (Spain). It's total surrender to the game: she won her fourth Ladies European Tour title at the Kenya Ladies Open, came third in Morocco, and was runner-up in Saudi Arabia (2023). Scratch the calm demeanour, and there is a girl with a plan who wants to hit straighter and longer. Golf consumes her. She recently

reconnected with her childhood coach, Gaurav Diwan, and is "working on my swing speed and distance". From those early years, she turned pro in 2016 and was also rookie of the year, and Ashok is the first Indian female golfer to enter the top 50 world ranking. On a journey that began at age five, she accompanied her father, Ashok Gudlamani, onto the Karnataka Golf Course in Bangalore. One swing and another, and soon she was hooked. Over the years, her resolve, passion, and stoic stance have seen her climb deftly along the ranks of ladies' golf. Putting, she believes, is her strength, and often birdie-ing to perfection, the ramrod straight serious girl with her lips pursed in concentration has beaten

men, trumped tournaments, and is eyeing 2024 as the greens promise victories ahoy. "Finishing in the top 5 in Spain has been heartening after the work I have put in. It has been completely different when compared to where I was in 2022. Then, I was ranked 99 at the LPG. So, the first win (in Kenya) got the ball rolling," smiles Aditi. A miss at the 2020 Olympics (she came fourth), a silver at the Asian Games 2023, she dug deep after an off-kilter season. Having crossed the finish line with wins, she feels failure teaches, victories not so much. "In August, I took a month or two off to prepare for the Asian Games. Even though it had no ranking points and had nothing to do with my LPGA.

People stood in long queues to cast their vote in an Assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir after a gap of ten long years. PM Modi called it Naya Kashmir as he aimed his dart at the 'teen khandan', the three dynasties—Congress, JKNC and PDP. It's been a long ten years in the Valley. There have been other decades marked by turbulence. But none like the past decade—a period of transformational change, depending on who is asked. The ten years carry a lot of weight and significance. On 18 September, Kashmiris, for the first time, voted not for a state but a Union Territory. The region's status changed in 2019, following the abrogation of Article 370 by the Modi government. Many other firsts are also taking place during these keenly watched elections: Established political parties being pitched against several Independent candidates, who are backed by organisations like the banned Jamaat-e-Islami; the entry of Engineer Abdul Rashid; and the absence of stalwarts such as Mehbooba Mufti. It led to the political landscape of Jammu and Kashmir becoming fiercely competitive, which is why the Assembly

elections in Jammu and Kashmir is ThePrint's Newsmaker Of The Week. The main parties in the fray are the INDIA bloc's National Conference (NC) and Congress, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). During the last election BJP and PDP had entered into an alliance. This election also has the second-highest number of Independent candidates since 2008. These elections carry a lot of political weight for the BJP, even beyond the region. The Modi government has been showcasing the abrogation of Article 370 as one of its key achievements. After the recent delimitation exercise, Kashmir has 47 seats and Jammu has 43. Twenty-four Assembly seats in seven districts went to polls on Wednesday. Delimitation led to an increase in seats in Hindu-dominated Jammu and nine seats being reserved for the Scheduled Tribe community, the BJP is hoping to be a formidable force in Jammu even as it continues to face several challenges in the region. When it comes to the Kashmir valley, BJP has very little influence. For the National Conference too, these elections carry a lot of impor-

tance. Former CM of Kashmir and chairperson of NC, Omar Abdullah, lost to Engineer Rashid during the Lok Sabha elections. After making several statements about not contesting elections unless statehood is restored to J&K, he has decided to take the plunge. BJP has also brought up statehood multiple times. On 7 March this year, while launching an 'Integrated Development of Hazratbal Shrine' in Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a strong emotional pitch to the people of J&K.

He guaranteed to his "family in J&K" that "under no circumstances would development grind to a halt" in the UT. Modi continued the same rhetoric on Thursday at the rally in support of BJP candidates in Srinagar's Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium. He spoke about BJP's promise to restore Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, empowerment and development. The withdrawal of Article 370 and statehood have emerged as major issues in these elections. Employment is also another significant concern. Quite naturally, the people in the region are divided regarding Article 370.

Briefs

BALLIA

Nurse suspended over fake documents

A staff nurse, Kumudlata Rai, posted at CHC Rasra for nearly a decade, has been suspended and an FIR lodged against her. The action followed a complaint alleging she used fake documents with inconsistent birth dates to pass her exam and secure the job. Chief Medical Officer Dr. Sanjeev Varman confirmed the suspension after a departmental inquiry verified the allegations.

SAHARANPUR

CM holds secret review on voter list

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath made an unannounced visit to Saharanpur, holding a closed-door review meeting on the SVEEP voter awareness campaign and voter list purification. Officials, MLAs, and local BJP leaders attended. The CM reportedly directed completion of the list purification by December 11. The media was kept away, and attendees refused to comment, making the 'mystery visit' a topic of local discussion.

CHANDLAULI

MGNREGA Scandal: 59 workers only on paper

Major irregularities have surfaced in two MGNREGA works in Mubarakpur panchayat, Shahabganj. Villagers allege 59 workers are shown on paper across the two sites, but virtually no work or laborers are visible on the ground. They accuse a corruption chain from the panchayat to the block and district levels. The BDO has acknowledged the matter and promised an investigation, but villagers remain skeptical of any concrete action.

JAUNPUR

Sports Day for differently-abled children

A sports competition was grandly organized at Rachna Special School in Jaunpur as part of World Disability Day week. Differently-abled children enthusiastically participated in unique events like frog race, jalebi race, and banana race. Winners were awarded medals and study materials. Guests praised the school's efforts and urged society to help such children become self-reliant.

KUSHINAGAR

BEO Inspects Mid-Day Meal Quality

Block Education Officer Akhilesh Kumar Singh inspected half a dozen schools in the Hata area, checking Mid-Day Meal quality and interacting with students. At Radhiya Devaria Composite School, he tasted the meal with children and praised the 80% 'Nipun' literacy rate among the 132 students present. However, he found Sabiliyan School Rajhi Gaunra closed before time and urged children playing outside to attend school regularly.

MAU

Tehsil holds public grievance redressal day

A 'Samadhan Diwas' was held in Ghosi tehsil, presided over by the Chief Revenue Officer. Out of 67 complaints received from departments like Revenue, Police, and Development, four were resolved on the spot.

