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

Briefs

LUCKNOW

Excise officer suspended

The Uttar Pradesh government has suspended Gautam Budh Nagar District Excise Officer Subodh Kumar after inspections confirmed that liquor shops were overcharging customers. The action followed multiple complaints and investigation reports submitted by then Deputy Excise Commissioner (Meerut in-charge) Rakesh Kumar Singh. Inspections conducted on December 23, 2024 and January 20, 2025, found overrating at a total of 25 liquor shops. Acting on these findings, Excise Minister Nitin Agarwal ordered Kumar's suspension and initiated departmental proceedings. The minister said the Uttar Pradesh government follows a zero-tolerance policy against corruption and irregularities in liquor sales, and strict action will continue to ensure transparency and public interest.

CHANDIGARH

In a big boost, 4 netas join BJP in Punjab

The BJP in Punjab got a shot in the arm here on Friday as four prominent politicians joined the saffron party. These included Onkar Singh, a former leader of AAP, who had also served as the officer on special duty (OSD) to Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann. The other three included former two-time Congress MP from Faridkot, Jagmeet Singh Brar, who had defeated Sukhbir Badal in 1999, former MLA from Kotkapura, Ripit Singh Brar and another former Akali leader Charanjit Singh Brar.

New Delhi

242 betting and gambling sites blocked

The Centre on Friday blocked 242 illegal betting and gambling website links as part of increased enforcement actions following the passage of the Online Gaming Act, government sources said.

FRESH SALVO | Saffron party cites IMF report hailing India's economic growth to chide LoP for his 'dead economy' remark

BJP mocks Rahul as 'Leader of Pessimism'

NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Friday lashed out at Congress leader **Rahul Gandhi**, terming him the "Leader of Pessimism" -- for having described the Indian economy as "dead" last August -- after the International Monetary Fund praised India's "stronger than expected" growth in the third quarter of the current fiscal.

Criticising Gandhi for running down India, BJP national spokesperson **CR Kesavan**, in a post on X asked if the Congress leader would now apologise. "Will LoP, Leader of Pessimism, Rahul Gandhi, who maliciously lied and badmouthed our Indian Economy, now publicly apologise to our nation and people?"

Kesavan further noted that, "The IMF lauding the Indian economy is a resounding rebuke and snub to Rahul Gandhi's fake narrative and cheap political agenda, which attempted to undermine our nation's remarkable progress

and growth".

Gandhi had, while agreeing with US President Donald Trump's remarks on India being a 'dead economy', stated last August that, "Everybody knows that the Indian economy is a dead economy. I am glad that President Trump has stated a fact. The entire world knows that the Indian economy is a dead economy. Everybody knows this except the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister."

With the latest IMF assessment painting a different picture, Kesavan alleged that Gandhi has "no compunction or remorse in abusing and slandering the country to further his narrow, failed political agenda".

The Director of IMF's communication department Julie Kozack had on Thursday stated that "what we have seen in India is that India is a key growth engine for the world". The institution had also projected India to grow at 6.6 per cent in the current fiscal mainly on account of strong domestic consumption.



EC 'gaslighting' citizens: Rahul on Maha ink row

Amid the row over quality of 'indelible' ink used in marker pens in Maharashtra civic polls, Rahul Gandhi on Friday asserted that "vote chori is an anti-national act" and accused the Election Commission of gaslighting citizens. "Election commission gaslighting citizens is how trust has collapsed in our democracy. Vote Chori is an anti-national act," Gandhi said in his post on X.

BJP hits back at Cong MP with 'khandani chor' barb

The BJP on Friday attacked Rahul Gandhi with a "khandani chor" barb. Reacting to Gandhi's remarks, BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla, in a post on X, said, "Bahana (excuse) brigade back! Accepting defeat before counting ends?" "Rahul Back to doing what he does best -- discredit, distort and disinform. 'Khandani chor' now regurgitating claims of Thackerays," he charged.

After def board nod, plan to get 114 Rafales awaits DAC approval

NEW DELHI

In a key booster for India's defence capabilities, the Defence Procurement Board (DPB) on Friday approved the proposal to acquire 114 Rafale fighter jets from French aviation manufacturer Dassault.

According to defence sources, the proposal will now be taken up for clearance at the next Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Sources further stated that the Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is likely to give the final approval.

Last year, the Indian Air Force had moved a formal proposal to the Defence Ministry, seeking 114 more Rafale fighter jets.

According to sources, India and France may sign the final agreement on 114 fighter jets as soon as next month.



Govt may raise FDI in defence to 74%

India plans to make it much easier for foreign firms to invest in defence companies, two government sources with knowledge of the matter said. The cap on foreign direct investment in defence firms with existing licences under the so-called automatic route, where government approval is not required, is set to be raised to 74% from 49%.

In April last year, India signed a landmark Rs 63,000 crore deal with France to buy 26 Rafale-Marine fighter jets to give added punch to the Indian Navy.

Protesters block highway after Bengal worker's J'khand death

KOLKATA

Local residents of Murshidabad on Friday blocked National Highway 12 to protest alleged attacks on migrant workers from the district in another state.

The protesters blocked the highway and burnt tyres at Maheshpur in Beldanga 1 from 9 am leading to severe traffic snarls and commuters had to face severe hardships to reach their destination. Trains services were also disrupted.

The protesters demanded severe punishment for those who have repeatedly termed residents of Murshidabad working in other states as 'Bangladeshi's' for speaking in Bengali.

Notably, the protest was sparked by news of the death of a Murshidabad resident who had migrated to Jharkhand for work.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, however, blamed Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)



Laying the foundation stone of 'Mahakal Mahatirtha' in North Bengal's Siliguri. West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee on Friday announced the construction of the world's tallest idol of Mahakal. She said the 216-feet-high temple structure would include a 108-feet bronze sculpture of the deity. The foundation stone laying-ceremony took place in presence of leaders from various religious communities.

for allegedly instigating 'violence' in Bengal.

"BJP wants chaos and the central government's agencies are behind it. In every 'double-engine' government state, migrant workers of Bengal are heckled. I want to ask them the reason

Punjab Kesari group alleges 'witch-hunt', Mann govt denies it

MUMBAI

The Punjab Kesari Group has accused the Bhagwant Mann-led Punjab government of unleashing a "targeted witch-hunt" against the media house following what it described as fair and balanced reporting on allegations raised by the opposition against the ruling party's national leadership.

The allegations have triggered a wider political debate on press freedom, governance and the use of state machinery.

In a letter addressed to Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria and Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, the Punjab Kesari Group claimed that a series of coercive actions were initiated soon after it published a news report on Oct 31, 2025. The report, the group said, covered opposition allegations concerning the national convener of the ruling Aam Aadmi Party.

According to the media group, the first sign of pressure came on November 2, when government advertisements were allegedly withdrawn across its publications.

BJP to elect new prez on Jan 20

NEW DELHI

After a nearly three-year delay, the Bharatiya Janata Party will elect its new national president on January 20, with the party on Friday announcing the detailed election schedule. The notification was issued by the BJP's national returning officer and Rajya Sabha member K Laxman.

According to the schedule, the electoral college list will be released on January 16. Filing of nominations will take place between 2 pm and 4 pm on January 19, followed by scrutiny, withdrawals and the final announcement of candidates on the same day. If required, polling will be held from 11.30 am to 1.30 pm on January 20. In case of unanimity, the new president will be declared during this period.

The party had last month appointed Bihar minister and five-time MLA Nitin Nabin as its national working president last month, making him the leading contender for the top post. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has praised Nabin as a young and industrious leader with strong organisational experience.

No role in 'Battle of Galwan' film or such ventures, says MEA

NEW DELHI

Ahead of the release of Salman Khan's movie "Battle of Galwan" -- based on the 2020 clash between Indian and Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley -- the Ministry of External Affairs on Friday said issues regarding film-making in India are looked after by "relevant authorities", and the MEA has "no role" in this or such ventures.

At his weekly media briefing, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said this in response to a query from a reporter.

Produced by Salman Khan and his mother Salma Khan, "Battle of Galwan" releases on April 17.

Jaiswal was asked to comment on some reports claiming that the MEA has 'raised objections' to the film depicting the clash between Indian and Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley six years ago.

"We understand that a film

of this nature is being planned. Issues regarding film-making in India, as you are well aware, are looked after by relevant authorities. And as far as we are concerned, MEA has no role in this or such ventures," he said.

The film, directed by Apoorva Lakhia, has Salman playing the role of Bikkumalla Santosh Babu, who laid down his life along with 19 other soldiers of the 16 Bihar Regiment in the 2020 battle while defending Indian territory.

He was posthumously given India's second-highest wartime gallantry award, the Maha Vir Chakra.

A 112-minute teaser of the film, which has created buzz on the Internet, was released on Salman's 60th birthday on December 27.

Several Indian media outlets have reported on the teaser and the criticism it drew from various Chinese media.

The military standoff in eastern Ladakh began in May 2020.



EC: Voter address errors in UP not linked to SIR

LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh State Election Commission on Friday responded to questions raised by the Samajwadi Party over alleged errors in the voter list, saying that incorrect or identical house numbers in electoral rolls are a common and long-standing issue and not the result of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

In a post on X, the Commission said that cases where unrelated voters are shown with the same house number in the electoral roll exist across many polling stations and assembly constituencies.

It clarified that this "unsatisfactory situation" did not arise due to the SIR, as no voter details were modified during the enumeration

phase of the revision exercise.

Explaining the reasons, the Commission said that in many villages houses do not have formal numbers, while in urban areas several houses also lack standard numbering.

EC collects documents from Amartya Sen's home

Election officials on Friday visited Nobel laureate economist Amartya Sen's residence at Bolpur in Birbhum district and collected the requisite documents in connection with the ongoing SIR, a family member said.

EC extends deadline

The Election Commission on Thursday extended the last date for filing claims and objections on the draft rolls of Goa, Lakshadweep, Rajasthan, Puducherry and West Bengal in the ongoing SIR of electoral rolls to January 19.

ED attaches Al Falah Univ assets, files charge sheet

NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday attached assets worth about Rs 140 crore of Haryana-based Al Falah University that came under the radar of the security agencies following the November 10 Red Fort area blast, and filed a charge sheet against Al Falah Group chairman Jawad Ahmed Siddiqui and his trust, officials said.

The 54-acres land of the university based in Dhauj area of Faridabad, the buildings of the university, those belonging to various schools and departments and hostels has been attached as part of a provisional order issued under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said.

PTI had first reported early this week that the ED is going to attach these properties, owned by the Al Falah Trust, categorising them "proceeds of crime".

Siddiqui was arrested by the ED in November on money laundering charges linked to cheating with students of the educational institutions run by his trust. It was claimed by the agency that the educational institutions did not have the required valid accreditation for teaching.

When a 31-year-old woman immolated herself at home in Surat over a marital dispute, her husband recorded a video of the incident instead of saving her, leading police to file a case and arrest him on Friday.

The 33-year-old man, Ranjit Saha, was arrested on cruelty and abetment of suicide charges for recording his wife's self-immolation instead

Bihar to ban pvt practice by govt docs

PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Friday announced that the state government will bring a new policy to completely ban private practice by all government doctors, saying the move would strengthen the public healthcare system. Addressing a public meeting at Bada Ramana Maidan in Bettiah during the launch of his Samridhhi Yatra, Kumar said the ban would ensure doctors devote full attention to government hospitals.

of saving her, police said.

The woman, Pratimadevi, later died. The Ichchapur police on January 14 registered a case against Saha under sections 85 (cruelty by husband/relative) and 108 (abetment of suicide) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Inspector AC Gohil said.

The woman set herself on fire on January 4, according to her statement recorded by police on January 11, days before her death. However, the woman's brother suspected

the involvement of her husband in her death and alerted police, Gohil said.

"After starting investigation, we found a clip in his mobile phone where he was recording his wife's self-immolation instead of saving her," said the Inspector.

The self-immolation was triggered by a fight between the couple, originally hailing from Bihar, because of a minor dispute involving their children.

Fire-hit nightclub in Goa used different names: CM

PANAJI

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Friday said 'Birch by Romeo Lane', the nightclub gutted in a fire last month claiming 25 lives, operated under different names over the years, and his government will conduct a probe into its violations since 1999.

