

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ    Wednesday, 03 December, 2025    UNIQUE GIFT OF KRIYAYOGA ASHRAM AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO GIVE IMPETUS TO WORLD BUILDING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

## Agreements on nuclear energy, Su-57, S-400 likely during Putin's visit

New Delhi

While Russian President Vladimir Putin's upcoming visit to India is likely to include agreements on the purchase of fifth-generation Sukhoi-57 fighter jets and the S-400 air defense system, as well as on technology transfer and joint production of jet



engines and the construction of small nuclear power plants, the two countries may also agree on a formula to address the obstacles to bilateral trade caused by US tariffs. Ahead of

Putin's visit to India, which begins on Thursday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed this in a press conference with Indian journalists via video link, organized by the Russian news agency Sputnik. The Kremlin spokesman said that the Russian leadership respects Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's stance on the Russia-Ukraine war and supports the US plan to end the conflict, but European leaders want the conflict to continue until the last Ukrainian citizen is killed, and that is why they are continuing to provide financial and military aid to Ukraine. Peskov said, "Russia-India relations

are not just a standard set of diplomatic protocols and trade agreements; they are much more important than that. Our bilateral relationship is based on a deep historical background of mutual understanding, partnership, and a shared vision of global affairs, and a vast network of international law.

## EC should decide on the date of SIR in Kerala within two days: Court



New Delhi

The Supreme Court has directed the Election Commission to decide on the date of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in Kerala within two days. A bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant said that the local body election process is underway in the state, so the date for the SIR should be extended. The hearing on the SIR issue will continue tomorrow, December 4th. During the hearing today, the Chief Justice stated that the government machinery has no problem, but some political parties do. During the hearing, Prashant Bhushan, representing

the petitioner, said that the court should be aware that many people in the country today view the Election Commission as a dictator. The Chief Justice then asked them not to make such comments and to confine themselves to their arguments. During the previous hearing, the court had made it clear that there should be no chaos in the process and a timely response is required. In the petition, the Kerala government has sought to halt the SIR process until the ongoing local body election process in the state is completed. The petition states that Kerala has 1,200 autonomous bodies.

## Vande Mataram and electoral reforms to be discussed in Lok Sabha

New Delhi

The central government has agreed to discuss electoral reforms during the winter session of Parliament. The Lok Sabha will discuss the 150th anniversary of the national song "Vande Mataram" on Monday, December 8th, starting at 12 noon. The discussion on electoral reforms will begin the following day, Tuesday, December 9th, at 12 noon. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju stated on Tuesday that this was decided at an all-party meeting chaired by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. He added that the Lok Sabha will discuss the 150th anniversary of the national song "Vande Mataram" on Monday, December 8th, starting at 12 noon, and the electoral reforms on Tuesday, December



9th, starting at 12 noon. The opposition has been creating uproar over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), the process of updating voter lists, in both the previous and current sessions of Parliament. Proceedings in both houses of Parliament, which began on Monday, were disrupted for the second consecutive day over the issue. Speaking to reporters in the Parliament complex, the Union Minister stated that the all-party meeting called by the Speaker was fruitful, and they all agreed that

a special discussion would be held on Monday on the 150th anniversary of the national anthem, Vande Mataram. This discussion would begin at 12 noon and continue throughout the day. It was also agreed that a discussion on electoral reforms would take place on Tuesday, December 9th. This meeting could discuss and debate a wide range of issues related to elections and their processes in the country. The electoral process is crucial for parliamentary democracy. He said, "With the consensus on the

Parliament considers all matters related to reforms in the electoral process

Parliament considers all matters related to major reforms in the electoral process. Meanwhile, the SIR is an administrative matter decided by the Election Commission. Administrative matters handled by the Election Commission cannot be discussed in the House without the government's direction or consultation. It is noteworthy that the process of updating voter lists is currently underway in 12 states.

discussion now settled, and the time and date fixed. I look forward to a very constructive and engaging discussion." The Union Minister stated that after the discussion on both issues is complete in the House, we will propose raising it.



Winter Action Plan will protect the homeless and poor from cold: CM Rekha Gupta.

## Nadda calls on MPs to support the "TB-Free India" campaign

New Delhi

Union Health Minister JP Nadda on Tuesday called on MPs from Uttar Pradesh to support the TB-Free India Campaign. Speaking at a meeting held in the Parliament House Annexe (EPHA) auditorium, JP Nadda stated

that the purpose of the dialogue with MPs is to advance the national mission of a TB-Free India. The session aims to increase parliamentary support and awareness in the fight against tuberculosis, focusing on prevention, early diagnosis, care, and community mobiliza-

tion. He stated that MPs can make a significant contribution to achieving a TB-Free India. Union Health Minister JP Nadda stated that under the National Campaign for TB-Free India, an intensive 100-day campaign was launched

across the country. Meetings will now be held with MPs from each state to ensure the program's success. In this regard, a meeting with MPs from Uttar Pradesh is being held on Tuesday. Meetings will also be held with MPs from Maharashtra and the Northeast.

## Delhi's air quality is suffocating: Air in 'very poor' category

New Delhi

Due to changing wind direction and local factors, the air quality in the capital is once again rapidly moving towards the severe category. Tuesday morning began with haze and light fog. A light layer of smog also appeared in the sky, reducing visibility. People were seen wearing masks during this time, and respiratory patients faced difficul-

ties. The Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 372, which is in the very poor category. This is an increase of 68 points compared to Monday. Meanwhile, Noida's air quality was the most polluted in the NCR, with an AQI of 395, which is in the very poor category. Greater Noida recorded an AQI of 378, Ghaziabad 361, and Gurugram 277. Faridabad's air quality was the cleanest.

## Pakistan's lies on Sri Lanka relief mission exposed: Foreign Ministry

New Delhi

A new controversy has erupted between the two countries over Pakistan's relief flight to cyclone-ravaged Sri Lanka. Pakistan claimed that India was deliberately blocking its humanitarian flights, delaying the delivery of relief to Sri Lanka. However, India immediately rejected Pakistan's allegations, stating that it had approved Pakistan's request on the same day, within just four



hours, on humanitarian grounds. India also categorically rejected the misleading claims being spread by Pakistan on this issue. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal called the statement by the Pakistan

Foreign Ministry "ridiculous" and another attempt to spread misinformation against India. He added that India is committed to providing full assistance to Sri Lanka in its difficult situation. Jaiswal stated that

Pakistan's formal request was received by the Indian High Commission in Islamabad at around 13:00 pm on December 1, 2025. The government, recognizing it as a humanitarian emergency, issued the approval at 17:30 pm that same day. Pakistani media spreading fake news India categorically stated that the news circulating in Pakistani media that India denied airspace permission is completely false.

## Zero tolerance on activities against the unity and integrity of the country: Centre

New Delhi

The Government of India has a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of illegal and anti-national activities. Over the past five years, the government has declared 23 organizations unlawful. This action was taken under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. This information was provided by Minister of State for Home Affairs

Nityanand Rai in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. Minister of State for Home Affairs Rai stated that strict and consistent action has been taken against any organization involved in activities prejudicial to the sovereignty, unity, integrity, and security of the nation. He stated that the 23 organizations declared unlawful during these five years include SIMI, ULFA, ATTF.

## UP Cabinet: A world-class temple museum will now be built on 52 acres in Ayodhya

Lucknow

The Yogi government has taken a major step towards developing Ayodhya as a world-class cultural and spiritual destination. The cabinet meeting held at Lok Bhavan on Tuesday expanded the scope of the proposed world-class temple museum in Ayodhya, in collaboration with Tata Sons. Finance Minister Suresh Khanna, while providing information



on the cabinet decision, stated that Tata Sons has expressed its desire to develop and operate a state-of-the-art temple museum using its CSR funds. A tripartite MoU for land allocation for the project was

signed on September 3, 2024, between the Central Government, the Uttar Pradesh Government, and Tata Sons. Finance Minister Suresh Khanna stated that the state government had previously

granted Tata Sons 25 acres of Nazul land in Manjha Jamthara village in Ayodhya for 90 years, but Tata Sons had requested more land to accommodate the museum's grandeur. In addition to this land, a further 27.102 acres, totaling 52.102 acres, will be transferred free of charge from the Housing and Urban Planning Department to the Tourism Department to further expand the scope.

Big relief for former Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yeddyurappa

New Delhi

The Supreme Court has granted a major relief to former Karnataka Chief Minister and BJP leader B.S. Yeddyurappa. A bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant has stayed the trial in the POCISO case filed against Yeddyurappa. The court has issued a notice to the Karnataka government. The Supreme Court stated that the Karnataka High Court misinterpreted an earlier decision and failed to consider the merits of the case, despite the petitioner being granted liberty in the earlier order. Yeddyurappa had

## The Prime Minister's Office will now be called 'Seva Teerth'

New Delhi

The Prime Minister's Office has been renamed Seva Tirtha. The central government has made this decision. It is reported that the Prime Minister's Office will soon be relocated to a new complex. This building has been named Seva Tirtha. The new complex, which is in the final stages of construction, was previously known as the 'Executive Enclave'



under the Central Vista Redevelopment Project. In addition to the PMO, the 'Executive Enclave' will also house the offices of the Cabinet Secretariat, the National Security Council Secretariat, and India House, a venue

for high-level interactions with visiting dignitaries. Officials said that 'Seva Teerth' will be a workplace designed to demonstrate the spirit of service and where national priorities will take shape.



## Govt. is giving new impetus to horticulture development in the state

Dinesh will inaugurate the "Horticulture Upgradation Seminar" on Dec 3rd

**Lucknow**



The Yogi government of Uttar Pradesh is continuously striving to increase farmers' income and give a new direction to horticulture development. In this regard, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Horticulture, Agricultural Marketing, Agricultural Foreign Trade and Agricultural Exports, Dinesh Pratap Singh will inaugurate the joint Horticulture Upgradation Seminar of Gorakhpur and Basti Divisions at the Yogiraj Baba Gambhirnath Auditorium in Gorakhpur on December 3rd, 2025 at 10:00 am. This event is being organized to commemorate the completion of the golden 50th anniversary of the Horticulture Department. Three key topics will be discussed in detail at

the event. The first topic is "Rooftop Gardening," which will discuss measures to promote fruit and vegetable production on rooftops in urban areas, increase greenery in cities and provide fresh vegetables to people at home. Experts will educate residents on potted plant production techniques, nutrient management and environmental benefits. The second major topic is high-value horticultural crops in small areas, which is for doubling the income of marginal and small farmers. Subject matter experts will guide farmers on cultivation techniques and

## RPI will soon receive national party status: Ramdas Athawale

**New Delhi**



Republican Party of India (Athawale) National President and Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, said at the National Executive meeting held at New Maharashtra Sadan, New Delhi, that the party will soon receive national party status. RPI National President Ramdas Athawale said that the RPI has already received state party status due to winning two seats in the Nagaland Assembly elections and its strong performance in Manipur. Ramdas Athawale said that the party executive committee has been formed in Arunachal Pradesh this month. Ramdas Athawale stated that the organization is already active in all 28 states and 8 union territories, and to further strengthen the RPI, the party will launch a nationwide membership drive to recruit 20 million new members. Athawale appealed to all members present at the executive

meeting to fight for social justice under the leadership of the RPI to address local issues in their states, districts and regions, win the trust of the people and participate in strengthening the organization. Athawale expressed his heartfelt congratulations to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on the NDA landslide victory in the Bihar Assembly elections, marking the beginning of a new chapter of Bihar bright future and progress. Athawale stated that all opposition parties, including the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, are misleading the public by making false statements regarding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voter list and reservations. Ramdas Athawale

stated that extensive discussions were held with the state presidents and state in-charges who participated in the meeting to spread the party principles to every corner of the country through a massive membership drive. RPI National President Ramdas Athawale appealed to every member to actively participate in the massive membership drive and effectively contribute to strengthening the RPI, which is committed to realizing Babasaheb dreams. On this occasion, the RPI National President also stated that the RPI will continue its struggle and dedication for justice for all deprived sections of society, including minorities, farmers, laborers, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

## An auto driver killed an elderly man after he demanded compensation for a broken chair

**Akhand Bharat Sandesh**

**Kaushambi. Maniram**, a resident of Tilhapur Mod Market under the Pipri police station, bought four chairs while returning from Puramufti and had them loaded onto his auto. He promised to drop them off at Tilhapur Mod and returned home with his wife on his bike. While waiting for the auto, Maniram asked the driver to remove the chairs. The auto driver removed the chairs and dropped them on the ground, breaking one. Maniram began arguing with the driver about compensation. Meanwhile, the driver tried to flee with the vehicle. Maniram stood in front, but the driver struck him hard, killing Maniram, 68, on the spot. Pipri police have arrested the driver and taken the vehicle into custody and are investigating.