DISRUPTION | Indigo flight crisis continue causing further difficulty to passenger

Airport turns into chaos zone

LUCKNOW

Flight operations at Lucknow's Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport remained severely affected on Sunday, adding to the disruptions witnessed over the past several days. The ongoing issues with multiple airline schedules, particularly those involving IndiGo, created a chaotic atmosphere within the terminal as passengers struggled to cope with widespread cancellations and delays. According to airport officials, 33 flights to and from Lucknow were cancelled throughout the day, while an incoming flight from Delhi was diverted to Kolkata due to operational constraints. The repeated disruptions left many passengers stranded, increasing frustration among those with connecting flights or urgent travel plans. A total of 740 passengers cancelled their tickets as uncertainty continued through the day.

**33 flights cancelled; passengers face long delays and diversions**

At the airport, the impact was visible as travellers crowded the departure and arrival areas, seeking updates on their flights. Some passengers expressed distress after learning of cancellations only upon reaching the airport. Instances of frustration escalated into heated exchanges as travellers questioned the lack of timely communication from

airline staff. Many passengers also reported additional expenses related to hotel bookings, taxis and reissued tickets. Among the affected travellers were individuals who had arrived from surrounding districts and were unable to return home easily. Two sisters from Balrampur broke down after discovering their flight had been cancelled, as their brother who dropped them had already left for home. Similar concerns were raised by passengers travelling abroad, whose connecting journeys were heavily impacted by cancellations in

Political criticism over airline disruptions

BSP leader Mayawati criticised the ongoing disorder in airline operations, stating that widespread cancellations, pollution concerns and weakening currency trends were causing national anxiety. She said effective policies focused on public interest were essential to address these issues, emphasising the need for clear governance and timely solutions.

Railways steps in with special train after flight cancellations

Following the cancellation of 41 flights from Lucknow, the North Eastern Railway announced a special Gorakhpur-LTT train via Lucknow to assist stranded passengers. The service, scheduled for December 7, aims to provide alternative travel options as thousands continue facing disruptions due to widespread airline delays and diversions.

LUCKNOW

The delays were not limited to IndiGo alone. Air India and Akasa Air also reported extended waiting times on multiple routes. Air India's services between Lucknow and Delhi were delayed by over an hour, while several Mumbai-bound flights faced delays ranging from 45 minutes to two hours. Passengers on these routes took to social media to highlight the situation, urging

the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to intervene. Operational disruptions extended into the evening, with airline officials attributing the situation to crew-related issues and cascading delays across national routes. Many passengers demanded clearer communication and accountability, stating that sudden cancellations without prior notice were unacceptable.

Deputy CM directs clean up of voter list



JHANSI

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya chaired a review meeting in Jhansi on Sunday, focusing on the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral roll. Emphasizing the exercise's core democratic purpose, Maurya directed officials to ensure the inclusion of all eligible individuals and the deletion of names of deceased, permanently shifted, or ineligible voters. He stated that no eligible citizen should be left out of the list, while also ensuring that no "infiltrator" is included.

The Deputy CM specifically instructed teams to prioritize the registration of new youth voters above 18 years of age and to expedite the collection of applications from graduate voters for the graduate consti-

Asserts focus on Bundelkhand's development;

tuencies. He urged for better coordination at the team level, door-to-door campaigns for form filling, and a prompt resolution of any technical or field-level grievances raised by Booth Level Officers (BLOs) or citizens.

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the meeting, Maurya touched upon broader governance issues. He reiterated the government's focus on women's empowerment, housing for all under central and state schemes, and the development of the Bundelkhand region, expressing confidence that it would emerge as an industrial and employment hub akin to the National Capital Region (NCR).

Codeine syrup to Currency : Akhilesh Yadav attacks BJP

SAHARANPUR

During his visit to Saharanpur on Sunday, SP president Akhilesh Yadav alleged that the UP government was using the Survey for Integrated Revision (SIR) to divert or suppress opposition votes. He attended multiple social events in the district and later addressed the media, stating that SIR should focus on voter verification but was instead being used for political advantage.

Yadav also criticised the handling of the codeine-based cough syrup case, claiming that individuals associated with the ruling side were involved. He linked the issue to broader political tensions following recent electoral outcomes in Bihar and ongoing political ambitions in West Bengal.

**SP Chief claims administrative actions under SIR to influence electoral outcomes**

Discussing national economic concerns, Yadav referred to comments made by a BJP MP regarding currency value fluctuations. He argued that rising dollar rates, combined with tariff impacts, were affecting traders and required policy attention. On allegations of illegal cough syrup distribution,

Yadav said that those responsible for exposing children to harmful substances should face strict action. He suggested that administrative machinery, including bulldozer-led enforcement, was not being used consistently.

He also commented on emotive political issues such as the Babri Masjid matter, saying that emotional narratives were influencing elections. Yadav criticised the ruling party for fostering division rather than development and highlighted price rise, increased electricity costs, and lack of industrial expansion as unresolved issues. Meanwhile, separate remarks from the Deputy CM countered Yadav's statements, citing internal political shifts after recent election results and emphasising ongoing development work in Bundelkhand.

Wall collapse injures three workers

JHANSI

A portion of the wall at the Gomti Nagar Bus Depot collapsed near the Vibhuti Khand CNG pump today during excavation work being carried out under the CM Grid Scheme, injuring three laborers. One worker's condition is reported to be serious.

The injured laborers, identified as Deepu and Fakire (both from Sitapur), and Ram Asre (from Malihabad), were immediately admitted to the Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences. Workers present at the site alleged that the wall was already leaning and structurally unsound.

The Gomti Nagar Bus Depot is currently being developed on a PPP model by Omaxe.

Every mosque named after Babur will end : Keshav

JHANSI

During a visit to Jhansi, Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya made a strongly worded statement regarding a mosque reportedly being built in West Bengal with references to Babur. Maurya claimed that "any structure in Babur's name will meet its end," asserting that such construction would be unacceptable to "devotees and nationalists." His remarks immediately added fuel to existing political tensions between the BJP and the West Bengal government.

Maurya argued that while building a mosque is permissible, associating it with Babur would not be tolerated. Political analysts noted that such language has the potential to deepen communal polarisation ahead of upcoming elections, especially as the BJP increases its focus on Bengal. Maurya also predicted that the BJP would form the government in the state in 2026—comments seen by critics as part of a broader

**Deputy CM issues sharp statement over Bengal mosque, escalating communal tensions**

to deepen communal polarisation ahead of upcoming elections, especially as the BJP increases its focus on Bengal. Maurya also predicted that the BJP would form the government in the state in 2026—comments seen by critics as part of a broader

Woman marries Krishna idol

BADAUN

An unusual wedding area drew significant attention after 28-year-old Pinky Sharma married an idol of Lord Krishna following full Hindu rituals. The ceremony took place in Byour Kasimabad village on Saturday and was conducted with complete traditions, including kanyadaan, pheras, and other customary rites. Relatives and villagers attended as both "baraat" and "gharati."

