

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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

## CJI Surya Kant described the work of judges as extremely stressful

New Delhi

Chief Justice Surya Kant said on Saturday that judges should engage in recreational activities to recharge themselves. The CJI stated that judges work long hours and are extremely stressful. Given the nature of their work, they should engage in recreational activities. Recreational



activities include activities that people engage in to refresh their body

and mind. These could include sports, yoga, meditation, swimming,

or walking. Speaking to the media at the inaugural function of the All India Judges Badminton Championship, the CJI said that judges should engage in recreational activities appropriate to their age. "Judges' working hours are long and their work is stressful. They have to sit for long hours. Therefore, all judges should

engage in recreational activities and make it a habit. This is essential for judges to recharge," he said. Justice Surya Kant said, "The large number of High Court judges participating in this championship shows that they are conscious about their health." Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal and Union Minister Kiren Rijiju

were also present at the event. This two-day sporting event is being held at the Thyagaraj Sports Complex in Delhi. Former CJI Justice BR Gavai and Justice Vikram Nath will preside over the closing ceremony and prize distribution. The event is being organised by former international badminton player Avantika Deka.

## It is not in our nature to quarrel: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat



Nagpur

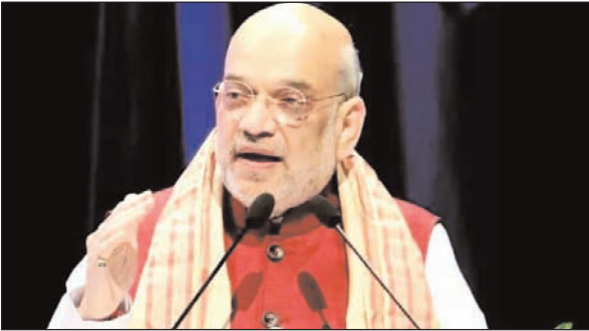
Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat said during an event on Saturday that quarreling or arguing is not in our country's nature, and that brotherhood and collective harmony have always been India's tradition. Addressing an event in Nagpur, Bhagwat said that India's idea of nationalism is fundamentally different from the Western one. "Quarrels are not in our country's nature." The RSS chief said, "We don't argue with anyone. We stay away from disputes. Quarrels are not in our country's nature. Living together and promoting brother-

hood has been our tradition." Bhagwat said, "Other parts of the world were formed in conflict-ridden conditions. Once an opinion is formed there, every other opinion is rejected. They close the door to other opinions and start calling it 'ism.'" Mohan Bhagwat said that India's idea of nationalism is fundamentally different from the Western interpretation. He said, "They (Western countries) don't understand our idea of the nation." So they started calling it nationalism, but our idea of a nation is different from the Western one. Whether it is a country or not... we have no differences on that.

## Organized drug crime will be curbed: Amit Shah

Raipur

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, while inaugurating the three-day DGP-IG conference held in Naya Raipur, said that the Modi government has provided a permanent solution to the problems of Maoism, the Northeast, and Jammu and Kashmir. Organized drug crime will be curbed across the country. He said that these areas will be developed at par with other parts of the country. Shah stressed the need for 360-degree action against organized drug crime spread across the country. He directed the state police to take strict action against interstate and international gangs in collaboration with the NCB. He said that we must develop a system that ensures that narcotics smugglers and criminals do not find even



an inch of space in the country. Amit Shah said this about Maoist violence. The conference discussed important issues such as internal security, law and order, terrorism, Maoism, and the elimination of narcotics networks. Shah said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this conference has emerged as a major platform for internal security solutions and policy formulation. Referring to the decisive steps taken by the central government to eradicate Maoist violence, he said that the country

will be completely free from this problem before the next DGP-IG conference. In 2014, the number of Maoist-affected districts was 126, which has now reduced to only 11. India's policing will be established as the most modern system. Referring to the stringent laws enacted by the central government, Shah said that the NIA and UAPA laws have been strengthened and three new criminal laws have been implemented. He expressed confidence that after the implementation of these new laws, India's policing will be estab-

### Meeting continues on the theme of Developed India - Safe India

Raipur

The second day of the All India DGP-IGP Conference, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, began on Saturday morning. National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and top officials from police and security agencies across the country are present.

lished as the most modern system in the world. Citing the extensive raids conducted across the country after the PFI ban as an example of excellent coordination between the central and state governments, he said that special attention is being paid to intelligence accuracy.



**Gorakhpur.** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath assured the people who came to Janta Darshan seeking financial assistance for the treatment of serious diseases that they should get treatment in upgraded hospitals without any worry, the government will provide them with full financial help. Whatever amount will be spent on the treatment.

## Rail Connect app and website servers down, ticket booking halted! Millions of passengers

New Delhi

The server of IRCTC's Rail Connect app and official website suddenly went down, bringing ticket booking to a complete halt. Millions of passengers are facing



difficulties booking new tickets, checking ticket status, and using other services due to the server outage. This sudden technical glitch has caused significant inconvenience to users planning their travels.

## Punjab: Violence amid strike: Case filed against PRCTC employees



Sangrur

Police have registered a case against 10 members of the Punjab Roadways, PUN-BUS, and PRTC Contract Workers Union, who protested outside the Sangrur bus stand on Friday, under serious charges including attempt to murder and obstruction of duty. It is alleged that the union mem-

bers poured petrol on SHO Dhuri, Inspector Jasvir Singh, and set him on fire. All the accused named in the case were arrested at the protest site. In this regard, SHO Jasvir's statement was recorded at the City Police Station, Dhuri, stating that at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, union officials and workers blocked government buses parked inside the bus stand

## Children should stay with their parents after divorce: Supreme Court

New Delhi

The national capital, Delhi, is once again shrouded in a thick blanket of toxic smog. The air quality index has reached the "very poor" category in various parts of the city, posing a serious threat to the health of residents. According to the Central Pollution Control Board, the AQI level has risen dangerously in major areas like ITO, Ghazipur, Anand Vihar, and Dhaula Kuan. Images



from various parts of the city have emerged, showing how the toxic smog has engulfed the entire city. Visibility has dropped significantly, and people are experiencing breathing difficulties in the morning and evening. AQI

levels in major areas ITO - 345 AQI Ghazipur - 358 AQI Anand Vihar - 358 AQI Dhaula Kuan - 372 AQI Last Friday morning, a thick blanket of smog and light fog enveloped Delhi and its surrounding areas, dis-

rupting normal life. The presence of smog in the sky significantly reduced visibility, causing difficulties for people in carrying out their daily activities. A large number of people were seen wearing masks during this time, and this situation proved particularly troublesome for patients suffering from respiratory diseases. The air quality in Delhi has deteriorated for the past several days. On Friday, the air quality index was recorded at 369.

### Gangster Anmol Bishnoi's custody extended by seven days

New Delhi

The National Investigation Agency's special court has extended the judicial custody of gangster Anmol Bishnoi for seven days. This significant decision was made during a special hearing at the NIA headquarters. Anmol Bishnoi had filed an application with the court, expressing fears for his life. Upon his arrival in India from the United States, the NIA team arrested Anmol and produced him in the Patiala House Court, where he was remanded to 11 days' remand. Anmol Bishnoi, brother of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi.

## The custody of four accused, Shaheen-Muzammil, has been extended

New Delhi

The National Investigation Agency's special court has extended the remand period of four accused in the Red Fort terror attack case by ten days. These accused include Dr. Muzammil, Dr. Adeel, Dr. Shaheen, and Mufti Irfan Ahmed, among others. This court's decision will help the investigating agency further investigate the case and inves-



tigate other possible links. Following the completion of the 10-day remand period, the NIA produced seven accused in the Patiala House Court. The NIA team is interrogating Dr. Shaheen. The NIA team arrived in Faridabad last Thursday

night with Dr. Shaheen, who serves as a female commander of the terrorist organization Jaish-e-Mohammed. The team questioned her at Al Falah University. Previously, they had brought Dr. Muzammil to Faridabad for questioning. Sources indicate that the investigating agency may now bring Dr. Adeel for questioning as well. The NIA team brought Dr. Shaheen to Faridabad.

## Preparations for Khichdi Mela to be completed by December 20: Yogi

Gorakhpur

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to ensure that all work related to the world-famous Khichdi Mela, to be held at the Gorakhnath Temple on Makar Sankranti, is completed by December 20th. The safety, convenience, and comfort of the devotees attending the Khichdi Mela should be a priority. Ensure that the devotees



do not face any difficulties. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath held a review meeting with the mayor and officials regarding the Khichdi Mela preparations in the Gorakhnath Temple's

auditorium on Saturday morning. On this occasion, the Chief Minister stated that the Khichdi Mela at the Gorakhnath Temple is associated with the faith of followers of the Sanatan

Dharma not only in eastern Uttar Pradesh but also in Bihar, Nepal, and across the country and the world. In view of this, all basic amenities should be arranged at the fair to provide better facilities to the devotees. The fair will be broadcast live on Doordarshan and All India Radio, allowing those who are unable to attend the fair for various reasons to participate virtually.



## The District Health Committee meeting concluded under the chairmanship of the District Magistrate

The District Magistrate directed the Medical Superintendents to work diligently for the effective implementation of all programs run in the district under the

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**Prayagraj.** The District Health Committee (governing body) meeting concluded on Saturday in the Sangam Auditorium under the chairmanship of District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma. During the meeting, the District Magistrate directed the Medical Superintendents to work diligently for the effective implementation of all programs run in the district under the National Health Mission. Reviewing Janani Suraksha, the District Magistrate directed the Medical Superintendents of Ramnagar, Bahadurpur, Kaudihar, Saidabad, and Dhanupur, the blocks with the lowest progress, to register pregnant women through ASHAs and ensure their delivery in government hospitals.

Expressing displeasure over reports that approximately 43 percent of pregnant women in urban areas were not reporting their deliveries compared to the registered pregnant women, the District Magistrate directed private hospitals to obtain 100 percent delivery reports. The District Magistrate directed that HRP women be identified



and their cesarean deliveries be performed free of charge at First Referral Units (FRUs). The District Magistrate directed the Chief Medical Officer to report all maternal deaths, review them, and take necessary corrective action. The District Magistrate directed that publicity activities be conducted to motivate men to increase their participation in the family planning program. The District Magistrate directed that the Medical Superintendent and Deputy Chief Medical Officer conduct surprise inspections and ensure that disciplinary action is taken against CHOs who are absent without notice.

The District Magistrate informed all MOICs that the performance of some of the ASHAs assigned to the SIR is

unsatisfactory. The performance of SIRs in all three assembly constituencies of the city is unsatisfactory. He asked all the MOICs to motivate the ASHAs and speed up the work and complete the SIR work within the stipulated time period, as now only a short time is left for the date of submission of forms under the SIR process. On this occasion, Chief Medical Officer Dr AK Tiwari, all Additional/Deputy Chief Medical Officers, all Chief/Chief Medical Superintendents/Superintendents, Medical Superintendents, Medical Officers in Charge of Urban Primary Health Centres, SMOs, District Programme Managers, NHM along with representatives of allied departments and institutions participated.

## PWD Marks Encroachments in Dibiyapur, Action Planned Against 300 Shops and Houses

Auraiya

The Public Works Department (PWD) on Thursday intensified its drive to remove encroachments along the Bilraiyan-Panwadi highway on Bela Road in Dibiyapur town by carrying out fresh measurements based on revenue maps and marking encroached structures with red paint. PWD Assistant Engineer Bharat Vijay Singh and Junior Engineer Amit Shukla, along with their team, conducted the on-site survey. Measurements were taken from the center of the road up to 11 meters, 12 meters and at some locations up to 14 meters on both sides. Shops and residential structures found within the encroached area were marked with red signs, creating panic among property owners in the locality. Earlier, the PWD had already served notices to owners of about 300 identified shops and houses falling under



alleged encroachment. The issuance of these notices had caused unrest among traders and residents. Officials said the current action is being carried out in compliance with orders passed by the Allahabad High Court in Public Interest Litigation Nos. 255/2019 and 350/2128 (Maan Singh Rajput vs State of Uttar Pradesh and Others). The district administration is required to submit its compliance report before the High Court. Assistant Engineer Bharat Vijay Singh stated that the marking has been done strictly as

per the revenue department maps in accordance with the High Court directions. Executive Engineer Amar Singh clarified that although the department had conducted measurements earlier as well, the present demarcation based on updated revenue records will be treated as final and all further action will proceed on this basis. With the red markings now in place, large-scale demolition action is expected in the coming days, intensifying anxiety among shopkeepers and homeowners in the affected area.