## Youth injured in accident dies

**Akhand Bharat Sandesh**

**Kaushambi.** A young man from Hisampur Madho, Saini police station, has died in a road accident. According to the incident, Vinay Kumar, son of Pappu, was on his way to a hospital in Khaga last Sunday to learn medicine. As soon as he reached Budwan Mod on his bike, he was hit by an unknown vehicle, causing him to fall on the road along with his bike and suffer serious injuries. Upon receiving the information, his family members rushed him to Fatehpur. Due to his critical condition, he was admitted to a private nursing home in Prayagraj on Monday, December 1st. He died last night during treatment. The weeping family members performed the last rites of the young man.



## Mission Director Pulkit Khare reviewed the progress of skill training activities

**Lucknow**



A district-wise review meeting of DC and MIS Managers was held under the chairmanship of Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission Director Pulkit Khare. The meeting included a detailed discussion on the quality, progress, data management, target achievement and functioning of training providers under various skill training programmes. The Mission Director directed that divisional-level competitions must be conducted in all divisions by 10 December. After the competition, the names of five eligible candidates from each skill sector, in descending order, must be submitted to

the Mission office. He informed that password-protected confidential question papers (Set A and Set B) for the competition will be sent to districts by the Mission. He instructed that candidates shortlisted at the district level must be ensured participation at the divisional level so they may get a fair opportunity to progress to the state level. The Mission Director stated that

the smooth operation of all designated training batches is the top priority of the Mission, so that maximum youth can be empowered through skill training and connected with local employment and self-employment opportunities. He further said that providing skill training to more and more students in government and non-government schools under Project 'Praveen' is a key objective of the government. In case any training provider is found involved in irregularities, UPSDM will take blacklisting action and written notices will be issued to such providers.

During the meeting, the Mission Director informed that the Zero Poverty

Campaign is being reviewed at the Chief Minister Office level. Under this campaign, the Mission is consistently working to provide skill training to identified families and Self-Help Group (SHG) women and linking them with self-employment and wage-employment opportunities.

He directed that a comprehensive database be prepared of all youth who have been trained under UPSDM and DDU-GKY in the last three years but have not yet obtained employment. Participation of such youth in the employment fair organised at the ITI on the 21st of every month must be ensured so they can benefit from available job opportunities.

## Government OTS Scheme a Hit: Dozens of Consumers Join on Day One in Fatehganj Sarosa

**Lucknow**

The Uttar Pradesh Government One Time Settlement (OTS) Scheme witnessed an impressive response on its very first day in the Fatehganj Sarosa subdivision. Consumers from more than a dozen villages of the area enthusiastically reached the camp to register themselves for settling outstanding electricity bills, including cases of theft and other pending dues. Executive Engineer Neeraj Kumar, who attended the camp, explained that Energy Minister A.K. Sharma



introduced this scheme primarily to benefit rural consumers whose electricity bills have accumulated beyond their capacity to pay. The scheme provides them relief through easy installments and discounts. Motivating the public, he gave the slogan: "Come early, gain more." He also instructed all electricity staff of

the region to spread awareness about the OTS scheme by visiting households so that maximum consumers can take advantage of it. During the camp, Assistant Engineer Ravindra Kumar Singh, TG-2 Avinash Yadav, Naushad Alam, Avneesh Yadav, Bheeshm Bhushan Pratap Singh (Tony), Abhinav, Ashish and other staff members were present. A heavy rush of consumers was seen from early morning on the inaugural day, clearly indicating the strong enthusiasm among rural citizens toward the OTS scheme.

## Strict Action Against Illegal Settlers in Slum Areas: Southern Zone Police Conduct Intensive Checking Drive

**Lucknow**

Acting on the directives of the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, a large-scale operation was conducted on Monday in the Southern Zone of Lucknow as part of the statewide campaign against illegal settlers living in slums, makeshift colonies and sensitive localities. The operation was carried out under the supervision of Lucknow Police Commissioner Amrendra Singh Sengar. Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Nipun Agrawal and Assistant Commissioner of Police (Krishnanagar) Rajneesh Verma, along with the Bijnor police team, conducted intensive checking in the airport area and



nearby commercial establishments, slums and temporary settlements. During the drive, the police thoroughly examined the Aadhaar cards, voter ID cards and other identity documents of individuals residing in these areas. For verification of the addresses mentioned in these documents, correspondence is being made with the

concerned police stations. Officials stated that if any discrepancies are found during verification, strict legal action will be taken against those identified as illegal settlers. This operation by the Southern Zone Police is being considered a significant step toward strengthening security and maintaining law and order in the region.

## Cattle Successfully Rescued from Drain: Quick Action by Municipality and Bajrang Dal Saves Life



**Lucknow**

Panic ensued in Mohalla Madhav Nagar of Jalesar police station area on Monday when a cow fell into a drain and got trapped. The animal remained stuck for several hours before help arrived. Local residents immediately informed Bajrang Dal volunteers, prompting a joint rescue operation by the Jalesar Municipality and

Bajrang Dal team. The rescue operation faced significant challenges due to the narrowness of the drain, its depth and the fast-flowing water. After hours of strenuous effort, the cow was finally rescued safely. Residents present at the scene breathed a sigh of relief and praised the rescue team for their prompt action. Key participants in the operation included Lucky Mehrotra, District

Student Head of Bajrang Dal: Vikas Thakur, Block Student Head, Pranshu Kushwaha, Chief Cow Protector and Deputy Cow Protector Shyam Thakur, along with municipal staff. Local citizens expressed their gratitude to the municipality employees and the Bajrang Dal team for saving the animal and lauded their courage, promptness and humanitarian sensitivity.

## Constructive Dialogue Held Between LDA Officials and Farmers Affected by Anant Nagar Scheme



**Lucknow**

On December 1, a significant and constructive meeting was held between the Lucknow Development Authority (LDA), farmers affected by the Anant Nagar Scheme and concerned officials. During the discussion, farmers presented their pending issues and demands in detail. In response, officials assured that another round of dialogue would be conducted next Saturday in the presence of senior authorities to work toward resolving all outstanding matters. During the meeting, farmers raised key concerns related to land disputes, compensation, rehabilitation and other unresolved aspects of the scheme. LDA officials listened attentively and emphasized that the next phase of talks—directly involving top officials—would focus on concrete steps toward addressing the farmers' issues. Representatives from Sanyukt Kisan Morcha Bharat and the Bhartiya Kisan Mazdoor Union Dashahri actively participated in the discussion. Organization representative Manish Yadav Dashahri expressed satisfaction, stating that the administration's willingness to hear the farmers' concerns has strengthened hopes for a positive resolution. Farmer organizations described the meeting as a positive beginning and expressed confidence that all pending demands of the affected farmers would be addressed satisfactorily in the upcoming dialogue.



## Ganga Pujan was performed on the banks of the Sangam in the presence of officials

The Magh Mela will be organized in a clean, accessible, safe, and grand manner - Divisional Commissioner

**Akhand Bharat Sandesh**

**Prayagraj.** On Tuesday, at the sacred banks of the Triveni Sangam of the sacred rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati, Divisional Commissioner Soumya Agarwal, Police Commissioner Jogendra Kumar, District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma, Mela Adhikari/Vice President of Prayagraj Development Authority Rishiraj, Municipal Commissioner Seelam Sai Teja, and other officials performed Ganga Pujan with Vedic mantras to pray for the successful completion of the Magh Mela 2026. They prayed to Mother Ganga for a safe and smooth Magh Mela. On this occasion, Mahant Balveer Giri Ji Maharaj of the Bade Hanumanji Temple, other saints, and Mayor Umesh Chandra Ganesh Kesarwani also worshipped Mother Ganga. After the Ganga Pujan, the Divisional Commissioner addressed the media, stating that the Ganga Pujan was completed today. Land allocations begin today. He stated that, in accordance with the government's intention, the Magh Mela will be organized in a clean, accessible, safe, and grand manner. He stated that 800 hectares of land will be allocated in seven sectors for the fair. This year, approximately 150 million people are expected to attend the Magh Mela. He stated that, drawing on past experiences, some new experiments are being undertaken. For the convenience of the devotees, efforts are being made to minimize walking, improve parking facilities, further improve crowd management, stream-



line traffic management, and provide a robust networking system. On this occasion, District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma stated that the Ganga Pujan was completed in the presence of saints and sages. A prayer has been offered to Mother Ganga for the safe and smooth conduct of the upcoming Magh Mela. All necessary arrangements are being made to ensure that the devotees coming to the fair do not face any difficulties. He stated that over 150 million people are expected to attend the fair. In view of this, meetings have been held with the relevant departments to ensure proper crowd management, traffic, and

arrangements within the Magh Mela area. Parking spaces have been identified on the roads leading in and all necessary arrangements are being made there. The District Magistrate stated that the fair will be conducted in a systematic manner. Magh Mela Officer Rishiraj stated that the Magh Mela will be conducted safely and smoothly. He stated that officials from all relevant departments have been instructed to complete their respective tasks within the stipulated timeframe. Police and administrative officials, priests, and religious leaders, along with a large number of people, were present on the occasion.

## A large number of lawyers gathered at the Kaushambi courthouse, raising slogans in support of the Advocates' Protection Act



**Akhand Bharat Sandesh**

**Kaushambi.** Lawyers in Kaushambi roared loudly on Tuesday, campaigning for the passage of the Advocates' Protection Bill in the winter session of Parliament. Under the banner of the All India Rural Bar Association, the Advocates' Protection March, jointly led by National President Gyan Prakash Shukla and National General Secretary Anil Kumar Tiwari Mahesh, was seen in high spirits. The state-wide Advocates' Protection March, which began in Lucknow and reached Kaushambi this afternoon via Unnao and Kanpur, reached Kaushambi. Here,

lawyers held a public meeting in support of the bill in the Model District Bar Association's library hall. Outside the library hall, hundreds of lawyers also raised slogans demanding the implementation of the Act. Addressing the public meeting in the library hall, National President Gyan Prakash Shukla, regarding the awareness campaign among lawyers, said that the Parliament session has begun. The Central Government should introduce the Advocates' Protection Act Bill along with other bills in this session. He stated that if the government does not introduce the bill in the winter session, advocates will



intensify their agitation on this issue. National General Secretary Anil Kumar Tiwari Mahesh stated that the government and administration's indifferent attitude toward the safety of advocates will not be tolerated. He added that the Association's draft of the security bill includes several welfare measures for young advocates and a pension for senior advocates. The general meeting was chaired by Bar Association President Dilip Pandey and conducted by senior advocate Satyendra Nath Mishra. At the general meeting, the Association honored former President Nar Narayan Mishra, President Dilip Pandey, and Rakesh

Kumar Jaiswal with Struggle Honor Letters for their contributions to the Advocate Safety Campaign. The general meeting was coordinated by former President Rakesh Kumar Jaiswal and former General Secretary Laxmikant Tripathi. Senior advocates Gopalji Shukla, Pappu Mishra, Roshan Agrahari, Nitish Tripathi, Amit Singh, Rahul Kumar Sahu, Rudra Vishwakarma, Sneh Dutt Maurya, Bhupesh Sharma, Niranjan Singh, Harishankar Pandey, Akshay Vishwakarma, Ravidev Pandey, Ashish, etc. were present on the occasion. General Secretary Tushar Tiwathanks.ri proposed a vote of thanks.

## Awareness campaign launched under Mission Shakti Phase 5.0

Empowered Women, Prosperous State Don't be afraid of any problem; pick up the phone and dial the women's helpline number: get immediate help

**Akhand Bharat Sandesh**

**Tharwai.** Today, it is being seen that women are not safe if they go out of their homes. Women are not safe if they go out to study due to problems like harassment from bullies and domestic harassment. Special attention has been given to women's safety and respect, and special emphasis has been placed on women's safety and respect. Nowadays, every woman is able to freely



exercise her rights and focus on her education. In this context, campaigns are being conducted under Mission Shakti Phase 5.0. On Monday, a women's police team under the Tharwai police station visited JRD Adarsh ??Public School

in Tharwai to raise awareness about women's empowerment and respect. Sub-Inspector Akanksha Dwivedi, from the Mission Shakti team, provided the girls with detailed information about the police's ongoing women's empowerment

campaign. She emphasized that women should always be aware that if someone harasses them on the road, at work, or around their home, they should not panic. To teach them a lesson, call the numbers provided for women's safety and respect.

