

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ Wednesday, 25 February, 2026 UNIQUE GIFT OF KRIYAYOGA ASHRAM AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO GIVE IMPETUS TO WORLD BUILDING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

Briefs

BENGALURU Student mortgages mule account

In a shocking incident, an engineering student mortgaged his friend's bank account to cyber criminals to use it as a "mule account" to transfer over Rs 7 crore. The accused, Ayush, was arrested by the Bagalakuante police after bank officials alerted the friend about huge transactions. A year ago, Ayush said his account was blocked and sought help to pay hostel and college fees. The friend shared his Karnataka Bank account details, and an Airtel SIM linked to it. Police found Ayush had voluntarily mortgaged the account and collected commission.

CHANDIGARH Hooda leads Congress protest march

Alleging rampant corruption under the BJP rule, Congress MLAs led by Leader of Opposition Bhupender Singh Hooda on Tuesday took out a protest march to the Haryana Assembly. The march began from High Court Chowk and was joined by Congress state president Rao Narendra Singh and other senior leaders. MLAs held placards and raised slogans against the ruling BJP government. They alleged corruption in MNREGA, irregularities in paddy procurement, poor condition of sports stadiums, neglect of athletes, irregularities in HPSC, farmers' problems, unemployment, job crisis and the drug problem. Hooda said the government has "failed on every front."

JAIPUR Ex-principal duped of ₹1.85 crore

A 75 year-old retired principal in Jodhpur lost Rs 1.85 crore in a "digital arrest" scam after a fraudster posed as a Mumbai Crime Branch officer. The case surfaced when Saraswati Maheshwari went to transfer Rs 22 lakh, which was later held, and bank staff took her to the cyber police station. Living alone in Kamala Nehru Nagar, she was told on February 16 that Rs 25 lakh commission money was deposited using her Aadhaar and mobile number, and she must surrender her funds. She transferred Rs 1.85 crore from SBI and issued two Rs 6 lakh cheques that bounced.

SEVA TEERTH | It won't be a place for display of power, but a centre for empowerment, says 'Seva Sankalp Resolution'

Cabinet holds first meet at new PMO complex

NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet, in its first meeting at Seva Teerth, the new PMO complex, resolved that every decision taken in the premises will be inspired by the sentiment of 'Nagrik Devo Bhava' and will be a centre for empowerment of every Indian and not a place for display of power.

The meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, also resolved that every effort of governance conducted from Seva Teerth will remain connected to the spirit of simplifying the life of the last person in the country.

According to the resolution, termed 'Seva Sankalp Resolution', every decision taken in the new building will be inspired by a spirit of service towards 1.4 billion citizens and will be connected to the broader goal of nation-building.

"The Union Cabinet reiterates its resolve that every decision taken in this premises will be inspired by the sentiment of 'Nagrik Devo Bhava'. This place will not be a centre for the display of power, but rather a centre for the empowerment of every Indian," the resolution read.



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav speaks during a Cabinet briefing in New Delhi on Tuesday

New mission: HPV vax against cancer for girls

New Delhi: In a major step towards eliminating preventable cancers among women, the Union government will soon launch a nationwide human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme targeting girls aged 14 years, official sources said on Tuesday. According to sources, the programme will use a single-shot Gardasil, a quadrivalent HPV vaccine, that provides protection against HPV types 16 and 18, which cause cervical cancer, as well as types 6 and 11.

"We reaffirm that, in line with our vision, we will further strengthen the governance model that is trans-

parent, aware, and sensitive to the emotions of citizens," it said.

Reading out the resolution at a cabinet briefing, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said that work culture at Seva Teerth will be guided by the spirit of the fundamental ethos of the Constitution, and every decision will be accountable to the aspirations of people.

This meeting and this building are a direct expression of the reconstruction of New India, according to the resolution.

"With this auspicious beginning, we welcome that future whose foundation has been laid by centuries of effort. After Independence, for so many decades, governments operated from the Prime Minister's Office in South Block, preserving the legacy and envisioning the future. We envisioned an India whose thought is indigenous, whose form is modern, and whose capability is boundless. Today, Seva Teerth is the embodied manifestation of that very vision, which will enhance India's pride as the Mother of Democracy," it said.