Initially, Pinky's mother opposed the decision, but later agreed, citing her daughter's long-standing religious inclination. Pinky, a postgraduate in Education, has reportedly been a devotee of Krishna since childhood and frequently visited Vrindavan with her family. According to relatives, her devotional belief intensi-

**28 year old Pinky Sharma performs full rituals while marrying idol**

fied after she received a gold ring as temple prasad four months earlier, which she interpreted as a divine sign.

Villagers have begun referring to her as "Meerabai of Kalyug" due to her strong devotion. The idol was decorated like a groom, and her brother-in-law symbolically represented the groom's side.

Forgery Racket: Criminals walked free on fake IDs

BANDA

Police have uncovered a large-scale forgery racket that allegedly secured the release of nearly 1,000 jailed criminals using fabricated documents. The network operated for more than two years, arranging bail for offenders—including hardened criminals and those from other states—through forged Aadhaar cards and falsified land records. The mastermind, identified as retired schoolteacher Shiv Swaroop, was arrested after a series of complaints revealed repeated fraudulent bail applications.

The first signs emerged in November 2025 when multiple FIRs were filed at Tindwari police station, alleging that unknown individuals had used forged identity documents to obtain bail in NDPS and other

**Gang used forged Aadhaar cards and land papers to secure bail**

serious cases. Following orders from senior police officials, teams launched "Operation Shikhanja" and began systematic verification of past bail records. Initial arrests led to the identification of a doctor and several intermediaries involved in producing fake

papers. Subsequent raids resulted in the recovery of 35 forged Aadhaar cards, counterfeit land records and equipment used to create them. Four gang members have been arrested so far.

During interrogation, the main accused admitted that the group had facilitated over 1,000 fraudulent bail applications across Banda and neighbouring districts. Police are now working with courts to cancel all illegally obtained bail orders.

Farmers say government measures "only on paper"

LUCKNOW

With winter pollution intensifying across northern India, Uttar Pradesh is witnessing a renewed spike in stubble-burning cases. After declining significantly between 2020 and 2022, the incidents have surged sharply in 2024 and 2025, raising concerns among administrators and environmental experts. According to a recent report by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Uttar Pradesh recorded 4,006 cases between 15 September and 26 November in 2020. By 2022, the number had dropped to 2,663 due to strict monitoring. However, incidents rose again in 2023, climbing further to 6,284 cases by late November this year.

Agriculture department records show that authorities

**UP sees sharp rise in stubble-burning incidents again, officials alarmed as pollution worsens**

have imposed fines worth ₹27.85 lakh across 1,304 cases so far. Around 3,920 awareness programmes have also been conducted, and nodal officers have been deployed for groups of farmers. Yet the rising numbers suggest that current measures have had limited long-term impact.

Uttar Pradesh emerges as startup hub

LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh is steadily positioning itself as a strong emerging hub in the Startup India ecosystem, supported by forward-looking government policies and sustained focus on innovation-driven development. The state's administration has introduced a range of industry-friendly measures designed to energize the startup environment and create opportunities for young entrepreneurs.

Today, Uttar Pradesh holds a prominent place in the

national startup landscape, with startups now operating in all 75 districts. These ventures span diverse sectors such as agritech, artificial intelligence, drones, fintech, and information technology. Government officials state that the aim is to encourage youth to become job creators, a shift reflected in the expanding number of enterprises across the state.

The startup ecosystem has grown at a consistent pace, with 18,568 active startups currently registered. Of these, nearly 8,000 are led by women, indicating a significant rise in female participa-

**State reports 18,568 active startups across all 75 districts**

tion in entrepreneurship. This progress is linked to the state's

startup policy, which offers mentoring, financial aid, and technical support to early-stage innovators.

Incubation centers across universities and technical institutes have strengthened the foundation for new ideas, helping transform concepts into functional enterprises. These centers have evolved into innovation platforms, contributing actively to the state's growing presence in India's startup sector.

Advancements in the IT and electronics segments have provided additional momentum. Cities including Noida, Greater

Noida, Lucknow, Kanpur, and Gorakhpur are evolving into important technology hubs, housing a mix of early-stage ventures and expanding companies. Ongoing development of IT parks is also making Uttar Pradesh a more attractive destination for domestic and global investors.

According to startup sector analyst Rajat Srivastava, the state's structured policy framework has accelerated the growth of the startup ecosystem. He noted that Uttar Pradesh is steadily progressing toward becoming a major national startup center.

Talent hunt competition highlights young artists



LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Artist Academy organized a talent hunt competition for "Miss & Mister Uttar Pradesh-2025-26" at Hotel Savvy Grand in Lucknow today, drawing nearly two hundred impressive participants. This event is

part of a series aimed at providing an international platform for the state's young artists. During the talent round, participants showcased diverse skills, including Deepanjali Tripathi's semi-classical dance, Abhimanyu Raj's Sufi singing, and Ayushi Singh's energetic dance performance.

Briefs

ISLAMABAD

Indonesian prez on trip to boost Pak ties

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto will undertake his maiden official visit to Pakistan from Monday to deepen bilateral ties and explore new avenues of cooperation. Subianto has been invited by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the visit from December 8-9, the Foreign Office said in a statement, adding that he will be accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising key ministers and senior officials. Subianto will hold delegation-level talks with Sharif. He will also meet President Asif Ali Zardari.

KARACHI

Forces foil attack on Jaffar Exp

Security forces foiled an attempt to attack the frequently-targeted Jaffar Express passenger train in Pakistan's Balochistan province, according to a media report on Sunday. Unidentified insurgents planted an improvised explosive device (IED) on the track used by the Peshawar-bound train in the Nasirabad area of the province on Saturday, the Dawn newspaper reported. Law enforcement agencies cordoned off the area after receiving information about the device and defused it, the report said. The train came under an attack months ago that left 26 people dead.