Sawant informed the state assembly that his government has started an extensive crackdown on tourism establishments operating without necessary permits and asserted that no VIP protection will be given to violators.

The chief minister fielded a volley of questions from the

Opposition benches regarding the fire that broke out at Birch by Romeo Lane, a nightclub at Arpora village in North Goa that claimed 25 lives last month.

He pointed out that Birch by Romeo Lane had been operating under another name a few years ago.

"The name of the club kept changing. The inquiry is being conducted into the violations of the club, right from 1999 when it was granted permission to be established on a tenanted land," he said.

He assured the House that action would be taken on commercial establishments operating on tenanted lands.

police said. Neelam (40), wife of Surendra, died during treatment at Virangana Avantibai Medical College here on Thursday. At the time of her death, only her minor son Shani was with her, police said.

According to Jalesar Circle Officer (CO) Ritesh Thakur, Neelam had been suffering from complications caused by HIV infection for nearly a month, and was staying at her parental home in

India has 9 cr diabetics, says new study

NEW DELHI

At 90 million, India ranked second in the number of adults living with diabetes in 2024. China was first at 148 million and the US ranked third at 39 million, according to a study published in The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology journal.

Researchers, included those from the International Diabetes Federation in Belgium and India Diabetes Research Foundation and Dr A Ramachandran's Diabetes Hospital in Chennai.

Farrukhabad for treatment. As her condition deteriorated, she returned to her native village Nagla Dheeraj under Jethra police station limits five days ago, and was later admitted to the Etah medical college, where she succumbed during treatment early Thursday. Hospital officials informed police, following which personnel were deputed to conduct inquest proceedings and complete other legal formalities.

shocking tales

Man watches wife setting self on fire, records video

SURAT

When a 31-year-old woman immolated herself at home in Surat over a marital dispute, her husband recorded a video of the incident instead of saving her, leading police to file a case and arrest him on Friday.

The 33-year-old man, Ranjit Saha, was arrested on cruelty and abetment of suicide charges for recording his wife's self-immolation instead

Boy, 8, goes to hosp alone for HIV+ mom's autopsy

ETAH (UP)

An eight-year-old boy found himself alone at a hospital as he arranged the postmortem examination of his mother, who died of HIV-related infection, until local police stepped in to help him with legal formalities and the last rites.

Shani accompanied his mother's body to the morgue for the autopsy, telling officials he had no one else with him,

police said. Neelam (40), wife of Surendra, died during treatment at Virangana Avantibai Medical College here on Thursday. At the time of her death, only her minor son Shani was with her, police said.

According to Jalesar Circle Officer (CO) Ritesh Thakur, Neelam had been suffering from complications caused by HIV infection for nearly a month, and was staying at her parental home in

Farrukhabad for treatment. As her condition deteriorated, she returned to her native village Nagla Dheeraj under Jethra police station limits five days ago, and was later admitted to the Etah medical college, where she succumbed during treatment early Thursday. Hospital officials informed police, following which personnel were deputed to conduct inquest proceedings and complete other legal formalities.

Uttarakhand: De-addiction Campaign in Soldier-Dominated Village Sawad of Chamoli, Hundreds Take a Pledge



A comprehensive public awareness campaign against substance abuse was organized in the soldier-dominated village of Sawad in Chamoli district. The campaign was jointly conducted by the Mahila Mangal Dal and the Yuva Mangal Dal with hundreds of villagers participating enthusiastically. During the program, women, youth and elderly residents came together to discuss the harmful effects of substance abuse and pledged to make society drug-free. Speakers emphasized that addiction not only damages an individual health but also casts a dark shadow over families, society and the future of coming generations. They highlighted

that in soldier-dominated regions, it is especially important for youth to remain healthy and disciplined.

Call to Curb Sale and Consumption of Drugs

Members of the Mahila Mangal Dal stated that addiction has pushed several families into economic and social distress. They appealed for collective efforts to put a stop to the sale and consumption of intoxicants in the village. Meanwhile, members of the Yuva Mangal Dal urged young people to channel their energy toward sports, education and other Positive activities. At the conclusion of the campaign, participants took an

oath to abstain from substance abuse and to motivate others to do the same. Villagers also urged the administration to take strict action against illegal drug trafficking.

Active Participation of Villagers

It is noteworthy that de-addiction campaigns are being conducted continuously across many regions of Uttarakhand. With the active participation of social organizations, voluntary groups and local residents, the fight against substance abuse is increasingly taking the form of a mass movement. The campaign held in Sawad village is regarded as an important step in this ongoing effort.

NGT Seeks Response from CPCB on Death of Seven Elephants in Assam Train Accident



Assam

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has sought responses from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and other authorities regarding the death of seven elephants in a train accident in Assam Hojai district last month. Taking suo motu cognizance based on media reports, the tribunal stated that the incident raises serious environmental concerns. The accident occurred on December 20, 2025 near Changjurani village in Hojai district when the Silchar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express collided with a herd of elephants. The impact derailed the train engine and five coaches on the Jamunamukh-Kampur section under the Lumding division. Seven elephants died in the collision, includ-

ing three adults and four calves, while one calf sustained injuries. In its order issued on January 5, the NGT noted that the circumstances of the incident warrant investigation. The tribunal has impleaded the CPCB, the Special Chief Secretary (Environment) of the Assam government, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and the Assam State Pollution Control Board as parties to the case. The matter is listed for the next hearing on January 28 at the NGT Eastern Zonal Bench in Kolkata. Officials have attributed the accident to low visibility due to dense fog. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has directed the Forest Department to conduct a detailed probe into the causes of the collision.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Mahant Balaknath receive courtesy visit



GAZIPUR

Dr. Vijay Yadav, Chairman of Krishna Sudama Group of Institutions, Mardapur Sadat/Varanasi and State Treasurer of the Bharatiya Janata Party Kisan Morcha, paid a courtesy visit to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Mahant Balaknath to seek their blessings and guidance. During the meeting, a positive discussion was held on issues related to the all-round development, good governance, security and public welfare of Uttar Pradesh. The dynamic personality, visionary leadership and dedication of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Mahant Balaknath towards the nation and the state were appreciated. Those present on the occasion said that the Chief Minister leadership is inspiring in taking the state to new heights of development and his guidance is giving further momentum to public welfare schemes. Gaurav, Ajay Yadav and Krishna Kumar Yadav were also present on this Occasion.

Media persons met with the Labour Minister to Protest harassment

Varanasi

Regarding the issue of stopping the publication of Rashtriya Sahara Hindi daily newspaper from January 8 without any prior notice and not paying the pending salary, gratuity and PF of the employees and demanding their resignation verbally, the employees under the leadership of the President and Secretary of Kashi Journalist Association and Varanasi Press Club met the State Labour, Employment and Cabinet Minister Anil Rajbhar at his residence and handed over a memorandum to him. During this, President of Journalist Association Arun Mishra and President of Press Club Chandan Rupani expressed their anger over the oppressive action being taken against Sahara employees and



requested for immediate action. Taking immediate action, the Cabinet Minister directed the Principal Secretary (Labour) over the phone to take immediate action against harassment of journalists and media workers in Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Kanpur, Noida and Varanasi as well as in other parts of the state. Taking immediate action, the Cabinet Minister direct-

ed the Principal Secretary (Labour) over the phone to take cognizance of the issue of media personnel of Rashtriya Sahara in Varanasi as well as in Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Kanpur, Noida of the state and take immediate action against the harassment of journalists and media personnel.

After the minister instructions, within half an hour the Deputy

Labour Commissioner Varanasi himself called the Sahara employees over the phone and heard their entire story and prepared a complete report for further action and sent it to the government immediately.

After the minister instructions, the Deputy Labour Commissioner has issued a notice to the management of Varanasi Sahara unit asking them to appear on January 20. During this, along with Vinay Shankar Singh, Minister of Varanasi Press Club, Gyan Singh Rautela, Kaushal Kumar Singh, Devesh Singh, Rahul Singh, Subroto Mukherjee, Tripuresh Rai, Manoj Rai, Prabhakar Dubey, Bhagwat Prasad, Sanjay Kumar, Umesh Srivastava, Virendra Singh, Shivendra Singh, Hausla Singh, Rakesh Yadav associated with Rashtriya Sahara were Present.

Rashtra Sevika Samiti Celebrates Makar Sankranti Festival



Ghazipur the Rashtra Sevika Samiti celebrated the Makar Sankranti festival on Friday at the Saraswati Vidya Mandir premises in Raiganj, Ghazipur. The main speaker was Archana, the principal of Rani Lakshmi Bai Inter College and Neelam, the divisional head of the Samiti, was present on the stage. The program was presided over by Nandini. Chief speaker Archana explained that Makar Sankranti is a festival of har-

mony and renewal in the Sanatan tradition. With this festival, the sun enters the Capricorn zodiac sign, marking the beginning of auspicious events in Hindu households. The weather is infused with new energy. The Rashtra Sevika Samiti observes this festival as a celebration of harmony.

Through this festival, we unite society and highlight the historical values of the Sanatan tradition. It is our duty as sisters to

celebrate all ancient festivals with enthusiasm and joy, along with our families and with social harmony.

After the address, everyone shared a meal of khichdi. The program was conducted by Priyanka, the co-city secretary. Prominent members of the Samiti present at the event included Neelam, Soni, Kalyani, Jahnavi, Shakuntala, Shraddha, Suman, Bindu, Preeti, Aradhana, Sheetal, Kusum and Others.

BHU to Host Two-Day National Conclave on Odia Language, Literature and Cultural Identity

Varanasi

The Kabi Samrat Upendra Ithanja Odia Chair, Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University, is organizing a Two-Day National Conclave titled "Rediscovering Odia Language, Literature and the Making of a Cultural Identity" on 17-18 January 2026 at the Mahamana Auditorium, Malaviya Moulya Anusheelan Kendra, BHU.

The conclave will bring together eminent scholars, writers and academicians to deliberate on the historical evolution, literary traditions, manuscript heritage, oral narratives and contemporary relevance of the Odia language and literature and their role in shaping cultural identity. The Inaugural Session on 17 January 2026 at 10:30 AM will be



graced by Prof. Ajit Kumar Chaturvedi, Vice-Chancellor, Banaras Hindu University, as the Chief Guest. Prof. Kailash Pattanaik, Former Dean, School of Languages, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan will be the Guest of Honor, while Sushma Ghildyal, Dean, Faculty of Arts, BHU will Preside over the session. The conclave will feature a Keynote Address by Prof. Jatindra Kumar Nayak on critical discourse in Odia Plenary and technical sessions will include presentations by Dr. Gourahari Das, Prof. Bishnu Mohapatra, Prof.

Lakshmikanta Tripathy, Dr. Hrishikesh Panda, Prof. Yashodhara Mishra and Kedar Mishra among others. A Round-Table Conversation will be held on the second day with invited guest speakers, followed by the Valedictory Session addressed by Anand Vikram Singh along with senior members of the Odia Chair. The programme will also include a cultural evening featuring Hindustani flute recital by Shubhakant Sahoo and Odissi dance performances by students, highlighting the interaction between literature and Performing arts.

Chandauli

Mughalsarai At around 10 pm on Thursday night, a Scorpio with West Bengal number collided with four vehicles at Padav intersection located at Jalilpur police post under Kotwali. The Scorpio driver was drunk. During this time, two people were injured after being hit by a Scorpio, while a young man died. Police reached the spot and got the injured admitted to the trauma center. After this the driver and Scorpio were brought to the police station. Police also found liquor bottles from the car. After the incident, angry people vandalized the Scorpio and caught the drunk driver and beat him up, while another youth riding the Scorpio escaped. The police sent the body for post-mortem and started further action. According to the information received, as soon as the Scorpio number WB 02 AU 8586, going from Mughalsarai towards Varanasi, at around 10 pm on Thursday night, had



reached near the halt intersection, the driver lost control of the Scorpio and after hitting a car, auto, e-rickshaw, bicycle etc. parked on the roadside, four pedestrians Trampled and collided with the divider. There was an outcry after the incident. Angry people vandalized the Scorpio and caught the driver and beat him up. During this time, another youth riding in Scorpio

escaped. As soon as the information was received, CO PDDU Nagar Arun Kumar Singh, Mughalsarai Kotwali in-charge Inspector Santosh Kumar Singh, Jalilpur police post in-charge Abhishek Shukla reached the spot along with the police team. The police freed the Scorpio driver Harish Yadav, a resident of Varanasi from the clutches of the vil-

lagers and took him into custody, while three seriously injured people were taken to the trauma center where one youth was declared dead by the doctors. The deceased has been identified as Irshad, 20 years old, son of Jamil, resident of Chaurhat. Seriously injured people are being treated in the trauma center. All the youth traveling in the Scorpio are said to be intoxicated. In this regard, CO Arun Kumar Singh said that a youth has died. Scorpio has been brought to the post with the help of Haiwa. Mughalsarai Kotwali in-charge Inspector Santosh Kumar Singh said that one youth has died in this incident and two are currently undergoing treatment in the Trauma Center. The drunk driver, Harish Yadav, resident of Varanasi, has been arrested and the search is on for the others in the vehicle. The body of the deceased has been sent for post-mortem and action is being taken by registering a case under relevant sections.