## Labourer Dies at Auraiya Grain Market, Family Alleges Murder, Protest Erupts at Mandi Gate

Auraiya

Tension prevailed at the Auraiya grain market on Thursday after the death of a labourer, with the family alleging that he was brutally beaten to death by a grain trader. Enraged relatives placed the body at the mandi gate and staged a protest, demanding strict action against the accused. The deceased has been identified as Jalaluddin, a resident of Chirhau village. According to family members, Jalaluddin had gone to work at the commission shop of Raghav Gupta alias Pappu in the grain market. When he did not return home till evening, the family began searching for him and later found him lying dead at the shop. The victim son alleged that the shop owner assaulted his father severely, leading to his death and later fled from the spot. Based on this allegation, the family accused the trader of murder and demanded his immediate arrest. However, trader Pappu denied the allegations, stating that Jalaluddin had been working at his shop for the past 15 days and suddenly fell ill during work. He claimed that the family took Jalaluddin to the hospital, where doctors declared him dead. Following the incident, agitated relatives placed the body at the mandi gate and blocked movement, demanding police action. Upon receiving information, Kotwali In-charge Rajkumar, along with a police team, reached the spot, pacified the protesters and initiated a detailed investigation. Police officials said that the matter is being probed from all angles and further action will be taken after the post-mortem report and inquiry findings.

## Auraiya SP Abhishek Bharti Instills Fear Among Criminals, Gains Public Trust

Auraiya

Within just two months of assuming charge, Auraiya Superintendent of Police Abhishek Bharti has made a strong impact through his modern, firm and justice-oriented policing style. While his decisive action has created fear among criminals, his approachable attitude and prompt justice delivery have significantly increased his popularity among the people of the district. After taking charge on 19 September, SP Bharti has successfully cracked several major criminal cases and ensured the arrest of hardened criminals, including through police encounters. The strict action



has led to a visible decline in crime, with several offenders either being sent to jail or fleeing the district fearing police action. SP Bharti also gives top priority to public grievances. He personally listens to complainants at his office with seriousness and sensitivity, ensuring timely

justice. Under the public hearing system, he reportedly spends 6 to 8 hours daily addressing citizens' problems, many of which are resolved within 24 hours—a practice that has earned widespread appreciation. Recently, the Superintendent of Police was also seen conducting inspections on a motorcycle, a move that drew public attention and added to his proactive image. He has launched strong initiatives for women empowerment, establishing separate women help desks at every police station for faster redressal of women-related grievances.

Special instructions have also been issued at all police stations to ensure

respectful treatment and quick resolution of problems faced by senior citizens. To encourage direct communication with the public, SP Bharti has made his official mobile number public, allowing citizens to reach out directly with their concerns. All station house officers have been directed to function strictly in accordance with government guidelines, intensify routine patrolling and maintain heightened vigilance during the ongoing wedding season, particularly in towns prone to traffic congestion. To maintain law and order across the district, CCTV surveillance is being actively monitored at all police stations.

## SDM Jagmohan Gupta Reviews SIR Work in Aliganj, 70 Per Cent Progress Achieved

Etah

A detailed review meeting of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) work was held on Friday at the Aliganj Tehsil auditorium under the chairmanship of Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Jagmohan Gupta. Booth Level Officers (BLO) and other concerned staff participated in the meeting, during which the progress of the work was thoroughly reviewed. The SDM informed that the SIR work in the tehsil



area is progressing at a rapid pace and nearly 70 per cent of the work has been completed so far. During the review, it was also reported that a total of six BLO have completed their assigned tasks in full. Appreciating their performance, the SDM directed other BLO and staff to ensure comple-

tion of the remaining work within the stipulated time frame. Emphasising the importance of the SIR process, the SDM made it clear that any kind of negligence would not be tolerated. He instructed all officials to remain actively engaged in the field and expedite the pending work. He further directed that door-to-door verification at the booth level must be ensured so that there are no complications in the upcoming electoral procedures.

## Youth Found Hanging in Auraiya, Body Discovered by Children, Police Send for Post-Mortem



Auraiya

A 25-year-old man allegedly died by suicide by hanging himself under unknown circumstances in Yakubpur village of the Bela police station area on morning. The body was discovered by children, who raised an alarm and immediately informed the police. The deceased has been identified as Jeevan, son of late Nandlal. He was a daily wage labourer and the

youngest among five brothers—Satendra, Kallu, Pramod and Pradeep. According to information, a recent death in the family had occurred at Naila Katra in Rasulabad, Kanpur Dehat, where Jeevan maternal aunt passed away. The children of the household reportedly saw Jeevan hanging and alerted the family and police. On receiving the information, Bela Station House Officer Ganga Das Gautam, along with Sub-

Inspector Upendra Kumar, Sub-Inspector Santosh Kumar and Sub-Inspector Birjanand, reached the spot with the police team. The body was brought down, legal formalities were completed and the shav was sent for post-mortem examination to Chicholi, Auraiya. Police officials stated that the cause of the suicide is yet to be ascertained and further investigation is underway.

## An AAP delegation met with the family of deceased BLO Vijay Kumar

Lucknow

The death of Vijay Kumar Verma, a Shiksha Mitra and BLO resident of Sarawan in the Malihabad area of Lucknow district, due to a brain hemorrhage has exposed the state administrative system and the chaos of election duty. Constant phone calls, the intense pressure of SIR duty and unplanned workload took the life of a Shiksha Mitra. On Friday, an Aam Aadmi Party delegation met with the victim's family and learned about the incident from his wife, Sangeeta Verma, on the spot. The delegation offered condolences and assured them of justice. Sangita Verma, the victim, stated that her husband had been under immense mental stress for the past several days. She stated that the administration neither provided assistance with his treatment nor did any official offer condolences after his death. The government



and administration silence on this entire matter is most painful. On this occasion, delegation member and Ayodhya State President Vinay Patel stated that this is not an isolated incident. At least 25 such BLO have lost their lives across the country due to the pressure of their duties. This sends a clear message that election duty and the SIR process are not safe for employees and must be immediately reconsidered. The party stated that these deaths are the result of negligence, pressure and an insensitive government system and will not be dismissed as a normal occurrence. State spokesperson Prince Soni stated that the pressure of

SIR duty has now become not a government order but a death warrant for employees. He said that those responsible for strengthening democracy are the ones falling prey to the system chaos and pressure. He demanded the government immediately fix responsibility, provide compensation and review the SIR process. Lucknow District President Iram Rizvi stated that SIR duty is no longer a responsibility, but has become an unbearable pressure imposed on employees. He added that this is not the first incident, and the government silence is the ultimate insensitivity. The Aam Aadmi Party demanded justice.

## Drivers protest at Jantar Mantar, raising voice against foreign cab companies

**Delhi-Jantar Mantar** Thousands of drivers engaged in cab services in Delhi-NCR gathered at Jantar Mantar today and held a peaceful but vigorous protest. Drivers allege that the policies of foreign companies like Ola,

Uber and Rapido are against their interests, leading to a significant decline in earnings, arbitrary commissions, lack of security and unequal fare distribution. Protesting drivers raised slogans: "Go away, Ola, Uber, Rapido, take Bharat Taxi—adopt Swadeshi!" The driver community says that foreign platforms generate significant revenue through their hard work, but they do not receive their fair share. Economic pressure and insecurity have forced drivers to take to the streets to raise their voices. The drivers' main demands include a guarantee of fair and respectable fares, increasing drivers' share by reducing commissions; implementing a strong and transparent policy for driver safety and promoting driver-friendly platforms by encouraging the indigenous model, "Bharat Taxi." The drivers warned that "Bharat Taxi Take – Swadeshi Adoption" is not just a slogan, but a fight for their rights and self-respect. If the problems are not resolved soon, this movement could take a larger form in the coming days.





# A grand tribute meeting was held in memory of Martyr Krishnanand Rai

His indomitable courage and commitment to public service were remembered

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**Ghazipur.** The Martyr Memorial Ground under the Kotwali Muhammadabad police station of the district became a shining example of dedication and respect on Saturday, when a massive tribute meeting was held on the death anniversary of former MLA and popular public leader Martyr Krishnanand Rai. The massive presence once again echoed his immortal message of struggle, sacrifice, and patriotism. The program began with the laying of floral tributes to the portraits of Martyr Krishnanand Rai and his six companions who attained martyrdom with him. The patriotic slogans echoing in the auditorium filled the atmosphere with pride and emotion. Union Textiles Minister and MP Giriraj Singh and Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brijesh Pathak were present as chief guests on the occasion. In his address, Deputy Chief Minister Brijesh Pathak said, "The



bravery with which Krishnanand Rai faced terror and injustice for the safety of the people is an inspiration for generations to come." He also praised Alka Rai's courage and her unwavering commitment to justice. The program was chaired by Captain Anirudh Rai and conducted by

Shashank Rai. Former Minister Anand Swaroop, Upendra Tiwari, former MLA Surendra Singh, Rajya Sabha member Sangeeta Balwant, Neeraj Shekhar, Dr. Sanand Singh, Piyush Rai, Abhinav Sinha, and numerous public representatives and social workers were present on the stage. In memory of the martyrs, blankets were distributed to the needy, conveying a message of service and cooperation. Finally, the meeting chairman thanked all the attendees and concluded the program. The tribute meeting not only commemorated the indomitable courage of martyr Krishnanand Rai, but also inspired society to move forward on the path of truth, justice, and unity.

# A traffic awareness program was held at St. Francis Senior Secondary School Berua

Traffic Month 2025 Campaign: Road Safety, Widespread Awareness on Golden Hour

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**Bharawari, Kaushambi.** Superintendent of Police Rajesh Kumar and Additional District Magistrate Mrs. Shalini Prabhakar organized a traffic awareness program at St. Francis Senior Secondary School, Berua Charwa on Saturday, providing information about traffic rules and road safety. On this occasion, officers and staff from the civil police, traffic police, school principal Jitendra Pratap Singh, manager Gerald P. D'Souza, teachers, parents, students, public dignitaries, and media personnel were present. First, everyone present was administered an oath to follow traffic rules. Addressing the students, school staff, parents, and others present, the Superintendent of Police urged them to follow traffic rules and explained in detail the damage caused by road accidents. The Superintendent of Police emphasized the following important points: Do not



drive two-wheelers without a helmet; do not carry more than two passengers on a two-wheeler; wear a seat belt when driving a four-wheeler; carry vehicle and driving license documents with you or upload them to DigiLocker; give way to ambulances and fire trucks immediately; do not drive on the wrong side of the road, at high speed, or

while intoxicated; do not talk on a mobile phone while driving. The Superintendent of Police also explained the importance of the Golden Hour, stating that the first hour after a road accident is called the Golden Hour, during which the chances of saving a person's life increase significantly if timely medical assistance is provided. Immediate

assistance to the injured person can save their life, so call the 108 ambulance and 112 police helplines without delay. Giving detailed information about the "Pahgir/Rahveer Yojana", it was told that in case of a road accident, if a passerby or a common citizen takes the injured person to the hospital immediately after the accident i.e. in the golden hour (first hour), then he is honored by the government by providing an incentive amount of Rs. 25 thousand and a certificate and the person helping will not be called for any kind of legal action. During the program, students gave information about traffic rules through drama/dance and song and also gave the message of following traffic rules. In the same sequence, the traffic police gave detailed information about traffic rules/signals. After that, pamphlets related to traffic rules were distributed by the traffic police and reflectors were pasted on vehicles and posters were put up at various places.