KATHMANDU

4.6 tremor jolts Nepal, no damage

A 4.6-magnitude earthquake hit western Nepal's Sudurpashchim province on Sunday morning. There were no immediate reports of damage. The earthquake was recorded at 8:28 am with an epicentre located in the Ghusa area of the Darchula district, according to the National Earthquake Monitoring and Research Centre. However, there were no immediate reports of any damage.

BEIJING

India opens new mission building

India on Sunday opened its new state-of-the-art Consulate building in Shanghai, marking its first relocation in 32 years in China's main business hub. The Shanghai Consulate caters to India's burgeoning business community in the eastern region of China, home to top trade and business hubs like Yiwu, where a number of Indian businesses are present. The new Chancery building at the prominent Dawning Centre in Changning District, covers 1,436.63 sqm, more than double the size of the previous one.

PEACE PUSH | Russia eyes 'radical changes' before sealing pact

Ukraine deal 'close', hints US, but Kremlin not sure

MOSCOW

US President Donald Trump's outgoing Ukraine envoy has said that a long-awaited deal to end the war in Ukraine is "really close," even as Moscow insists major revisions are needed before any agreement can move forward.

Speaking at the Reagan National Defense Forum in California, U.S. Special Envoy for Ukraine Keith Kellogg described the effort to end Europe's deadliest conflict since World War Two as being in "the last 10 metres," adding that those final steps are often the most difficult. Kellogg, who will step down in January, said only two major issues remain unresolved — the future of the Donbas region and the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, currently under Russian control.

"If we get those two issues settled, I think the rest of the things will work out fairly well," Kellogg said. "We're almost there." He reiterated, "We're really, really close."

Russia, however, offered a far more cautious and tougher assessment. Following four



hours of Kremlin talks between President Vladimir Putin, Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff, and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner last week, Putin's foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov confirmed that "territorial problems" were discussed. This is widely understood to refer to Russia's claim over the entire Donbas region, even though Ukraine continues to control roughly 5,000 square kilometres of it.

Almost all countries recognise Donbas as Ukrainian territory, and Kyiv has repeatedly rejected ceding it. Ukrainian

President Volodymyr Zelenskiy warned that giving up Donetsk without a referendum would be illegal and would leave Ukraine vulnerable to future Russian advances deeper into the country.

Ushakov, quoted by Russian media, said Washington would need to "make serious, I would say, radical changes to their papers" on Ukraine, though he did not specify what Moscow wanted altered.

Zelenskiy said on Saturday that he held a long and "substantive" phone call with

Witkoff and Kushner. The Kremlin has suggested Kushner is now expected to lead the drafting of a potential peace deal.

Kellogg, a retired lieutenant general with combat experience in Vietnam, Panama and Iraq, described the scale of losses on both sides as "horrific," saying Russia and Ukraine together have suffered more than two million casualties, including both dead and wounded, since the invasion began in February 2022. Neither country releases credible casualty numbers.

Russia currently controls 19.2% of Ukraine, including Crimea, all of Luhansk, more than 80% of Donetsk, around 75% of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, and small parts of Kharkiv, Sumy, Mykolaiv and Dnipropetrovsk.

The latest negotiations come amid concerns in Kyiv and Europe after a leaked set of 28 U.S. draft peace proposals suggested Washington was open to compromising on Russia's key demands, including limits on Ukraine's military, a halt to NATO expansion, and acceptance of Moscow's control over roughly one-fifth of Ukraine.

Hegseth backs military strikes on 'cartel boats'

WASHINGTON

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth defended strikes on alleged drug cartel boats during remarks Saturday at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, saying President Donald Trump has the power to take military action "as he sees fit" to defend the nation.

Hegseth dismissed criticism of the strikes, which have killed more than 80 people and now face intense scrutiny over concerns that they violated international law. Saying the strikes are justified to protect Americans, Hegseth likened the fight to the war on terror following the Sept 11, 2001 attacks.

"If you're working for a designated terrorist organization and you bring drugs to this country in a boat, we will find you and we will sink you. Let there be no doubt about it," Hegseth said during his keynote address at the Reagan National Defense Forum. "President Trump can and will take decisive military action as he sees fit to defend our nation's interests. Let no country on earth doubt that for a moment."

The most recent strike brings the death toll of the



campaign to at least 87 people. Lawmakers have sought more answers about the attacks and their legal justification, and whether US forces were ordered to launch a follow-up strike following a September attack even after the Pentagon knew of survivors.

Though Hegseth compared the alleged drug smugglers to Al-Qaida terrorists, experts have noted significant differences between the two foes and the efforts to combat them.

Hegseth's remarks came after the Trump administration released its new national security strategy, one that paints European allies as weak and aims to reassert America's dominance in the Western Hemisphere.

During the speech, Hegseth also discussed the need to

check China's rise through strength instead of conflict. He repeated Trump's vow to resume nuclear testing on an equal basis as China and Russia, a goal that has alarmed many nuclear arms experts. China and Russia haven't conducted explosive tests in decades, though the Kremlin said it would follow the US if Trump restarted tests.

The speech was delivered at the Reagan National Defense Forum at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute in California, an event which brings together top national security experts from around the country. Hegseth used the visit to argue that Trump is Reagan's "true and rightful heir" when it comes to muscular foreign policy.

By contrast, Hegseth criticized Republican leaders in the years since Reagan for supporting wars in the Middle East and democracy-building efforts that didn't work. He also blasted those who have argued that climate change poses serious challenges to military readiness.

"The war department will not be distracted by democracy building, interventionism, undefined wars, regime change, climate change, woke moralizing and feckless nation building," he said.

A Decade of Nightclub Blazes
CELEBRATION TO TRAGEDY

The deadly fire at Birch By Romeo Lane in North Goa, which killed at least 25 people, echoes a series of nightclub disasters over the past decade, where pyrotechnics, electrical faults, and human conflict have caused massive loss of life.

NIGHTCLUB FIRES THAT CLAIMED LIVES IN THE PAST DECADE

OCT 2015

ROMANIA: Colectiv fire kills 64; pyrotechnics ignite flammable polyurethane foam

DEC 2016

USA: Oakland 'Ghost Ship' warehouse fire kills 36 during party

JAN 2022

CAMEROON: 16 killed after fireworks spark blaze

JAN 2022

INDONESIA: 19 dead as nightclub burns during clash

AUG 2022

THAILAND: Mountain B fire kills 23; suspected electrical issue

OCT 2023

SPAIN: 13 killed in nightclub fire; electrical fault likely

APR 2024

TURKEY: 29 dead in Istanbul club fire during renovation

MAR 2025

NORTH MACEDONIA: 62 killed after indoor fireworks ignite ceiling

Trump honours 'incredible people'

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump on Saturday presented the 2025 Kennedy Centre honourees with their medals during a

ceremony in the Oval Office, hailing the slate of artists he was deeply involved in choosing as "perhaps the most accomplished and renowned class" ever assembled.