Manipur CM briefs PM on steps to bring back peace

NEW DELHI

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Monday called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He was accompanied by Deputy Chief Ministers Losii Dikho and Nemcha Kipgen.

This was the first meeting of the chief minister and his two deputies with the prime minister after assuming the charge of Manipur on February 4.

"CM of Manipur, Shri @YKhemchandSingh, along with Deputy CMs, Smt. @KipgenNemcha, Shri Losii Dikho met Prime Minister @narendramodi," the PMO wrote on X.

The chief minister briefed PM Modi on the steps taken up by the new state government to bring peace and harmony in the state, a Manipur government release said, adding that he also urged the



Manipur CM Yumnam Khemchand Singh, with Deputy CMs Nemcha Kipgen and Losii Dikho, call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in New Delhi on Tuesday

5k houses to be built for displaced

Imphal/New Delhi: Union Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has approved the construction of 5,000 houses for the rehabilitation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Manipur, officials said. The approval was given by the minister following a meeting with Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh in the national capital on Monday evening.

prime minister to take special care of women's empowerment in both the hills and the valley.

The Manipur chief minister and his two deputy chief ministers have invited the prime minister to visit the state.

AIADMK poll vow: ₹10K per household

CHENNAI

Ahead of the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, the AIADMK on Monday announced a series of welfare assurances, with its general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami promising direct financial relief to households and targeted support for youth, fishermen, weavers and small traders if the party returns to power in 2026.

Releasing what he described as the third phase of the party's election manifesto, Palaniswami said the AIADMK would prioritise measures to ease the cost-of-

living burden on families.

"At a time when families are struggling with steep hikes in property tax, house tax and electricity charges, this government has failed to protect the people. The AIADMK will stand firmly with every household," he said.

At the core of the announcement is a one-time assistance of Rs 10,000 for every household in Tamil Nadu. Palaniswami said the payment would help offset the financial strain caused by rising taxes and utility charges. He also announced monthly stipends for job-seeking youth registered with employment exchanges.

Sasikala floats her own party

CHENNAI

Former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa's aide VK Sasikala, who was convicted in a corruption case, on Tuesday announced she would launch a new political party, marking her return to "active politics".

At a public meeting in Ramanathapuram district held to commemorate the birth anniversary of Jayalalithaa, she unveiled the party's flag in black, white and red bearing the portraits of former chief ministers CN Annadurai, MG Ramachandran and Jayalalithaa in the centre.

Nod for 9,072 cr rly projects covering 8 dists in 4 states

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Tuesday approved three Railway ministry projects with a total cost of approx 9,072 crore. They include doubling of Gondia-Jabalpur section and laying of third and fourth lines between Purnarakh-Kiul and Gamharia-Chandil sections. These projects covering 8 districts across Maharashtra, MP, Bihar, Jharkhand will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by about 307 km.

Civil enclave to be developed at Srinagar airport for ₹1,677 cr

The Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved the expansion of the civil enclave at the Srinagar International Airport at an estimated cost of Rs 1,677 crore. The expansion of the civil enclave will mark a major milestone in strengthening aviation infrastructure and connectivity in the Kashmir Valley, an official release said. "The project scope also includes the construction of barracks for security personnel.

Cabinet clears MSP for raw jute at ₹5,925 per quintal

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Tuesday approved the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for raw jute at Rs 5,925 per quintal for the 2026-27 marketing season, an increase of Rs 275 over the previous season. The decision will benefit jute growers, especially in West Bengal and Assam, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav told reporters after the meeting.

File objections to ASI report in 2 weeks, directs MP HC

INDORE

The Bhoj Utsav Samiti advocate Shirish Dubey said that the Division Bench of the High Court, Indore, on Monday allowed all parties two more weeks to submit suggestions and objections on the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) report concerning the Bhojshala Temple-Kamal Maula Mosque complex.