# Ghazipur Police Take Major Action: One Injured, Four Arrested in Encounter

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**Ghazipur.** Five notorious wanted criminals were injured and arrested in a police encounter by the Zamania police team. They recovered a .32 bore pistol, one empty .32 bore cartridge, one live .32 bore cartridge, one illegal .315 bore pistol, and one live .315 bore cartridge. As part of the ongoing campaign against crime and criminals, the Zamania Police Station in-charge Inspector and Sub-Inspector Brijeshwar Yadav, along with their



team, were patrolling near the Elaichipur Village Railway Station when they spotted five individuals walking at a high speed from Elaichipur Village towards the Zamania Railway Station. When an attempt was made to chase and stop the suspect, the accused Arbaaz

Ali, son of Waliullah, resident of village Khijirpur Alinagar, Police Station Zamania, Ghazipur, was arrested and tried to escape by firing at the police. In self-defense, the police team fired back. In this incident, one accused Arbaaz Ali, son of Waliullah, resident of

village Khijirpur Alinagar, Police Station Zamania, Ghazipur, was shot below the knee of his right leg. One .32 bore pistol, one empty cartridge of .32 bore and one live cartridge of .32 bore were recovered from him. One illegal country-made pistol of .315 bore and one live cartridge of .315 bore were recovered from the possession of the second accused Shamsher Ali, son of Waliullah, resident of the above mentioned village.

A total of 05 accused were arrested as per rules in connection with

the above case. The injured accused was immediately sent for treatment adopting a humanitarian approach and four other criminals were arrested from the spot. A case has been registered in connection with the police encounter and recovery and legal action is being taken. In the encounter team/arrest team, Police Station Incharge Zamania Ram Sajan Nagar along with his team and Outpost Incharge Deoria along with his team of Police Station Zamania were present.

# A man convicted of murdering a married woman has been sentenced to eight years of rigorous imprisonment

The court imposed a fine of 18,000 rupees on the murderer

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**Kaushambi** On June 15, 2023, in the Karari police station area, a married woman was strangled to death by her in-laws for demanding additional dowry. During the trial, the court found the accused guilty of murder and sentenced him to 8 years of rigorous imprisonment. The court also imposed a fine of Rs. 18,000.

On the information of Sushila Devi, mother of the deceased



married woman, FIR No. 131/23 under sections 498A/304B of the Indian Penal Code and 3/4 of the DP Act was registered at the Karari police station against the accused Sunil Kumar, son of Ram Lakhan, resident of village Ekaura, police station Karari.

After investigation, the

charge sheet was filed in the court. The trial of the case took place in the court of ADJ FTC-1, district Kaushambi. After hearing the statements of both the parties and the arguments of the lawyers, the court found the accused guilty of murder. The government lawyer demanded the harshest punishment for the murderer. The judge sentenced the accused of murder to 8 years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 18,000. Has been punished.

# A 10-day confluence of handicrafts and culture at NCZCC

National Crafts Fair begins December 1 Padma Shri Malini Awasthi will inaugurate the cultural evening

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**Prayagraj.** Making the National Crafts Fair plastic-free is not just an initiative, but a responsibility towards our future. We humbly request all artisans and visitors to join us in this campaign to protect the environment and promote a clean and green culture by completely abandoning plastic. Centre Director Sudesh Sharma stated this at a press conference held on Saturday regarding the National Crafts Fair. The North Central Zone Cultural Centre, Prayagraj, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, is once again ready for a grand gathering of art, craft, and culture. Under the "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat" initiative, the National Crafts Fair is being held this year from December 1 to December 10. This 32nd Crafts Fair is set to be a major attraction for the people of Prayagraj, showcasing the art and cuisine of the entire country. 156 stalls from 20 states, national award-winning artisans will be the highlight. This year's fair will feature a total of 156 stalls representing



senting artisans from 20 states. Of these, 129 stalls will be dedicated to exquisite craft products, while 27 will be dedicated to traditional and delicious cuisines from various states. The fair will showcase a wide variety of craft products: silk suits from Karnataka, hand embroidery from Madhya Pradesh, silk textiles and shawls from Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Bihar, and Jaipuri quilts. Hyderabad's famous pearls, Bengal's paddy jewelry, and stone jewelry. Handicrafts include stone carvings, mosaic glass, and terracotta pottery from Rajasthan, brass utensils from Moradabad, wooden toys, and deity costumes. Phulkari and juttis from Punjab, leather crafts, mats, dry flowers, and bedsheets from various states, and products from Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh will be on display. Eight artisans who

have received national awards for their signature products (such as Phulkari, Banarasi sarees, Jamdani sarees, Chikankari, etc.) will be key attractions. Approximately 650 artists will deliver colorful performances. The fair's cultural stage will be filled with top and regional artists from across the country. Renowned folk singer Padmasree Malini Awasthi will open the cultural evening. Ghazal singer Bhupendra Shukla and Qawwali singer Yusuf Nizami will perform. Poets and writers will gather. A special gathering for poets will be held on December 9th. Regional Arts: Various folk artists from Assam, Rajasthan, Haryana, Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh will showcase the regional folk arts of their states. Sharad Anurag from Mahoba will sing Alha, while Anshika Rajotiya will perform Sufi songs.

# Youth power in Muhammadabad: Grand Rural Sports League held, over 800 athletes participated

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Ghazipur.** The Uttar Pradesh Rural Sports League, organized by the Youth Welfare Department, was inaugurated on Friday at Ashta Shaheed Inter College in the Kotwali Muhammadabad area of the district. This mega sports event, organized under the Honorable MLA Sports Competition, began with the chief guest, Block Chief Awadhesh Rai, flagging off the 100-meter race. District coordinator Rajan Prajapati, BDO Yashwant Kumar Rao, District Youth Welfare Officer Dilip Kumar, Sports Officer Arvind Yadav, social worker Vinod Rai, and several other dignitaries were present. Over 800 participants enthusiastically participated in various



This mega sports event, organized under the Honorable MLA Sports Competition, began with the chief guest, Block Chief Awadhesh Rai, flagging off the 100-meter race

competitions, including athletics, team games, and wrestling, showcasing their skills. Key Results of the Race Competition: Sub-Junior Boys 100m: Arun Rajbhar (First), 800m: Brijesh Pal (First) Sub-Junior Girls 100m: Preeti Kumari (First) 800m: Vidushi Pandey (First) Junior Boys 100m: Indrajeet Pal, 200m: Suraj Yadav, 400m: Ramprakash

Chaurasia, 1500m: Sanjeet Yadav (First) Junior Girls, 100m: Khushi Giri, 200m and 400m: Sonanti Kumari Bind 800m: Anshu (First) Senior Boys, 100m: Angad Kumar Bharti, 200m: Radheshyam Bind, 400m: Ankit Yadav, 1500m: Mithilesh Bind (First) Senior Girls, 100m: Reena Kannaujiya (First), Second: Soni Chaudhary Third: Archana, Team

Winners in Volleyball, Sub-Junior, and Senior Competitions: Hata, Junior: Sherpur Kabaddi: Sub-Junior (Boys): Mohammadabad, Junior: Tiwaripur Senior: Raghubarganj, Sub-Junior (Girls): Amrita Chauhan and Team Junior Girls: Hata, Kho-Kho (Girls) Overall Winner: Ashta Shaheed Inter College, Junior 57 kg: Priyanshi Chauhan. The event concluded

with the college principal, Shivshankar Giri, distributing prizes to the winning participants. Nodal Officer Ravi Shankar Prasad, Waqar Khan, Chandrakant Yadav, Kishanchand, Ajit Kumar Pandey, Diwakar Yadav, Manoj, Pramod, and Shivanand, along with many others, were present. The sports festival infused new enthusiasm and energy among the youth of the region.





## Editorial

### India's reliance on imported technology despite its strong indigenous

It delivered two Ming-class submarines to Bangladesh in 2017, gifted a P625 frigate to Sri Lanka in 2019, and committed to exporting Yuan-class submarines to Thailand. Although the Thai deal encountered difficulties when Germany refused to supply key propulsion components. Thailand decided to proceed with the acquisition, underscoring China's persistence in maintaining its naval export commitments. Additionally, Pakistan is set to acquire at least eight Hangor-class submarines and other naval equipment from Beijing, further enhancing China's presence in the region. India has increasingly aligned itself with Western naval powers to address maritime challenges through collaborative efforts. France was among its earliest Western partners, and the countries' cooperation has grown stronger over time. India also participates in joint maritime missions with European nations and European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) initiatives such as Operation Atlanta and Aspides. Furthermore, India contributes to significant maritime security dialogues such as the Coordinated Maritime Presence (CMP) and Enhancing Security Cooperation In And With Asia (ESIWA). India's 2023 inclusion in the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), led by the US Central Command, underscores its dedication to enhancing collaborative security in the western Indian Ocean. The IFC-IOR exemplifies India's commitment to collective security, even though it remains a preliminary step toward a more robust maritime security framework. Advancing to the next level will require India to engage in the technically complex task of real-time information sharing through secure legal frameworks beyond Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT). The Quad's Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) initiative highlights the challenges in achieving seamless data-sharing capabilities. To counter hybrid threats and protect critical infrastructure, India must prioritise sharing vital intelligence and deploying unmanned systems for coordinated surveillance. Strengthening such partnerships will bolster India's naval capabilities and contribute to broader maritime security across the Indian Ocean Region. The commissioning of new naval platforms marks a significant milestone for India but also highlights persistent challenges, particularly in achieving technological self-reliance in engine manufacturing. Although the INS Surat, INS Nilgiri, and INS Vagsheer were designed by India's Warship Design Bureau and built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, their engines were procured from foreign manufacturers, exposing a critical dependence on external sources. INS Surat, the fourth and final ship of the P15B Guided Missile Destroyer Project, employs a Combined Gas Turbine and Gas Turbine (COGAG) propulsion system. This system uses Me6E and DT-59 reversible engines sourced from Ukraine's Zorya Mashproekt, a key supplier for India's frontline warships. Despite the ongoing war in Ukraine, India has continued to rely on Zorya, underscoring the critical nature of this dependence. To secure the supply chain, Bharat Forge acquired a 51 per cent stake in Zorya's India arm in 2023. Similarly, INS Nilgiri, the first ship of the P17A Stealth Frigate Project, launched in 2019, uses a Combined Diesel and Gas (CODAG) propulsion system. This system incorporates LM2500 engines from General Electric in the US and MAN diesel engines from Germany, further emphasising India's reliance on imported technology despite its strong indigenous design capabilities. INS Vagsheer, the sixth and final submarine of the P75 Scorpene project developed in collaboration with France, also depends.