They will receive assistance within a short time, and action may be taken against the harasser. SI Deepti Mishra also provided detailed information about helpline numbers, including the Women Power Line 1090,

Women's Helpline 181, Child Helpline 1098, Chief Minister's Helpline 1076, and Police Emergency Service Dial 112. She also explained various public welfare schemes implemented by the government, including the Kanya Sumangala Yojana, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, and the Chief Minister's Mass Marriage Scheme. On this occasion, school principal Adarsh ??Pal and teachers Neha Dubey, Soumya, Sangeeta, Tanu Tripathi, Stuti Singh etc. were present.

**Akhand Bharat Sandesh**

**Lucknow.** On Tuesday, Vipin Kumar assumed charge as the District Basic Education Officer (BSA), Lucknow. He has extensive and rich experience in the education sector. Previously, he served as Senior Lecturer at Prayagraj DIET, Specialist in Holistic Education (outgoing), Assistant Teacher in the Basic Education Department, and Block Education Officer. Vipin Kumar is origi-



nally from Kaushambi district and received his education in Kaushambi and Prayagraj. On the occasion of assuming charge, Vipin Kumar Kushwaha of Prayagraj also met him and extended his best wish-

es and congratulations on his new responsibility. Sab Kumar's appointment is being considered a step towards reinventing the quality of education and administrative efficiency in Lucknow district.

## Woman commits suicide by hanging under suspicious circumstances



**Akhand Bharat Sandesh**

**Kada Kaushambi.** A woman committed suicide by hanging herself inside her home under suspicious circumstances in Majra Kazipur, Thulguila village, in the Saini police station area, around 11 a.m. on Sunday. The deceased was identified as Sangeeta Devi (30), wife of Anil Kumar. The deceased, Sangeeta Devi, hanged herself by making a noose of

cloth from a tin can inside the house at around 11 a.m. Her husband was out working. When neighbors arrived at her home and saw the woman's body hanging from the noose, panic ensued. Police arrived at the scene, removed the body, completed the formalities, and sent it for post-mortem examination. The woman's death has caused a turmoil in the family. The deceased woman has two young children: a one-year-old

girl and a four-year-old son. The children are inconsolable, weeping inconsolably after their mother's death. No clear reason for the suicide has been revealed at this time. Station House Officer Dharmendra Singh stated that no complaint has been received regarding the incident. The body has been sent for post-mortem examination based on information from the deceased's brother. Further action will be taken after the report is received.

## Annual inspection of Vidya Bharati Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Sansthan's inter-school began

**Akhand Bharat Sandesh**

**Prayagraj** The annual inspection of Vidya Bharati Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Sansthan's inter-school began. The inspection began with a prayer session by Uma Shankar Mishra, Principal of Saraswati Vidya Mandir Inter College, Lalaganj, Azhara, Pratapgarh, and his associates, Acharya Shiv Pratap Tiwari, Shashank Shekhar Dwivedi, and Ram Shiromani Mishra. The dignitaries lit lamps and offered flowers to Goddess Saraswati. Following this, the school's brothers and sisters performed the prayer, in



which everyone devotedly worshipped the Goddess. After the prayer, the school's Principal, Suresh Chandra Tiwari, introduced and honored the guests. After that,

the head of the inspection team, Principal Umashankar Mishra, while providing guidance to the brothers and sisters as well as the school family, explained the five

changes of the Sangh centenary year - social harmony, family enlightenment, environmental protection, self-awareness and civic duty - in a very good manner and appealed that we all should take it to different places and people of the society and present its relevance in the present time in a simple manner so that the welfare of the human society can be achieved. Along with this, he blessed the brothers and sisters to keep moving on the path of continuous progress by doing their work and responsibilities with devotion. All the teachers, brothers and sisters of the school were present in this program.

## Bike rider dies in midnight road accident

**Akhand Bharat Sandesh**

**Kaushambi.** A young bike rider died in a road accident at 2 a.m. near Girdharpur Garhi village in the Kadadham police station area. Doctors declared him dead upon arrival at the hospital. Kadadham police, on patrol, found a young

man lying injured on the roadside. Police transported the young man to the Community Health Center, Ismailpur, in their vehicle. However, after examination, doctors declared him dead. The deceased has been identified as 27-year-old Mahesh Yadav, a resident of Lukiya village in the

Saini police station area. According to family members, Mahesh had gone to Girdharpur Garhi village to attend his sister's sister-in-law's wedding. While returning that night, a vehicle hit his bike. The impact was so severe that Mahesh fell to the road, seriously injured. Police

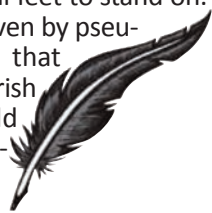
informed Mahesh's family through his mobile phone and rushed him to the hospital, where doctors declared him dead. The body was sent for a post-mortem. Police are now searching for the vehicle involved in the incident through CCTV cameras installed on the highway.



## Editorial

### Halal certification is turning into a scam. It's creating a Muslim-only economy

**Halal** is the latest Islamic fad. The internet is buzzing with content on Halal living, Halal dating, and even Halal sex. Halal certification is a booming global industry created by New Islam. A religion that has so far been proudly political is becoming brazenly commercial too. And why not, when catchphrases like “Islam is the complete way of life”—making detailed prescriptions for politics, economy, and every imaginable aspect of life—go unchallenged? In an ongoing Supreme Court case, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta submitted that while nobody had any objection to Halal certification for meat, nowadays even cement, iron rods, and bottled water were being certified as Halal. Since such certification comes at a cost—charged by private agencies in the Halal certification business—even customers who have no interest in such labels are being made to pay higher prices for the commodities thus certified. Halal certification preys on the naïveté of the newly prosperous Muslim masses. The Indian economy has been steadily growing, and Muslims have shared in this prosperity as much as anyone else. But this upward mobility has to be matched by enhanced self-esteem and social respectability, which, for a Muslim, still comes through overt piety and demonstrative religiosity. The Halal industry sows such fervour and reaps a good harvest from it. In the process, not entirely unwittingly, it also fosters a narrow and rigid religious attitude among Muslims—one that leads, inevitably, to radicalisation. The growth of the Indian economy has placed unprecedented purchasing power in Muslim hands too. And though the Halal certification business is aimed at tapping into the vast and growing Muslim market, it is bound to have some insidious and unforeseen consequences. For one, it will result in economic separatism, creating a Muslim-only parallel economy. In effect, it will lead to the systemic economic boycott of other communities. Stray calls to boycott Muslim street vendors, which keep circulating on social media, are a red herring compared to the harm the Halal market is insinuating into the political economy. Its normalisation and mainstreaming will have far-reaching consequences for inter-community relations—even greater than what Muslim Personal Law or vote bank politics have had so far. If a non-Muslim were to buy and sell in the Halal market, he would have to comply with the terms prescribed by Sharia, as interpreted by the agents of Halal certification. In such a market, they would be second-class citizens. Dhimmis. We would have the economic version of an Islamic state. Having suffered from the Two-Nation Theory, are we now sleepwalking into a Two-Economy reality? The path is nearly charted as a parallel economy develops around Islamic banking, Halal stocks, Halal mutual funds, Halal investments, and Halal travels. This trend will eventually lead to demands for the Halal certification of India itself as a country fit for Muslims. Then for the Constitution as a document that doesn't conflict with Sharia. And, as has already been happening informally, Halal certification for political parties—determining whether it is right for a Muslim to vote for some of them. One wonders, why should the religious lens be used to look at everything from iron rods and cement to electric wires and batteries? How will someone who looks at iron and cement through an Islamic filter see people of other religions? An outlook like this, even if genuinely Islamic, would have no place in the modern world. But as I will show in the latter part of this article, this isn't even Islamic. It has no precedence in history or theological feet to stand on. It's pop Islam—faux piety, driven by pseudo-Islamic power theology that seeks to paint the world in garish green. It divides the world between Islamic and non-Islamic and posits .



## Deep State is the convenient bogeyman of modern politics. It's entered India too

**Circa 1900:** Rudyard Kipling wrote Kim, placing the eponymous hero at the centre of the Great Game of espionage between the British Empire and Russia in the 19th century. The book is set after the Second Anglo-Afghan War, which ended in 1881, but before the Third, likely in the period 1893–98. Kim, short for Kimball O'Hara, is an impoverished Irish orphan who lives on the streets of Lahore and works for Mahbub Ali, a Pashtun horse trader. He later befriends an aged Tibetan lama, accompanies him on his journey along the Grand Trunk Road, learns about the Great Game, and is eventually recruited by Mahbub Ali, who works for the British Secret Service in their quest to extend influence in both Afghanistan and Tibet. Whether or not the Great Game—the expression used by British imperialists to describe the perceived expansion of Russian influence in Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Tibet—actually existed, the fact remains that surveys were undertaken, expeditions mounted, spymasters recruited, and novels written, even as soldiers lost their lives. Taking a cue from Viceroy George Curzon, all pro-establishment papers—from the Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore to The Pioneer of Lucknow, The Statesman of Calcutta (now Kolkata), and The Times of India of Bombay (now Mumbai)—concurred that Tsarist Russia posed a real threat to the jewel in Britain's crown. A hundred and twenty years later, histo-

rians remain sceptical of Curzon's assertions. Is the hue and cry about the Deep State similar to the Great Game? Whether or not it exists, whether it operates in all countries, and whether the 'deep state' of one country is connected with others through the dark web or entrenched corporate interests remains unclear, as the discourse is more ideological than empirical. Sometimes, those who claim to be part of the deep state ascribe to themselves a larger-than-life role in state affairs—for example, AS Dulat and Asad Durrani in their 2018 book The Spy Chronicles: RAW, ISI and the Illusion of Peace. Their claim to be arbiters of one of the most tense and difficult relationships in the region has been widely critiqued by reviewers. The term first gained wide currency in the context of Türkiye as derin devlet, which literally translates to “deep state” in English. In Türkiye, it refers to a non-elected military elite dominating elected governments, especially when they attempt to dismantle the secular foundations of the Republic, established by Mustafa Kemal Pasha after the abolition of the caliphate in 1923. In Pakistan, “deep state” refers to a government controlled by powerful military leaders, as documented by Stephen Cohen in The Idea of Pakistan and Ishtiaq Ahmed in Pakistan: The Garrison State. Elected governments in Pakistan have rarely exercised real control over defense and foreign policy. In the US, Democrats and Republicans

accuse each other of controlling the 'deep state.' Democrats claim the pro-Republican arms lobby and military-industrial complex constitute the deep state, while Republicans argue that Ivy League universities promote 'wokeism' and diversity, equity, and inclusion narratives that, according to Donald Trump, undermine America's greatness. Trump has accused the deep state within the Democratic regime of election interference, citing the Freedom Medal awarded to George Soros as evidence. However, skeptics argue that if the deep state were so powerful, how could Daksh Patel dislodge it simply by firing 'interns and associates' whose tenure is co-terminus with that of President Biden? Ultimately, the deep state serves as a convenient scapegoat for anything that goes wrong or for political parties losing popular support. If Republicans and Democrats are battling it out in Washington, India faces a similar scenario, with Left liberals and Right nationalists accusing each other of leveraging the 'deep state' to gain or retain power. Publications like The Caravan and Organiser Weekly lead these respective narratives. Left liberals claim the RSS is India's deep state, while Right nationalists accuse the Ford Foundation and George Soros' Open Society Foundations of attempting to discredit the democratically elected Modi government. Left liberals find support in the speeches of Leader of Opposition Rahul

Gandhi, while Right nationalists, led by Vice President Dhankhar, minister Kiren Rijju, and BJP spokespersons like Sambit Patra, vehemently counter these claims. In a pre-budget article for The Indian Express, economist Surjit Bhalla, a former member of the PM's Economic Advisory Council, alleged that India's deep state comprises “major industrialists, senior IAS babus, and their friendly influencers in the media”, slowing down economic growth. This claim was firmly repudiated, point by point, by Vivek Kaul in Newsland, who questioned the logic behind such allegations.