This year's recipients are actor Sylvester Stallone, singers Gloria Gaynor and George Strait, the rock band Kiss and actor-singer Michael Crawford. Trump said they are a group of "incredible people" who represent the "very best in American arts



and culture" and that, "I know most of them and I've been a fan of all of them." "This is a group of icons whose work and accomplishments have inspired, uplifted and unified millions and millions of Americans," said a tuxedo-clad Trump. "This is perhaps the most accomplished and renowned class of Kennedy Centre Honourees ever assembled."

He ignored the Kennedy Centre and its awards program during his first term as president. But he has instituted a series of changes since returning to office in January, most notably ousting its board of trustees and replacing them with Republican supporters.

Japan lodges protest as China military aircraft locks its radar

TOKYO

Japan said Sunday that it has protested to China after a military jet that took off from the Chinese carrier Liaoning locked its radar on Japanese fighter jets near the southern island of Okinawa, the latest spat between the two countries whose ties have plunged recently over the Japanese leader's Taiwan remarks.

Japan's Defense Ministry said China's military aircraft J-15 "intermittently" targeted its radar at Japanese F-15 fighter jets on two occasions Saturday - for about three minutes in the late afternoon and for about 30 minutes in the evening.

The radar lock by the Chinese aircraft was detected



by different Japanese fighters that had scrambled against a possible airspace violation by China, according to the ministry. There was no breach of Japanese airspace, and no injury or damage was reported from the incident.

It was not known whether the radar lock incident involved the same Chinese J-15 both times.

Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, briefing reporters

in the early hours of Sunday, said Japan protested to China over the radar lock, calling it "a dangerous act that exceeded the scope necessary for safe aircraft operations."

"The occurrence of such an incident is extremely regrettable," Koizumi said. "We have lodged a strong protest with the Chinese side and demanded strict preventive measures."

Coup bid in Benin foiled, says minister

PTI

COTONOU (BENIN)

A coup that was announced in Benin on Sunday has been "foiled," the interior minister said in a video on Facebook.

"In the early morning of Sunday, a small group of soldiers launched a mutiny with the aim of destabilising the state and its institutions," Allassane Seidou said. "Faced with this situation, the Beninese Armed Forces and their leadership, true to their oath, remained committed to the republic."

Earlier, a group of soldiers had appeared on Benin's state TV Sunday to announce the dissolution of the government in an apparent coup, the latest of many in West Africa.

Must abolish EU, says Musk after fine on X

Agencies: Elon Musk on Saturday launched a blistering attack on the European Union after his social media platform X was hit with a hefty penalty, telling his 230 million followers

that the "European Union should be abolished." The remarks came a day after the European Commission imposed a 120 million euro (\$140 million) fine on X, concluding a high-profile probe under the bloc's Digital Services Act (DSA). The investigation, seen as a major test of the EU's resolve to regulate Big Tech, found the platform guilty of breaching transparency rules.

According to the Commission, X violated the DSA by deceptively designing

its "blue checkmark" for supposedly verified accounts, failing to provide researchers access to public data, and lacking transparency in advertising practices. The decision triggered swift criticism from the Trump administration, which has previously aligned with Musk on controversial efforts to shrink the federal workforce and curb spending before the two later fell out.

Musk himself fired back shortly after the fine was made public. Posting on X, he declared: "The EU should be abolished and sovereignty returned to individual countries, so that governments can better represent their people."



Vote may test Hong Kong anger over fire

HONG KONG

Hong Kong voters are casting ballots Sunday in their second legislative election since a 2021 overhaul of the system eliminated the pro-democracy opposition in the Chinese territory. The poll, coming less than two weeks after an apartment fire that killed at least 159 people, is a possible test of public sentiment about the government's handling of the tragedy. The focus is on voter turnout, which fell to about 30 per cent in the last election in 2021, after the overhaul dampened interest. Some analysts believe mounting public anger over government accountability in the blaze could suppress turnout further.

After 2 years, X'mas lights glow in Bethlehem

PTI

BETHLEHEM

For the past two Christmases, John Juka's family restaurant looked about the same as any business in Bethlehem: shuttered and eerily empty.

But on Saturday evening, it bustled with families and was lit by strings of red lights, a hopeful change in the Palestinian city that's been reeling since war broke out in Gaza.

Christmas celebrations are slowly returning to the traditional birthplace of Jesus in the Israeli-occupied West

Bank. While a shaky cease-fire holds in Gaza, Palestinians hope the festivities are a step toward a more peaceful future in a region shaken by tragedy.

"It's not like it was before the war," 30-year-old Juka said. "But it's like life is coming back again."

Tourism and religious pilgrims have long been a prime economic engine for Bethlehem. Around 80 per cent of the Muslim-majority city's residents live off it, according to the local government. Those earnings ripple out to communities across the West Bank, a ter-



ritory long marked by economic precarity.

"When we have 10,000 visitors and pilgrims sleeping

in Bethlehem, that means the butcher is working, the supermarket is working and everybody is working," said

Bethlehem Mayor Maher Nicola Canawati. "There's a ripple effect."

That economic lifeline vanished when war broke out in Gaza following the Hamas-led October 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel. Bethlehem's authorities canceled major Christmas celebrations during Israel's retaliatory offensive in Gaza, whose health ministry has reported over 70,000 Palestinians killed. At the same time, Israel's military scaled up operations in the West Bank, including communities near Bethlehem. The unemployment rate in the city jumped

from 14 per cent to 65 per cent, the mayor said. Poverty soared, and about 4,000 people left in search of work. A United Nations report last month said the West Bank is going through its most severe economic downturn on record, citing the ongoing Israeli military operations.

"The decision we took was to reignite the spirit of Christmas and to reignite hope," the mayor said. "I think this sends a great message to the whole world that we Palestinians love life and we are eagerly looking forward to a peaceful solution."

Nobel winners all set for the awards night

STOCKHOLM

Nobel week was underway in Stockholm and Oslo with laureates holding news conferences and lectures before they will be awarded the prestigious prizes.