With tax revenue growth slowing in the last few months, the possibility of an upside earlier expected on the revenue front may be receding rapidly. Revenue expenditure is also rising at a rate higher than the budgeted 6 per cent. If the fiscal deficit target of 4.9 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) has to be met for 2024-25, which the government must in view of the uncertainties and challenges emerging both domestically and globally, the finance ministry may see in the composition of the current year's capex a sliver of hope. The finance ministry should not spend ~0.83 trillion for equity infusion into BSNL. Instead, it should ask the telephone company to raise resources from the market. The ministry should also desist from spending the remaining ~0.6 trillion earmarked for capital allocation to new schemes. Saving about ~1.43 trillion (a little less than half a percent of GDP) will be a cushion against other expenditure slippages and revenue shortfall. Not too many tears would be shed for a squeeze on capex if the hit is primarily on infusing equity into a state-owned enterprise and on new schemes that are yet to be announced. Quite ironically, a slowdown in the government's capex may well turn out to be an opportunity.

capital expenditure (capex) continues to be a cause for concern. Of course, the extent of its decline has reduced somewhat — from 35 per cent at the end of the



first quarter of the current financial year to 15 per cent at the end of six months. But the latest number for the April-November 2024-25 period shows that the Union government's capex was still 12 per cent lower than what it was in the same period of 2023-24. Instead of aiming for the targeted 17 per cent growth to ~11.11 trillion in capex for 2024-25, the government will have to strive hard to at least cross the figure of ~9.48 trillion reached last year. What has led to this decline? A widely held view is that the seven-phase general elections, which began on April 19 and ended on June 1 last year, caused a slowdown in capex. But if that indeed is the reason, the decline in capex in the first quarter should have been reversed in the second quarter of 2024-25. And certainly, the first two months of the third quarter should have raised the trajectory of capex growth to a higher level. There has been some improvement, but a 12 per cent decline in the April-November 2024-25 period is

no comfort. Look at the slightly different trajectory seen in the Union government's revenue expenditure growth during the same period. The Budget for 2024-25 had projected a rise of over 6 per cent to ~37.1 trillion in revenue expenditure. At the end of June 2024, the growth was just about 2 per cent, but it has been rising since then, reaching 4.2 per cent by the end of the first six months of 2024-25 and climbing even higher to 7.8 per cent during April-November 2024-25. So, if revenue expenditure has gained momentum, why has capex failed to follow suit? A close analysis of the government's capex numbers presents an interesting picture. Over 90 per cent of the Centre's total capex during 2024-25 was accounted for by just six sectors — roads, railways, defence, telecom, transfer to states and new schemes. Their share in total capex in 2023-24 was a little less at 87 per cent. But the 12 per cent decline in the first eight months of 2024-25 is primarily the result of a

marked slowdown in only two of these six areas — roads and defence, which accounted for over 40 per cent of the total capex outlay for 2024-25. Capex on the construction of roads and highways fell by 16 per cent, while defence saw a decline of 15 per cent. This is serious and has worrying implications for both infrastructure and defence. The problem of slowing expenditure in these two areas should not have been difficult to fix. Either effective monitoring of spending is lacking, or there are serious problems with project execution, reflecting the poor expenditure-absorbing capacity of these two sectors. This is borne out by a relatively good performance of the Indian Railways, which accounts for over 22 per cent of this year's capex. At ~1.68 trillion, the Indian Railways' capex is just about 1 per cent lower than its spending during April-November 2023. With regard to the transfer of special assistance as loans to states for their capex and additional central assistance for their externally aided projects, the Union government's performance was slightly better. In the April-November 2024-25 period, these transfers rose by about 5 per cent, although much lower than the budgeted increase of 41 per cent.

In contrast, such transfers during the entire 2023-24 had risen sharply by about 24 per cent to ~1.15 trillion. It appears that these transfers will take a hit in the current year and for the first time since this initiative to

help states boost their capex was undertaken a couple of years ago. Significantly, this has not yet adversely impacted the states in a big way. The capex of 25 states (accounting for 95 per cent of all the states' and Union territories' total capex budget) has risen by just about 1 per cent in the April-November 2024-25 period, although states like Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Mizoram, Odisha, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal saw their capex fall by varying margins. Eventually, however, this will have an adverse impact on the states' capex programme and its growth-enhancing effect. There are two more sectors that account for another 13 per cent of the Centre's capital expenditure budget. But they bring out an intriguing aspect of why the government's capex has been slowing. They suffer from a peculiar problem, which has nothing to do with either the relevant sectors' expenditure-absorbing capacity or the absence of effective expenditure monitoring. The bulk of the capex under telecommunications was meant for infusing equity into state-owned Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd, or BSNL. Of the total capex of ~0.84 trillion, the proposed amount for BSNL's equity infusion accounted for as much as ~0.83 trillion.

But the total expenditure under this head in the first eight months of 2024-25 is only 6 per cent of what has been budgeted. In other words, a decision to transfer

## Will Israel-Hamas Ceasefire Really Lead To Peace?

On January 20, 1981, on the day Ronald Reagan took over as the new US president, Iran freed 52 American hostages it had been holding for over a year. That projected Reagan as a strong leader sending a powerful signal to US allies and its foes. His predecessor, Jimmy Carter, did all the negotiations and tried his best to have the hostages released while he was still the president. But Tehran would not let him take the glory. Forty-four years on, Donald Trump is taking the credit for the Gaza ceasefire deal, which will come into effect a day before his inauguration, cementing his reputation as a tough leader. Biden can say that the deal happened under his watch. But there is no doubt that it was Trump whose pressure led to achieve the goal. He declared on his social media platform Truth Social: "This EPIC ceasefire agreement could have only happened as a result of our Historic Victory in November, as it signalled to the entire World that my

Administration would seek Peace and negotiate deals to ensure the safety of all Americans, and our Allies." Days after he threatened that there better be a Gaza deal by his January 20 inauguration or "all hell would break out", his special envoy to the Middle East, Steven Witkoff, landed in Tel Aviv last Saturday. It was the Sabbath, the day of rest for Jews. But Witkoff insisted on meeting the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, that day. At their meeting, he conveyed Trump's message that the incoming President of the United States wanted to end the Gaza war and demanded that a ceasefire agreement be signed immediately. The format of the three-stage deal announced on Wednesday was proposed by Biden in May last year and was later also endorsed by the UN Security Council. But both Hamas and Israel kept dragging the negotiations over it. In Israel, Netanyahu refused to give any concessions to Hamas and continued with his brute military operation in Gaza.

## New allocations towards augmentation of power distribution

**Extension** of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for solar energy value chain, increased allocation towards PM Suryaghar Muft Bijlee Yojana, and greater thrust to distribution and transmission infrastructure are likely to be the key features of the upcoming Budget, as far as the energy sector is concerned. Sources said these proposals figured not only in the budget wish lists of the industry, but also in the respective recommendations from the ministries of power and renewable energy to the finance ministry, ahead of the Budget. "Given the success of PM Suryaghar scheme with almost 600,000 installations in just nine months since its launch, one could probably see additional allocation to target more households," said Ashwin Jacob, partner at Deloitte India. "As far as evacuation of power from offshore wind projects is concerned, we would want to see the VGF or budgetary support to continue or get enhanced," he added. "We hope to see a decisive increase in funding to accelerate the green energy transition. Priorities must include scaling renewable energy by addressing grid and transmission challenges, advancing Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) for grid stability and reliable power, doubling energy efficiency and digitalizing the energy sector through AI, smart meters, and data-driven solutions. Streamlining rooftop solar programs with simplified approvals, financing, and monitoring is equally vital," said Saurabh Kumar, Vice President — India, Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP). Sharat Goyal, CEO of Impact Infracap also expects the government to remove restrictions on state wise caps on roof top capacity for net-metering for industrial establishments. "Further, adoption of batteries to substitute use of diesel generators for back-up power should receive incentives and policy support

given their role in reducing dependence on imports," he said. While the government is increasingly working towards enhancing the country's RE capacity, the distribution and transmission infrastructure for its evacuation still needs to be strengthened. With the peak demand for power growing at a rate of 8-9% annually, the industry is looking forward to strengthening of climate resilient infrastructure augmentation. "One can expect new allocations towards augmentation of power distribution infrastructure, especially in high density/ urban load centres, in view of the sharp rise in peak demand over the last few years," said Anujesh Dwivedi, Partner at Deloitte India. He noted that there may be some allocation towards supporting the preparatory work especially on the listing of power utilities, or some incentive mechanism for promoting initiatives on private sector participation or listing of utilities at the state level because they are increasingly being seen as the much needed structural reforms the sector needs. The industry is optimistic of a wider coverage of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme by including smart metering in infrastructure definition.

"This would direct more financing for a sector which seeks to bring down India's transmission and distribution losses to 12% and improve recovery for state utilities," Goyal said. Goyal also noted that power transmission despite significant potential has not seen any notable monetisation events which could address the latent investor demand. "Government should announce a time-bound privatisation programme for assets owned by PGCIL," he said. The sector also sees the PLI scheme for solar value chain to continue with possible reduction in the duty structures for solar equipment. Jacob highlighted.

## Government of India has categorically rejected the allegation

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

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

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

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



## Briefs

NEW DELHI

## Indigenous stealth frigate given to Navy

Indigenous advanced stealth frigate "Taragiri", endowed with state-of-the-art combat capabilities, has been delivered to the Navy, officials said on Saturday. The fourth ship of Nilgiri-class (Project 17A) and the third one built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilding Ltd (MDL), "Taragiri" (Yard 12653), was delivered to the Navy on November 28 at MDL, Mumbai, marking a major milestone in achieving self-reliance in warship design and construction.

JAIPUR

## 24L voters yet to clear SIR scrutiny

The names of over 24 lakh people may be removed from Rajasthan's voter list under the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise which began on November 4 and will end on December 4, sources said. Done under the directions of the Election Commission, the names of voters and their family members are being matched with the voter lists prepared in the last SIR exercise conducted in 2002. Voters whose names do not match the 2002 SIR list may be removed from the current electoral rolls.

NEW DELHI

## 'Op Sindoor example of proper fusion'

Operation Sindoor is a "brilliant example" of civil-military fusion, where the administrative machinery worked seamlessly with the armed forces to communicate vital information and build public confidence, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Saturday. Rajnath Singh was addressing the valedictory ceremony of the 100th Common Foundation Course at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) in Mussoorie, Uttarakhand.

GUWAHATI

## Eviction drive: 1.7K families hit

An eviction drive was launched in Assam's Nagaon district on Saturday to clear encroachments from 795 hectares of government and forest land, where around 1,700 families lived, officials said. The drive started in the Lutimari area in the morning amid heavy deployment of security forces and came to a close at 4 pm, but will resume on Sunday, they said. Over 1,100 families had already left with their belongings.

—Digjyoti Lahkar

GROUND ZERO | Heavy rain lashes state, 28 disaster response teams on standby; flights and trains rescheduled

## Ditwah exits Lanka, TN braces for cyclone

CHENNAI

Rain triggered by Cyclone Ditwah, which entered the open sea inching towards the Tamil Nadu coast, lashed the coastal areas and Cauvery delta districts on Saturday, with Ramanathapuram and Nagapattinam districts bearing the brunt.

Normal life in Rameswaram was affected for the second day today owing to continuous rain accompanied by gusty winds.

According to State Revenue and Disaster Management Minister K K S S R Ramachandran, it was not clear if Cyclone Ditwah will hit the coast near Chennai. But the state government is fully prepared to launch rescue and relief activities on a war footing, he said.

"About 28 disaster response teams, including SDRF and NDRF teams, are on standby. We are planning to airlift 10 more teams from other states. The Air Force and Coast Guard have also been alerted. Additionally, monitoring teams will be sent to the districts tomorrow," the minister told reporters here.

There have been no fatalities so far, but 16 livestock have died, and 24 huts have been damaged. "There has been no major impact due to



Boats moored at the shore amid gusty winds in view of Cyclone 'Ditwah', at Kasimedu fishing harbour in Chennai on Saturday

the rain so far. However, the state government is continuously monitoring the situation and has readied teams for rescue and relief operations," he said.

"The Cyclonic Storm Ditwah over coastal Sri Lanka and adjoining southwest Bay of Bengal moved north-north-westwards with the speed of 8 kmph during past 6 hours and lay centered at 5.30 am today over the southwest Bay of Bengal and adjoining north

Sri Lanka," the IMD said.

It lay 190 km south-south-east of Karaikal, 300 km south-southeast of Puducherry, and 400 km south of Chennai, and is very likely to continue to move north-northwestwards and reach over southwest Bay of Bengal near North Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and adjoining south Andhra Pradesh coasts by early morning of November 30, the weather bulletin said.