Kaul argued that neither the IAS, corporates, nor the media benefit from economic deceleration. Instead, he pointed out that the real cause of economic slowdown is the compulsion of all political parties—BJP, Congress, and AAP—to allocate budgetary resources to freebies rather than long-term investments in social and physical infrastructure, which are crucial for sustained economic growth. Josy Joseph, in his book The Silent Coup: A History of India's Deep State, argues that the deep state is actually led by the IPS. He claims that in the name of combating terrorism in Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, and the Northeast, as well as 'Left-wing extremism' (LWE) in Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, and Andhra Pradesh, the triumvirate of the NIA, CBI, and ED have consolidated unchecked power, with nei-

ther the legislature nor the judiciary exercising adequate oversight. He documents human rights violations of individuals caught in the crosshairs of state action. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Steve Coll offers another perspective, alleging that India's deep state mainly comprises serving and retired IFS officials. However, if the IAS, IPS, and IFS were truly dominant, why would they have allowed the creation of the Department of Military Affairs under the Chief of Defence Staff, effectively relegating the Defence Secretary (an IAS officer) to a largely ceremonial role? A completely contrarian view is presented by Sandhya Ravishankar, news editor at NDTV Profit.

She argues that global NGOs and foreign funding agencies have attempted to damage India's international reputation by supporting anti-CAA protests and farmers' agitations against the farm laws. Quoting the French publication Mediapart, she alleges that the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) received \$47 million from the US Deep State to produce investigative reports targeting governments opposed by Washington—a charge firmly denied by the US Embassy in New Delhi. She lists organisations such as the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (led by Maja Daruwala, daughter of the legendary Sam Manekshaw), the Indian Police Foundation (chaired by celebrated police officer Prakash Singh).

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

**Among** the longest hitters, at 25 years of age, this girl has been wow-ing golfing fans across the world. Her straight hits cover much ground, leaving onlookers agape. For world no. 41, Aditi Ashok, who has had a spectacular run in the 2023 LET, opens with a much-cherished win on European soil, winning the Ladies Open 2023 season-ending tournament at the Andalucia Costa Del Sol Open (Spain). It's total surrender to the game: she won her fourth Ladies European Tour title at the Kenya Ladies Open, came third in Morocco, and was runner-up in Saudi Arabia (2023). Scratch the calm demeanour, and there is a girl with a plan who wants to hit straighter and longer. Golf consumes her. She recently reconnected with her childhood coach, Gaurav Diwan, and is “working on my swing speed and distance”. From those early years, she turned pro in 2016

and was also rookie of the year, and Ashok is the first Indian female golfer to enter the top 50 world ranking. On a journey that began at age five, she accompanied her father, Ashok Gudlamani, onto the Karnataka Golf Course in Bangalore. One swing and another, and soon she was hooked. Over the years, her resolve, passion, and stoic stance have seen her climb deftly along the ranks of ladies' golf. Putting, she believes, is her strength, and often birdie-ing to perfection, the ramrod straight serious girl with her lips pursed in concentration has beaten men, trumped tournaments, and is eyeing 2024 as the greens promise victories ahoj. “Finishing in the top 5 in Spain has been heartening after the work I have put in. It has been completely different when compared to where I was in 2022. Then, I was ranked 99 at the LPG. So, the first win (in Kenya) got the ball rolling,” smiles Aditi.

### Tax cuts won't fix low growth. Govt must look beyond fiscal policy

**The Modi** government's main move in the Union Budget 2025 has been to cut personal income tax. As finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her speech, it is meant to boost demand in the economy. However, the government doesn't expect a higher-than-usual increase in other non-debt receipts and has budgeted a decline in the deficit. The budgeted capital expenditure is the same as the revised estimates for 2024-25. The tax cut should be seen in the context of other fiscal policy moves the Modi government has made in the last decade to boost growth. Since 2016, the Indian economy has struggled to sustain rapid growth. From 2016 to 2019, it was in a relentless showdown, with GDP growth falling to 3.9 per cent in 2019-20. The GDP then fell sharply in 2020-21 due to the pandemic. After this sharp decline, high GDP growth numbers created a false sense of complacency, but the compound annual growth rate between 2019-20 and 2024-25 is only 4.8 per cent. The latest GDP estimates suggest that the economy is slowing down again—with growth clocking at 5.4 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2024. Even if we set aside the critiques of GDP estimation in India, growth remains a topic of concern in policy conversations. The government's response to an economic challenge depends on what it considers to be the root cause. The Modi government's actions over the past decade suggest that it seeks to address India's economic growth pangs through fiscal policy. Consequently, fiscal policy has done much of the heavy lifting in the government's growth strategy over the past decade. In the economic slowdown from 2016-17 to 2019-20, the government sought to maintain its expenditure. To do so without increasing the reported fiscal deficit, from 2017-18 to 2019-20, it

transformed a significant part of its on-budget expenditure into off-budget expenditure done by public enterprises. It also sharply raised cesses and surcharges on petroleum products, which are not shared with the states. These unusual tactics allowed the government to spend more, and expenditure continued to outpace GDP growth. These tactics also allowed the government to introduce new cash transfer schemes such as PM KISAN and increase allocations to existing schemes. In 2019, in an effort to stimulate investment, the government announced major tax breaks for corporates, especially in manufacturing. At the time, corporate tax collection had been growing rapidly while other taxes were struggling to deliver the budgeted increase. The tax cut led to a sharp reduction in the corporate tax to GDP ratio in the subsequent years. As the pandemic hit, fiscal policy became even more central.

The pandemic allowed the government to suspend its concern for deficits and bring the off-budget expenditure to the Budget in 2020-21. For a few years, revenue expenditure as a percentage of GDP was higher than its pre-pandemic levels.

Among other things, this allowed the government to increase subsidies and cash transfers, and introduce production-linked incentives for manufacturing in India. Total subsidies as a percentage of GDP have now gone back to their pre-pandemic levels. The most important change in expenditure since the pandemic has been in its composition. Of the Union government's total expenditure, the share of capital expenditure has increased. Its share rose from 12.5 per cent of total expenditure in 2019-20 to 22.2 per cent in 2023-24. In 2019-20, capital expenditure was 1.67 per cent of GDP.

### Why Syrians Are Between A Rock And A Hard Place

**The** replacement of the much-reviled Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria by a so-called “rebel force” that is actually just an Islamist offshoot of al-Qaeda and ISIS—which, remember, was headquartered in the Syrian city of Raqqa from 2014 to 2017—once again underlines how the turbulent history of that region is painted in countless shades of grey. As if the ongoing war between Israel and the equally Islamist Hamas left you in any doubt about that, of course. The Assads had ruled Syria with a mix of fear and murderous brutality for over 50 years. But that family, their Ba'ath Party and that general cohort were not religious fanatics. In fact,

they professed the sort of secular socialism which evolved into the crony socialism-cum-authoritarianism seen in many countries ruled by similarly inclined people and parties. Even India and the Congress Party of the mid-1970s were not unlike Syria during that same period. The difference, of course, is that the Emergency in India marked the apogee and also the end of authoritarianism. India never degenerated into a single-party rule—which appears to be the main cause of the rise of the Islamist factions all over West Asia today. Ironically, authoritarian secularism (and in Syria's case, also minority rule by the Shia Alawite tribe of the Assads) has

led to the ascent of doctrinaire Sunni Islam and power being captured by its adherents. As the news channels broke the news of the fall of Assad's government in Syria, I saw London's Oxford Street become an impromptu victory procession of cars with young men honking, shouting and hanging out of windows brandishing their homeland's distinctive opposition flag. It continued for well over an hour without any of London's uniformed finest visible. Maybe the Metropolitan Police were just relieved it was not yet another fraught pro-Gaza demonstration. But having lived in Syria during the regime of this just-ousted socialist dic-

tator's father, I had mixed feelings. How would those fashionably puffer-jacket-clad Syrians cheering in London fare under the country's new rulers whose roots are in the Salafist-jihadist school although they profess to have “moved” to a more accommodating position? Do Syrians not know what's happening in Afghanistan, whose Taliban rulers mouthed similar lines and then recanted? When my father was India's ambassador to Syria, the then President Hafez al-Assad ordered the Hama massacre in 1982, triggered by a long-brewing uprising in that city 200km north of Damascus by the Muslim Brotherhood.



## Briefs

**Cricket  
Tournament  
Honors Late  
Leader**

**LALITPUR**  
The fourth Late Govind Singh Judev Memorial Cricket Tournament concluded in Chhapchaul village. Former BJP Mandal President Ashutosh Singh Sengar inaugurated the event. Winners were felicitated, and players were encouraged to uphold sportsmanship and diligent preparation. The organizer, Dhruv Singh Bundela, expressed gratitude to all participants and guests for the successful event.

**Nigam pays  
tribute to  
former mayor**

**KANPUR**  
Former Union Minister and Kanpur Mayor, Prakash Jaiswal, was remembered at the Kanpur Nagar Nigam headquarters. Mayor Pramila Pandey, corporators, and officials paid floral tributes. The Mayor announced that a park and intersection in Pokharpur will be named after him. The Nagar Nigam and Jal Kal departments will observe a holiday on December 2 in his honor.

**Rape accused,  
four others  
arrested**

**JAUNPUR**  
Tejibazar police arrested Riteek Sharma, a wanted accused in a minor rape case, acting on a tip-off. A case under BNS and POCOA Act is registered. In a separate incident in Khutahan, police arrested four youths—Sandeep Bind, Saurabh Bind, Krishna Chaurasiya, and Govinda—on apprehension of breach of peace. Legal proceedings have been initiated in both cases.

**Community  
Toilet Built at  
Lakhs,  
Neglected**

**BALLIA**  
A community toilet built at a cost of lakhs in Kushha Bhaar village, Bairthara Road, lies completely dilapidated. Doors, tanks, and pipes are broken. Villagers allege that while 12 sanitation staff are shown on paper, none are present on-site. They have demanded immediate repair, security, and regular monitoring from the administration to make the facility usable again.

**Illegal Steroid  
racket  
exposed in  
gyms**

**SAHARANPUR**  
An illegal steroid racket is flourishing in Saharanpur's gyms and protein shops. Trainers and shopkeepers openly sell steroid injections and illegal hormone drugs to youths seeking quick muscle gain. Doctors warn of severe side effects like heart attacks, liver failure, and infertility. Parents and experts are demanding strict action, license checks, and awareness to curb this dangerous trade.

**MGNREGA  
Scam  
Exposed in  
Mubarakpur**

**CHANDAULI**  
Large-scale irregularities have surfaced in MGNREGA works in Mubarakpur village. Villagers allege fake attendance of laborers for withdrawing payments, while minimal work is visible on-site. Old photos are reused to show progress, and files show completed projects. They demand a high-level probe in the entire block and strict action against the guilty.

**DECISIONS | Cabinet clears 20 key proposal covering water supply, health, sports and tourism**

# Disability rehabilitation centers to open in every division of UP

LUCKNOW

The UP Cabinet meeting held at Lok Bhavan approved 20 proposals across multiple sectors including health, sports, tourism, water supply, urban development, environment, and Divyang welfare. The agenda placed before the Cabinet listed 21 items, of which 20 received approval.

According to the Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister, an additional proposal relating to industrial concessions was also discussed. Under this, Paswara Papers Ltd received payment of ₹1.50 crore under State GST provisions, while ₹65.67 lakh will be reimbursed. A related proposal involving Vrindavan Agro Ltd of Mathura was also cleared.

Under the AMRUT scheme, Kanpur will receive over ₹317 crore for a major drinking water project expected to benefit 33 wards. The UP government also approved

**Projects Span Divyang Rehabilitation Centres, Museum Development and Road Works**

transfer of 45,000 square metres of Nazul land in Civil Lines, where the former Georgeina McRobert Memorial Hospital stood, to the local development authority. Bareilly secured approval for a ₹266-crore drinking water project expected to cover nearly 92% of the municipal population.

The Cabinet also approved further development of Dr Sampurnanand Sriga Stadium

in coordination with the Sports Authority of India (SAI). One-third of the facility will be allocated to SAI as part of the collaboration.

In another decision, sportspersons appointed through direct recruitment based on medal achievements will have the duration of competitions and training camps counted as "on duty," eliminating the need to apply for leave.

**All divisions to get modern rehabilitation centres**

In a cabinet meeting chaired by the Chief Minister, the Uttar Pradesh government approved a major decision aimed at strengthening support systems for persons with disabilities across the state. The cabinet has cleared the proposal to establish new District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs) in all 18 divisions of UP. Currently, 38 districts operate DDRCs, but many centres had been facing operational challenges due to limited resources and structural constraints. The government has now decided to overhaul the system with fresh infrastructure and improved facilities to ensure uninterrupted services for beneficiaries. Providing details of the cabinet decision, the Finance Minister stated that the newly approved DDRCs will offer a comprehensive suite of services under one roof. These will include disability surveys, identification, camps, assistive devices, artificial limb fitting, and training programmes. The centres will also provide physiotherapy, speech therapy, and other essential rehabilitation services.