Hungarian László Krasznahorkai, who won the Prize in literature for his surreal and anarchic novels that combine a bleak world view with mordant humour, was expected to give a lecture in Stockholm on Sunday in one of his rare public appearances.

When the Nobel judges announced the award in October, they described the 71-year-old as "a great epic writer" whose work "is characterised by absurdism and grotesque excess." "Krasznahorkai's work can be seen as part of a Central European tradition," the Nobel Prize organisation said. "Important features are pessimism and apocalypse, but also humour and unpredictability." Last year's winner was South Korean author Han Kang.

SRK shares thoughts on James Bond



Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol

SRK opens up on James Bond, saying he won't play 007, while reflecting on his journey in action films

After Daniel Craig's exit from the James Bond franchise, speculation about the next 007 has been rife, with Shah Rukh Khan asked about taking the iconic role. SRK, in London for a *DDLJ* statue unveiling with Kajol, made it clear he is not interested.

When BBC News India asked Shah Rukh about playing James Bond, he replied, "No, I don't have the accent. I don't like shaken martini. I haven't done too many action films, actually. I was always wanting to do an action film, but then Kajol was in my life... So, I did all the romantic films."

Kajol, seated beside him, reminded SRK that he had done other films too. Shah Rukh added, "Yeah, but the ones we are known for are the ones we have done together. I just did a few action films because I always felt I could. I did it a little late in the day. I

think I enjoyed it. I don't know James Bond, but Sean Connery for sure."

James Bond has been portrayed by stars like Sean Connery, Roger Moore, Pierce Brosnan, and Daniel Craig. The last Bond film, *No Time to Die*, starred Craig. Denis Villeneuve is set to direct the next installment, though no casting announcements have been made.

SRK's recent films include *Dunki* (2023) and *Jawan* (2023), for which he won a *National Award*. He will next appear in *King* (2026), directed by Siddharth Anand, co-starring his daughter Suhana Khan.



Pics: X/BBC

'Here we go'



Meghna Gulzar begins final schedule of Kareena Kapoor, Prithviraj Sukumaran starrer *Daayra*



Taking to her Insta handle, she posted a photo of a car with packed bags, showing that the team is ready for the final leg of the shoot

After delivering acclaimed films such as *Talvar*, *Raazi* and *Sam Bahadur*, director Meghna Gulzar is now gearing up for her next project, *Daayra*, starring Kareena Kapoor Khan and Prithviraj Sukumaran.

Giving an exciting update about her upcoming project, Meghna informed her fans that she has started the final shooting schedule for her latest film.

Taking to her Instagram handle, the ace director posted a photo of a car with packed bags, showing that the team is ready for the final leg of the shoot. She captioned it, "Final Schedule. Here we go Team #daayra"

In September, the lead stars of the film shared glimpses from the first day of shoot, adding several BTS moments. "Day 1. 68th film *Daayra* with the most amazing @meghnagulzar and @therealprithvi...Send love and blessings," Kareena wrote in the caption.

From holding a *puja* ceremony on the first day of production to discussing scenes with director Meghna Gulzar, trying look tests, shooting scenes, and reading scripts, the actor offered an intimate insight into their preparations.



Aamir on finding love again

Actor opens up about finding love again after his two divorces from Reena Dutta and Kiran Rao



Actor Aamir Khan, who confirmed his relationship with girlfriend Gauri Spratt on his 60th birthday in March this year, recently opened up about finding love again after his two divorces from Reena Dutta and Kiran Rao.

He revealed that he had reached a point where he thought he would probably never find someone who could be his partner and wasn't expecting it, and said he feels fortunate and lucky to have met Gauri.

Appearing at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit 2025, Aamir said that he never thought he would get into a relationship again. He added, "She brings a lot of calm, steadiness. She's a really amazing person, and I am so fortunate and lucky to have met her. I am very fortunate that while my marriages didn't work, I am still very happy to have met Reena, Kiran and now Gauri in my life. They have contributed to me as a person in a

very big way and I look up to them in many ways."

Further, Aamir talked about maintaining a cordial bond with his ex-wives, Reena Dutta and Kiran Rao, saying that both are good people. He added that Reena is an amazing person. "While we fell apart as husband and wife, that doesn't mean we fell apart as human beings," Aamir said, adding that there is a lot of love and respect for Reena in his heart.

The *Talaash* actor shared how he grew up with Reena, calling her a fantastic person, and said that although they parted ways, they did not part as human beings. "It's the same with Kiran. She is an amazing person, and we decided to part ways as husband and wife, but we are family. Reena, her parents, Kiran and her parents, and my parents, we are all actually one family."

Aamir was married to Kiran Rao from 2005 to 2021. The duo, who share a son named Azad, announced their divorce after 16 years of marriage. He was first married to Reena Dutta from 1986 to 2002, and the couple has two children together, Junaid Khan and Ira Khan. They divorced in 2002.

Views

Dakota Johnson gets candid

Actor-producer opens up about the emotional highs and lows of acting and producing, revealing Hollywood's challenges and rewards

Actor-producer Dakota Johnson has candidly revealed the challenges and rewards of her career, describing a "love-hate relationship" with acting and producing due to the "shady" side of the entertainment industry and the emotional battles she faces as a performer, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Speaking at the Red Sea International Film Festival's "In Conversation With" series on Friday, Johnson reflected on her journey in Hollywood and her push to become a producer through her company TeaTime Pictures. "Financiers are really shady sometimes. It is heartbreaking. As a producer, it can be very heartbreaking. As an actress, it can be heartbreaking," she said, ad-

ding that despite the hurdles, both roles are "incredibly fulfilling."

Johnson, the daughter of actors Melanie Griffith and Don Johnson, spoke at length about her difficulties with the darker side of Hollywood, something she has had to deal with more and more since she moved into producing and financing her projects.

"Financiers are really shady sometimes. It is heartbreaking. As a producer, it can be very heartbreaking. As an actress, it can be heartbreaking," she said, before adding, "But then both (producing and acting) are so incredibly fulfilling, and I feel very grateful that I'm able to do both," as quoted by the outlet.

She added that she found producing as more of a challenge than acting because "there's something about acting where I feel I'm in a bubble, and with producing you see behind the curtain, and it's really ugly."