Speaking to ANI on Monday, Dubey said, "Today, the Bhojshala case was scheduled for hearing before the Division Bench of the High Court, Indore. The Advocate General brought the Supreme Court's order to the court's attention and explained the matter. The court asked questions, including that the Supreme Court had ordered

BHOJSHALA DISPUTE



that all reports be unsealed and the report be given to all parties. However, the Division Bench of the High Court, Indore, had passed an order stating that the report should be given to all parties. In this context, the court questioned that almost two years had passed, and no party had received any suggestions or objections. Nevertheless, the court granted all parties an additional two weeks' time to submit their suggestions and objections to the report if they wished."

Bhoj Utsav Samiti petitioner Ashok Kumar Jain maintained that the survey report had already been opened earlier.

"The survey report had already been opened. It had been open a year earlier. No one had any objections to it, yet the magistrate had given the date of March 16," he said. Petitioner Ashish Goyal from the Hindu Front for Justice termed the development significant. "Today marks a great victory for the Hindu community. This is a historic day. The struggle of the entire Hindu community of Dhar, which has been going on for years, is about to be completed," he told ANI. Advocate Vinay Joshi, representing the Hindu Front for Justice, said the ASI report has been taken on record and will be uploaded to the portal for access.

'Modi didn't take Cabinet nod on US deal' PM under Trump, Epstein pressure, says Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi

BHOPAL

The India-US trade deal was done by Prime Minister Narendra Modi without taking the approval of the Cabinet. It is not an Indo-US deal but a Trump-Modi deal, said Leader of Opposition in Parliament, Rahul Gandhi. He was addressing the Kisan Panchayat here on Tuesday.

The Congress launched a nationwide stir against the deal from Madhya Pradesh.

He also claimed that the PM did not consult senior Union ministers Rajnath Singh (Defence), Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Agriculture) and Nitin Gadkari (Road Transport and Highways) in this regard.

He also alleged that through the trade deal, the PM has compromised the interests of India's agriculture, data, textile



Lok Sabha LoP Rahul Gandhi being felicitated during Congress' Kisan Mahachaupal in Bhopal on Tuesday

and import sectors. He further claimed, "The Indo-US trade deal was done by PM Modi under the pressure of US President Donald Trump because of Epstein files and to save industrialist Adani."

Gandhi also challenged PM Modi to withdraw the deal but said that the PM was not in a position to do so because of the Epstein Files. Sharing descriptions written by former Army chief Gen M M Naravane's memoir, Rahul Gandhi accused the Prime Minister and Defence Minister of not taking decision when the Chinese army came near the line of control.

PM speaks in Mann Ki Baat, but does not say a word in Parl: Kharage

Criticising PM Modi, AICC president Mallikarjun Kharage said, "He had the time speak on Mann Ki Baat, but did not have time to present his statement in Parliament on trade deal." Kharage asked, "Modi always says he has talks with Trump... does he (Modi) discuss issues about selling the nation to Trump?" Speaking at the Youth Congress protest at the AI summit, Kharage said even the BJP workers had protested during the Commonwealth Games held in New Delhi thereby insulting the nation.

AAIB to probe air ambulance crash that killed 7 in J'khand



Locals gather near the wreckage of a Redbird Airways Pvt Ltd Beechcraft C90 air ambulance that crashed near Simaria, in Chhattrapal, Jharkhand

RANCHI

The grief and pain of family members of seven people, who died in an air ambulance crash near Simaria in Jharkhand's Chhattrapal district, were palpable on Tuesday afternoon, as the bodies were handed over to them after post-mortem examination.

The Beechcraft C90 air ambulance, operated by

Redbird Airways Pvt Ltd, was en route to Delhi from Ranchi when it crashed on Monday evening in the Bariatu Panchayat area of Simaria, located deep inside a forest, killing all seven onboard, including two pilots.

The post-mortem was conducted at Sadar Hospital in Chhattrapal. An Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) team has been dispatched to the crash site.

All five passengers and the two crew members, rescued from mid-sea, have been admitted to a hospital, one of the officials said.

Copter crashes into sea near Andamans, all seven rescued

SRI VIJAYA PURAM

A Pawan Hans helicopter carrying seven people, including two crew members, crashed into the sea just 300 metres away from its scheduled landing at Mayabunder helipad in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands on Tuesday, and all of them were rescued, officials said.