The Cabinet cleared construction of the Chandauli-Sakaldih four-lane road costing ₹29 crore, with a revised cost of approximately ₹4.92 crore. The project is scheduled for completion within 18 months. A major tourism project

was also approved, involving allocation of 52.102 acres of Nazul land in Ayodhya for the construction of a world-class museum.

The facility will include extensive information on regional temples and heritage.

## New training rules for sports events

LUCKNOW

The UP government has approved a new system that recognises the entire duration of participation by state-appointed players in national and international sports events as official duty. The decision includes competition days, training camps, related activities and travel time. The move aims to remove procedural difficulties players previously faced while seeking permission for events.

According to the Finance Department, earlier recruitment rules did not clearly specify leave provisions for sportspersons, leading to delays in approvals for competitions and training camps. Under the updated system, players will be granted permission more easily, ensuring uninterrupted participation in sports activities and strengthening the state's representation in major events.

The cabinet also approved the MoU with the Sports Authority of India (SAI) for management and operation of the under-construction Dr. Sampurnanand

**Sports camps and travel time now counted as official duty for players**

Sports Stadium in Sriga, Varanasi.

Facilities within the stadium complex, including buildings and infrastructure, will be handed over to SAI for establishing a National Centre of Excellence.

Officials stated that the centre will help identify young talent across sporting disciplines and provide advanced training for national and international competitions. The initiative is expected to improve opportunities for emerging athletes and enhance Uttar Pradesh's sports infrastructure.

## Assembly's winter session poised for intense debates

LUCKNOW

The winter session of the Uttar Pradesh Legislature is expected to begin around December 15, with discussions underway regarding preparations and scheduling. The session, though short, is expected to be significant as it will take place ahead of upcoming panchayat elections. Opposition parties, including the Samajwadi Party and Congress, are planning to raise key issues such as the SIR process, unemployment, inflation, law-and-order conditions, farmers' concerns, and women's safety.

Last year, the winter session was convened on December 16 and ran for four days. This year as well, the session is likely to last between four and five

**Opposition to raise SIR, inflation, employment and law and order concerns**

days. The government is expected to present details of various development initiatives and welfare schemes undertaken during its current term. Several ordinances

issued in recent months may also be tabled in the House to be converted into legislation.

Rural development, clean drinking water, housing, and road construction are expected to remain priority areas for discussion. In the context of upcoming local body elections, the government may also introduce a supplementary budget. As per legislative tradition, the first day of the session will begin with obituary references to departed members. The House may be adjourned after paying tribute to the late Ghosi MLA Sudhakar Singh, who passed away on November 20. With both the government and the opposition preparing their strategies, the winter session is expected to be a politically charged and closely watched event.

## BLO dies suddenly, family alleges stress from SIR Duty

HATHRAS

A Booth Level Officer (BLO), Kamakant Sharma, stationed as an assistant teacher in Sikandra Rao, Hathras, tragically died after collapsing while drinking tea on Tuesday morning. He was actively assigned to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) duty for voter list compilation. He passed away en route to the hospital.

His family members alleged that the BLO was under severe stress due to the high pressure of the SIR work. The death of Sharma, who leaves behind a wife and four children, marks the eighth death among BLOs in UP, with several previous cases attributed to illness or suicide amid work-related strain.

## Agencies trace ₹2,000 crore cough syrup network

LUCKNOW

Investigating agencies in Uttar Pradesh have uncovered a large illegal trade involving banned cough syrup, revealing transactions estimated between ₹1,900 and ₹2,000 crore. The case came to light after the arrest of Amit Singh Tata, leading officials to a wider network operating across multiple states. Authorities report that the syndicate had expanded rapidly over a few years, using fake companies and multiple bank accounts to facilitate the operation.

According to officials familiar with the inquiry, the network was active in UP, Bihar, Jharkhand and other regions, with the supply chain extending to Bangladesh through the

**Trafficking spread across several states, supply extended to Bangladesh border**

West Bengal border. Key accused Shubham Jaiswal is under scrutiny for suspicious financial activities, including irregular bank transactions and links to several shell firms. More than 100 bank accounts and multiple assets have been



examined so far. The Enforcement Directorate has sought complete records of actions taken by various agencies to consolidate the investigation. Officials believe the network may involve individuals based abroad, prompting the issuance of a lookout notice against Alok, a suspended police constable linked to the case, due to fears of possible escape. Agencies anticipate additional revelations as the investigation continues.

## Voters get relief: EC confirms no penalty for missing SIR deadline

LUCKNOW

The final date for completing the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voter list in Uttar Pradesh is 11 December. Many voters across the state have not yet submitted their SIR forms, raising questions about whether missing the deadline could lead to their names being removed from the electoral roll. According to the Election Commission, failure to submit the form by the specified date will not result in any fine or legal penalty.

The draft voter list will be published on 16 December. If a voter's name is missing from the draft, they can still add it during the claims-objections period, which will continue until January 2026. Officials have stated that voters who

**Voters can file claims and objections until January 2026 to restore names**

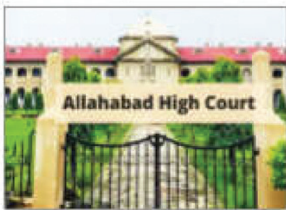
appeared in previous electoral rolls will not face action for failing to submit the SIR form, though a verification notice may be issued. In such cases, voters must present valid identification during the verification process.

## HC quashes DM's order, raps officials over contempt

PRAYAGRAJ

The Allahabad High Court delivered multiple significant orders on Monday, issuing bailable warrants against senior education officials while also overturning a district administration order related to an arms licence.

In the first case, the court issued a bailable warrant against the Secretary of the Basic Education Council for failing to comply with a previous court order. Justice Dinesh Pathak noted that despite earlier directions to file a compliance affidavit or appear in person by December 1, the Secretary neither submitted the required affidavit nor attended the hearing. As a result, the court instructed the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Prayagraj, to ensure the Secretary is produced before

**Court cancels DM's order on arms licence suspension**

the court on December 6.

A similar order was issued against the Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) of Mirzapur, Anil Verma. The warrant was issued in a contempt case filed by a petitioner who had demanded equivalent pay for duties performed as a working headmaster. The court noted that the BSA failed to take a decision as directed in earlier orders.

## Truck-bus collision causes fire: 3 dead, 24 injured

BALRAMPUR

A devastating accident occurred on the Phulwariya Bypass in Balrampur when a truck collided with a private bus traveling from Sonouli (near the Nepal border) to Delhi late Monday night. The collision caused the bus to be dragged 100 meters, where it struck a high-tension power pole.

The resulting short circuit and downed power lines caused the bus to catch fire, turning it into an inferno. Three people were burned alive, and 24 passengers sustained injuries, with six in critical condition referred to Bahraich Medical College. Most of the 45 passengers were from Nepal.

## 42 'ghost' voters found on one property

UNNAO

A significant irregularity has been uncovered during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral roll in Unnao district. Officials conducting physical verification in Puran Nagar area of Sadar tehsil found 45 voters registered at a single address (House No. 57), while only three individuals were found residing there. The homeowner and neighbours confirmed that they had no knowledge of the other 43 names listed, raising serious concerns about the integrity of the voter list preparation process.

Following the discovery, the district administration has ordered a detailed investigation and sought a comprehensive report from the concerned Booth Level Officer (BLO). The BLO involved stated that the individuals linked to the addi-

**Discrepancy found during physical verification, probe ordered**

tional names could not be traced at the address. Authorities are examining whether the names are a result of outdated records not being updated over the years or a more organized manipulation.

This case has emerged amidst the broader SIR drive in Unnao, where approximately 83.32% of form digitization work is complete.

**achievement**

## UP's women ride the lakhpati wave

LUCKNOW

Under the UP government's rural livelihood framework, the 'Lakhpati Didi' initiative has emerged as a major driver of women's economic empowerment and rural financial stability. The model aims to ensure that women associated with self-help groups (SHGs) achieve a stable annual income of over ₹1 lakh, supported through structured livelihood planning, skill training and market linkages.

As of November, 18.56 lakh women in Uttar Pradesh have



already achieved the status of Lakhpati Didi, meaning they earn more than ₹1 lakh annually through sustained livelihood activities. According to state data, 35.94 lakh

**Over 1.85 million women now earning above ₹1 lakh**

women have been identified for the programme, out of which income details of 29.68 lakh women have been recorded in the Digital Livelihood Register.

At the national level, the central government has set a target of making 2 crore SHG members across the country earn above ₹1 lakh per year by 2026-27. Uttar Pradesh's share in this nationwide target

stands at 28.92 lakh women. With 18.56 lakh women already achieving the milestone, the state government has expressed confidence that the remaining 10.36 lakh will also reach the threshold within the stipulated timeframe.

The initiative is producing visible shifts in rural economic dynamics. Across Uttar Pradesh, 98.49 lakh rural women are connected to 8,96,618 SHGs. These groups operate through 62,958 village organisations, enabling mutual support, financial inclusion and collective access to markets. Women are earn-

ing steady incomes through agriculture-linked activities, dairy and animal husbandry, handicrafts, food processing and small-scale service enterprises.

The state's objective is to ensure that each SHG member maintains an annual income above ₹1 lakh consistently for three years, covering four quarterly cycles and the agricultural season. Officials note that this consistency is central to meaningful economic empowerment, reducing seasonal vulnerabilities and strengthening family resilience.

LUCKNOW

The Horticulture and Food Processing Department in Uttar Pradesh is conducting structured training programmes at Government Food Science Training Centres and Community Fruit Preservation and Training Centres across several districts. The department has instructed district officials to complete the scheduled training targets within the prescribed timelines.

These centres are providing skill-based training to young men, young women, and farmers interested in the food



processing sector. Officials have been asked to prepare effective action plans to ensure that applicants receive technical training and that continuous monitoring is carried out during the training period. The department has also directed that trainees should be supported in linking their skills with employment opportunities.



THE HAGUE

**‘War criminal’ sent to ICC**

Germany has handed over Libyan national Khaled Mohamed Ali El Hishri to the International Criminal Court. Prosecutors accuse him of ordering torture, murder, rape and other crimes at Tripoli's Mitiga prison between 2015–2020. He was arrested in July in Germany on a sealed warrant and transferred to ICC custody.

ISLAMABAD

**Pak claims shootdowns**

Pakistan Air Chief Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sindhu unsubstantiatedly claimed Pakistani forces downed Indian Rafales, Su-30MKIs and drones during May clashes. India earlier said it damaged Pakistani jets under Operation Sindoor. Sindhu also claimed India's S-400 system was neutralised, though no evidence was provided.

ISLAMABAD

**China-Pak joint drills**

Pakistan and China began their ninth annual Warrior counter-terrorism exercise in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The drills aim to improve coordination and share modern warfare practices. The Pakistan Army said the exercise strengthens strategic defence cooperation rooted in long-standing mutual trust.

ISLAMABAD

**Minority Rights bill passed**

Pakistan's parliament passed the National Commission for Minority Rights Bill 2025 after debate. The commission will include 16 members to monitor legal protections and address violations. A controversial clause on the Qadiani community was withdrawn after objections. The bill fulfills a 2014 Supreme Court directive.

PESHAWAR

**Officials killed in ambush**

A militant attack in Bannu killed North Waziristan Assistant Commissioner Shah Waliullah, two policemen and a civilian. Two others were injured. The provincial chief minister condemned the attack and sought a detailed report as violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continues.

TEL AVIV

**India–Israel alignment**

Israeli security expert Danny Citrinowicz said India's defence collaboration with Israel is vital after Operation Sindoor. He said shared threats and technology cooperation strengthen deterrence and regional posture. He noted India's growing capabilities and Israel's experience in multi-front conflicts enhance mutual security interests.

BOGOTÁ

**Lev Tahir group expelled**

Colombia expelled 26 members of Lev Tahir ultra-Orthodox Jewish sect after concerns over children's welfare. Authorities found five children listed in Interpol alerts for possible abduction. The group was held in Medellín before deportation to the US.

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON

**India–US talks progress**

Indian Ambassador Vinay Kwatra met key US senators and defence chief General Dan Caine to discuss cooperation in defence, trade and energy. Kwatra said the talks were constructive and strengthened bipartisan support for deeper India–US strategic partnership.