CAUGHT ON CAM

Celebs were snapped as they were out and about in Mumbai



Neha Dhupia and Angad Bedi pose for the paps as they are snapped in Bandra

Shilpa Shetty is all smiles as she is spotted outside the Kalina airport

Salman Khan waves at the paps as he is spotted at Kalina airport

Briefs

NEW DELHI

Mumbai Smashers clinch IPBL



Mumbai Smashers charted a miracle run, going from sixth to champions with a win over Hyderabad Royals in the Grand Finale of the Indian Pickleball League—launched by The Times Group and recognised as India's only official pickleball league sanctioned by the Indian Pickleball Association under the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports. Mumbai capped their turnaround in front of Hon'ble Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs Mr. Kiren Rijju, with a 5-1 win over Hyderabad on Sunday at the KD Jadhav Indoor Hall. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Vineet Jain, Managing Director, Times Group, said: "Pickleball has a special quality. It has the potential to become a mass participation sport."

BENGALURU

Shivakumar backs Chinnaswamy



Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister **D K Shivakumar** on Sunday announced that Chinnaswamy Stadium will continue to host future IPL matches. The announcement comes amid doubts over hosting the event in Karnataka following the June 4 stampede at the stadium, which occurred when a large crowd had gathered to celebrate the Royal Challengers Bangalore's victory in IPL 2025. Speaking to reporters after casting his vote in the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) presidential elections, Shivakumar said a new large stadium will also be constructed in the future. "I'm a cricket lover. We will ensure that the accident in Karnataka does not happen again."

VIZAG

Bangar has different RoKo approach



Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma deserve to be treated differently for their body of work over the years and their place in the ODI side should have never been

GG TALK | Coach feels duo's experience crucial while applauding youngsters

Gambhir vouches for Ro-Ko



India's Rohit Sharma plays a shot during the third ODI at Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium.

BCCI

At this moment, the Indian think tank is doing a tough balancing act of building the team around a new set of players without completely cutting ties with the old guard.

In that context, head coach Gautam Gambhir, who oversees this process, was a delighted man to see both the parties chipping in with handy contributions.

Giving heft to the senior side, Virat Kohli emerged player of the series in the ODIs against South Africa, scoring two hundreds and a fifty - a quick ride back to his incredible peaks of 2015 onwards.

Rohit Sharma helped himself to a couple of fifties to underline his fine touch.

Gambhir hoped the two stalwarts will continue to churn out such performances, which will keep the ODI outfit in good shape.

"Look, they're quality players. I've said it many times as well that they're world-class players. They are quality players in this format



Look, they're quality players. I've said it many times as well that they're world-class players. They are quality players in this format and their experience is really important in the dressing room," said Gambhir at the press meet after India beat SA by nine wickets to bag the one-day series 2-1.

Gautam Gambhir,
India head coach

"They're doing what they do. They've been doing it for such a long time for Indian cricket. Hopefully, they can continue doing the same, which is always going to be important come the white ball format and the 50-over format," he added.

The rest given to seniors Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammad Siraj and the injury-enforced absence of Shubman Gill and Hardik

Gambhir hints at keeping chop and change policy

Gautam Gambhir's penchant for shuffling cricketers has often come under sharp scrutiny, but the head coach insisted that "batting order is overrated" in white ball cricket, strongly hinting of him sticking to his trusted ways.

Forced by the combination, Ruturaj Gaikwad, a genuine opener, had to bat at No. 4 in the just-concluded ODI series, while all-rounder Washington Sundar has been a perennial floater in the line-up.

But Gambhir had his reasons. "I think in a one-day format, you should know the template that you

want to play with. I've always believed that in white-ball cricket, batting orders are very overrated, except the opening combination," said Gambhir in the post-match press conference here after India sealed a 2-1 ODI series win over the Proteas.

"In Test cricket, obviously, you've got to have a fixed batting order, but it (batting order) is very, very overrated (in white ball formats)," he added.

To further drive in his point, he gave the example of Washington who has been wearing different hats

in each match.

"See, you're talking about someone who's got 100 at Manchester, a 50 at Oval who averages, what, 40-plus in Tests. Sometimes, you've got to look at balance as well. I know it's tough on someone like Washi, but then I think he's done an incredible job, batting at No. 3, No.5, No. 8.

"That's the kind of character he is, and that's the kind of character we want in that dressing room, who are willing to do everything for the team with a smile on his face, which me as a batter knows how tough it is," said Gambhir.

Dalhor, Sarkar headline retained ISPL S3 player list

ISPL has introduced a player retention system, allowing each franchise to secure one key performer

MUMBAI

The Indian Street Premier League (ISPL), India's pioneering tennis-ball T10 tournament, has announced its list of retained players, including last edition's stars **Abhishek Dalhor** of Majhi Mumbai (retained for 26.65 lakh) and Jagannath Sarkar of Chennai Singams (retained for 20.02 lakh), as franchises look to form strong squads ahead of the highly anticipated Season 3 Player Auction scheduled for Tuesday in Mumbai.

For the first time, ISPL has introduced a player retention system, allowing each franchise to secure one key performer ahead of the auction. This new structure brings an added layer of strategy to Season 3, making the upcoming bidding process more competitive and impactful.

Abhishek Dalhor was one of the standout performers of the previous edition, delivering crucial contributions in high-pressure moments. His



growth has now been recognised at the IPL level with his selection as a net bowler for Kolkata Knight Riders in IPL 2025, underlining ISPL's role as a platform for talent progression. Jagannath Sarkar, meanwhile, emerged as a dependable top-order force for Chennai Singams, anchoring chases, accelerating when required, and repeatedly lifting his team in high-stakes games.

Other key players retained for the upcoming season include Bhavesh Pawar from Tigers of Kolkata (retained for 11.05 lakh) and Mansoor KL from Falcon Risers

Hyderabad (retained for 4.5 lakh). These players delivered consistent, impactful performances for their respective sides, and their retention underscores the franchises' confidence in them as central figures in their Season 3 strategies.

ISPL is backed by a strong leadership group featuring Core Committee Members Sachin Tendulkar, Ashish Shelar, Minal Amol Kale and Suraj Samat, whose collective vision has been central to the league's rapid rise, scale and popularity.

Suraj Samat, ISPL Core Committee Member and League Commissioner, said: "Introducing player retentions for the first time marks an important step in the evolution of the ISPL. These strategic decisions enhance competitive balance and build excitement for the Season 3 auction. With increased team purses, new franchises joining, and 408 players from 101 cities in contention, the stage is set for teams to assemble formidable line-ups.

How Yashasvi found inner Jais-Wall to add another arrow



India's Yashasvi Jaiswal celebrates his century during the third ODI against South Africa.