The crash occurred at around 9.30 am, after the chopper took off from Rangat in the North and Middle Andaman district, the officials said.

All five passengers and the two crew members, rescued from mid-sea, have been admitted to a hospital, one of the officials said.

Mamata slams Centre for not changing WB name to Bangla

KOLKATA

After the central government has given affirmation to the change of name of Kerala to 'Keralam', West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday while congratulating people of Kerala had slammed the Central government for not changing West Bengal's name to 'Bangla'.

Notably, Trinamool Congress (TMC) government had passed a resolution in July 2018 to rename West Bengal as 'Bangla' and had sent it to the central government several times.

"The legitimate rights of Bengal have always been denied. We have passed the bill in our Assembly and have sent it several times to the central government but was of no use. We have to wait for a long time during meetings as the name of the state starts with 'W,'" said Mamata.

Graft, case backlog: NCERT book lists judicial challenges

NEW DELHI

Corruption, massive backlog of cases, and lack of an adequate number of judges are among the "challenges" faced by the judicial system, according to the new social science NCERT textbook for class 8.

The section "corruption in the judiciary" in the new book states that judges are bound by a code of conduct that governs not only their behaviour in court, but also how they conduct themselves outside it.

The revised chapter, titled "The Role of the Judiciary in Our Society", goes beyond explaining the hierarchy of courts and access to justice, and addresses challenges faced by the judicial system.

The earlier editions of the textbook largely focused on the structure and role of courts.



"...people do experience corruption at various levels of the judiciary. For the poor and the disadvantaged, this can worsen the issue of access to justice. Hence, efforts are constantly being made at the State and Union levels to build faith and increase transparency in the judicial system, including through the use of technology, and to take swift and decisive action against instances of corruption wherever they may arise," the chapter reads.

The book pegs the approximate number of pending cases in the Supreme Court at 81,000, in high courts at 62.40 lakh, and district and subordinate courts at 4.70 crore.

It highlights the judiciary's internal accountability mechanisms and refers to the established procedure for receiving complaints through the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS).

HC notices to Centre, states on PIL flagging misuse of AI

AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat High Court on Tuesday issued notices to the Central and state governments on a PIL concerning the misuse of artificial intelligence to create deepfakes and synthetically generated content targeting Constitutional authorities.

A division bench of Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal and Justice DN Ray also directed the Gujarat DGP to file a response, stating that questions to issue notices to intermediary platforms Meta, Google, X, Reddit and Scribd will be considered after receiving responses from governments. The PIL, filed by advocate Vikas Vijay Nair, sought legal reforms and regulatory directions to protect Constitutional and statutory authorities against misuse of AI in creation and circulation of fake and manipulated videos and photographs.

Electricity connections pending in 151 schools, CDO issues notices to engineers

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. Chief Development Officer Harshika Singh reviewed the Basic Education Department's plans and programs in the Sangam auditorium on Tuesday. She expressed strong displeasure at the incomplete work despite the release of funds for electricity connections in 218 council schools and directed the concerned executive engineers to issue show-cause notices. During the review, it was revealed that in the year 2023-24, the Director of Education, Lucknow, had allocated more than Rs. 3 crore for electricity connections in 218 schools in the district. Of these, 205 schools made payments through the Jhatpat portal, but only 54 schools have received electricity connections so

far. The CDO took a strict stance when work was found pending in 151 schools. She directed the District Basic Education Officer to seek explanations from the Block Education Officers who were absent from the meeting. An explanation was also sought for the low number of applications received on the Nipun Plus app under the Nipun Bharat Mission in Koraon, Holagarh, and Dhanupur blocks. Dissatisfaction was also expressed over the pending birth certificate applications for children without Aadhaar in Chaka block. Reviewing Operation Kayakalp, the CMO directed for 100% saturation of all 19 parameters. He directed that other basic amenities, including furniture, electrification, disabled toilets, and boundary walls, be com-

pleted promptly in schools. UPCIDCO and the Rural Engineering Department were instructed to ensure the remaining work in under-construction schools is completed with quality and the hand-over process is completed expeditiously. The demolition of dilapidated buildings, the demand for new buildings, and the assessment of high-tension lines passing over schools were also reviewed. The Health Department was also asked to conduct an additional MR vaccination program in all schools in coordination with the Health Department. District Basic Education Officer Anil Kumar, all Block Education Officers, officials from the Health Department and related implementing agencies were present at the meeting.