Commercial Tent City ready in Arail, Divisional Commissioner and Police Commissioner inaugurate it



Devotees will get modern facilities for safe, organized and comfortable stay

Prayagraj. The Mela administration is continuously striving to provide better facilities to the devotees and tourists visiting Prayagraj during Magh Mela 2026. In this regard, under the aegis of the Mela Authority, the Prayagraj Development Authority has constructed a state-of-the-art commercial tent city in the

Arail area. The objective is to provide safe, organized and comfortable accommodation facilities to the increasing number of devotees during the Magh Mela. This commercial tent city was inaugurated by Divisional Commissioner Soumya Agarwal and Police Commissioner Prayagraj Jogendra

Kumar. The tent city is equipped with modern facilities, which will allow devotees to experience hotel-like amenities in the Mela area. In the

The objective is to provide safe, organized and comfortable accommodation facilities to the increasing number of devotees during the Magh Mela

Arail area, this year, a wellness center and other tent cities have also been developed with the cooperation of

the Tourism Department and private operators. These facilities are located between Shivalaya Park and Triveni Pushp, where devotees will be provided with accommodation as well as health, yoga and wellness-related services.

On the occasion of the inauguration ceremony, Additional Police

Commissioner Ajaypal Sharma, Mela Officer Rishiraj, Municipal Commissioner Sai Teja, Additional Mela Officer Dayanand Prasad, Secretary Prayagraj Development Authority Ajit Singh, Deputy Mela Officers Vivek Shukla and Abhinav Pathak, along with other officers, were present,

Two Brothers Shot in Land Dispute, Condition Critical

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kaushambi. Two real brothers were shot in a land dispute on Friday evening in Chakmahpur Pandeymau village under Kokhraj police station area. Both seriously injured brothers have been admitted to SRN Hospital in Prayagraj, where their condition is critical. According to information, Ashish Kumar, son of the late Dhara Singh, a resident of Chakmahpur Pandeymau village under Kokhraj police station area, had gone to Bharwari for some work on Friday



evening. Upon returning to the village, his rival relatives surrounded him and started beating him. When Ashish's

elder brother, Shiv Kumar, intervened, the attackers also beat him. During this time, the attackers shot both brothers

with a pistol. Ashish was shot in both legs, while Shiv Kumar was shot in his left leg. The sound of gunfire

spread panic throughout the village, and people hid in their homes. Upon receiving information about the incident, the Kokhraj police reached the spot. The police immediately took the injured to the medical college in a police jeep. After primary treatment there, considering their critical condition, the doctors referred them to SRN Hospital in Prayagraj. Ashish works in a private job in Maharashtra and had recently come home. According to the police, his family has a long-standing land dispute with their relatives. Kokhraj

police station in-charge Chandrabhushan Maurya said that upon receiving the information, he reached the spot with his team. The injured have been admitted to the hospital.

The mother of the injured youths has given a written complaint to the police, based on which a case will be registered and action will be taken against the accused. There is a tense atmosphere in the village regarding the incident, and police force has been deployed as a precautionary measure.

Dr. Vikrant Appointed Youth President of Labour Party

Lucknow The national leadership of the National Labour Party (NLP) has appointed Dr. Vikrant Pratap Singh as the State Youth President of Uttar Pradesh to strengthen the organization. In the official appointment letter issued by National President of the National Labour Party, Neeraj Rai, it was stated that Dr. Vikrant Pratap Singh has consistently demonstrated dedication, active leadership.

UP Foundation Day to be Celebrated with Great Fanfare at the Open University

Cultural programs, quiz, exhibition, and speech competition to be held on January 24

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University will celebrate Uttar Pradesh Foundation Day on January 24, 2026, in a grand and joyous atmosphere. Following instructions from the Governor's Secretariat, the university administration has begun preparations. The Vice-Chancellor of the university, Prof. Satyakam, said that the Foundation Day celebrations will be held with dignity and enthusiasm under the direction and guidance of the Governor of the state and Chancellor of the university, Smt. Anandiben Patel. A framework

for various programs has been prepared to make the event a success. Prof. Gyan Prakash Yadav has been appointed as the nodal officer for the successful conduct of the programs related to Foundation Day. The ceremony will include cultural performances, short film screenings, rangoli making, a quiz competition, an exhibition, and a speech competition. Nodal officer Prof. Gyan Prakash Yadav informed that the speech competition will be held on January 21, 2026, while the quiz competition and exhibition will be held on January 24, 2026. On the same day, colorful cultural programs will also be presented at the Atal Auditorium in the Saraswati campus. To ensure the success of the ceremony, a coordinated team comprising Prof. Meera Pal, Prof. P.K. Pandey, Prof. Devesh Ranjan Tripathi, Prof. Satyapal Tiwari, and Prof. Gyan Prakash Yadav has been formed, which will oversee all the arrangements for the event.

Meera Hospital wins the MS Sai Prajapati Technical Services Open Cashmoney Cricket Tournament 2026

A healthy mind develops in a healthy body. Chief Guest: ACP Tharwai Arun Parashar

On Thursday, a T-20 cricket match was held at the Dev Sports Cricket Ground from January 5th, concluding with the final match on January 15th. ACP Tharwai Arun Parashar was the chief guest at the final match, and Yagya Singh, Deputy Commandant of the RAF 101st Battalion, Shantipuram, Phaphamau, was the special guest. The chief guests were honored with bouquets and robes, and mementos and souvenirs were presented as gifts. Afterward, the ACP and Deputy Commandant introduced the two teams that reached the final. ACP Tharwai Arun Parashar, who arrived as the chief guest, stated that players are leading in every field, be it education or sports, and are proudly bringing honor to their parents, region, and country. He emphasized that if you want to achieve something in life, change your methods, not your intentions. Hard work and true dedication are essential to achieving your goals. Speaking to all the players, he emphasized that a healthy mind devel-



ops in a healthy body, and sports enhance physical and mental abilities. The special guest also emphasized that cricket is also a game in which players are advancing and proudly bringing honor to the country by achieving high positions. Chief coordinator Ramchandra Prajapati expressed his gratitude to all the guests. The final match of the MS Sai Prajapati Technical Services Open Cashmoney Cricket Tournament 2026, being

played at the Dev Sports Cricket Ground, was played between Meera Hospital and PMS Sports Club. PMS Sports Cricket Club won the toss and decided to field and Meera's team came to bat and was all out after scoring 186 runs in 19.1 overs in the stipulated 20 overs. Chasing the target, PMS Sports team was all out after scoring only 73 runs in 11.1 overs. Man of the match of this match was given to Misham Abbas, best

batsman to Saurabh Pratap Singh and best bowler to Kunal Mishra. Trophy and Rs. 50000 to the winning team and Rs. 25000 to the runner up. MS Sai Prajapati Technical Services owner Anil Prajapati, RTR Finance Service owner Ravi Tiwari (Rudraksh) tournament organizer Ramchandra Prajapati gave this award to the players. Along with Premchand Prajapati, Dr. Mahesh Chandra Prajapati, Gyan Singh Prajapati, Neeraj Pandey, Abhishek Shukla, Rammurti Prajapati, Rajkumar Patel, Santosh Yadav, Divyansh Dubey, Prabhakant Dwivedi, Subedar Bharatiya Gohari Councilor Surendra Mohan Prajapati, Vivek Yadav, Vishal Kumar, Aniket Dwivedi, Sunil Kumar Prajapati, Mandal President Rajiv Prajapati, Vikas Yadav, Rajesh Yadav, Rupa Devi Prajapati, Vandana Devi Prajapati, Manju Prajapati, Brijesh Pandey, soldier Sanjay Pandey, soldier Chandrashekhar Prajapati, Sanjay Prajapati, Shrikant Prajapati, Satyanarayan Prajapati etc. were present in large numbers.

Editorial

Shashi Tharoor has always disliked ‘statist Congress’

Power is in the words. Language has mystical powers. I enjoy playing with words. Those words are hot. You can be moved to tears by words. You can find humor in words. Moreover, there are few things that can convey the planet and all its inhabitants as vividly and comprehensively as words. During the 2009 austerity drive of the Congress-led UPA administration, Tharoor was embroiled in controversy for his response to a query regarding flying “cattle class” to Kerala. His statement, “Absolutely, in cattle class out of solidarity with all our holy cows!” caused a political storm following his response. Tharoor, an accomplished writer of numerous best-selling books on Indian society and politics, was forced to clarify that he did not want to offend economy class passengers after the Congress party swiftly censured him. After 16 years, Tharoor is now again in trouble for comments he made in an interview. In response to a Malayalam report that he had claimed, “We have many leaders, but many feel that there are no ordinary workers,” Tharoor clarified that he had really said, “several workers feel there is an absence of a leader in Kerala’s Congress.” “You should not think that I have no option to spend my time. I have options,” Tharoor added earlier in the interview. I have speeches, books, and invitations to speak all around the globe. Some saw his comments as a covert signal to the highest levels of Congress that he was thinking about other political paths. Amidst the upcoming Assembly elections in the state next year, Tharoor is now facing accusations of “crossing the line” from the top leaders of the Congress’s faction-ridden Kerala unit, putting him in the center of a maelstrom. Because of this, Shashi Tharoor has been named this week’s ThePrint Newsmaker. Actually, Tharoor’s essay praising the new industrial policies of the Left-led Kerala government had already been a hot topic before the interview controversy erupted. Tharoor had stated that, during the course of 18 months last year, Kerala’s startup ecosystem was valued at an astounding \$1.7 billion, which is five times higher than the worldwide average for the same time period. While the fact that this change has started happening under an LDF government run by communists is shocking, it is not totally unexpected. “The path to growth and prosperity for their people lies in capitalism, entrepreneurship, and initiative, not in red flags, strikes, and agitations,” he said in the post, comparing the Communists in Kerala to their West Bengali counterparts at the turn of the century. While he disagrees that the state’s industrial climate has changed generally, Tharoor defended himself by saying that “when something good emerges, even if only in one area, it is petty not to acknowledge it” in response to attacks from Kerala Congress officials over the piece. Tharoor, a former UN diplomat, has had a tumultuous political career with the Congress since his 2009 victory in the Lok Sabha elections from the Thiruvananthapuram constituency. Mostly because he had a habit of saying things that went against the party line. However, he consistently gets himself into problems by more than simply his words. In 2009, as the UPA was implementing its austerity measures, Tharoor and then-External Affairs Minister SM Krishna came under fire from the government for allegedly residing in a five-star hotel in Delhi while their official quarters were still being prepared. Tharoor lost his position in the Manmohan Singh government’s council of ministers in 2010 due to the scandal surrounding the sweat equity provided to Sunanda Pushkar, his then-girlfriend and later-wife, by a consortium that owned the Kochi club of the Indian Premier League. His ordination as a junior minister was renewed in 2012. Tharoor was thrust into his gravest professional crisis in January 2014, when Pushkar was discovered dead in a luxurious Delhi hotel room—months prior to the Lok Sabha elections.