**FINE OR FRAGILE| Sister Uzma Khanum says former PM confined, cut off from visitors as protests mount outside Adiala Jail****‘IMRAN IS ‘FINE’, BUT UNDER MENTAL TORTURE’**

Blames Gen Asim Munir, other service chiefs and President Asif Ali Zardari for his incarceration

ISLAMABAD

Former Pakistan prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan is alive and physically well, but allegedly being subjected to “mental torture” in prison, according to his sister Uzma Khanum. She spoke to reporters after being allowed to meet him at Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi—her first authorised visit in weeks.

Uzma described Imran as “perfectly fine in health,” but said he appeared frustrated and angry at the treatment



File photos of former Pakistan PM Imran Khan and his sister Uzma Khanum

he is receiving. According to her, he

spends most of his time confined to a room, with minimal time outdoors and no meaningful communication with the outside world. The meeting reportedly lasted about 30 minutes, during which Imran complained of isolation and psychological pressure.

The visit coincided with PTI demonstrations outside Islamabad High Court and Adiala Jail, protesting what they claim is a systematic denial of visitation rights. The party alleges that family members and senior leaders have not been able to see Imran since late October.

To counter the protests, the government imposed Section 144 in Islamabad and

**Von der Leyen’s communications under new probe**

BRUSSELS

The European Commission is under a new investigation over its failure to record and archive President Ursula von der Leyen's communications, European Ombudswoman Teresa Anjinho announced on Tuesday.

The inquiry focuses on a text message von der Leyen reportedly received in January from French President Emmanuel Macron via the encrypted Signal app. The commission declined to release the message under a freedom of information request, saying it had been auto-deleted.

The text was related to EU negotiations on a contentious trade agreement with Mercosur, a bloc of Latin American nations. The deal was finalized last December but has yet to take effect.

Macron has publicly criticized the deal, which French farmers fear will expose them to heavy competition from Brazilian and Argentinian beef producers. Politico described Macron's message as an attempt to “blow up” the treaty.

Von der Leyen is currently facing two separate censure motions – one from the right and another from the left in the European Parliament.

**Ex-EU diplomat detained**

The former vice-president of the European Commission and head of the bloc's foreign service, Federica Mogherini, is being held by authorities amid a police investigation into alleged misuse of EU funds, Belgian and French media reported on Tuesday.

Belgian police have carried out searches at the headquarters of the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels, of which Mogherini was chief from 2014–2019, and the College of Europe in Bruges, where she has been rector since 2020.

**Ex-PM Khaleda Zia critical, UK experts to join treatment team**

DHAKA

A team of UK medical specialists is set to join the international board treating former Bangladesh prime minister Khaleda Zia, who remains in critical condition at Dhaka's Evercare Hospital, her personal physician AZM Zahid Hossain said on Tuesday.

Doctors from the UK, US, China and Bangladesh are now part of her treatment panel. A five-member team from China met the board on Monday. Hossain said despite preparations, there is currently no scope to move the 80-year-old leader abroad due to her fragile condition.

Zia, chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), was admitted on November 23 with severe heart and lung infections and has been on venti-

lation since Sunday. Security around the hospital has been significantly tightened after the interim government declared her a “very, very important person.” Police barricades and Special Security Force teams have been deployed, and surrounding cabins vacated.

Nationwide prayers are being held as messages of support flood social media. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed concern and offered support. Zia's son Tarique Rahman, in self-exile in London, thanked supporters and said the family remains hopeful.

**SON'S RETURN:** Bangladesh's ailing former prime minister Khaleda Zia's son Tarique Rahman, who has been living in self-exile in London for over a decade, is preparing to return home soon, a senior leader of her party has said.

**No dual citizenship, says US Senator cites ‘divided loyalties’ as reason**

ANI/WASHINGTON

US Republican Senator Bernie Moreno plans to introduce legislation requiring Americans with dual citizenship to choose one nationality. Fox News reported. Under the proposed Exclusive Citizenship Act of 2025, current dual citizens would have one year to either renounce foreign citizenship or give up their US citizenship. Those who fail to act would automatically lose their American citizenship.

Moreno, who renounced his Colombian citizenship, argued that US citizenship should reflect exclusive loyalty.

The bill would also bar future citizens from holding another nationality and require federal agencies to track compliance.

**Rains claim over 1,300 lives across Indonesia, Lanka & Thailand**

BATANG TORU (INDONESIA),

More than 1,300 people have died and hundreds remain missing after devastating floods and landslides swept through Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand following days of intense monsoon rains. Authorities confirmed at least 712 deaths in Indonesia, 410 in Sri Lanka and 181 in Thailand, with more than 800 still unaccounted for.

Indonesia remains the worst hit, with rescuers struggling to reach remote communities across Sumatra where collapsed bridges and washed-out roads have cut access. Nearly 507 people are missing as helicopters and boats navigate damaged terrain amid worsening weather.

**Expired Pak relief to flood-hit Lanka sparks outrage**

Pakistan's tweet on standing with flood-hit Sri Lanka and delivering relief material backfired spectacularly today with X users calling attention to the fact that the items were well past their expiry date. As images of the expired food and medical items sent as aid by Pakistan were widely shared online, reports said Sri Lankan relief officers had also flagged the problem. Visuals showed packets bearing an expiry date of 10/2024 (October 2024), with the caption – “Pakistan Stands With Sri Lanka today and Always”. The consignment was found to be expired and unusable when it arrived in Sri Lanka. According to sources, Colombo has raised it with Islamabad unofficially as well as through formal channels.

Environmental groups say illegal logging intensified the scale of destruction, turning the once-lush Batang Toru forest into a wasteland of uprooted trees and mud. Activists warn the disaster is partly man-made and demand urgent restoration and stronger protections.

In Sri Lanka, rescue teams continue searching for more than 300 missing after Cyclone Ditwah trig-

gered widespread flooding and landslides.

President Anura Kumara Dissanayake called it the nation's worst disaster in recent history.

Thailand has begun cleanup operations, restoring services and distributing aid after flooding affected over 3.9 million people.

Thousands remain displaced as countries battle mounting humanitarian and environmental fallout.

Rawalpindi, temporarily banning public gatherings. Minister of State for Interior Tahir Chaudhry defended the restrictions, saying they were based on intelligence alerts.

He warned that action would be taken without discrimination against violators of the order.

Chaudhry further stated that militants use VPNs to hide identities online, and that authorities had ordered VPN registration to curb potential terrorism links—not to restrict public freedoms or IT businesses. He also invoked a Peshawar High Court ruling prohibiting the use of state resources for political activity, cautioning PTI officials, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, against using provincial machinery for protests.

**Russia backs China on Taiwan**

MOSCOW

Russia reiterated firm backing for China on Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong, calling Beijing the “sole legitimate” authority. Russian Security Council Secretary Sergey Shoigu conveyed the stance during talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Moscow.

Citing TASS, Shoigu said Moscow–Beijing coordination strengthens global stability and supports a multipolar world.

He added that the West is uneasy with the unprecedented level of Russia–China strategic cooperation.

**Putin: Ready for fight if Europe wants war**

MOSCOW

President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday that Russia did not want a war with European powers, but was ready to fight if Europe did want a direct conflict with Moscow.

“We’re not going to have a war with Europe, I’ve already said. But if Europe suddenly wants to wage a war with us and starts it, we are ready right away. There can be no doubt about that,” Putin said.

He also threatened that if Europe starts a war with Russia, there could be “a situation in which there won’t be anyone to negotiate with.”

Putin accused European countries of hindering US President Donald Trump's attempts to end the war in Ukraine by putting forward proposals they knew would be

**Pope Leo XIV calls for justice at Beirut blast site**

BEIRUT

Pope Leo XIV ended his first foreign visit with a powerful message of solidarity, compassion, and justice for Lebanon, praying at the 2020 Beirut port blast site—now a stark symbol of government failure and impunity. Relatives of the 218 victims held photos as the Pope prayed before the ruined grain silo and met each family member with quiet empathy.

For many, the visit revived hope in a stalled investigation repeatedly blocked by political interference and legal hurdles. “The explosion was a crime...



Lebanon must end impunity,” said Cecile Roukoz, whose brother died in the blast.

Later, during a waterfront Mass attended by an estimated 150,000 worshippers, Leo urged Lebanese citizens not to surrender to despair despite economic collapse, political paralysis, and rising fears of wider conflict. He appealed for unity beyond sectarian and political loyalties.

“Lebanon, stand up,” he said. “Be a home of justice, fraternity, dignity, and lasting peace for the entire region.”

**Third Russian tanker attacked in Black Sea**

AP/ANKARA

A tanker carrying sunflower oil from Russia to Georgia was attacked in the Black Sea, the Turkish maritime authority said Tuesday, days after two Russian “shadow fleet” oil tankers were attacked by Ukrainian naval drones.

The Turkish Directorate General of Maritime Affairs said the MIDVOLGA-2 came

**Israel awaits hostage remains, soldiers kill 4**

Smoke rises as Israeli forces demolish home of Abdul Karim Sanoubar, a suspected Palestinian militant accused by Israel of planting bombs on buses in central Israel, in Nablus, West Bank on Tuesday

DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP)

Israeli forces killed two Palestinians in Gaza and two suspected attackers in the West Bank on Tuesday, as the government awaited the transfer of what are believed to be the last hostage remains held by militants in Gaza.

Israel's Prime Minister's Office said the remains were expected to be handed over by the Red Cross before undergoing forensic identification. The remains are believed to be of the final two hostages taken during the Oct 7, 2023 Hamas attack that launched the war. It was unclear whether the transfer had already taken place. The deaths marked another surge of violence across Palestinian territories, deepening fears that tensions could derail the fragile truce.

ing fears that tensions could derail the fragile truce.

In southern Gaza, an Israeli drone strike killed journalist Mohamed Wadi, according to Nasser Hospital officials. Wadi, known for drone footage documenting the conflict, was struck in Khan Younis. Palestinian media groups say the war has taken a devastating toll on journalists. In central Gaza, a man was fatally shot near the Bureij refugee camp. Al-Awda Hospital reported.

The Gaza Health Ministry said over 350 Palestinians have been killed since the ceasefire began on Oct 11. Israel has claimed recent killings were responses to militant fire, as both sides continue to accuse each other of violating ceasefire terms.

under attack about 130 kilometers (80 miles) off the Turkish coast. The 13 crew members were unharmed and the vessel has not requested assistance.

It was heading toward the Turkish port of Sinop, the maritime authority said in a statement on X.

On Monday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan spoke out against Ukraine's

drone attack on two Russian vessels, the Kairos and Virat, saying it signalled a “worrying escalation” of the conflict.

“We cannot condone these attacks, which threaten navigational safety, life, and the environment, especially in our own exclusive zone,” Erdogan said in a televised address. “We are issuing the necessary warnings to all parties regarding such situations.”

**Trump in good health, says WH after MRI**

WASHINGTON

The White House has released President Donald Trump's MRI results amid rising questions over his health and mental sharpness. Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said the preventive scan, conducted in October, showed “excellent overall health,” with normal cardiovascular and abdominal imaging. The summary noted no arterial narrowing, inflammation, or organ concerns.

The release followed criticism from Democrats and public scrutiny after Trump showed visible swelling in his ankles and bruising on his hand.

Responding to reporters earlier, Trump said the MRI was routine and clarified it was not related to cognitive health, noting he had already “aced” a cognitive test.

**Adolf Hitler seeks name change after poll win**

OMPUNDJA (NAMIBIA)

Adolf Hitler Uunona, a long-serving regional councillor in northern Namibia, has officially removed “Hitler” from his name following his reelection to a fifth term. He will now be publicly known as Adolf Uunona.

The 59-year-old, a Swapo party member, has long faced questions about sharing a name with the Nazi leader. He stressed that his politics focus on Namibia's liberation struggle and local development, not hatred or conquest. Uunona said his father chose the name without understanding its global significance. Despite international attention, he retains strong local support due to decades of grassroots work in improving roads, services, and community welfare.

**Bulgaria withdraws budget after mass protests**

SOFIA

Bulgaria's government has withdrawn its controversial draft budget after massive nationwide protests, including a large demonstration in Sofia on Monday night, where organisers claimed around 50,000 people gathered. The proposed budget included higher taxes, increased social security contributions and expanded public spending. Critics, including opposition parties and business groups, warned the plan would damage investment, push economic activity into the informal sector and worsen inflation just as Bulgaria prepares to join the eurozone next year.