A grand Martyr DSP K.P. Singh Memorial Lecture was held

"Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. The Martyr DSP K.P. Singh Memorial Lecture was held in a solemn atmosphere at the Diamond Jubilee Hostel. His daughter, Smita Kinjal Singh, a 2008 batch IAS officer and currently the Transport Commissioner of Uttar Pradesh, was the keynote speaker. She delivered a comprehensive lecture on the topic "Administrative Skills for a Developed India 2027." In her address, Smita Kinjal Singh highlighted the various layers of the administrative structure, the role of good governance, innovation, transparency, sensitivity, and public service, and the responsibilities of administrative officers to achieve the goal of a developed India. She emphasized that effective administration requires a balance between policy formulation, grassroots implementation, citizen participation, and technological innovation. She also shared her experiences from her administrative journey, inspiring young students to join public service. Before the program, a heartfelt tribute was paid to martyred DSP Krishna Pratap Singh. He was not only a brave officer but also a literary figure. His daughter, Smita Kinjal Singh, planted a tree in his memory. Speakers on the occasion highlighted the courage, dedica-

tion, and inspirational life of martyred DSP K.P. Singh. It is noteworthy that martyred DSP K.P. Singh lived in room number 68 of the Diamond Jubilee Hostel during his academic and preparatory years. This program was an important initiative to revive his memory and inspiration within the hostel and the university campus. On behalf of the hostel administration, Superintendent Dr. Shailendra Kumar Singh, Warden Prof. Rajesh Garg, former University Proctor Prof. Rakesh Singh, Secretary of the Alumni Association Prof. Kumar Birendra, Proctor-in-Charge Dr. Atul Narayan, Dr. Uttam Singh, and Dr. Avinash Srivastava welcomed and honored the chief guest. The district administration was graced by the presence of Mr. Sanjeev Gupta (RTO), Mr. Himesh Tiwari (RTO), Mr. Anand Rao (ARTO), Mr. Rajiv Kumar (ARTO), and Mr. Rajiv Chaturvedi (ARTO). All guests described the memorial lecture as a source of inspiration for the youth and emphasized the need to continue organizing such events. The program concluded with a question-and-answer session in which students asked questions related to administrative service, preparation strategies, and career guidance. The event concluded with a vote of thanks.

Public Hearing: Instructions for Immediate Action on Drinking Water, Drainage, and Encroachment

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. During the "Sambhav" public hearing held at the Municipal Corporation on Tuesday, Municipal Commissioner Seelam Sai Teja listened to the grievances of people from various areas of the city and directed officials to resolve them promptly. He stated that timely resolution of public issues is the administration's priority. The most common complaints during the public hearing were related to the drinking water crisis, road and drain construction, clearing clogged drains, encroachment, and house tax. The Municipal Commissioner issued clear instructions that clogged drains should be cleaned immediately, and repairs or reconstruction should be carried out if necessary. He directed special attention to street lighting, the condition of public toilets, the repair of platforms, the removal of debris, and the city's sanitation system. He directed all zonal officers to conduct regular inspections in their respective areas and ensure on-the-spot resolution of problems. He stated that laxity in responding to complaints of encroachment and filth will not be tolerated. Additional Municipal Commissioners Deependra Yadav, Arvind Kumar Roy, Rajiv Kumar Shukla, Dinesh Chandra Sachan, Chief Engineer (Civil) Sanjay Katiyar, Municipal Health Officer Dr. Mahesh Kumar, General Manager Jalkal Gaurav Kumar, Chief Tax Assessment Officer P.K. Mishra, along with all zonal officers and officials from the concerned departments were present in the meeting. In a press release issued by the Public Relations Department, it was informed that the complaints of the citizens are being resolved regularly through the 'Sambhav' public hearing.