Muslims want waqf reforms too. It’s not an issue for political acrimony

When the Waqf Amendment Bill 2024 was first tabled in the Lok Sabha on 8 August last year, it triggered fears within the Muslim community, as it was perceived to have been introduced without adequate consultation with stakeholders. After all, the issue of waqfs—Muslim institutions through which property is bequeathed for religious or charitable purposes—is sensitive because it involves socio-religious spaces such as qabristans, masjids, idgahs, and madrasas. As such, the government and Parliament were exhorted to adopt procedures that allayed rather than stoked the fears of

Muslims. In this backdrop, the decision to refer the bill to a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament was welcome. The 31-member committee, drawn from across party lines, received 97,27,772 memoranda overall. There were representations from various ministries and departments—including Minority Affairs, Law and Justice, Railways, Housing and Urban Affairs, Road Transport, and Culture (Archaeological Survey of India)—as well as state waqf boards and experts, ensuring a diversity of opinions. As such, the government and Parliament were exhorted to adopt pro-

cedures that allayed rather than stoked the fears of Muslims. In this backdrop, the decision to refer the bill to a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament was welcome. The 31-member committee, drawn from across party lines, received 97,27,772 memoranda overall. There were representations from various ministries and departments—including Minority Affairs, Law and Justice, Railways, Housing and Urban Affairs, Road Transport, and Culture (Archaeological Survey of India)—as well as state waqf boards and experts, ensuring a diversity of opinions. It is not entirely

correct to state that waqf reforms are being externally foisted. Rather, to a large extent, the demand for waqf reforms has emerged from within the Muslim community also. The Ministry of Minority Affairs received numerous complaints from Muslims on the maladministration of waqf properties, which manifested in voluminous litigations. The ministry’s analysis of grievances received from April 2023 found that 148 complaints pertained mostly to encroachments, illegal sales of waqf land, delays in surveys and registration, and complaints against waqf boards and mutawallis.

Has Trump Abandoned Ukraine In Favour Of Russia?

Donald Trump has spent only a month in his second term as the US President. However, he has disrupted the international order, weakened the Western alliance and created a sense of insecurity and uncertainty among its members, surprising even some of his supporters. There has been a paradigm shift in US foreign policy under Trump. He is now closer to Moscow than Washington’s traditional allies. He has embraced the Kremlin’s narrative on Ukraine and has sidelined US allies. Although senior members of the Trump administration have denied that the US has abandoned Kyiv and ignored its European allies, Trump himself has not made any serious attempts to pacify Ukrainians and Europeans. His closeness to Russia has been on display since he talked for 90 minutes on the phone with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, in which they agreed to start negotiations to end the Ukraine war, which will mark its third anniversary on Monday. Trump did speak to Zelenskyy soon after that call with Putin, but a nervous Ukrainian President warned that excluding his country from the talks would be “very dangerous”. Events after that only made Ukrainians feel sidelined. Trump’s Vice President, JD Vance, met European leaders in Munich two days later. But his comment that Europe will not be included in the peace talks only helped fuelled the speculation that they were being left out of the future of Ukraine, which is closer to their homes and in which they have invested a lot of money and effort since



the Russian invasion. Vance’s meeting with Zelenskyy did not go well either as the Ukrainian leader refused to give access to the country’s vast reserves of critical minerals unless he was given security guarantees. That angered Washington. Ending the Russia-Ukraine war was Trump’s major campaign promise. But hardly anyone expected him to brazenly take Russia’s side and even blame Ukraine for the conflict, which he did. Last Tuesday, a US delegation led by Secretary of State Marco Rubio met the Russian delegation headed by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Saudi Arabia, to discuss peace. Ukraine was not invited. Putin—who had been shunned by the US and its allies since the invasion of Ukraine—was delighted. A frustrated Zelenskyy dismissed the Riyadh talks as worthless. Trump did not like those comments and called the Ukraine President a dictator, even accusing him of starting the war. Zelenskyy said the US President was living in a Russian-made “disinformation space”. This infuriated Trump, who does not take kindly to any criticism. He described Zelenskyy as “a modestly successful comedian” who “talked the United

States of America into spending \$350 Billion, to go into a War that couldn’t be won, that never had to start, but a War that he, without the U.S. and ‘TRUMP,’ will never be able to settle.” Trump’s behaviour towards Zelenskyy is in stark contrast to Biden’s, who had backed Ukraine against Russia with all the possible military and financial aid. President Biden travelled to Ukraine many times since the Russian invasion in February 2022 to display his administration’s full support. He also promised NATO membership to Ukraine at a future date. Russia was severely punished for invading Ukraine. The US joined hands with its allies to isolate Moscow. Russia faced tough sanctions and its assets in the West were seized. The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against Putin for alleged war crimes in Ukraine. There were even plans to put Putin and his close allies on Nuremberg-style trials. Until a year ago, Ukraine’s leader was talking about even liberating all its territory, including Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014, with the help of Western military equipment. Ukraine even succeeded in occupying the

Russian territory of Kursk, which it had thought would be used as a bargaining chip during negotiations with Moscow. But all that now looks like a distant dream. With Trump back in the White House, Ukraine fears that Russia will be allowed to keep all the occupied territory as part of the deal to end the war. Kyiv is now likely to be denied NATO membership. That could be a promise to Russia to end the war. The US under Trump has now even opposed calling Russia an aggressor in a G-7 statement being prepared to mark the third anniversary of the war. The US team removed the phrase from the first draft, which was prepared by Canada, the current holder of the group’s presidency. It is not just Ukraine, America’s European allies are also now nervous about the intent of Trump. Since the Second World War, they enjoyed the US security umbrella under NATO. But now they are unsure if the US under Trump will honour Article 5 of the NATO, which is triggered when a member state comes under attack. It implies that an attack on one member is an attack on all. There is even fear in Europe that Donald Trump may sign a deal with the Russian leader Vladimir Putin that will lead to the withdrawal of US forces from Baltic states and effectively kill the NATO alliance. That could be similar to the non-aggression treaty signed by the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany on August 23, 1939, sending shockwaves to other European countries and prompting Hitler and Stalin to annex neighbouring countries. It is another matter

that Hitler invaded the Soviet Union two years later, putting an end to the treaty. European members of NATO may call themselves major powers, but they can’t match Russia’s military might without US support. Even after losing more than a hundred thousand men and lots of military equipment in the Ukraine conflict, Moscow remains a strong power, mainly because of its nuclear arsenal. So Why Has Trump Changed The Narrative? Trump has always been an admirer of strongmen like Putin. Even during his first term, he developed a rapport with him. He also dislikes Zelenskyy, whom he sees as more of a roadblock in ending the Ukraine conflict. As a former businessman, Trump sees things from the perspective of profitable deals. Western sanctions have hit Russia, but American companies have also suffered business losses, running into billions of dollars. He would like to reverse that. And despite Ukraine’s resistance, Trump believes Zelenskyy will have to give access to critical minerals in return for any future US support. Some in the Trump administration suggest Kyiv should provide Americans with those minerals in return for the US military and financial aid already received by Ukraine. Trump has blamed European leaders for not doing enough to end the Ukraine war. He has also complained for a long time that Europe has lived off the US for too long and it must pay for its security. Europeans have increased their defence budgets but not enough to survive without US support.

The Hindutva Pitch of the BJP: Will Bihar Pay Attention This Time?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attacked the opposition, calling members of the party who support “jungle raj” anti-Indian and anti-faith. Furthermore, he said that the state’s citizens would hold anybody who insults Maha Kumbh in contempt forever. Political circles were captivated by his attention on Maha Kumbh, which he displayed barely two days before Maha Shivratri, as the event was coming to a close. For what reason did Modi bring up the holy event, which has been going on for almost two months, Was all he was doing was addressing the Opposition’s strong criticism of what they saw as poor administration during the world’s largest religious gathering, the Maha Kumbh, and the two stampedes that occurred there. Did he want Maha Kumbh to be a part of the National Democratic Alliance’s Bihar election platform? It is quite probable that Modi, who had begun the NDA’s Bihar election campaign with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, purposefully

brought up the controversy surrounding Maha Kumbh in order to strengthen the Hindu support among the OBC. Many also saw it as an effort to win over religiously inclined female voters. Meanwhile, political scientists claimed Modi didn’t really need to mention Maha Kumbh. In contrast to Uttar Pradesh, religious and communal appeals do not have the same impact on elections in Bihar. A transformative governance agenda has traditionally had a greater impact on the state. Rather than a rising embrace of the Hindutva ideology of the BJP, observers pointed out that Bihar was shifting away from the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) led by Lalu Yadav owing to fears of his previous misrule. North Bihar is still firmly under the control of the NDA, and yatras, which were once used to communalize politics, have not been very successful. The Hindu Swabhimani Yatra, which Union Minister Giriraj Singh attempted last year but was unable to launch, is a prime example.

The trinity that failed women at Maha Kumbh. Holy, unholy, and the algorithm

Aasavage irony is unfolding in Uttar Pradesh right now. India’s holiest gathering is a hunting ground for faceless remote predators. At the “once in 144 years” Maha Kumbh Mela underway in Prayagraj, where millions congregate to wash away their sins in the Ganga, an unholy alliance of voyeurs, traders, and technology has formed. They’re transforming purification into portable entertainment. What’s on sale? The privacy and bodily integrity of women devotees. And the price? Anywhere between Rs 800 and Rs 2,000, depending on the quality of violation. Indian women have been failed, yet again, by a new trinity: The holy, the unholy, and the algorithm. Last week, 13 FIRs were lodged against 140 social media accounts for posting objectionable videos of women, including those of female devotees taking a dip at the Kumbh. The bathing videos came to light during a separate investigation by the Ahmedabad Cyber Crime Police into videos sourced from a Rajkot hospital’s gynaecology department. The investigation revealed that the three accused—Prajwal Taili, Praj Patil, and Chandraprakash Phoolchand—ran at least 22 Telegram channels where they sold clips of women, recorded and traded without their consent. The three men, a YouTuber from Prayagraj and two NEET aspirants from Maharashtra, ran their enterprise under an innocuous name “Megha Demos Group”. The channels, with labels like “CCTV Injection Group”, “Labor Room Injection Group”, and “Ganga River Open Bathing Group”, turned these transgressions into a menu of options. “Disturbingly, some content featured covert recordings from hospital labour rooms, medical examinations, and public areas like bus stands, marriage halls, and parlours,” cyber crime officers told The

Times of India. This lucrative venture raked in Rs 8 lakh a year. To the credit of UP Police, their social media monitoring team has moved swiftly, and identified 15 more accounts across Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram participating in this ecosystem of exploitation. The state government has now banned cameras at bathing ghats, deploying CRPF and state police personnel to enforce this prohibition. In 2019 too, the Allahabad High Court had banned the publishing of photos and videos of women at the Kumbh Mela: “The court said no pictures of women bathing or taking a holy dip should be shared. It also warned that action would be taken if the order was broken. This rule applies to both print and visual media.” This violation and commodification of women’s bodies at the Maha Kumbh represents a betrayal across three interconnected spheres. It’s not as if Indian women are unfamiliar with such trespasses—that’s our daily reality. But the Kumbh videos expose a particularly perverse intersection of faith, trade, and technology. First, there is the sacred: In a space of spiritual liberation, the crowd provides both cover and target for predators. Elaborate systems. At Indian temples and other places of worship prevent photography to protect idols and deities. Those regulations don’t extend to the bodies of women who show up at these sites. Then comes the betrayal by the profane, a carefully constructed marketplace where every assault is catalogued, priced, and traded. What’s most chilling about the Kumbh videos is the clinical efficiency of their distribution. The “Megha Demos Group” operated with the precision of a tech startup, complete with a freemium business model. Finally, there is the betrayal by technology.

Medical seat domicile rule of T'gana flawed: SC

Delhi : The

Supreme Court criticized the Telangana government's domicile policy, which requires students to have attended Classes 9–12 in the state to be eligible for state quota medical seats through NEET, saying it was distant from reality. Many students now study in Kota for Class 11 and 12 to get better coaching for medical and engineering entrance exams. Should they be denied admission because they are not Telangana residents? "CJI BR Gavai, Justices K Vinod Chandran and Joymalya Bagchi asked. "You must have a humane approach." Such students should not be harassed. Students whose parents are from Telangana are entitled for state quota seats regardless of where they finished Class 11 and 12, "CJI warned, "Either



you (the govt) rectify the matter, or we will set it right." Advocate Raghenath Basant told the bench that the domicile bar has created a sensitive situation for kids whose parents were born in Telangana and have lived there.