## DITWAH

The name, 'Ditwah', referring to a lagoon, was suggested by Yemen. It is likely named after Detwah Lagoon, a large, saline lagoon on the north-west coast of the island of Socotra in Yemen.



## CYCLONE PREPAREDNESS

- As many as 6,000 relief camps have been established in districts
- Reports from the weather office suggest that the cyclone may pass parallel to the Chennai coast and may fetch heavy rain
- 14 NDRF teams have already been deployed in the vulnerable districts in the state, including Villupuram, Chengalpattu, Tiruvallur, Nagapattinam, Tiruvallur, Thanjavur, Pudukottai and Mayiladuthurai. Additional teams have been allocated for Puducherry and Chennai.
- Fishermen from Chennai, Rameswaram, Pamban, Nagapattinam, and other coastal districts did not venture into the sea.
- Delta districts of Nagapattinam, Thiruvallur, Thanjavur, Mayiladuthurai, Pudukkottai, Karaikal, Karur, Perambalur, Ariyalur, Tiruchirappalli and Karaikal districts received heavy rains accompanied by strong winds.
- Chennai airport authorities said about 54 flights to various districts in the state have been cancelled.
- The Southern Railway has announced changes in the pattern of train services
- Tourists have been asked not to visit Dhanushokodi on the south-eastern tip of Pamban Island, which is west of Talaimannar in Sri Lanka

## SIDELIGHTS

## Andhra forecast

The IMD on Saturday forecast heavy rainfall across parts of Andhra Pradesh for four days from November 30 to December 3 under the influence of cyclonic storm Ditwah. The IMD has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall, and extremely heavy rainfall at isolated locations over South Coastal Andhra Pradesh (SCAP) and Rayalaseema on November 30. On December 1, heavy to very heavy rainfall is expected at isolated places over SCAP, along with heavy rainfall in parts of NCAP, Yanam and Rayalaseema.

## India aid

India on Saturday sent a contingent of 80 NDRF rescuers and specialised search dogs to Sri Lanka for undertaking relief and rescue operations in the aftermath of unprecedented floods in the neighbouring country following Cyclone Ditwah, an official spokesperson said.

## Exams postponed

The Pondicherry Central University has announced that all exams scheduled to be held on Saturday have been postponed and a holiday was declared for all classes at the university because of Cyclone Ditwah which is heading towards the union territory coast. A revised date of the examinations would be announced in course of time.

## Forensic probe reveals suspicious WhatsApp chats of arrested doctor

LUCKNOW

Jammu and Kashmir Police and central agencies have unearthed crucial information during their joint investigation into Dr Adil Ahmad, arrested earlier this month in Saharanpur. Officials said forensic examination of his mobile phone has revealed WhatsApp chats that raised an alert within the security establishment. In one such chat, he is allegedly seen demanding eight lakh rupees from a hospital management while referring to a project.

Dr Adil was arrested on 6 November from Saharanpur. His arrest came just a day after the blast reported in Delhi. He had previously worked at V-Bros and Famous

## NIA expands probe

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) is expanding its probe into the Delhi Red Fort blasts. The agencies are not just questioning the doctors who are part of the Al Falah University, but also trying to ascertain if those part of the Faridabad module were in touch with MMBS graduates who studied in other countries. Investigators say that the Faridabad module members who executed the Delhi blasts were in touch with those who had studied MBBS in other countries, such as the United Arab Emirates and Bangladesh. Further, the agencies have also sought details of doctors working in multiple private hospitals in Delhi.

Medicare hospitals in Saharanpur. His activities are under close scrutiny by Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Anti-Terrorism

Squad. Investigators said several suspicious chats, documents and digital files have been extracted from his phone that

## Fraud land deal

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate's probe into the Al-Falah University land acquisition trail had uncovered a significant fraud involving the use of a forged General Power of Attorney (GPA) allegedly executed by individuals long after their deaths. The scheme relied on faking documents for deceased owners. Officials, requesting anonymity, told ANI that land falling under Khasra No. 792 in the Madanpur Khadar area in southeast Delhi was eventually purchased by the Tarbia Education Foundation, linked to Al-Falah group chairman Jawad Ahmad Siddiqui, on the basis of fabricated ownership documents.

cast serious doubt on his role. Forensic experts have been analysing the time stamps of the chats, transaction trails and other data stored in the

device to piece together the money flow and communication links.

Initial findings suggest that the money demanded may have been intended to support an illegal network. The role of the hospital management has also come under question. Investigators are trying to determine whether the staff had knowledge of the actual use of funds or if they were misled.

Officials from the hospitals have been questioned as part of the probe. The ATS and local police are checking whether money was transferred through banking channels or paid in cash. Security agencies are mapping Dr Adil's contacts and financial links to establish the full scope of the case.

## Tejashwi named leader of MGB in Bihar Assembly

PATNA

Lawmakers of the opposition 'Mahagathbandhan' in Bihar on Saturday unanimously elected Tejashwi Yadav of the RJD as the coalition's leader in the state legislature.

The decision was taken at a meeting hosted by Yadav here ahead of the five-day session of the legislature, beginning on Monday, during which all the newly elected members of the 243-strong assembly will be sworn in.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, RJD MLA Bhai Virendra said, "Tejashwi



Yadav has been elected leader of the 'Mahagathbandhan' in the state legislature. Of course, he will also be leader of our party in the assembly."

Congress MLC Samir Kumar Singh, who is also a working president of the party's state unit, said "the decision on Tejashwi Yadav was unanimous. We have sufficient numbers, and he shall be the leader of the opposition as well".

The 'Mahagathbandhan' was decimated in the recent assembly polls, which saw the ruling NDA retaining power by bagging 202 seats.

## NFSA beneficiaries: Raj tightens rules

JAIPUR

The Rajasthan government has added new norms to check the eligibility of beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act.

The beneficiaries who pay annual electricity bills of more than Rs 50,000, use air-conditioners at home, and sell more than 100 quintals of crops to the government at MSP rates may lose NFSA food subsidies.

The state government is running a Give Up Campaign for

## Minister Sumit Godara said that 4.8 million affluent beneficiaries have voluntarily surrendered their food subsidy

ineligible beneficiaries to surrender their food subsidy so that the poor can receive their entitled grain.

Food and Civil Supplies

Minister Sumit Godara said that 4.8 million affluent beneficiaries in the state have voluntarily surrendered their food subsidy under the Give-Up Campaign, which began on November 1st last year.

"The campaign will last till December 31st this year. Punitive and recovery action will be taken against ineligible individuals who do not voluntarily relinquish their food security benefits after the deadline," said the minister.

## GoM's ST report sparks outrage

Guwahati: On the final day of the Winter Session of the Assam Assembly, the much-awaited report of the Group of Ministers (GoM) on granting Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to six ethnic communities — Ahom, Chutia, Moran, Matak, Koch, Rajbongshi and Tea-Adivasi — was hurriedly tabled amid noisy protests from the opposition benches.

—Digjyoti Lahkar

## Raj Bhavan renamed Lok Bhavan

KOLKATA

West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose on Saturday implemented a central government directive and renamed the Raj Bhavan in Kolkata to 'Lok Bhavan'.

In an official notification, Bose said that on March 27, 2023, President Droupadi Murmu handed over a symbolic key of the then Raj Bhavan to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, on

the request of the governor, heralding a new era of people's Raj Bhavan -- The Jana Raj Bhavan.

"In pursuance of the communication from the Ministry of Home Affairs dated 25.11.2025, it is hereby notified that the name of the holdings of 'Raj Bhavan' in Kolkata, Flagstaff House and Darjeeling, has hereby been modified and renamed as 'Lok Bhavan'," the notification said.

This notification comes into

force with immediate effect, it said.

In a post on X, Bose said, "The 'Jana Raj Bhavan' conceptualisation by the then Raj Bhavan, Kolkata, was prompted by the urge to make the establishment alive to the needs of the people, their aspirations and hopes, their problems and challenges. Simultaneously, the imposing edifice was to shed its aura of 'awe and fear' and be open to people from all walks of life.

## money special

## Reforms, mfg momentum propel Q2 growth to 8.2%: Piyush Goyal

MUMBAI

India's economic trajectory strengthened notably in the second quarter, with GDP expanding by a robust 8.2%—a performance Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal attributed to sustained reforms and a vigorous push to domestic manufacturing. Speaking at a national padyatra in Vadodara on Saturday, marking the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Goyal said the latest growth figures underscore the success of the government's efforts to enhance the ease of doing business and stimulate indus-



trial capacity, PTI reported. He noted that India's export performance remains resilient despite prevailing global headwinds. Merchandise exports in April–October edged up to \$254.25 billion, while services exports surged to USD 237.55 billion, reflecting strengthening demand for Indian capabilities across sectors. Goyal said this momentum, coupled with

rising public investment and steady consumption, reaffirms India's position as the world's fastest-growing major economy. The 8.2% expansion—higher than China's 4.8%—was aided by strong manufacturing output, which grew 9.1%, and a steady construction sector. The minister added that the numbers clearly counter scepticism from certain quarters and highlight India's "relentless growth" outlook. With the festive season boost and GST rationalisation further supporting demand, he expressed confidence that the economy will continue on an accelerated growth path.

## Tariffs batter exports to US

NEW DELHI

India's exports to its largest export market, the United States, have suffered a sharp reversal under the impact of aggressive tariff hikes. Between May and October 2025, shipments fell 28.5%, plunging from \$8.83 billion to \$6.31 billion, according to think-tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI). The decline in exports followed a rapid escalation in US duties that began at 10% on April 2, rose to 25% on August 7, and reached 50% by late August. The spike in tariffs made Indian goods among the most heavily taxed of any US trading partner, according to a GTRI report Saturday. For comparison, China faced tariffs of about 30%, while Japan at 15%.

## Air India, not just a biz opportunity for Tata Group: Chandrasekaran

Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran on Saturday said Air India, is not just a business opportunity but a "responsibility" for the Tata Group. The group has been working on an ambitious five-year transformation plan, but the progress has been slower than expected due to various factors, including global supply chain woes resulting in aircraft upgradation as well as delivery delays.

The Government of India and the ADB have signed agreements for three loans worth over \$800 million for projects in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

## No major Rupee depreciation expected

The Indian rupee, which has been under pressure for a host of reasons, is unlikely to depreciate further in the near term, Union Bank of India said, providing a rationale that the rupee has already weakened by roughly 4% this year.

## Goenka takes over as FICCI President

Anant Goenka, Vice Chairman of RPG Group, on Saturday took over as FICCI President for 2025–2026, the industry chamber said.

## Govt cuts base import price of gold

The government has reduced the base import price of gold by \$14 to \$1,336/10 grams. The base import price of silver has also been cut by \$16/kg to \$1,723/kg.

## SEBI imposes seven-day ban on Prabhudas Lilladher over client-funds breaches

In a rare but measured enforcement move, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has barred Prabhudas Lilladher Pvt. Ltd. from undertaking any new business for seven days from December 15, 2025, following multiple violations concerning client funds and regulatory reporting.

The order, issued by Sebi's Chief General Manager N. Murugan, said the broker cannot take on any new contracts or launch any new schemes during the seven-day restriction period.

The restriction stems from a joint inspection by Sebi, NSE, BSE and MCX covering April 2021 to October 2022, which uncovered misuse of client money, delayed settlement

of idle balances, incorrect margin reporting and over-charging of brokerage.

The regulator flagged a shortfall of about Rs 2.70 crore in client funds on several days in July 2021 and highlighted delays in settling more than 1,900 dormant accounts.

It also cited misreported margins and the improper passing of penalty charges to clients, prompting the temporary bar.

The inspection also found incorrect reporting of end-of-day and peak margins, including a short-collection of peak margins of around Rs 55.46 lakh in one instance. There were also issues of misreported client funds and wrong ledger balances submitted to the exchanges.