Sant Gadge Maharaj 150th Birth Anniversary Celebrated in Fatehpur

Fatehpur

The 150th birth anniversary of Sant Gadge Maharaj, revered as the Pioneer of Cleanliness and social reform, was celebrated with devotion and enthusiasm at Sant Gadge Convent School in Premnagar. The event witnessed active participation from students, who presented vibrant cultural performances, adding grace to the occasion. The programme commenced with floral tributes offered to the portraits of Sant Gadge Maharaj and B.R. Ambedkar by school manager and founder of the Human Kranti Party, Chaudhary Aryan Manav. The event was conducted by Principal Satyavan Chaudhary. Presiding over the function, Chaudhary Aryan Manav shed light on the life and contributions of Sant Gadge Maharaj. He informed that the saint was born in 1876 in Shergaon village under Daryapur tehsil of Amravati district, Maharashtra. His childhood name was Debu, his



father name was Jhingraji and his mother name was Sakhubai. In 1905, he renounced his home to dedicate his life to social welfare and reform. He highlighted that Sant Gadge Maharaj established nearly 65 institutions during his lifetime,

including schools, dharamshalas, gaushalas and orphanages. He emphasized education as the foundation of progress and was known for his message: "Sell your utensils if needed, but do not deprive your children of education." Sant Gadge

Maharaj strongly opposed superstition and social evils, spreading awareness through devotional songs and discourses. He was known to carry a broom and a piece of earthen pot, referred to as "Gadga" in Maharashtra, which led to his popular name, Gadge Baba. Wherever he traveled, he would personally clean public spaces, earning him recognition as a symbol of cleanliness and social awakening. Chaudhary Aryan Manav appreciated the discipline and performances of the students and encouraged them to draw inspiration from the lives of great reformers. Among those present on the occasion were Ramesh Chand Sahu, Pankaj Chaudhary, Omprakash Srivastava, Najma Singh, Chittrakshi Rajput, Geeta Devi, Suresh Singh, Neha Yadav, Noor Saba, Rohit Dwivedi, Sandeep Agrahari, Nancy Agrahari, Rajesh Sahu, Sunil Patel (Advocate), Rajesh Tiwari and several other dignitaries, who paid floral tributes to Sant Gadge Maharaj.

OC JAC Submits 10-Point Charter of Demands to Centre on EWS Rights

New Delhi: The Other Castes Social Welfare Association Federation (OC-SWAF), under its joint action committee (OC JAC), submitted a 10-point memorandum to the Central Government during a protest at Jantar Mantar, urging concrete steps on issues related to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS). Organisation President Poladi Rama Rao stated that a separate national government commission should be constituted to study the current status and ensure effective implementation of EWS reservation. The memorandum demands strict enforcement of EWS reservation in employment and education, an increase



in the upper age limit and issuance of EWS certificates without conditions with a minimum validity of five years. It also calls for raising the income limit to 10 lakh annually and filling backlog reserved posts exclusively with EWS beneficiaries. Among other demands, the organisation has sought political reservation within the 50% cap,

implementation of the creamy layer concept across all categories, increasing the age limit for farmer insurance to 70 years and granting legal status to Minimum Support Price (MSP). Additionally, the group has appealed to extend the benefits of the National Guaranteed Employment Scheme to the agricultural Sector.

Excellence Strengthens Democracy: 20 BLO Felicitated



Barabanki

District Magistrate and District Election Officer Shashank Tripathi on Monday honored 20 Booth Level Officers (BLO) for their outstanding contribution to making the electoral roll more accurate and transparent under the Special Intensive Revision Campaign-2026. BLO who facilitated the submission of more than 150 Form-6 applications from new voters on the special campaign day were awarded certificates of appreciation.