Children of a Kerala resident posted in Telangana for four years who complete Class 9-12 in Telangana are eligible for state quota medical seats. He said youngsters who study outside Telangana despite their parents being natural citizens cannot apply for state quota medical seats.

Hindu University establishes public policy institute

Delhi: Hindu College at Delhi University has set itself apart from other Indian universities by creating a public policy lab. Officials have stated that the goal is to include real-world policymaking into both undergraduate and graduate programs. With the goal of democratizing and decentralizing the process of knowledge generation, the lab is designed to serve as a hub for policy simulations, applied research, and field-based insights. This will bring

CEO tells DUSU hopefuls to submit bond and affidavit, no deposit required

Delhi : The

DUSU Election Commission has made it clear that all that is needed to run for student union office in the forthcoming elections is an affidavit and a Rs 1 lakh surety bond. Neither the school nor their own bank accounts will require them to deposit this sum. It is sufficient for a candidate to submit an affidavit and a surety bond, stated Chief Election Officer Prof. Raj Kishor Sharma during a news conference. Neither the university nor their account will request the payment



of this sum. He emphasized that the goal of this measure was to increase clarity and simplicity. In addition, the presiding officer, Dr. Rajesh Singh, emphasized the Election Commission's dedication to holding fair and free elections and urged all parties involved to work

together. While outlining the DUSU 2025–26 election program and code of conduct, Sharma made sure to mention that campaigning with hand-made posters is strictly forbidden and can only be done on dedicated "Democracy Walls."

Assess UV technology in sewage treatment, NGT directs IIT Delhi

Delhi : National Green Tribunal (NGT) asked IIT Delhi to examine the effectiveness of UV technology in sewage treatment and directed the DPCC to take punitive action against 14 STPS, which, as per a report, failed to meet the standards.

A tribunal

bench, headed by NGT chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava, in an order took notice of a report by Delhi Jal Board (DJB).

The report stated that of 37 STPs in the city, seven were yet to be installed with a disinfection system, four had not installed any sys-

tem, while among others, 15 had deployed UV and 11 had chlorination-based disinfection systems to treat bacteria in sewage before discharging the treated water into drains. For those yet to be installed, the process was initiated or tenders awarded.

Delhi dominates India's top college list

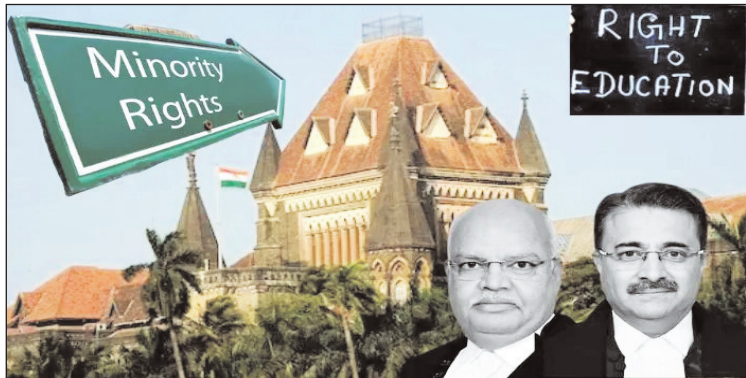
Delhi : Delhi University's Hindu College has topped the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025 list, followed by Miranda House, Hans Raj, Kirori Mal and St Stephen's, emerging as the top five colleges in the country. Delhi University (DU) also recorded its best-ever performance in the Universities category, rising to fifth position from last year's sixth. It advanced to 12th place in the Research Institutions list and retained the 15th spot overall. Vice Chancellor Yogesh Singh called the achievement "a landmark moment", crediting the collective efforts of faculty, students, alumni and staff. Hindu College Principal Anju Srivastava said the recognition reflected the college's focus on holistic education. "We have created an ecosystem where students get opportunities for research, innovation and practical exposure. Under NEP reforms, they are pursuing interests beyond the classroom with flexibility and industry linkages," she told. Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) secured the second spot among universities. Vice Chancellor Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit said the ranking was a matter of great pride, highlighting JNU's model of "excellence with equity and innovation with inclusion".

CBSE and NCB to Raise Drug Abuse Awareness

Delhi : Together, the NCB and the Central Board of Secondary Education are working to eliminate drug use from schools and raise public awareness about the dangers of substance misuse. The CBSE board headquarters hosted an agreement signing event. The CBSE announced in an official statement that the two organizations have reached an agreement that will allow them to work together on various projects. These projects will include community outreach, counselling services for students and parents, e-modules on drug prevention, capacity-building workshops for teachers and counsellors, and quarterly awareness programs.

SC: Why are minority institutions excluded from RTE?

Delhi : The Supreme Court said its 2014 verdict by a five-judge constitution bench that the Right to Education (RTE) Act did not apply to religious and linguistic minority educational institutions "strikes at the heart of good quality universal elementary education, its consequences are far-reaching" and should be reconsidered. A two-judge bench forwarded a bundle of Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra appeals on whether minority-run schools required passing the Teacher Eligibility Test to CJI to consider advancing the matter to a larger bench. It claimed exempting minority institutions from the Act would erode inclusion. Minority schools are exempt



from teacher appointment and free education for underprivileged children laws. The SC court noted its 2014 verdict basically divided RTE under Article 21A from collective rights under Article 30(1), which allow minority communities to construct and run educational institutions.

The Pramati Educational

and Cultural Trust (case) exempts minority schools, whether aided or unaided, from the RTE Act using clause (1) of Article 30 of the Constitution, which we disagree was correctly decided. Thus, a revisiting of the ruling seems inevitable "Justice Dipankar Datta, who wrote the bench verdict with Justice Manmohan, stated.

Companies in the electronics industry are the most welcoming to LGBTQIA+ apprentices.

Delhi : A whopping 71% of businesses in the electronics sector have shown a great desire to hire LGBTQIA+ apprentices, making it one of the most welcoming sectors for this demographic. Overall, 64 percent of Indian companies are welcoming of LGBTQIA+ apprentices, so this is just one more example of a larger trend. The January–March TeamLease Degree Apprenticeship Outlook Report emphasizes this change. The majority of electronics and telecom firms (71%) are eager to hire LGBTQIA+ apprentices.

Supreme Court asks Centre, NCERT on transgender-inclusive

Delhi :The

Supreme Court notified NCERT, the Union government, and six states to respond to a plea to integrate transgender inclusive sex education in school curricula. Chief Justice of India (CJI) Bhushan R Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran sent notices to the Centre, NCERT, and Maharashtra, Punjab, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu on the case brought by 16-year-old Delhi student Kaavya Mukherjee Saha.

Class 12 student from Vasant Valley School in Delhi filed the case, com-



plaining about the lack of transgender-inclusive

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in NCERT and SCERT textbooks. The student wants binding gender sensitisation and transgender-inclusive CSE rules in all schools nationwide. Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, representing Saha,

told the bench that NCERT had recently admitted in a Right to Information (RTI) reply that it had "no information" on integrating CSE into school education, despite a 2024 Supreme Court order. Saha's petition claimed that NCERT and most state councils of educational research and training (SCERTs) have failed to include structured or examinable content on gender identity, gender diversity, and sex and gender despite Sections 2(d) and 13 of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.

Pradhan Mantri Kalyan Yojana relies on NCERT

Delhi : Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan voiced his faith in NCERT's ability to push educational reforms and bring about a paradigm change in teaching and learning, despite the fact that the council has been criticized for its textbook updates. In his support of NCERT's initiatives to implement the reforms proposed in NE, Pradhan compared it to a "Gyan Kumbh" that has had a profound impact on the lives of many Indians. At its 65th Foundation Day, Pradhan emphasized that NCERT needs to take the lead in transforming India's education system by adopting a reform-oriented and tech-driven role. It has come a long way since its start, especially in terms of education's role in nation-building.

He emphasized that



the organization needed to "don a new avatar" that was reform-oriented, tech-driven, and focused on best practices in order to embrace its role as a change leader. With unwavering conviction, Pradhan declared that NCERT will "bring a paradigm shift in teaching and learning and play a key role in actualising the goal of Samridhh Bharat." "Confident that NCERT will continue shaping critical and creative thinking in the 'Amrit Peedhi'," stated the professor.

DU teachers raise issues of unoccupied reserved seats

Delhi: Teachers from Delhi University brought up issues with professor recruitment in front of a Parliamentary Committee, claiming that the SC/ST populations were marginalized on a systematic level. Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. They paid a visit to DU and had in-depth interviews with eighty people, including faculty, stu-

IIT Madras, IISc B'luru, IIT Bombay top 3 in NIRF 2025

Delhi : The

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has topped the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025 for the seventh consecutive year, and also emerged the top engineering college in India for the 10th year since the rankings were introduced in 2016. Like last year, the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru is ranked second in the overall ranking, and IIT Bombay third. The first non-engineering institution in the Top 10 of the overall ranking is the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi at eighth (seventh last year); the IITs at Delhi, Kanpur, Kharagpur, and



Roorkee (which swapped places with AIIMS) hold the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh places. Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi) and Banaras Hindu University (Varanasi) have moved up to the ninth and tenth spots, respectively. Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan and minister of state for education Sukanta Majumdar

announced the overall rankings and rankings across 17 categories for higher education institutions (HEIs).

The categories include engineering, management, medicine, university, law, research, and agriculture. There is also a category just for colleges. A total of 14,163 higher education institutions participated in the 10th edition of NIRF Rankings.

BCCI to hold AGM on Sept 28 to elect president, secretary, other office bearers

Delhi : The Board of Control for Cricket in India will conduct elections for the post of all its office-bearers - president, vice-president, secretary, joint secretary and treasurer, in Mumbai on September 28. In a notice, seen by all the state associations, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia stated, "Notice is hereby given that the 94th Annual General Meeting (hereinafter referred to as "AGM") of the Board of Control for Cricket in India ("BCCI"), which will be held at 11.30 AM on September 28, 2025, at BCCI headquarters at Mumbai, to transact the business as per the agenda provided below." "The minutes of the 93rd Annual General Meeting held on September 29, 2024, the minutes of the Special General Meeting held on January 1, 2025, and the minutes of the Special General Meeting held 2025, are attached herewith. Rest of the agenda papers will follow shortly. You are kindly requested to attend the meeting," Saikia concluded.

NMC asks medical colleges to deploy PG students in flood-affected areas

Delhi : The National Medical Commission (NMC) has asked all medical colleges across the country to deploy post-graduate medical students in flood-affected areas.

The deployment would be a part of the district residency programme, according to its recent directive. The directive states: "In view of recent floods/disaster-like situations in northern states/UTs, there is an urgent requirement for healthcare professionals as part of the ongoing relief measures.

'Om Puri redefined heroism'

Actor Abhishek Banerjee has shared that his cameo appearance in the second season of *Freedom at Midnight* is a tribute to late star Om Puri, whom he says defied the very meaning of what it took to be a hero.

"I have grown up admiring one of the biggest acting legends of India, the late Om Puri sahab. He was truly a trailblazer and defied the very meaning of what it took to be a hero. When people see his filmography, one thing that is great takeaway is that he always did roles and films, never evaluated them based on the size of the role," Abhishek told IANS.

In the series, Abhishek essays the role of a rioter driven by vengeance after losing his pregnant wife to communal violence, a journey that ultimately leads him to surrender before Mahatma Gandhi in the series, which is based on the partition of India and Pakistan, and the religious and socio-political dynamics of the era.

The character was also portrayed by Om Puri in the Ben Kingsley-starrer *Gandhi*, which was directed by Richard Attenborough in 1982. "When Nikkhil asked me to do this cameo, I wanted to make sure I showed up. That's the true spirit of the role."

The role is an homage to Om Puri's role from *Gandhi*, and just having the opportunity to step into this character was

deeply an honour for me."

Abhishek says that he has "no comparison" to Om Puri's legacy and his craft. "He will and is truly a cinematic icon. But to step into his footsteps, even for this small cameo role, is truly an honor for me. I want to always

remember that roles aren't always about their size; sometimes it's the smallest parts that leave behind the highest impact, and the feedback since the release of *Freedom at Midnight* has been just that. I have been getting so many messages and calls, tags on social media appreciating the cameo," concluded Abhishek.