**CYCLONE SHAKEN SRI LANKA| Nation reels from deadliest storm toll in years as rain batters northern, western provinces****DITWAH TOLL 153**

COLOMBO

Cyclone Ditwah exited Sri Lanka on Saturday afternoon after a trail of catastrophic floods and landslides, leaving the island nation in mourning.

According to the Disaster Management Centre, 123 people have been killed so far, while 130 others remain missing as search and rescue operations continue in rain-battered northern and western provinces.

The storm, which made landfall on Wednesday, unleashed record rainfall that inundated low-lying towns, severed transport links, and triggered hill-slope collapses that buried homes and displaced thousands.

Authorities intensified evacuations after the Kelani River burst its banks on Friday evening, compelling hundreds to flee to temporary shelters.

On Saturday, floodwaters continued to rise in several low-lying districts, forcing emergency evacuation orders for residents living along the river's path as it drains into the

**DEATH**  
**153****MISSING**  
**130****RESCUED**  
**43,995**

Indian Ocean near Colombo. Disaster response teams backed by the Sri Lankan armed forces deployed helicopters, rescue boats, and military vehicles to airlift marooned families, deliver medicines, and clear debris.

Disaster Management Centre Director General Sampath Kotuwegoda confirmed that 43,995 people have already been shifted to state-run welfare centres.

**Rescue Ops**

Sri Lanka shifted thousands after homes were destroyed or unsafe due to week-long rains. Director General Sampath Kotuwegoda confirmed relief work backed by the armed forces is underway in Colombo. Emergency crews are restoring communications and clearing blocked roads.

**Flood & aid alert**

Rains eased nationwide but northern Sri Lanka still faces intermittent showers from residual cyclone effects. Authorities warn flood levels may exceed the 2016 disaster. For regional support, a plane-load of relief supplies was dispatched by India.

**Maduro puts air force on alert**

VENEZUELA

President Maduro told Venezuelan Air Force to stay "ready and resolute" after renewed threats from President Donald Trump, who hinted at launching land-based operations to curb alleged drug shipments.

The Pentagon has sent warships into the Caribbean, including near Venezuelan waters, and confirmed strikes on small boats it claims were used for smuggling. Caracas has denounced the actions as illegal and part of a broader attempt to destabilise Maduro's government.

Addressing Bolivarian Military Aviation members, Maduro said Venezuela could become "a republic in arms" if provoked, urging forces to remain calm, alert and committed to national sovereignty. He added that a majority of citizens were prepared to defend the country if necessary.

Trump later praised the Air Force's 7th Bomb Wing at Dyess Air Force Base, claiming US operations had already slashed maritime trafficking significantly, though offering no public evidence on timing or scale. The standoff signals rising friction between Washington and Caracas.

**Trump voids Biden****Executive orders signed by autopen terminated**

WASHINGTON DC

President Donald Trump on Friday declared that any federal document signed by his predecessor, Joe Biden, using an autopen was "terminated," an extraordinary proclamation that has sparked constitutional and legal debate across Washington. The announcement, made on social media, targeted what Trump claimed to be widespread use of automated signing by Biden during his presidency.

"Any document signed by Sleepy Joe Biden with the Autopen, which was approximately 92% of them, is hereby terminated, and of no further force or effect," Trump wrote publicly, reiterating claims that the process was carried out illegally by aides operating the device.

The move amplifies months of political rhetoric from Trump, who has repeatedly linked Biden's alleged autopen use to questions about his mental fitness, accusing him of lacking direct control of presidential authority while in office. The

Pentagon and other executive departments signed thousands of orders during Biden's term, but Trump's blanket nullification goes further by extending to "anything else" signed without a handwritten signature, including potential pardons and legislative documents.

Legal experts have cautioned that the claims do not guarantee automatic invalidation.

Conservative commentator Ed Whelan argued that while Trump retains the authority to reverse executive orders.

**TRUMPLICANS.....TRUMP 2028, YES?**

President Donald Trump shared an AI-generated image on Truth Social holding a blue "TRUMP 2028, YES!" sign, captioning it "TRUMPLICANS!" The post revived discussion around the 22nd Amendment, which restricts presidents to two elected terms. Top Republicans including Speaker Mike Johnson said it was playful "trolling," reiterating past constitutional conversations. Trump earlier acknowledged he is "not allowed to run," calling it "too bad." A new survey by McLaughlin & Associates shows Donald Trump Jr. gaining ground in potential 2028 GOP race, reducing the gap with rival contenders.

**Cigarette behind Hong Kong fire?**

HONG KONG

Investigators are racing to determine the cause of the Wang Fuk Court fire in Hong Kong that killed at least 128 people on Wednesday, marking one of the territory's worst residential infernos in decades. The tragedy gained renewed public attention after a viral video circulated on social media suggesting that the blaze might have been triggered by a cigarette.

The clip, shared by RT India, alleged workers were seen smoking near the complex's outer wall moments before flames engulfed the lower floors.

However, local authorities have stressed that the claim remains unverified and is not

part of any confirmed evidence in the official probe.

The fire's rapid vertical spread has reignited concerns over the use of traditional bamboo scaffolding, a long-standing construction method still widely employed across urban Hong Kong for renovation and high-rise maintenance.

The eight-tower residential cluster at Wang Fuk Court had been encased in bamboo frames and green protective netting since last year, when large-scale refurbishment work was launched by contractors.

Officials say the dry bamboo and mesh netting likely acted as a conduit for flames, allowing the fire to climb swiftly through interconnected floors.

**Zelensky aide's exit sparks corruption claims**

MOSCOW

A senior Russian diplomat has alleged that President Vladimir Zelensky removed his chief of staff to conceal deeper corruption links reaching the Ukrainian leadership. Ambassador-at-Large Rodion Miroshnik told RT that the decision was a calculated attempt to deflect scrutiny from the president and preserve political power amid mounting investigations.

Chief of Staff Andrei Yermak, often portrayed by media as a key power broker, offered his resignation after raids were carried out on properties tied to individuals close to the administration. Although Yermak has not been formally charged, the controversy fol-

lows resignations of senior ministers earlier this month after a major financial scandal involving businessman Timur Mindich, accused of links to a massive kickback operation.

Miroshnik claimed the corruption trail could destabilise Ukraine's political standing,

**Russia slams UK press**

The Russian Embassy in the UK accused British media, including The Daily Telegraph, of distorting President Vladimir Putin's Ukraine comments, calling them "doctored" to fit UK narratives. The mission warned misquoting fuels tensions as US envoy Steve Witkoff plans Moscow peace talks.

especially as Kyiv negotiates additional funding with European partners. The European Union has repeatedly urged Ukraine to strengthen anti-corruption systems as Western aid continues to flow into critical sectors, particularly energy.

**Umerov to lead Ukraine delegation**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has appointed Secretary of National Security and Defense Council (NSDC) Rustem Umerov instead of former head of his office Andriy Yermak as head of the delegation for the talks with the US, its allies, and Russia, according to a decree published on Zelensky's website on Saturday.

**Now, snail heist hits France**

PARIS

A dramatic theft hit rural France as 450 kg of fresh and frozen snails, valued at 90,000 Euros (Rs 93 lakh), were stolen from producer Jean-Mathieu Dauvergne's snail farm, Reuters reported. The heist occurred between Sunday night and Monday morning, shocking the French gourmet supply chain just weeks before Christmas. Dauvergne said the thieves cut perimeter fencing, forced entry using a crowbar, broke doors, and disabled light detectors before raiding cold-storage rooms where raw snail meat was stocked.

"It's incredible to have stolen such a quantity. It must be an organised network," he said, calling the loss a "very tough blow" affecting up to 10,000 meals planned for festive fine-dining orders.

**Ex-B'desh PM's son keen to return**

DHAKA

Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) acting chairman Tarique Rahman on Saturday said that he strongly wishes to return to the country to be with his critically ill mother and party chief Khaleida Zia, but prevailing political circumstances prevent him from doing so.

Rahman took to his social media platform, urging people to keep praying for the recovery of his ailing mother and expressed hope that when the political climate permits, his long wait to return to Bangladesh will finally end.

Meanwhile, local media on Saturday reported that Khaleida Zia's health condition has further deteriorated, with

the BNP chief remaining under close observation in the Coronary Care Unit (CCU) at Evercare Hospital in Dhaka.

"In such a moment of crisis, I, too, strongly long for my mother's affectionate touch, just like any child. But unlike others, I do not have the unrestricted freedom or sole authority to make that happen. There is also little scope to describe this sensitive matter in detail. Our family remains hopeful that once the political situation reaches the expected stage, my long and anxious wait to return to my homeland will finally come to an end," Rahman said.

The hospital premises witnessed an influx of party leaders and activists early in the day amid rising concern over her condition.

**Rus discovers major silver deposits**

MOSCOW

Russia's Federal Agency for Subsoil Use announced the discovery of two substantial silver deposits in the Far East, Ungurskoye in Zabayskysky Krai and Kegali in Magadan Oblast.

Reserves are estimated at 699.6 tonnes and 70.5 tonnes respectively.

Polymetal has proposed a 2028 development project for Kegali with an investment of 2.5 billion rubles (about \$32.2 million), Xinhua reported.

Rosnedra said more than 200 new solid mineral deposits have been registered in Russia since early 2025, in line with annual discovery averages.

**IMRAN KHAN SIS WARNS CHAOS IN PAKISTAN IF HE IS HARMED**

KABUL

Death rumours surrounding jailed former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan triggered a sharp political warning from his sibling, raising fears of nationwide instability.

Speaking to media, Niazi family member Noreen Niazi called her brother "a 100% healthy person", alleging that misinformation about his condition was being "deliberately spread to unsettle the public".

In an interview with Indian broadcaster NDTV, she warned that "any attempt to physically harm him is a red line" and could plunge Pakistan into chaos due to his massive grassroots back-

ing. Niazi also criticised the harsh conditions of Khan's imprisonment. Citing prison protocols, she argued that no inmate should remain in solitary confinement beyond a short span. She claimed Khan has spent nearly a month in isolation, far exceeding what she said was permissible.

"This amounts to mental and physical abuse and violates the jail manual," she alleged, adding that authorities were blocking family access to prevent his message from reaching the public.

Her remarks coincided with the appointment of Asim Munir to an expanded military command role, signalling a new era of consolidated defence authority.

**Khan alive, govt wants him to leave Pak: PTI senator**

Refuting recent death rumours, PTI Senator Khurram Zeeshan confirmed that former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan is alive and currently lodged in Adiala Jail. Zeeshan said Khan is being kept in isolation as a tactic to pressure him into leaving the country and staying silent abroad. Speaking to ANI, Zeeshan claimed the Pakistani authorities are intimidated by Khan's popularity, refusing family visits and blocking release of photos or videos. "It's been almost a month of isolation. His family, lawyers, and senior PTI leaders have not been allowed to meet him. This is a complete violation of human rights," he said. Zeeshan added that the government has offered Khan concessions to leave Pakistan, but the former prime minister has refused. Despite his imprisonment, Khan's influence remains strong, especially among the youth, and his party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), continues to grow in support. Zeeshan noted that the ruling regime fears that even one image of Khan could mobilise public backing, highlighting the enduring reach of his leadership and ideology across generations.

**London battles red streets crisis**

LONDON

Chewing paan or gutka and spitting it in public, a common sight across South Asia, is becoming a costly problem in the UK. Streets, stairwells, and pavements are increasingly stained with the distinctive red residue of chewing tobacco, forcing councils to spend heavily on cleanup.

According to the Evening Standard, Brent Council in North London spends over £30,000 (around Rs 35 lakh) annually removing paan stains from pavements, shops, and buildings. Areas around Wembley

are particularly affected, with the bright red mix of saliva and tobacco seen on streets, telephone boxes, and even flower beds.