Among those honored were 1 BLO each from Kursi and Ramnagar Assembly constituencies, 9 from Barabanki, 3 from Zaidpur, 4 from Dariyabad and 2 from Haidergarh. List of Awarded BLO Pramod, Mashroom Ahmad, Shatrohan Lal, Bhupesh Singh, Meenakshi Singh, Aleemuddin, Surendra Kumar, Anita Devi, Shailendra Kumar Verma, Sajit Kumar, Ashwani Kumar, Arjuman Benazir Ansari, Anupam Yadav, Akhilesh Verma, Manokamani, Anand Kumar Verma,

Avadhesh Kumar, Dheeraj Sharma, Shadab Kaleem and Ranjan Giri were felicitated for their exemplary Work. Collective Effort Essential for Target Achievement. The DM stated that Purification of the electoral roll is a vital task for nation-building. He also interacted with the BLO to understand field-level challenges and suggestions, assuring them that Practical inputs from the ground would be incorporated into the upcoming action plan to make the campaign,

CDO Orders Regular Cleaning of Ganga Ghats

Fatehpur

A joint meeting of the District Ganga Committee and District Environment Committee was convened at the Vikas Bhawan auditorium under the chairmanship of Chief Development Officer (CDO) Pawan Kumar Meena. The meeting focused on reviewing ongoing initiatives related to Ganga conservation, sanitation and environmental management. Taking a firm stand over the unsatisfactory progress of door-to-door waste collection in several gram panchayats, the CDO directed the District Panchayati Raj Officer to withhold salaries of Secretaries and Assistant Development Officers (Panchayat) in development blocks including Bhitaura, Haswa, Vijaypur, Bahua, Airayan, Devmai, Malwan, Asothar and Dhata until a minimum five percent increase in household coverage is achieved. Block Development Officers were also instructed to ensure regular and effective operations. Emphasizing public participation, the CDO called for intensified awareness campaigns under the themes of "Nirmal Ganga, Aviral Ganga, Jan Ganga, Gyan Ganga and Arth Ganga." He directed officials to ensure



regular cleaning of Ganga ghats and systematic waste collection. Members of the committee highlighted concerns regarding stagnant water and foul odor at Om Ghat, Khusrupur, Hajipur, Pakka Ghat and Dev Ghat. In response, the CDO ordered the formation of a joint team comprising officials from the Irrigation, Bridge and Forest Departments to conduct an inspection and submit a detailed report. During the District Environment Committee session, extensive discussions were held on solid waste management, biomedical waste disposal, e-waste management and prevention of single-use Plastic. Executive Officers of Municipal

Councils and Nagar Panchayats were directed to intensify seizure drives against single-use plastics, conduct regular inspections and impose penalties where necessary. Traders are to be encouraged to adopt cloth and jute bags as sustainable alternatives. The CDO further directed that door-to-door waste collection be carried out with proper segregation of wet and dry waste, ensuring its disposal in accordance with established norms. Public awareness regarding e-waste collection mechanisms is to be strengthened and systems for safe aggregation are to be developed. Special emphasis was laid on the secure disposal of biomedical waste,

with strict instructions to prevent any illegal dumping in rural or urban areas. The Divisional Forest Officer was instructed to submit verification reports on plantation activities and send reminders to departments with pending reports. The meeting concluded with confirmation of previous proceedings and issuance of necessary directives to concerned departments. Among those present were Additional District Magistrate (Finance/Revenue) Avinash Tripathi, District Development Officer, Additional Chief Medical Officer, Divisional Forest Officer, District Coordinator (MNREGA).

A meeting was held under the chairmanship of the DM to ensure the safe and smooth conduct of the upcoming Holi festival and other festivals

Celebrate Holi and other festivals in the traditional manner; no new traditions should be introduced - District Magistrate Instructions were given to maintain proper arrangements for electricity supply, cleanliness, and drinking water. An appeal was made to celebrate the festivals peacefully, together, with mutual brotherhood and harmony. Keep a close watch on those spreading rumors and take strict action against them - Additional Police Commissioner

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj

A meeting was held in the Sangam Auditorium on Tuesday under the chairmanship of District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma to ensure the safe and orderly conduct of the upcoming Holi festival and other festivals. Peace Committee officials, representatives of the Civil Defense and the District Crime Prevention Committee, along with other dignitaries present at the meeting, offered suggestions for ensuring the safe conduct of the festivals, following which the District Magistrate directed the officials of the concerned departments to take necessary action. During the meeting, the District Magistrate stated that several major festivals, including Holi, Ramadan, Eid, and Navratri, are scheduled for this month, which must be celebrated safely and systematically with mutual cooperation and harmony. He emphasized that all of you play a vital role in convey-