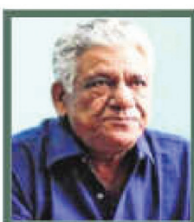


Photo: Instagram @nowitsabhi

Actor Abhishek Banerjee says his *Freedom at Midnight* Season 2 cameo is a heartfelt tribute to late acting legend Om Puri



Malaika shares breakup feelings

Bollywood actress admits going through phases of 'anger' after breakup with Arjun Kapoor



their breakup, admitting that she went through phases of anger, upset, and disappointment.

During a chat on The Namrata Zakaria Show, Malaika addressed her breakup and said, "I think anger and hurt exist at a particular phase or time in your life, and I think everybody does. We are humans, we all go through phases of anger and being upset, disappointed. That's just human nature. But as you go along, as time goes on, and the most cliched line is - time heals all."

Further, Malaika said that despite their breakup, Arjun remains someone very important to her and an integral part of her life. She added that she does not really want to talk too much about her past or what her future may hold, as enough has already been written and shared, almost turning it into a media feeding ground.

She continued that her relationships have always been in the spotlight and have often made headlines. At one point, she recalled saying that her life is much more than just her personal relationships, as they were becoming too much of a centre of attention.

"Unfortunately, people forget that because it doesn't make a headline or copy. I am at that stage of life now, where I don't need to prove anything, but I need to do things that make me happy, and I want people to see that," added Malaika.

Bollywood star Malaika Arora, who was earlier in a long-term relationship with actor Arjun Kapoor, began dating him in 2018. However, they parted ways in 2024, shocking everyone.

The couple often faced trolling due to their age gap of nearly 12 years, with Malaika being older than Arjun.

Years after their split, the *Chaiyya Chaiyya* star opened up about

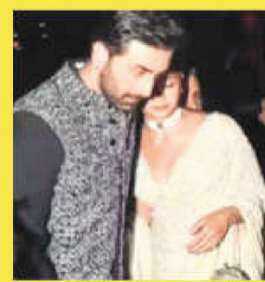


Photos: Instagram

Ranbir, Alia serve couple goals



Bollywood couple was spotted together during a late-night outing in Mumbai's Bandra area



Bollywood couple Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt were spotted together during a late-night outing in Mumbai's Bandra area on Tuesday. The two served major couple goals as they arrived at Gauri Khan's restaurant, Torii, hand in hand.

The actors were spotted greeting paparazzi outside the venue. For the outing, Alia Bhatt opted for a white sequined saree with fine embroidery. The actress paired the saree with a matching blouse and kept her look simple with a sleek bun, a statement choker, and soft makeup.

Ranbir Kapoor made sure to match her style in a black kurta-pyjama, layered with an embroidered Nehru jacket. Soon after the two were spotted outside the restaurant, videos and pictures of the couple went viral on the internet.

Actor Kiefer Sutherland arrested

Kiefer Sutherland arrested after allegedly assaulting ride-hail driver overnight

Actor Kiefer Sutherland was arrested on suspicion of criminal threats early on Monday morning after Los Angeles police say he assaulted a ride-hail driver. Just after midnight, officers responded to a call reporting an assault at an intersection just south of Hollywood Hills.

The Los Angeles Police Department said that they determined Sutherland entered a ride-hail vehicle, physically assaulted the driver and "made criminal threats toward the victim". The driver did not require medical treatment, police said. Sutherland was arrested and released from jail a few hours later on a USD 50,000 bond, according to jail records. His first court appearance is scheduled for February 2.



Jahaan - The Last Gift enters global circuit

Jahaan - The Last Gift has emerged as a notable example of how Waves Bazaar is helping Indian short-form cinema reach international audiences. Directed by Rahul Shetty, the short film was curated under the Top Selects segment at Waves Bazaar, a programme created to highlight select projects for focused interaction with international festival programmers, curators, and industry delegates.

Through this targeted curation, the film was positioned within a professional industry environment where it could be viewed, discussed, and evaluated for global circulation. Following its showcase, *Jahaan - The Last Gift* went on to secure selections at multiple international film festivals across North America

and Europe, marking its entry into global festival circuits.

The film's journey reflects Waves Bazaar's role as a launchpad rather than merely a screening platform. Exploring themes of environmental crisis and human survival, the short film resonated with global audiences and programmers alike. Its success underscores the growing demand for socially relevant Indian short-form storytelling on international screens.

John Forte passes away

Grammy-nominated musician and producer

John Forte, who worked closely with the Fugees, has died at the age of 50, Variety reported. Massachusetts' Chilmark Police confirmed to Variety that the police found the musician dead at his home on Tuesday afternoon. The local police chief said there were no signs of foul play and no clear cause of death at the scene. The case is now being looked into by the state



medical examiner. According to Deadline, John Forte was a key member of the Refugee Camp All Stars, a music group active in the 1990s. He worked on several well-known

songs, including Wyclef Jean's *We Trying to Stay Alive* and *Rumble in the Jungle*, which also featured Busta Rhymes and A Tribe Called Quest.

Soundous Moufakir eyes big-screen debut

Actress says she is ready to step into bigger cinematic spaces with an upcoming Bollywood project

Moroccan-born actress and model Soundous Moufakir is set to enter a new phase in her career as she prepares for her theatrical debut with a leading Bollywood production house. After gaining early popularity through reality television, the 28-year-old is now

moving towards more substantial roles in mainstream cinema.

Soundous, who represents a growing wave of international talent in Indian entertainment, will be seen in two film projects slated for release in 2026.

These films mark a significant shift from brief appearances to full-fledged roles, signalling her arrival as a serious film actress.

Sharing her excitement, Soundous said she feels ready to take on bigger cinematic opportunities after years of preparation and learning.

Alongside acting, she continues to make her mark in fashion, with her Moroccan-influenced style drawing attention. With several projects lined up, Soundous is steadily building a promising film career.



Views

Briefs

WASHINGTON

Trump: Total mess if SC nixes tariffs



President Donald Trump has warned that it would "be a complete mess, and almost impossible for our Country to pay" back the money the US has collected from his sweeping tariffs if the Supreme Court rules he doesn't have the unilateral ability to impose many of them. In a social media post, he said that if the court strikes down his tariffs: 'WE'RE SCREWED!' "It may not be possible," Trump said in his post about repaying the tariffs. But, "if it were, it would be Dollars that would be so large that it would take many years to figure out what number we are talking about and even, who, when, and where, to pay."

WASHINGTON

US terror tag on three West Asia outfits

The US has made good on its pledge to label three Middle Eastern branches of the Muslim Brotherhood terrorist organisations, imposing sanctions on them and their members in a decision that could have implications for America's ties with allies Qatar and Türkiye. The Treasury and State departments announced the actions Tuesday against the Lebanese, Jordanian and Egyptian chapters of the Muslim Brotherhood, which they said pose a risk to the US and American interests. "These designations reflect the opening actions of an ongoing, sustained effort to thwart Muslim Brotherhood chapters' violence and destabilisation wherever it occurs," Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement.

INSIDE VIEW | People tap Musk's Starlink to skirt internet curbs, describe their hardship and heavy security presence

Call to outside world: Iranians voice despair

DUBAI

Iranians on Tuesday made phone calls abroad for the first time in days after authorities severed communications during a crackdown on nationwide protests, giving a glimpse of life after being cut off from the outside world.

Some of them are still using Elon Musk's Starlink satellite internet service, three people inside the country said, the latest example of Starlink being used to counter internet shutdowns in geopolitical flashpoints.

Starlink, which beams its service directly from thousands of low-earth orbit satellites, is still working in some places in Iran, despite being banned by authorities there. One of the three people, in Western Iran, said he knew dozens of people using Starlink and that users in border towns and cities were largely unaffected.

Witnesses described a heavy security presence in central Tehran, burned-out government buildings, smashed ATMs and few passersby. But people remain concerned about what comes next, including the possibility of strikes after US President Donald Trump said he could possibly use the military to defend peaceful protesters.



Toll 2,000: Iran official

About 2,000 people, including security personnel, have been killed in protests, an Iranian official, who refused to be named, said. The official said that people he called terrorists were behind the deaths.

Trump also has said Iran wants to negotiate with Washington.

"My customers talk about Trump's reaction while wondering if he plans a military strike against the Islamic Republic," said shopkeeper Mahmoud, who gave only his first name out of concerns for his safety. "I don't expect Trump or any other foreign country cares about the interests of Iranians."

Leave now: US advisory

The US has urged Americans to "leave Iran now". "Protests across Iran are escalating and may turn violent, resulting in arrests and injuries," the US advisory said, urging Americans to consider moving to Armenia and Turkey.

Reza, a taxi driver who also gave just his first name, said protests remain on many people's minds. "People — particularly young ones — are hopeless but they talk about continuing the protests," he said.

The witnesses said text messaging still was down and that internet users in Iran could connect to government-approved websites locally but nothing abroad.

Death for protester?

Iran is set to execute its first protester, Erfan Soltani, 26, in connection with the ongoing demonstrations, Norway-based NGO Iran Human Rights (IHR) said. Erfan Soltani, 26, was arrested last week in Karaj near Tehran.

Final days, says Merz

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz believes the Iranian government is in its "final days and weeks." "If a regime can only keep itself in power by force, then it's effectively at the end," Merz said in Bengaluru.

Anti-riot police officers, wearing helmets and body armour, carried batons, shields, shotguns and tear gas launchers, according to the witnesses. Police stood watch at major intersections. Nearby, the witnesses saw members of the Revolutionary Guards all-volunteer Basij force, who similarly carried firearms and batons. Security officials in plainclothes were visible in public spaces as well.

Bill to annexe Greenland tabled in US

Washington: Republican Congressman Randy Fine has formally introduced the 'Greenland Annexation and Statehood Act', a legislation aimed at giving the Trump administration a legal authority to pursue annexation and eventual statehood for Greenland.

"Huge News! Today, I am proud to introduce the Greenland Annexation and Statehood Act, a bill that allows the President to find the means necessary to bring Greenland into the Union," Fine said in a post on X on Monday (local time).

He further asserted that America's "adversaries" are trying to establish a foothold in the Arctic, and "we can't let that happen". The Republican Congressman said that US President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio have made it clear that Washington "needs to restore American Dominance by acquiring Greenland."

Vance to host Greenland meet

Copenhagen: Denmark's foreign minister said Tuesday that US Vice President JD Vance will host a meeting with him and his Greenlandic counterpart in Washington this week as tensions spiral over the Trump administration's desire for control of Greenland.

The vast Arctic island is a semiautonomous territory of Denmark, a NATO ally of the US.

Tension flares in Minnesota, protests swirl

MINNEAPOLIS

Days of demonstrations against immigration agents left Minnesota tense on Tuesday, a day after federal authorities used tear gas to break up crowds of whistle-blowing activists, and state and local leaders sued to fight the enforcement surge that led to the fatal shooting of a Minneapolis woman.

Confrontations between federal agents and protesters stretched throughout the day and across multiple cities on Monday. Agents fired tear gas in Minneapolis as a crowd gathered around immigration officers questioning a man, while to the northwest in St. Cloud, hundreds of people protested outside a strip of Somali-run businesses after ICE officers arrived.

Later that night, confrontations erupted between protesters and officers guarding the federal building being used as a base for the Twin Cities crackdown.

With the Department of Homeland Security pledging to send more than 2,000 immigration officers into Minnesota in what Immigration and Customs Enforcement has called its largest enforcement operation ever, the state, joined by Minneapolis and St. Paul, sued the Trump administration Monday to try to halt or limit the surge.

100k visas nixed in '25

New York/Washington: The US has revoked over 100,000 visas, including of around 8,000 students, in 2025 as part of its widespread efforts to crackdown on immigration citing criminal activity. "We will continue to deport these thugs to keep America safe," the State Department said in a social media post on Monday.

The suit filed says the Department of Homeland Security is violating the First Amendment and other constitutional protections. It accuses the Republican Trump administration of violating free speech rights by focusing on a progressive state that favours Democrats and welcomes immigrants.

"This is, in essence, a federal invasion of the Twin Cities in Minnesota, and it must stop," state Attorney General Keith Ellison said at a news conference.

Homeland Security says it has made more than 2,000 arrests in the state since December.

The days after Renee Good was shot in the head by an ICE officer while behind the wheel of her SUV have seen dozens of protests.