Although the government had initially promised to revise the proposal after earlier protests, it later reversed its position, triggering widespread anger. Demonstrators, mostly young people, marched with



People attend a rally against austerity measures in next years draft budget, in Sofia

banners reading “Generation Z is Coming” and “Young Bulgaria Without the Mafia,” chanting demands for the government to revise the draft or resign.

While the rally began peacefully, tensions escalated as some protesters threw bottles, stones and firecrackers at ruling party offices and police. Riot police responded with pepper spray. Garbage containers were set on fire, and po-

lice vehicles were vandalised. Authorities confirmed at least 10 arrests. Emergency services treated several injured protesters and police officers.

Opponents argued the proposed spending surge would have been financed mainly through higher taxes on workers and businesses, along with sharply increased public debt, without delivering meaningful improvements to public services.



# Ranveer issues apology over *Kantara* mimicry



Ranveer mimicking the scene from *Kantara: A Legend Chapter-1*

Actor Ranveer Singh apologises after backlash for mimicking *Kantara* scene at 56th International Film Festival of India in Goa, says he respects all cultures and meant no offence to anyone

trolled by many users for his distasteful behaviour.

The actor shared a statement on his Instagram story on Tuesday and said he has always deeply respected every culture and tradition. Singh also praised Shetty for his performance in the film.

"My intention was to highlight Rishab's incredible performance in the film. Actor to actor, I know how much it would take to perform that particular scene in the way that he did, for which he has my utmost admiration," he wrote.

"I have always deeply respected every culture, tradition and belief in our country. If I've hurt anyone's sentiments, I sincerely apologise," he added. Directed by Shetty, who also featured in the film, *Kantara: A Legend Chapter-1* released in October and was a prequel to 2022's film *Kantara*.

Singh will next feature in *Dhurandhar*, which will release in theatres on Friday. The film is directed by Aditya Dhar and also features Sanjay Dutt and Akshaye Khanna alongside Singh.

My intention was to highlight Rishab's incredible performance in the film. Actor to actor, I know how much it would take to perform that particular scene in the way that he did, for which he has my utmost admiration.

I have always deeply respected every culture, tradition and belief in our country. If I've hurt anyone's sentiments, I sincerely apologise.

Actor Ranveer Singh issued an apology to Rishab Shetty for mimicking the scene from *Kantara: A Legend Chapter-1* and said his intention wasn't to "hurt anyone's sentiments".

Both the actors were present at the closing ceremony of the 56th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa, which was held on November 28.

Singh stuck his tongue out as he imitated the scene from the film. As the clip surfaced on social media, the actor was

## Controversy sparks debate

Ranveer Singh's imitation of a scene from *Kantara* at IFFI sparked online criticism. Fans questioned if this could affect his new film *Dhurandhar*, releasing this Friday.

## Focus shifts to *Dhurandhar*

Despite the social media buzz, attention is now returning to *Dhurandhar*. The action thriller stars Singh alongside Sanjay Dutt and Akshaye Khanna.

## Gets clean chit from CBFC

Director Aditya Dhar's upcoming film *Dhurandhar* has cleared a major hurdle after the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) granted approval for its release on December 5

## Apology issued

Singh quickly apologised to Rishab Shetty, clarifying he never intended to disrespect anyone. Industry insiders say this could prevent lasting damage to the film's release.



## Rishab Shetty present during Ranveer imitation

Ranveer Singh mimicked a sacred scene from *Kantara: A Legend Chapter-1* in front of Rishab Shetty at IFFI. The "Chamundi Daiva" ritual scene drew online criticism for its exaggerated gestures.

Pics: Instagram

# Naga Chaitanya shares post following Samantha marriage

Naga Chaitanya shares first social media post following ex-wife's wedding to Raj Nidimoru, highlighting his series *Dhootha* release



Pics: Instagram

Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu surprised fans on Monday by sharing wedding photos with her boyfriend Raj Nidimoru, after they exchanged vows in an intimate ceremony attended only by close friends and family at Sadhguru's Isha Yoga Centre in Coimbatore, at the Linga Bhairavi Temple. Samantha was previously married to actor Naga Chaitanya from 2017 to 2021. Following the wedding announcement, her ex-husband shared his first post on social media, prompting social media users to wonder about the timing of it.

Chaitanya took to Instagram to post about his series *Dhootha*, which was released on Monday. He wrote, "#Dhootha is a show that proved that if as an actor you make a choice based in creativity and honesty and you give it your best shot ... people will connect. They will receive and give you back that energy. Thank you! 2 years of dhootha! Love to the team that made this happen."

# Ashnoor reveals why she hit Tanya

Actress Ashnoor Kaur slams Tanya Mittal after *Bigg Boss 19* eviction, calls her 'fake' and 'double-faced'



## Love in Vietnam set for Korea release

*Love in Vietnam*, starring Shantanu Maheshwari of *Gangubai Kathiawadi* fame and Avneet Kaur, known for featuring in *Tiku Weds Sheru*, is set to release in theatres of Korea on December 8.

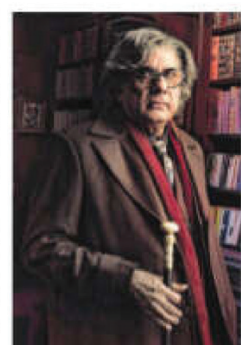
Directed by Rahat Shah Kazmi, the project marked the first India-Vietnam collaboration in Hindi cinema. It is described as a heart-wrenching love story inspired from the best-selling novel *Madonna in a Fur Coat* by Sabahattin Ali, according to a press release. The film released in India on September 12.

The film is presented by Zee Studios and produced by Blue Lotus Creatives, Innovations India, Rahat Kazmi Film Studios, Zebaish Entertainment, Tariq Khan Productions and Mango Tree Entertainment.

## Boman Irani's 1st look in *The RajaSaab* released

The makers of *The RajaSaab* shared the first look poster of Boman Irani's character on Tuesday on the occasion of the actor's 66th birthday.

The actor essays the role of a psychiatrist, hypnotist and paranormal investigator - a character wrapped in intellect and mysticism in the film. The film also features Malavika Mohanan, Nidhi Agerwal, and Ridhi Kumar alongside Prabhas. It will release in theatres on January 9, 2026. Written and directed by Maruthi, *The RajaSaab* is produced by People Media Factory and IVY Entertainment.



**B**igg Boss 19 contestant Ashnoor Kaur, who was evicted after the controversial violent incident involving Tanya Mittal, has finally broken her silence on everything that unfolded inside the house. It was alleged that Ashnoor intentionally hit Tanya with a wooden plank, leading to her immediate removal from the show by host Salman Khan.

Ashnoor gives her side of the story in detail. Calling Tanya 'fake' and addressing the body-shaming incident that took her back to her darkest teenage years, Ashnoor reveals that Tanya never really apologised to her. She also clarified that she had never intentionally hit her.

On labelling Tanya 'fake', Ashnoor said, "She's very fake. She is double-faced. She's acting. And there's a lot of negativity. And that's why, from day one, we've never really gotten along. Because I'm the kind of person, whether positive or negative, I'm on the face. If I don't like someone, I don't like someone. And that's very evident. She is very sweet on your face. Then she'll go back and say bad things. I just feel that these are traits of a weak person. And I feel sorry for her."

On how Tanya's body-shaming triggered Ashnoor's darkest teenage memories, the actress shared, "I'm still getting goosebumps talking about it. That was a very dark phase in my life. As teenagers, obviously, you're conscious of your body. Plus, I was on screen, going in front of the camera. It was a very tough time for me but then I healed. I started loving



Tanya Mittal

myself. But that incident, I don't know what happened. It just all got triggered. And it was really bad. And the reason I spoke about my journey was because she made thousands of people feel bad about themselves. So I just wanted them to know that you're not alone. You know, body positivity needs to be talked about. Body positivity needs to emerge."

When asked if Tanya ever apologised to her for the body-shaming remark, Ashnoor clarified, "She did not apologise to me. She just said that she apologised to me in front of Salman sir. And then she went on and said sorry to Abhishek (Bajaj), because apparently, she explained that he felt bad. That woman, even when I questioned her, she was like 'if you want me to apologise, I'll come and apologise to you every day'. And I was like, don't act in front of me."

Ashnoor also clarified that she actually did not hit Tanya with the plank intentionally during the task. She explained, "I feel bad that she got hurt because of me. And I'm really sorry about that. That, unintentionally, I did hurt her. I did not know about that until *Weekend Ka Vaar* happened. Because, you know, even on *Weekend Ka Vaar*, it was pointed out that my friends came and told me, GK (Gaurav Khanna) came and told me. But he never told me that she got hurt. He came and he told me, 'you hit her, you hit her'. And I was like, I won't accept something that you're saying because I know I didn't hit her intentionally."

## Abhishek Bajaj spills the tea on who's fake, dumb and a real player

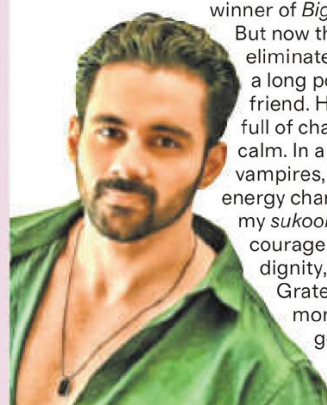
Abhishek Bajaj has been evicted from the *Bigg Boss 19* house, but he continues to be one of the most talked-about contestants. Although his stay in the house was short, he claims to have seen everyone's true colours. In a candid post-eviction interview, Abhishek also shared some interesting adjectives for his fellow contestants.

During a candid chat with *The Free Press Journal*, we played a "fiery" rapid-fire round with Abhishek, where he revealed which contestants he connects with each given adjective. When asked "clever," Abhishek replied Kunickaa ji. For the word "fake," he associated Shehbaz, and when asked "dumb," he claimed it was Mrudul.

Furthermore, Abhishek Bajaj called Pranit the "real player" of the *Bigg Boss 19* house, likely referring to the elimination twists. When asked who is the "silent bomb" of the house, he named his friend Ashnoor.

Abhishek further labeled Tanya as the "victim" and "sympathy" card player. When asked who he would choose not to meet after *Bigg Boss 19*, he said "no one," explaining that he does not prefer to hold enmity. However, he admitted that, except for Ashnoor, he did not fully trust anyone in the house. Abhishek then went on to describe Gaurav as the "diplomatic" person of the house.

Since this interview was taken before Ashnoor's elimination, Abhishek called his friend to be the winner of *Bigg Boss 19* house. But now that she has been eliminated, Abhishek wrote a long post for his dear friend. He said, "In a house full of chaos, you became my calm. In a room full of energy vampires, you became my energy charger. You were my *sukoon*. You came with courage, played with dignity, and left with love. Grateful for every moment we stood together Ashnoor...and today your exit felt personal! (sic)"





## Briefs

LONDON

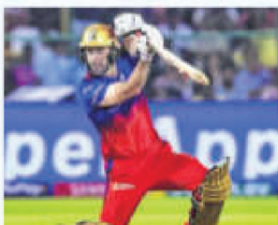
## Ex-England batter Robin Smith dies



Former England batter **Robin Smith**, who fought some intense battles with pacers in the 1980s and 90s, passed away at his home in Perth, Australia, on Tuesday. He was 62. Smith played 62 Tests between 1988 and 1996 and made 4236 runs at 43.67 with nine hundreds, but his impact on English cricket at that period was much more profound than his numbers, excellent anyway. The powerful right-hander was at his tenacious best against the West Indies pacers like Curtly Ambrose, Courtney Walsh, Malcolm Marshall and Patrick Patterson, when his teammate often sank into a pool of struggle. In possession of a withering square cut, often deemed as one of the fiercest strokes in cricketing history, Smith was at his peak between 1990 and 1995.

SYDNEY

## Maxwell pulls out of IPL auctions



**Glenn Maxwell**, whose IPL career over the last decade has largely been underwhelming, decided to pull out of the upcoming mini auctions scheduled in Abu Dhabi on December 16. The 37-year-old is a phenomenal talent in his younger days, has played every IPL season since 2012, barring one in 2019. He has managed only 2819 runs in 141 games at a strike rate of 155 plus and an average of less than 24, which doesn't justify the kind of prices that he has been consistently fetching in auctions over the years. He also picked 41 wickets with his off-breaks at an economy rate of 8.30. "After many unforgettable seasons in the IPL, I've decided not to put my name into auctions."