VISAKHAPATNAM

Over 0.6: Yashasvi Jaiswal shouldered the arms as Marco Jansen's tempting ball outside the off-stump found a safe passage to Quinton de Kock's gloves.

Jaiswal did not attempt to play the cut. Jansen had a knowing smile, and De Kock clapped in mock appreciation.

It was a significant moment in the series-deciding third ODI against South

Africa, which India eventually danced to a 9-wicket win. It was the earliest sign of Jaiswal's transformed mindset.

It was an open statement: Tonight he would not be playing that edgy 'Jais-ball' from ball one, and will make most of a chance that came his way because of an injury to Shubman Gill, the original opener and also the regular skipper of the side.

That edginess and urge to dominate bowlers had consumed Jaiswal at Ranchi and

Raipur, but here he eschewed all such thoughts.

When Proteas new ball bowlers tightened their lines, Jaiswal responded by leaving the ball and showing the patience to carry his bat. He seemed to have understood the rhythm of one-day cricket better now.

Head coach Gautam Gambhir touched on it.

"When you come into white-ball cricket from red-ball cricket, you think you have to bat aggressively. But you don't have to play

Kuldeep feels he is bad with DRS calls

Rohit was chuckling as he intervened on at least 3 occasions



Indian bowler Kuldeep Yadav appeal with success for the wicket of Lungi Ngidi.

ANI

VISAKHAPATNAM

Left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav admitted that he is "bad with DRS" appeals after his hilarious banter with senior pro Rohit Sharma formed a nice, little subplot of India's series-clinching victory against South Africa in the third ODI here.

Fielding at first slip, Rohit was chuckling as he intervened on at least three occasions to stop an excited Kuldeep from appealing animatedly and putting pressure on skipper KL Rahul to avail the Decision Review System (DRS) on Saturday.

"Clearly I am bad with DRS call. I feel that one DRS is reserved for me (laughs)," Kuldeep said in BCCI video.

"As a bowler, you always think that it's your wicket, it's out. But Rohit bhai, KL bhai, they are standing behind the wicket, so they have a better idea if the ball is missing the stumps, about the height and impact.

"But I always think that the

batter is out," he added.

Kuldeep tore through the South Africa middle-order with four wickets to help India bowl out the opposition for 270 after they looked good for a total in excess of 325.

Kuldeep said, "There are only two DRS, so you need to have those people around to guide you correctly, otherwise you could end wasting the DRS. So I must give credit to them too for ensuring that the DRS option is used wisely and we don't end up thinking that we have wasted them."

"Rohit bhai has been there always, he clearly asks me what do I think about the line.

"As far height is concerned, I can make out but with line and impact... that is a very big call."

While Kuldeep and Prasidh Krishna shone with the ball, Yashasvi Sharma slammed his maiden ODI hundred to win the player of the match award after Rohit and Virat Kohli too struck fluent half-centuries in a nine-wicket victory for the home team.

Ashes: Smith's brilliance propels Australia to victory

Set a target of 65 for victory, Australia raced to an eight-wicket win

BRISBANE

Steve Smith took a brilliant reflex catch to swing momentum just before Ben Stokes' defiant half-century ended in a rush of England wickets Sunday, then he hit the winning runs in the second cricket test to give Australia a 2-0 Ashes lead.

Day 4 was a tale of two captains. Set a target of 65 for victory after England was bowled out for 241 in the second innings, Australia raced to an eight-wicket win in 10 overs either side of a 20-minute interval as serious storms brewed to the southwest.

Jofra Archer was bowling around 150 kph (93 mph) under the lights and it only fired up Smith.

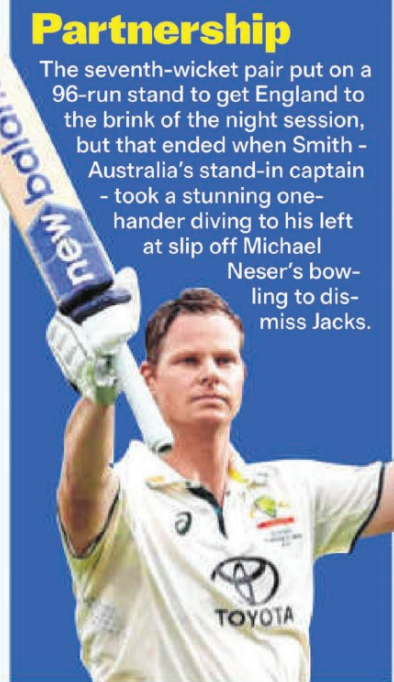
There were some theatrics involving the Australia captain and England's strike pace bowler, with Smith telling Archer to bowl faster after ducking a bouncer. He then ramped him for a boundary and hit the next ball for a six to bring up 1,000 test runs at the Gabba.

With Australia at 63-2 and needing just two runs to win, Smith hit a six to finish it and finished unbeaten on 23 from nine deliveries. Jake Weatherald was not out on 17.

Gus Atkinson took the wickets of Travis Head (22) and Marnus Labuschagne (3) as

Australia chased quick runs.

Tactical issues England has been criticized for its bowling attack failing to hit the right lengths consistently, for its dropped catches and for its top-order again throwing away wickets chasing fast



and furious runs.

But at least there was some encouragement for a few hours on a sunny Sunday afternoon at the Gabba, where Stokes reverted to some old-school test cricket and gave England a lead, albeit a small one.

Bazball shelved England skipper Stokes curbed his attacking instincts, dispensing with Bazball and pragmatically setting about reviving England's Ashes prospects.

England had resumed Sunday at 134-6, and took an hour and 36 minutes - 18.2 overs - to erase the first-innings deficit.

The Australian attack bowled a tight line and length and mixed it up with some short-pitch deliveries in an attempt to entice the usually aggressive England batters to have a go.

Stokes and Will Jacks (41) resisted the temptation for the

entire first session, knowing that a wicket would expose the tailenders. It was a completely different approach to England's usual attack-at-all costs mentality that has attracted wide criticism in the first two Ashes tests so far. The seventh-wicket pair put on 96-run stand.

Gambhir said.

Jaiswal's maiden ODI hundred here pre-validated Gambhir's view.

The 23-year-old's first fifty came in 75 balls, while getting some expert guidance from Rohit Sharma at the non-striker's end.

But the next 50 runs arrived in 35 balls, as the left-hander played a more familiar game.

In the phase between 22 and 26.1 overs, Jaiswal faced 11 balls and struck six boundaries to make a total 27 runs.