Global central bank chiefs in 'full solidarity' with Powell

FRANKFURT

Central bankers from around the world said Tuesday they "stand in full solidarity" with US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, after President Donald Trump dramatically escalated his confrontation with the Fed with the Justice

Department investigating and threatening criminal charges.

Powell "has served with integrity, focused on his mandate and an unwavering commitment to the public interest," read the statement signed by nine national central bank heads including European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde

and Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey.

They added that "the independence of central banks is a cornerstone of price, financial and economic stability in the interest of the citizens that we serve. It is therefore critical to preserve that independence, with full respect for the rule of law and democratic accountability."

In another major drone-missile attack, Russia hits Ukraine's power grid, kills 4

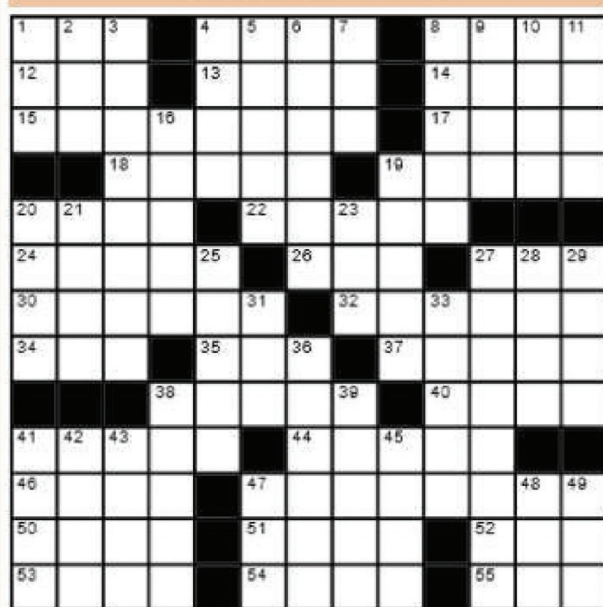
Kyiv: Russia launched a second major drone and missile bombardment of Ukraine in four days, officials said on Tuesday, aiming again at the power grid. Russia fired almost 300 drones, 18 ballistic missiles and seven cruise missiles at eight regions overnight, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on social media.

One strike in the northeastern Kharliv region killed four people at a mail depot, and several hundred thousand households were without power in the Kyiv region, Zelenskyy said. The daytime temperature in the capital was -12 C (around 10 F). The streets were covered with ice, and the city rumbled with the noise from generators. —Agencies

Inexplicable escalation: US

United Nations: The United States has accused Russia of a "dangerous and inexplicable escalation" of its nearly four-year war in Ukraine. US deputy ambassador to the UN Tammy Bruce on Monday singled out Russia's launch of a nuclear-capable Oreshnik ballistic missile last week close to Ukraine's border with Poland, a NATO ally. She told an emergency meeting of the Security Council that the United States deplores "the staggering number of casualties" in the conflict and condemns Russia's intensifying attacks on energy and other infrastructure.

Crossword #1745



- Across**
- Feminine pronoun
 - Ship pole
 - Leading player
 - Paar: 1954 Guru Dutt movie
 - A girl or a maiden, especially in Scotland
 - duck: one who cannot cope without help?
 - Dusk
 - Way out
 - Small film role
 - Unnatural
 - Be absent or deficient
 - Wilt
 - Reversed
 - Genre you might hear at a nightclub
 - Dead on arr.
 - Broke the promise of marriage, in a way?
 - Taking food
 - The French for 'island'
 - Scam
 - Japanese-American
 - Cooking herb
 - Lhasa: a type of pet furry dog?
 - Comic fantasy author Pratchett
 - Egyptian capital
 - Verve
 - Passed away
 - Thanks: (1,3)
 - Understanding term? (1,3)
 - Gad's son?
 - 20th letter of the Hebrew alphabet
 - Swelling on eyelid
 - Father

- Down**
- Took a load off?
 - Hum and: hesitate?
 - Monty Python member (4,4)
 - Svelte or slender
 - Summoned by a beeper?
 - On to the land
 - Queue after Q
 - Nap or repose
 - Move along the ground especially an aircraft?
 - "A rim" anagram for an Arab chieftain?
 - "Retired" in short?
 - Mr Modi of IPL fame
 - Lady
 - Japanese mountain
 - Mr. Kapoor of "Beta" fame
 - Lyric poem
 - Rot away
 - towards: inclined to?
 - Singles
 - Exchange fee
 - Some parties
 - Royal head-dress
 - Most appealing to senses
 - Hearty soup
 - Cagney's partner?
 - Ski lift (1-3)
 - Mystery writer Stanley Gardner
 - Ex-Chilean tennis star Marcelo
 - Inst. of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
 - Prefix involving reversal of action or state
 - An eon or an epoch
 - Carried out

YOUR DAY By Vinayak Vishwas Karandikar



ARIES: Aries: A day for spiritual growth and deep reflection. Opportunities for meaningful spending on religious activities, travel, or investments are likely. Positive growth is seen for those in research, astrology, finance, and teaching. Constructive family discussions will strengthen bonds; approach conversations with patience. Take care of your legs and digestive health to maintain vitality. Lucky number: 7; Lucky colour: Yellow



TAURUS: A day for introspection and heightened intuition. Opportunities to support others through loans, medical treatments, or charitable acts are likely. Success is seen for those in the occult sciences, finance, and consultancy. Harmonious interactions with family are possible when patience is practised. A gentle routine will support calmness and digestive wellness. Lucky number: 9; Lucky colour: Red



GEMINI: An excellent day to connect with influential people and expand your network. Unexpected gains or beneficial investments may occur. Positive developments are seen for those in marketing, media, education, and business. Deep and meaningful conversations with your partner will strengthen the relationship. Mindful relaxation and stress management will help maintain energy. Lucky number: 5; Lucky colour: Green



CANCER: A responsible and productive day. Investments in career growth, travel, or legal matters can be beneficial. Positive outcomes are seen for those in the medical field, law, and government jobs. Balancing work and family time will bring harmony. Gentle exercises will support back and digestive health. Lucky number: 8; Lucky colour: Blue



LEO: A day for philosophical insights and spiritual understanding. Spending on education, travel, or charitable activities will bring fulfillment. Success is seen for those associated with teaching, religious activities, and publishing. Meaningful conversations with loved ones will deepen emotional connections. Stay hydrated and take care of your hips and mobility. Lucky number: 3; Lucky colour: Yellow



VIRGO: A day of positive transformation and opportunities. Thoughtful spending will ensure financial stability. Growth is seen for professionals in psychology, research, and auditing. Family dynamics may evolve positively with understanding. Rest and mindfulness will support sleep and nerve health. Lucky number: 6; Lucky colour: White



LIBRA: A day of social engagement and partnership opportunities. Investments in business partnerships, travel, or legal matters can be rewarding. Success is seen for those in law, business, and counselling. Gentle movement and a balanced diet will support joint and digestive health. Lucky number: 4; Lucky colour: Pink



SCORPIO: A disciplined and productive day. Strategic spending on health or work will yield long-term benefits. Success is seen for those in healthcare, law enforcement, and finance. Investments in business partnerships can be rewarding. Fulfilling family responsibilities will enhance harmony. Gentle movement and a balanced diet will support joint and digestive health. Lucky number: 4; Lucky colour: Brown



SAGITTARIUS: Enthusiasm and learning will guide the day. Investments in education, children, or creative ventures will bring positive results. Growth is seen for teachers, writers, and media professionals. Joyful moments with family and children are indicated. Careful movement will support knees and stress management. Lucky number: 1; Lucky colour: Orange



CAPRICORN: A day of emotional depth and family warmth. Spending on home, renovations, or real estate will bring satisfaction. Success is seen for those in real estate, construction, and interior design. Quality time with family will enhance bonds. Gentle exercises will boost energy levels and health. Lucky number: 8; Lucky colour: Grey

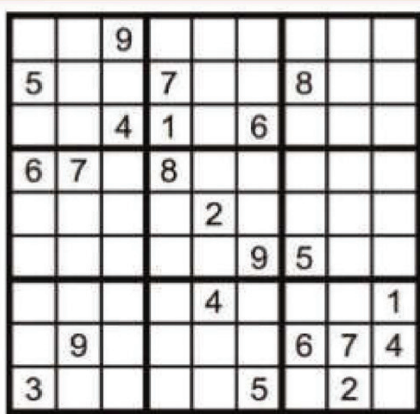


AQUARIUS: A day of networking, communication, and skill development. Spending on travel, gadgets, or learning will bring growth. Success is seen for those in journalism, IT, and social media. Open communication with siblings will strengthen relationships. Preventive care of the throat and allergies will maintain vitality. Lucky number: 5; Lucky colour: Sky Blue



PISCES: A day for careful financial planning and family enjoyment. Expenditure on comfort, luxury, or family needs will support well-being. Progress is seen for those in banking, finance, and the art field. A peaceful and harmonious time with family is indicated. Focused rest will support weight and sleep balance. Lucky number: 2; Lucky colour: White

SUDOKU - 635



WHAT TO DO: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only one correct solution.

Solution

Down: 1. Sea, 2. Hawk, 3. Etc. etc. 4. Slim, 5. Paged, 6. Ashore, 7. RST, 8. Sleep, 9. Box, 10. Mm, 11. Red, 12. Dip, 13. Wm, 14. Wm, 15. Wm, 16. Wm, 17. Wm, 18. Wm, 19. Wm, 20. Wm, 21. Wm, 22. Wm, 23. Wm, 24. Wm, 25. Wm, 26. Wm, 27. Wm, 28. Wm, 29. Wm, 30. Wm, 31. Wm, 32. Wm, 33. Wm, 34. Wm, 35. Wm, 36. Wm, 37. Wm, 38. Wm, 39. Wm, 40. Wm, 41. Wm, 42. Wm, 43. Wm, 44. Wm, 45. Wm, 46. Wm, 47. Wm, 48. Wm, 49. Wm, 50. Wm, 51. Wm, 52. Wm, 53. Wm, 54. Wm, 55. Wm, 56. Wm, 57. Wm, 58. Wm, 59. Wm, 60. Wm, 61. Wm, 62. Wm, 63. Wm, 64. Wm, 65. Wm, 66. Wm, 67. Wm, 68. Wm, 69. Wm, 70. Wm, 71. Wm, 72. Wm, 73. Wm, 74. Wm, 75. Wm, 76. Wm, 77. Wm, 78. Wm, 79. Wm, 80. Wm, 81. Wm, 82. Wm, 83. Wm, 84. Wm, 85. Wm, 86. Wm, 87. Wm, 88. Wm, 89. Wm, 90. Wm, 91. Wm, 92. Wm, 93. Wm, 94. Wm, 95. Wm, 96. Wm, 97. Wm, 98. Wm, 99. Wm, 100. Wm, 101. Wm, 102. Wm, 103. Wm, 104. Wm, 105. Wm, 106. Wm, 107. Wm, 108. Wm, 109. Wm, 110. Wm, 111. Wm, 112. Wm, 113. Wm, 114. Wm, 115. Wm, 116. Wm, 117. Wm, 118. Wm, 119. Wm, 120. 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Briefs

MUMBAI

Rahane to inaugurate MCA Kit Fair



Former India captain **Ajinkya Rahane** will inaugurate the second edition of MCA's Cricket Kit Fair to be organised on January 17 and 18 here. The first such fair was hosted last year and had featured several top cricket equipment manufacturers coming on board for the initiative taken by the Mumbai Cricket Association. "The response from the first edition was tremendous which also encouraged us to continue with it. It helps players from across age groups."

BENGALURU

RCB proposes installation of AI-cameras



Desperate to ensure that IPL matches are not taken away from the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here, the Royal Challengers Bengaluru franchise has proposed the installation of 300-350 AI-enabled cameras at the venue and offered to bear the estimated cost of Rs 4.50 crore for this crowd management initiative. RCB has made the proposal in an official communication to the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA).

NAVI MUMBAI

UPW, MI face off for second time in 3 days



Having finally got the monkey off their backs with the season's first win in their fourth attempt, UP Warriorz will enter the Women's Premier League match against Mumbai Indians with a spring in their step here Saturday. Winless in the first three outings, the Warriorz opened their account on Thursday, beating defending champions Mumbai Indians by seven wickets, and they are set to face each other for the second time in three days. The Warriorz though still need to figure out their batting order.