Brent Council has pledged a "zero-tolerance approach" to the problem, highlighting both the environmental and health hazards of public spitting. Council officials admitted that despite high-powered cleaning jets, some stains remain stubbornly resistant, making complete removal extremely challenging.

To tackle the issue, banners have been installed in three borough hotspots to warn the public, while enforcement of-

ficers patrol the areas. Offenders can face fines of up to £100 (Rs 12,000). The council hopes that increased awareness and penalties will curb the habit among residents.

Experts note that the habit, while culturally ingrained in parts of the South Asian community, clashes with UK public hygiene standards. The growing problem has sparked debate on balancing cultural practices with maintaining clean, safe urban spaces. Brent Council urges residents to dispose of paan and gutka responsibly to prevent further environmental damage and reduce public health risks.

**INDONESIA FLOOD TOLL 303**

JAKARTA

A total of 303 people died and 279 remain missing after flash floods and landslides struck three provinces in Indonesia's Sumatra region, the country's National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) said on Saturday.

BNPB Chief Suharyanto told a press conference that North Sumatra suffered the highest number of casualties, with 166 deaths and 143 people still unaccounted for. In West Sumatra, 90 people were confirmed dead and 85 missing, while in Aceh, 47 fatalities were recorded and 51 people remained missing.

He chaired a coordination meeting with BNPB units deployed in the three hardest-hit provinces, emphasising that operations must be intensified as weather conditions in the affected areas begin to improve,



Xinhua news agency reported.

He noted that the agency is prioritising three urgent tasks: conducting search and rescue operations for those still missing, restoring disrupted communication access, and ensuring the swift delivery of logistics to affected residents.

Meanwhile, the death toll from severe flooding in southern Thailand is also nearing 150, local authorities have said as water levels begin to recede and rescue operations continue.

During a press briefing, government spokesperson Siripong Angkasakulkiat said that fatalities have been reported across eight southern provinces, with Songkhla recording the highest toll at 110.

According to the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, the widespread southern flooding has affected an estimated 3.54 million people, even though water levels in several areas have receded.



## 'I know better about love than my character in the film'

**Vijay Varma and Fatima Sana Shaikh talk about love and filmmaking at IFP 15 while promoting *Gustaakh Ishq***

IFP, the world's leading festival for Creativity X Culture, kicked off its fifteenth season on Saturday at Mehboob Studio with an engaging lineup of sessions. Among the highlights, actors Vijay Varma and Fatima Sana Shaikh brought their new romance drama *Gustaakh Ishq* to the stage.

In conversation with Swati Chopra on "Bringing Back Old-School Romance," Vijay and Fatima discussed love, imperfections, and conflicts in relationships. Vijay praised veteran actor Naseeruddin Shah, saying, "Have you heard him? It sounds like

God is talking to you... His grip over languages and dialects is unmatched. Just being around him is an experience." Vijay added, "I know better about love than my character in the film."

Fatima called Shah "inherently a teacher" and shared a touching moment when he guided her through an emotional scene by placing her hand on his pulse. She also mentioned modern love habits she finds charming, like early-morning video calls.



Vijay Varma



Fatima Sana Shaikh

### 'Dilip Sahab and Raj Kapoor were truly in tune with the country'

Adarsh Gourav shared his thoughts on actors then and now: "When I watch older interviews of Dilip Sahab, Raj Kapoor, and all the legendary actors, they were so in tune with what was happening in the country... Today, I see a disconnect between the people we're representing and who we actually are." He added, "I try to be part of films I genuinely believe in... When you're spending months on a set, you have to genuinely connect with it."



Adarsh Gourav



Anjali Sivaraman

### 'I struggle with it'

Anjali Sivaraman spoke candidly about social media, saying, "I really struggle with it... I didn't think I'd have to train myself to become a content creator. It's challenging because I prefer living in the moment and living privately. But I also know everyone is online, and keeping your audience engaged matters. It's a lot of pressure, difficult but fruitful when it works."

### I've been afforded the privilege to wait: Zahan Kapoor

Zahan Kapoor discussed his career advantage, noting, "The biggest privilege for me is having people around who encouraged artistic pursuits. And staying power matters too. If you have a house in Mumbai, it's a big deal. If you have to pay rent, it's very hard."



### Stardom is something the public gives you: Vishal Jethwa

Actor Vishal Jethwa reflected on stardom and choices in Indian cinema. He said, "You can only choose when you have five options. I never had that privilege... Even after winning awards, I had to take up small roles that I didn't want to do. Despite making such choices, who would've thought that someone like me would get to do a film like *Homebound* or debut with Yash Raj Films?" He added, "Stardom is something the public gives you. It can't be created by you."



Vishal Jethwa

## 'Little wild one on the way'

Actors Randeep Hooda and Lin Laishram are expecting their first child



Pic: Instagram @randeephooda

Actor Randeep Hooda, who tied the knot with Lin Laishram in a traditional Meitei wedding ceremony in Imphal on November 29, 2023, celebrates his second anniversary on Saturday. Marking the milestone, the couple shared a heartfelt post announcing their pregnancy.

Revealing the joyous news on social media, they wrote, "Two years of love, adventure, and now... a little wild one on the way." Lin had sparked pregnancy rumours earlier this year when Randeep shared photos from

their *Diwali* celebration on social media. Several netizens claimed that Lin's baby bump was visible, even though the actress attempted to hide it.

Before his wedding, the actor revealed how he met Lin and shared the story of their first encounter with ANI, "We have been friends for a very long time. We met when we were in theatres. Since then, we have had a great friendship, which we are now making into a family."

Lin further stated, "We actually met at Naseeruddin Shah's theatre group called Motley and he was my senior. That's where I met him. We were friends and it's turning into a beautiful journey."



## Trend it like Beckham

David Beckham is in Mumbai for his UNICEF visit, creating buzz online as his interactions with actress Samantha, Dhanush and others go viral



Football legend David Beckham is in Mumbai, and on Friday he attended an event along with Telugu star Samantha Ruth Prabhu. The two were seen exiting the event together and shared a warm hug while saying goodbye. Their video has since gone viral on social media.

Beckham is currently in India as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador. While talking to Samantha for Elle India, he said, "India was one of the places I had never been to, and two years ago when I came here, I was blown away. I knew I was going to love it, but I didn't know I was going to love it as much as I do now. And that says it's about the people, the environment, the culture, and the food. But people in India... the energy is not what so many places have in the world." Not just Samantha, David also met Dhanush at an event, and their post has gone viral as well. Prajakta Koli met him too and shared pictures on Instagram, captioning them, "Met my book boyfriend today (sic)."

## Sidhu Moosewala's *Barota* out

Punjabi rapper-singer Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu, popularly known as Sidhu Moosewala, was shot dead through the windscreen of his car on May 29, 2022, in Jawaharke village of Mansa, Punjab, at the age of 28. Gangster Goldy Brar had publicly claimed responsibility for the killing. Three years after his tragic death, his new track *Barota* was released on Friday, along with a powerful music video featuring Punjabi actress Sweetaj Brar. Within just a day of its release, the song climbed to #1 on YouTube's music trending chart. Moosewala's voice in the track has once again moved fans emotionally. The late singer also penned the lyrics and composed the music for *Barota*.



## Melania Trump launches her production co

US First Lady Melania Trump announced the creation of her own production company, Muse Films. Announced on Trump's official social media channels, the First Lady shared that she has launched Muse Films. The announcement comes ahead of the release of the Amazon MGM Studios feature documentary about her, *Melania*, according to The Hollywood Reporter. "PRESENTING: MUSE FILMS My new production company," Trump wrote alongside a video that showcased the company's logo. "MELANIA, the film, exclusively in theatres worldwide on January 30th, 2026."



## Cooking

Up A Storm With

**Vivan Bhatena**

Vivan Bhatena, as a brave army man Jemdar Surja Ram in the war film *120 Bahadur*, is receiving praise for his performance. Vivan's quote from Insta about *120 Bahadur*: "From finding a brotherhood to even finding myself and my footing in life, it has been a journey of discovery and learning at every turn." The super-fit Vivan makes a handsome army man. What does Vivan eat to maintain his fine physique?

**My dietary preference:** I am purely non-vegetarian. In non-vegetarian fare I like Kolhapuri fried fish, but my favourite is lamb shank (shank is a cut of meat from the lower part of the leg, just below the knee).

**I begin my day:** With a glass of water, lime and salts to hydrate my body.

**My breakfast:** Eggs and a cup of tea. I like my eggs sunny side up or scrambled. I skip bread.

**My lunch comprises:** Grilled chicken and some carb source—rice, pasta.

**In the evenings I snack on:** Nuts, protein shake or a smoothie.

**My dinner is:** Fish, chicken or red meat with some veggies.

**My favourite desserts are:** Ice-cream and *rasmalai*.

**My fitness regime:** Three days a week of sport—Padel and volleyball—

and three days of weight training.

**My favourite restaurants are:** Masque, Ode, Mag St, Vietnamese food, Farmers Cafe and Boojies.

**My favourite cuisines are:** Goan and Parsi. In Goan food I like pork vindaloo and prawn balchao, and in Parsi food I like salli chicken and *dhanshak*.

**I can cook:** Continental food. I can make a healthy meal.

**My favourite food during winters:** Red meat.

**I feel guilty after having:** Ice-cream and cookies.

**While shooting for 120 Bahadur:** We stayed in this small 3-star hotel in Alchi, Ladakh. We had access to the chef, so one day I got him to make some *lamb nihari* and I polished 1 kilo of it.

**Tip on food:** Eat by your blood type.

**My favourite food I have had is:** Crickets.

**My favourite food during winters:** Red meat.

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## Recipe of Cottage Cheese Ice-Cream

### INGREDIENTS:

- 500 gms cottage cheese
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/4 cup dates or butterscotch syrup (as required)



### METHOD:

Combine cottage cheese, cocoa powder and dates/butterscotch syrup in a blender. Blend until smooth. Transfer to a freezer-safe container and freeze for 5 to 6 hours. Protein ice-cream is ready to eat.



## Briefs

LUSAIL (QATAR)

## Piastrri takes pole for Qatar GP sprint race



Oscar Piastrri took pole position for the Qatar Grand Prix sprint race, pushing his McLaren teammate Lando Norris into third place. A disgruntled Max Verstappen qualified only sixth. Norris holds a 24-point lead in Formula 1 over both men, and may well be relieved that Verstappen will start Saturday's sprint race behind him. The winner gets eight points with the top eight scoring points. "A day when things clicked," said Piastrri, whose form has nosedived in the second part of the season. "It's nice to be back." In-form Mercedes driver George Russell found a late burst to qualify second on Friday. Two-time F1 champion Fernando Alonso was fourth and Yuki Tsunoda - Verstappen's Red Bull teammate - was fifth in a season where he has struggled badly.

DUBAI

## Iran to boycott World Cup draw



Iran has decided to boycott the 2026 World Cup draw in Washington next week because the U.S. denied visas to members of its delegation, the state-run IRNA news agency reported. The agency quoted Iranian soccer federation spokesman Amir-Mahdi Alavi as saying on Friday that officials faced visa obstacles that go beyond sports considerations. There was no immediate comment from the White House. Alavi said the federation had reached out to FIFA and hoped it could help resolve the issue. Soccer's ruling body didn't immediately reply to a request for comment. President Donald Trump's administration announced in June a travel ban on citizens from 12 countries.

MUMBAI

## 'India lacks specialist off-spinner'



With India being outplayed by South Africa in the just-concluded Test series, spin great Harbhajan Singh felt the hosts don't have a specialist off-spinner for the

## PREVIEW | Team India face a buoyant South Africa side in the first ODI

## High-stakes audition for Ro-Ko

RANCHI

India will look to address several lingering selection puzzles when they take on South Africa on Sunday in the first ODI of the three-match series where Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli return to the set-up for a short audition that could well shape their 2027 World Cup fate.