NEW DELHI

## Virat Kohli confirms for Vijay Hazare



Indian superstar **Virat Kohli** on Tuesday confirmed his availability to play in the Vijay Hazare Trophy beginning on December 24, DDCA president Rohan Jaitley told

RAIPUR

The chatter around the volatile dressing room environment notwithstanding, India will rely on Virat Kohli's imperious form and Rohit Sharma's indomitable presence to seal a series victory over a doughty South Africa in the second ODI, here on Wednesday.

A record-extending 52nd ODI century by Kohli and a rapid 57 from Rohit paved the way for India's 17-run win in the series-opener at Ranchi, where the home bowlers endured a spirited fightback from the Proteas before managing to stop them.

With the 2027 ODI World Cup two years away, Kohli and Rohit are not only auditioning every match to prove their fitness and form but are also reportedly managing growing differences with head coach Gautam Gambhir.

The issue has dominated the off-field talk and is expected to have the BCCI stepping in at some point. Having set up two consecutive victories for India in last as many ODIs -- including a nine-wicket hammering of Australia at Sydney in October -- Kohli and Rohit have shown they will do everything possible to be on that flight to the World Cup in South Africa.

Both the chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar and Gambhir have remained non-committal about their participation in the World Cup and that has probably been at the centre of the simmering tensions between the two sides.

However, India have a lot more to worry about despite the opening win.

For starters, the combination does not seem perfectly aligned.

Ruturaj Gaikwad, who has built an impressive record in List A cricket, was pushed from opening to No 4. He did not look completely conditioned for the role, with stand-in captain KL Rahul staunchly defend-

## PREVIEW | Hosts look to seal ODI series victory against doughty South Africa

## INDIA RELY ON KOHLI-ROHIT PAIR



India's Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli celebrate their partnership during the first one-day international. ANI

ing his position at No 6.

Washington Sundar is not new to such experiments as the Tamil Nadu all-rounder, who batted at No 3 in Kolkata Test against the Proteas, has

seen plenty of changes in his batting positions. But in the first ODI at No 5, he too was among the batters dismissed in a phase where

India slowed down.

And again for an all-rounder, Washington also had another light day in terms of bowling as he sent down only three overs for 18 runs.

To his credit, Harshit Rana did a lot of good to his reputation with two wickets upfront with the new ball but his knack of giving away runs later on will require the all-rounder to bring in more con-

trol, especially when only one ball is allowed to play with after the 34th over.

In their bid to restore balance between bat and ball, the ICC's new rule allows only one ball from the existing two to be continued with from 34-50 overs.

Kuldeep Yadav snaffled key wickets for a match haul of 4/68 and even though he was a shade expensive, his variation

## Teams :

**India:** KL Rahul (c&wk), Ruturaj Gaikwad, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Dhruv Jurel (wk), Virat Kohli, Rishabh Pant (wk), Rohit Sharma, Tilak Varma, Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana, Kuldeep Yadav, Prasidh Krishna.

**South Africa:** Temba Bavuma (c), Matthew Breetzke, Dewald Brevis, Quinton de Kock (wk), Tony de Zorzi, Rubin Hermann (wk), Aiden Markram, Ryan Rickelton (wk), Corbin Bosch, Marco Jansen, Prenelan Subrayen, Ottnel Baartman, Nandre Burger, Keshav Maharaj, Lungi Ngidi.

proved to be the difference as South Africa fell short but then, not by a big margin.

South Africa will indeed take a lot of heart in their inspired comeback after being reduced to 11/3 at one stage.

On a flat deck, Marco Jansen tore into the Indian bowlers once again for a minute-a-mile half-century (off 26 balls), scoring a strokeful 70 off 39 balls.

Matthew Breetzke notched up a fine 72 in his first ODI against India to lead a comeback for South Africa while their long tail, which includes the dangerous Corbin Bosch, threatened to take the game away from India.

South Africa played in the first ODI without their regular skipper Temba Bavuma and Keshav Maharaj, who both were rested after their historic Test series win. But the Proteas are expected to bolster their squad with their return.

Like Guwahati where the hosts were not too accustomed with the pitch and conditions, the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Stadium in the Chhattisgarh capital is also relatively unfamiliar.

## Bavuma feels Roko bolsters India

SA skipper remembers seeing Rohit play at the 2007 T20 WC

RAIPUR

South Africa captain Temba Bavuma feels facing an Indian side with Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma is nothing new but it does bolster the hosts whom the Proteas had blanked 2-0 in the Test series.

Kohli's 52nd ODI ton and Rohit's 57 set up a 17-run victory for India in the opening ODI, giving them a 1-0 lead in the three-match series with the second match to be played here on Wednesday.

"The inclusion of those two guys that does bolster the team. Like we said at the start of the series, these are two guys who have a lot of experience and a lot of skill and that can only benefit the team."

"It is not something that we are not aware of," Bavuma told the media ahead of South Africa's training session at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Stadium here.

Underlining their experience in international cricket, Bavuma recalled watching a young Rohit in the 2007 T20 World Cup which India won as a school student.

"We played against Rohit. I think it was in 2007, the T20 World Cup, I was still in school then. I mean, these guys have been around, so there is nothing new. These are world-class players," he said. "(Coming up against them is) nothing new, we have come across it. We have been on the bad end of it. But we have also had good times against them. It all just makes the series a lot more exciting," he said.

Bavuma, meanwhile, said there was nothing for him to clarify on the use of the word "grove" made by South Africa head coach Shukri Conrad during the fourth day's play in



The inclusion of those two guys does bolster the team. Like we said at the start of the series, these are two guys who have a lot of experience and a lot of skill and that can only benefit the team

Temba Bavuma  
South Africa captain

the second Test. "No, I don't think it is distracting (and) no it's not for me to clarify," said Bavuma, who missed the opening ODI.

Bavuma heaped praise on Marco Jansen whose 39-ball 70 took South Africa on the brink of a victory in the first ODI.

"From an all-rounder point of view, I don't know where the rankings sit (but) I am sure Marco Jansen, in any one of the formats will definitely be in a top 10. His contributions, with bat (or) with the ball (and) sometimes even both, they have been immense to our success," he said.

"He is still a young guy, but he has had a lot of international cricket that is under his belt."

## Harshit not perturbed by criticism for getting backed

India pacer has been in firing line for being supported despite average efforts before the Ranchi ODI

RAIPUR

He has been caught in the firing line for being allegedly favoured by India head coach Gautam Gambhir but pacer Harshit Rana says he does not pay heed to any outside noise, as doing so will not allow him to play cricket freely.

During Gambhir's tenure, the 23-year-old fast bowler has made his India debut across formats starting with the Perth Test during last year's Australia tour.

While he has not made a huge dent across formats with his performances, Rana has received strong backing from the India head coach.

"If I start listening to all these things, put them in my mind and take the field, I won't be able to play cricket," said Rana when asked how he deals with criticism including from fans on social media.

"I try to avoid as much as possible. I just pay attention to what I have to do on the ground. I don't care about what is happening outside or



India's Harshit Rana bowls a delivery during the first ODI. PTI

what someone is saying about me."

"I just focus on my hard work and what I am going to do on the ground," he said ahead of India's training session here at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Stadium.

Even though he lacked control towards the later stage of South Africa's chase in Ranchi in the first ODI, Rana returned 3/65 to set up India's win with two wickets upfront.

The right-arm pacer said he is working with India's bowling coach Morne Morkel and Arshdeep Singh to improve skills with the new ball.

"With the new ball I am practicing a lot with Morne (Morkel) and I keep talking to Arshdeep a lot. I feel that Arshdeep has a lot of experience and he keeps helping and guiding me during practice," Rana said.

## SMAT: Suryavanshi sparkles but Maharashtra beat Bihar

Vaibhav became the youngest centurion in the history of the tournament

KOLKATA

The supremely talented Vaibhav Suryavanshi hit a sparkling 61-ball 108 not out but it went in vain as Maharashtra defeated Bihar by three wickets in their Elite Group B match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy here on Tuesday.

Asked to bat, the 14-year-old opener combined power with patience, smashing seven fours and seven sixes to become the youngest centurion in the history of the tournament as he guided Bihar to 176 for three.

In reply, skipper Prithvi Shaw set the tone with a brutal 30-ball 66, while Niraj Joshi (30), Ranjeet Nikam (27) and Nikhil Naik (22) chipped in with crucial contributions to take Maharashtra home with five balls to spare.

Mohd Izhar (2/22) and Sakibul Gani (2/50) claimed two wickets each, while Sakib Hussain (1/40), Suraj Kashyap (1/35) and Khalid Alam (1/34) picked up a wicket apiece to keep Bihar in the contest, but



Bihar's Vaibhav Suryavanshi plays a shot during the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy match in Kolkata. PTI

Maharashtra held their nerves. Earlier, Suryavanshi broke Bihar's record for most sixes in a T20 innings with his tally of seven. The 14-year-old also added 75 runs with Ayush Loharuka (25 not out) for the fourth wicket -- Bihar's highest stand for that wicket in T20 cricket.

The teen batter reached three figures in the 20th over, hitting the first ball from Arshin Kulkarni for a boundary.

## Sarfaraz shines

At Lucknow, Sarfaraz Khan slammed a sensational hundred as Mumbai outclassed Assam by 98 runs in their Group A match. Batting first, Mumbai posted 220/4 in 20 overs riding on Sarfaraz's 100 off 47 balls. In reply, Assam were bowled out for 122 in 19.1 overs with Shardul Thakur scalping 5/23 while Sairaj Patil and Atharva Ankolekar picked two wickets apiece to win the game.

## Brief scores:

**Group B:** Maharashtra 182 for 7 in 19.1 overs (Prithvi Shaw 66; Mohd Izhar 2/22) beat Bihar 176 for 3 in 20 overs (Vaibhav Suryavanshi 108; Vicky Ostwal 1/26) by three wickets. Goa 171 for 3 in 18.3 overs (Suyash Prabhudessai 75 not out; Tripuresh Singh 1/27) beat Madhya Pradesh 170 for 6 in 20 overs (Harpreet Singh 80; Arjun Tendulkar 3/36) by seven wickets.

**Group C:** Punjab: 222/8 in 20 overs (Abhishek Sharma 50, Anmolpreet Singh 69; Raj Limbani 3/36) lost to Baroda: 224/3 in 19.1 overs (Hardik Pandya 77 not out, Shivalik Sharma 47 retired hurt, Shashwat Kumar 31, Vishnu Solanki 43) by 7 wickets. Puducherry: 83 all out in 13.1 overs (JK Bhatt 3/17) lost to Gujarat: 84/1 in 9 overs

## ISL issue

## AIFF for "flexible" approach during minister's meeting

NEW DELHI

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) will stick to a "flexible" approach when Sports Minister **Mansukh Mandaviya** meets the representatives of all the stakeholders of the sport in the country to find a way out of the current crisis.

The meeting is being called by the sports ministry on the directives of the Supreme Court after the tender floated by the AIFF

for the commercial rights of the Indian Super League (ISL) found no takers.

As many as six meetings have been scheduled at the Sports Authority of India (SAI), including separate discussions with the ISL clubs, I-League clubs, prospective commercial partners, Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL) -- which still is technically the AIFF's commercial partner till December 8 -- and some OTT platforms.

It is learnt that the AIFF is

amenable to the idea of reduction in the annual minimum guaranteed payment amount of Rs 37.5 crore or 5 percent of gross revenue for the next five years to be paid by the commercial partner as per the tender, if it gets an assurance of financial support from the government.

If the minimum guaranteed payment amount is reduced, the



AIFF would want financial support from the government to fund the national teams and conduct various tournaments, it is learnt.

"The AIFF conducts 1700 matches and 21 championships in a year, it needs fund to prepare the national teams and ISL has been its main source of AIFF's income. Moreover, three women teams (senior, U20 and U17) as well as the men's

U17 team have qualified for the Asian Cup for the first time," a source told PTI.

The other two tricky issues which have been flagged by the prospective bidders and mentioned by (Retd) Justice Nageswara Rao in his report to the Supreme Court, relate to the structural and operational concerns of the ISL, which are interlinked.

The prospective bidder's participation in the Governing Council is limited (only one member out of six), in addition to the veto power

vested in the AIFF representative.

There are also limitations on the prospective bidder's ability to manage and sub-license rights. Key decision-making powers would remain with the national federation in accordance with the AIFF Constitution.

It is learnt that the national federation wants to tread a cautious path on these two matters as it feels that the concerns might have to do with the interpretation of an article in Constitution.