English Daily

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TRACK ICON | Seven-time Olympic medallist Andre De Grasse from Canada still aims to be the best and fastest man on the planet at LA28

ANDRE DE GRASSE: IN PURSUIT OF GREATNESS

MUMBAI

Andre De Grasse is one of the greatest and most accomplished athletes of this generation and a seven-time Olympic medallist from Canada, who has relentlessly chased excellence on the track.

In the 'Maximum City' for the Tata Mumbai Marathon 2026, the sprint sensation from Toronto spoke exclusively to in a candid, free-wheeling interview.

Excerpts...

Just looking at your amazing career so far, you know, with seven Olympic medals, including gold. How do you see your entire Olympic journey up until now?

Yeah, I mean, I feel like I've had a great run. I'm looking forward to probably doing one more Olympics in 2028, LA Olympics, before, you know, it's all said and done. But, yeah, I've had a lot of success, you know, coming into my first Olympic games in Rio, all the way to Tokyo, to Paris. So, I'm just happy that I've had such great opportunities to represent my country at the highest level. And not a lot of people can even get three Olympics. So, I'm really excited. I'm very grateful and very thankful to be able to do that. And I'm hoping, like I said, to, you know, get one more. So, that's the plan.

Which Olympics, in your opinion, was the most memorable one for you? You know, you've had your experiences. So, if you could recollect and say which was the most memorable one.

That's a great question. I

mean, all of them have a special place in my heart. I mean, it's hard to say which one, like, is the top ranked. But, if I had to choose, then, you know, I would say, probably, Tokyo. I mean, I won my first gold medal. The 200 metres. And that was a special moment. But, I mean, all of them have been so special. I mean, Paris, winning the 4x100 with my team. My first one, 2016, racing against Usain Bolt. So, like, all of them hold such a special place in my heart. But, yeah, I would say, if I had to choose, maybe Tokyo. But, just by a little bit. Just a little bit (smiles).

I was just doing a bit of research on your career, Andrew. And, you know, I just figured that you're the first Canadian sprinter to win three medals in a single Olympics. And it happened at Tokyo in 2020. What makes it even more incredible is your 200 meters gold at Tokyo, which is the first track gold for Canada in 25 years. And the first 200 meters gold for Canada in 93 years. So, it was an incredible achievement winning that gold in the 200s. So, what was running through your mind when you did that?

Yeah...I was in shock. I was a little bit in disbelief. It felt like an unreal moment because, you know, you train so hard. You work so hard to be able to accomplish that. And for it to finally happen, it didn't really sink in, like, at that moment. Like, I think the next day, like, when I got my actual medal on the podium and I heard the national anthem, that's when

I'm like, oh, wow, like, I actually did it. So, for me, that was really just like a special moment for me. I was so happy. I was so excited. You know, my family, my friends, like, they're all texting me, calling me.

So, yeah, that was just a dream. Like, a dream come true for me. So, I mean, to be able to do that on a high level and, you know, it's been a long time since anybody has done that in Canada. And then to be able to create history like that, I couldn't ask for any more. So, I'm just really grateful and, you know, for everybody, like, not just myself, but everybody that's helped me get there to that moment.

And what kind of preparation went into that Olympics? What was the kind of training you had or what kind of mindset were you in at that point of time?

Yeah, the training at that time, it was very intense. You know, I had to go away from, you know, my family for a long time. We did a training camp in Europe. We spent a lot of time there, two, three months. Then, you know, having to go to Tokyo and spend some more time there.

So, yeah, we were just training six days a week. Right. At the track, you know, five, six, seven hours a day. So, that was a pretty, like, intense moment, intense time in my career. But I knew it was going to be a, you know, I had to do something special. You know, I had to make sure that I had all the pieces together, my team, my physio, my coach, everybody, like, just in my corner helping



Sprint Sensation

7 Olympic medals

6 World Championship medals

Breakdown of Olympic medals

Gold

2 (Tokyo 2020 in 200m, Paris 2024 in 4x100m relay)

Silver

2 (Rio 2016 in 200m, Tokyo 2020 in 4x100m relay)

Bronze

3 (Rio 2016 in 100m and 4x100m relay; Tokyo 2020 in 100m)

Breakdown of World Championship medals

Gold

1 (Eugene 2022 in 4x100m relay)

Silver

2 (Doha 2019 in 200m, Tokyo 2025 in 4x100m relay)

Bronze

3 (Beijing 2015 in 100m and 4x100m relay; Doha 2019 in 100m)

Andre De Grasse. Pic: Paresh Bhojane



Yeah, I mean, he's an outlier. I mean, he's 6'6", 6'7", I believe. I remember the first time I raced him in 2014, you know, watching him on TV as a young kid in 2008, 2012 at the Beijing or London Olympics.

Andre De Grasse, 7-time Olympic medallist, on Usain Bolt

me to get there because, you know, I felt like I was in great shape. I felt like this was the time for me to do something special. I had just ran a personal best previous to the Tokyo Olympics. I was winning Diamond Leagues. I was winning major meets. So, I felt like I was ready to go, and I didn't want to miss that moment.

So, that was kind of a special time for me during that year. And especially, you know, during a pandemic, during that time, I had to make sure that I was just, like, focused at all times.

How much of a role did your coach Rana Reider play during that period, you know, when you were so successful and, you know, you were winning pretty much everything?

Yeah, my coach, my physio, my doctor, just my whole team. Like, everybody played a big role in helping me get to that moment. You know, they're just like, Andre, you know, this is the time. You're running these amazing times in practice. Now, you got to go out there and show the world and prove it. Yes, and execute.

So, you know, I didn't want to let them down because, you know, we put in all this hard work, put in all this training. And yeah, I mean, it all came together at the right time. So, I mean, I was super happy, super excited. And yeah, it was just really just a special time. I remember that year, it was definitely, the training was very hard. It was very rough, but it all paid off in the end.

At the 2016 Rio Olympics, you ran the legendary Usain Bolt pretty close and both of you had that

famous picture of grinning at each other. Just tell me a little bit about that. And how was that moment?

Yeah, I remember. So, that moment was, yeah, it was special because, first of all, at that time, you know, social media was now taking off, but I wasn't really on social media. I was just kind of just focused on my race. So, I don't even like, I didn't even know that was going on at that time until like afterwards. And then I saw the pictures. So, I didn't even know, but I remember just even before that race, like my coach was telling me, you know, hey, Andre, you need to qualify top two to make it to the finals. He's like, just do enough to get to the finals, you know, run a hard 150 meters and just see where you're at. Look around, make sure you're okay. He's like, obviously, you have Usain Bolt in your heart, so you need to like push it a little bit because, you know, he's going to be running hard. And yeah, so I remember I just coming off that turn and I got about 160, 170 in and I only saw Usain Bolt there on the side of me and I saw nobody else. And I was like, oh, well, time to like kind of save some energy for the finals. So, I looked around and of course, he's doing the same thing looking around as well. And it was just one of those moments where like, oh, like he was smiling. I was smiling and we're like trying to see who's, you know, who's going to, you know, try to save as much energy as possible. So, I just remember after the race, like he was kind of like waving his, you know, waving his hand and waving his finger.

Just talking about Bolt, Andre, what is it that makes him so special?

Yeah, I mean, he's an outlier. I mean, he's 6'6", 6'7", I believe. I remember the first time I raced him in 2014, you know, watching him on TV as a young kid in 2008, 2012 at the Beijing or London Olympics. You know, you don't realize how, as a kid, how tall a person is. Two years later, in 2014 at the Commonwealth Games, I'm lying up beside him in a 4x100 metre relay. And I'm looking up and I'm like, oh, wow, this guy's pretty tall.

India start favourites against Bangladesh in WC game

5-time winners had registered 6-wkt win over USA

BULAWAYO

Seeking to continue their confident start to the tournament, a well-balanced India will begin as firm favourites despite facing a tricky Bangladesh in their second match of the ICC U-19 World Cup here Saturday.

Five-time champions India started their campaign on expected lines, registering a six-wicket win over USA after bundling the opponents out for a paltry 107 in a rain-hit match, with right-arm pacer Henil Patel returning exceptional figures of 5/16 in seven overs and the other bowlers also doing a fine job.

The star-studded Indian batting line-up will hope to get an extended run at the crease against Bangladesh, who are likely to pose a



greater challenge to the **Ayush Mhatre-led** side after a rather comfortable win against the USA.

The opening duo of Mhatre and the incredible 14-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi will again lead the batting in the company of vice-captain Vihaan Malhotra, all-rounders Aaron George and Vedant Trivedi and wicket-keeper Abhigyan Kundu.

D Deepesh, RS Ambrish,

Henil Patel, Kishan Kumar Singh and Udhav Mohan offer the team pace bowling options, while the likes of Kanishk Chouhan, Khilan Patel and Mohamed Enaan shoulder the spin bowling responsibility.

Champions in five of the 16 editions, India are by far the most dominant team in the history of the competition, which started back in 1988 with Australia emerging winners in the inaugural event.

Raising their prospects further is the team's form in the last one year, having won series in England, Australia and South Africa.

The victory against USA was India's 14th in last 17 matches, and the side is backing itself to continue the excellent run of form against their next opponents.

ICC officials to visit B'desh to resolve T20 WC imbroglio

DUBAI

A two-member team of the ICC will land in Dhaka on Saturday to resolve the deadlock surrounding Bangladesh's participation in next month's T20 World Cup in India, hoping to allay their security concerns having already indicated that a change of venue is impractical.

Bangladesh has been asking the global governing body to relocate its World Cup matches, scheduled to be held in Kolkata and Mumbai, on the pretext of a perceived security threat to its players.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) raised this demand after national team pacer Mustafizur Rahman was abruptly delinked from his IPL contract with the Kolkata Knight Riders.

decider

Kuldeep, spin in focus as India prepare for Indore game

INDORE

India may have to reassess their bowling combination for the series-deciding third ODI against New Zealand here on Sunday after their spinners were outplayed and their batters struggled to break free against the visitors' slow bowlers in the first two matches.

The second ODI in Rajkot, which New Zealand won comfortably to level the series 1-1, exposed India's

middle-overs vulnerabilities. Chief among them was the struggle of **Kuldeep Yadav**, who failed to exert control or pose a consistent wicket-taking threat as New Zealand's batters, led by Daryl Mitchell, tackled him with confidence.

Kuldeep was attacked for both length and trajectory, with Mitchell in particular using his feet to negate the turn and disrupt India's plans through the middle overs.

The Kiwi batters swept him very effectively, a strat-

egy that worked well for them in Test matches too.

India's spinners as a group were unable to apply sustained pressure, a stark contrast to the effectiveness of the Kiwi spinners, who choked the home team's scoring rate and forced errors.

The Indore venue, known for its short boundaries and batting-friendly surfaces, places a premium on discipline rather than mere variation.

India's bowlers, particu-

larly Kuldeep, will need to bowl flatter, attack the stumps and use the bigger pockets of the ground smartly, rather than offering flight that can be easily exploited.

Controlling the lengths and cutting down boundary options will be critical on a ground where mis-hits often go for six.

The absence of injured Washington Sundar was felt without a doubt in Rajkot while his replacement Nitish Kumar Reddy bowled only

two overs.

Based on the conditions, Ayush Badoni, who bowls off spin, perhaps is a better fit in the XI instead of Reddy but it remains to be seen if the team management drops him after just one match, where he was off colour.

The team management may also look to strengthen the pace attack to offset the risks associated with bowling spin. It will be interesting to see if left-arm Arshdeep Singh is given a look-in.



Vishvaraj Jadeja, PTI

milked 121 runs for the unbroken second wicket partnership. Saurashtra started the chase on a fortuitous note, having received five penalty runs as Punjab batters ran on the restricted areas while batting in their innings.

Saurashtra did not squander that sign of luck, following it up with a befitting batting effort.

Jadeja and Desai combined to eke out 23 runs off pacer Krish Bhagat in the seventh over, and they seldom let the momentum taper off.

Jadeja, who was dropped later at the team score of 120, brought up his fifty in 29 balls, and then settled into a calmer rhythm, taking a further 45 balls to reach his third List A hundred.