Both Rohit and Kohli now compete in just one international format, and with India scheduled to play only six ODIs in the next two months - three against the Proteas and three versus New Zealand at home in January -- the stakes have rarely been higher for two of Indian cricket's modern-day greats.

The performance in these games could have a direct bearing on their prospects for the 2027 ODI World Cup. It may not seal their 2027 World Cup destinies, but it begins a high-stakes audition -- one that could either extend two legendary careers or nudge them closer to an inevitable sunset.

## A slice of symbolism

Incidentally, it was at this very JSCA Stadium back in 2013 that Rohit Sharma was first backed as a full-time opener - a defining moment that transformed not only his white-ball career but also India's 50-over outlook for years.

More than a decade later, the 37-year-old walks into Ranchi again, this time seeking a different kind of revival as India attempt to rebuild after losing the home Test series.

For India, the ODI series comes in the shadow of the T20 World Cup at home next year, a tournament that will invariably dictate selection priorities.

Match starts at 1.30 P.M  
Live on Star Sports



India's Kuldeep Yadav, Tilak Varma and others during a training session on the eve of the first ODI in Ranchi. PTI

## Squads:

**India:** KL Rahul (C), Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Tilak Varma, Rishabh Pant, Washington Sundar, Ravindra Jadeja,

Kuldeep Yadav, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Harshit Rana, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Prasidh Krishna, Arshdeep Singh, Dhruv Jurel.

**South Africa:** Temba Bavuma (C), Aiden Markram, Dewald Brevis, Nandre Burger, Quinton de Kock, Marco Jansen, Tony de Zorzi, Rubin

Hermann, Ottneil Baartman, Corbin Bosch, Matthew Breetzke, Keshav Maharaj, Lungi Ngidi, Ryan Rickelton, Prenelan Subrayen.

Head coach Gautam Gambhir, too, enters this series under scrutiny though his job is not under threat since his contract runs till 2027 World Cup.

His tactical calls and team selections were questioned after the Test setback -- his second major failure since taking charge. This ODI series is an important opportunity for Gambhir to stabilise the

narrative and show-case clarity in India's white-ball direction.

While the ODIs may not be his immediate priority with the T20 World

Cup at home looming next year, Gambhir will nevertheless be keen to restore stability and demonstrate direction in India's white-ball approach.

The management would be keen to use the South Africa games to broaden the player pool, test evolving roles and identify cross-format performers who can offer stability in both white-ball squads.

## Unsettled batting order

In this series too, India's XI remain far from settled with several senior players missing. Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj have been rested, while regular captain

Shubman Gill and Shreyas Iyer are nursing injuries.

Their absence not only weakens the line-up but also forces stand-in skipper KL Rahul and head coach Gambhir to juggle roles and responsibilities.

The middle-order puzzle is even more delicate.

The management needs to decide whether to back Washington Sundar as the spin-bowling all-rounder or the hard-hitting Nitish Kumar Reddy.

More composed Tilak Varma could also be trusted with extended runs. It also remains to be seen if the play-

ing XI can have Rishabh Pant if skipper KL Rahul keeps the wickets.

The coaching staff are keen to use these fixtures to evaluate fringe players, develop cross-format depth and maintain rhythm for senior pros without overloading them.

India's approach needs to be pragmatic: allow the seniors to regain rhythm, give emerging batters extended runs, and use the bowling unit -- built around Prasidh Krishna, Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana and Kuldeep Yadav -- to assess death-overs combinations in Bumrah's absence.

## Rahul says no definitive answer to spin woes

Stand-in skipper hopes to improve before facing SL and Aus next year

RANCHI

Stand-in ODI skipper KL Rahul on Saturday conceded that Indian batters' repeated struggles against spin, especially on home tracks, remain a concern but he didn't have a "definitive answer" to the decline of their traditional strength.

His comment comes amid a worrying pattern of Indian batting line-up's repeated buckling against spinners on home tracks in Test cricket over the last two seasons -- once their fortress.

New Zealand in 2024 and then South Africa recently whitewashed India 3-0 and 2-0 respectively, on the back of relentless spin bowling led by left-arm spinners Mitchell Santner, Ajaz Patel (NZ) and off-spinner Simon Harmer (SA) on pitches that had dollops of turn.

"We haven't played spin well enough in the last couple of seasons. I really don't know why we did it earlier and why we aren't doing it now. I don't have a definitive answer. All we can do is to look at how to get better individually and as a batting group," Rahul said on the eve of the first ODI against South Africa here.

Rahul said the batters will have to explore technical and tactical adjustments and it will be a long haul.

"It won't change overnight. We'll look at what improvements we need and hopefully by the time the Sri Lanka and Australia series come

We haven't played spin well enough in the last couple of seasons. I really don't know why we did it earlier and why we aren't doing it now. I don't have a definitive answer

KL Rahul

India stand-in ODI captain

around, we'll be better prepared. We'll also reach out to seniors who played spin exceptionally well," he added.

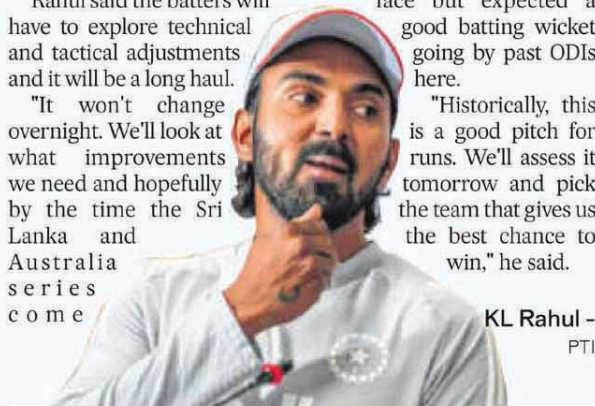
Echoing the concern, former India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin recently said that India's "pathetic" batting against spin has made them "probably one of the poorest spin-playing nations in the world."

Rahul said Indian batters must individually "seek answers" and fine-tune their technique if they are to reclaim their traditional edge against spinners.

The skipper said he had not yet inspected the Ranchi surface but expected a good batting wicket going by past ODIs here.

"Historically, this is a good pitch for runs. We'll assess it tomorrow and pick the team that gives us the best chance to win," he said.

KL Rahul - PTI



## India trounce Canada to storm into summit clash

The team will play Belgium, the only team they lost to earlier in the tournament by a solitary goal

IPOH

Jugraj Singh scored four goals as the Indian men's hockey team thrashed Canada 14-3 in a high-scoring encounter to top the pool standings and make the final of the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup here on Saturday.

Having lost only to Belgium by a goal earlier in the tournament, India were upbeat after a sensational 3-2 win against New Zealand in their previous game.

India will play Belgium in the summit clash on Sunday. The match began with an early goal by Nilakanta Sharma in the fourth minute, followed by a 10th minute goal by Rajinder Singh who has been in good nick, since his debut in the senior side.

It was a thrilling start to the game with Canada responding to the early goals by creating PCs and even converting from them. In the 11th minute, Brendan Guraliuk converted a fine PC.

Two more goals were



14-3  
India-Canada  
match scoreline

scored in the following minutes through Jugraj Singh and Amit Rohidas in the 12th and 15th minute respectively.

The 4-1 lead put India in good stead to build on their performance in the second quarter. With senior stars in the team rested for this tournament, the onus to shine was on a younger lot and they did well to hold off pressure from the Canadian defence.

A flurry of goals continued in this quarter with Rajinder Singh scoring in the 24th minute, Dilpreet Singh in the 25th

minute and Jugraj scoring his second goal in the 26th minute.

Ahead by 7-1, India were unstoppable but Canada came into the third quarter with slight modifications in their attack that led to a penalty stroke in the 35th minute.

Matthew Sarmiento made no mistake in pumping this one into the post to take the scoreline to 7-2. Meanwhile, Jugraj scored his hat-trick in this quarter when he struck in the 39th minute, and Selvam Karthi scored in the 43rd.

MUMBAI

Harmanpreet Kaur-led defending champions Mumbai Indians will face 2024 winners Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the opening match of the fourth Women's Premier League on January 9 at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai.

In a first for the tournament, the WPL final will not be held on a weekend, with the summit clash scheduled for a Thursday (February 5), likely to avoid a clash with the men's T20 World Cup, which begins the same week in India and Sri Lanka. The T20 World Cup opens with a match between Pakistan and Netherlands on February 7 (Saturday) in Colombo.

The 28-day, 22-match WPL will be played across two venues. DY Patil Stadium, which witnessed India's maiden women's ICC global title -- the ODI World Cup win over South Africa earlier this month -- will host the first 11 matches, including afternoon double-headers on January 10



## WPL Season 4 schedule

**In Navi Mumbai: January 9:** Mumbai Indians vs Royal Challengers Bengaluru; **Jan 10:** UP Warriorz vs Gujarat Giants and Mumbai Indians vs Delhi Capitals; **Jan 11:** Delhi Capitals vs Gujarat Giants; **Jan 12:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru vs UP Warriorz; **Jan 13:** Mumbai Indians vs Gujarat Giants; **Jan 14:** UP Warriorz vs Delhi Capitals; **Jan 15:** Mumbai Indians vs UP Warriorz; **Jan 16:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru vs Gujarat Giants; **Jan 17:** UP Warriorz vs Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals vs Royal Challengers Bengaluru

**In Vadodara:** Jan 19: Gujarat Giants vs Royal Challengers Bengaluru; Jan 20: Delhi Capitals vs Mumbai Indians; Jan 22: Gujarat Giants vs UP Warriorz; Jan 24: Royal Challengers Bengaluru vs Delhi Capitals; Jan 26: Royal Challengers Bengaluru vs Mumbai Indians; Jan 27: Gujarat Giants vs Delhi Capitals; Jan 29: UP Warriorz vs Royal Challengers Bengaluru; Jan 30: Gujarat Giants vs Mumbai Indians; February 1: Delhi Capitals vs UP Warriorz

**Eliminator:** Feb 3; **Final:** Feb 5 (both in Vadodara).

## EPL

## Foden rescues Man City with late goal in nervy win

MANCHESTER

Manchester City squandered a two-goal lead before grabbing a stoppage-time winner through Phil Foden to seal a 3-2 victory over Leeds in the Premier League on Saturday.

With Erling Haaland failing to score for a third straight game, City relied largely on Foden to overcome a team languishing in the relegation zone.

The England playmaker opened the scoring after 50

seconds -- for the fastest goal in the league this season -- before Josko Gvardiol added a second for City in the 25th.

Leeds replied in the second half through Dominic Calvert-Lewin and Lukas Nmecha, a striker who came through City's academy, before Foden curled home the winner in the first minute of added-on time.

City climbed to second place and trimmed the gap to first-place Arsenal, which visits Chelsea on Sunday, to four points

## SCORELINES

3-2

Man City-Leeds  
United

3-1

Brentford-Burnley

3-2

Sunderland-Bournemouth

Having lost 2-1 at

Newcastle in the league last

weekend and 2-0 to Bayer Leverkusen in the Champions League on Tuesday, City was staring at a three-match winless run in all competitions before Foden's late intervention.

Haaland, the Premier League's top scorer, hasn't scored in any of those games.

Sunderland produced an even better fightback than Leeds, also coming from two goals down to win 3-2 at home to Bournemouth. Brian Brobbey grabbed the winner in the 69th while

Bournemouth's second goal was a shot from nearly 50 yards (meters) from U.S. midfielder Tyler Adams.

Brentford beat Burnley 3-1 in the other early game, with Igor Thiago scoring twice for the hosts.

It was a pulsating day of matches at the English Premier League with Manchester City showing their mettle to grab the win in stoppage time.

Brentford and Sunderland proved their straps too in tough games



Manchester City's Phil Foden (right) scores against Leeds United. AP