ing the administration's message to the public and ensure the safe conduct of the festivals. The District Magistrate urged that no new traditions be introduced during the upcoming festivals, that all parties must agree on changing the location of the Holika Dahan, and that public transport should not be disrupted by the Holika Dahan. He urged that misleading information circulating on social media be brought to his attention as soon as possible so that timely action can be taken. In view of the board exams, he has directed that sound systems

be played at a low volume to avoid disrupting students' studies. The District Magistrate directed police station-wise meetings with organizers before the Holika Dahan. He directed the Additional District Magistrate, all Sub-District Magistrates, Additional City Magistrates, and all ACPs to visit all Holika Dahan sites in their respective areas and meet with organizers to ensure necessary arrangements are in place. He has instructed the Electricity Department to remain on alert and only conduct shutdowns when absolute-

ly necessary. He has also directed the repair of loose, loose, and worn wires, as well as ensuring a smooth power supply. He has also directed Health Department officials to ensure the availability of essential medicines and doctors at all community health centers. He has also directed the provision of adequate ambulances. He has also directed the deployment of police personnel at all intersections. He directed the District Excise Officer to take effective action to stop the sale of illegal liquor, launch campaigns to destroy illicit

liquor, and close liquor shops at designated times. He directed the Municipal Corporation to ensure cleanliness in urban areas, and the Chief Development Officer, through the District Panchayat Raj Officer, to ensure cleanliness in rural areas. The District Magistrate directed the Jal Nigam to maintain adequate drinking water supply. He directed Fire Department officials to keep fire tenders on alert and mobile squads operational to ensure prompt response in case of any incident. He also directed to prevent overspeeding, driving under the influence, and maintaining smooth traffic flow. The District Magistrate also directed to keep a special vigil on adulterated food items, identifying locations where fake khoya is produced and stored, and to take enforcement action, ensuring that adulterated food items are not sold under any circumstances. He urged strict action against those selling adulterated food items and not to harass vendors unnecessarily. He directed the Transport Department to take

necessary action to arrange for additional buses. Additional Police Commissioner Dr. Ajay Pal Sharma asked officials from the Peace Committee and other organizations to cooperate in celebrating the upcoming festivals with mutual coordination and harmony. He directed special visits to sensitive areas where incidents have occurred in the past and meetings with organizers at the relevant police stations to ensure a peaceful celebration of the festival. He advised against burning Holika under power lines or in places prone to accidents. He urged close monitoring of social media to prevent the spread of rumors. He urged that rumors on social media be immediately reported to the police so that they can be quickly refuted or action taken if necessary. He has instructed all sub-district magistrates and ACPs to constantly visit their respective areas and ensure necessary arrangements are in place. He has said that no new traditions should be started and Holi and other festivals should be celebrated in the traditional manner.

Heroin smuggling racket busted in Prayagraj: Smuggler arrested with 6.4 million consignment, Tagore town connection exposed



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. The Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) has busted an active heroin smuggling racket, arresting a smuggler with heroin worth ₹6.4 million. During interrogation, the arrested suspect revealed the name of an alleged mastermind from Tagore town, through whom the drug was being supplied to the city and surrounding districts. According to the ANTF, Sandeep Kumar, a resident of Sulemsarai in the Dhoomanganj police station area, was apprehended near the supply depot in Cantonment. The team had received information that a member of the smuggling racket was about to arrive with a large consignment. During the siege, the young man, who arrived on a scooter, was signaled to stop, but he began running.

He was chased and apprehended. During a search, 315.45 grams of heroin was

recovered from him, estimated to be worth approximately ₹6.4 million in the international market. The accused revealed that he had obtained the heroin from a man living near the Children's Hospital in Tagore town. He also admitted that he and an accomplice make small packets and supply them to other districts, including Prayagraj. The ANTF also recovered 20 small ziplock pouches, two mobile phones, a scooter, and ₹2,260 in cash from the accused. The investigation also revealed that Sandeep has previously served time in jail for drug trafficking. In 2021, a case of attempted murder was filed against him, and in 2023, he was also arrested in an illegal weapons case. The ANTF is now conducting raids to uncover the Tagore town connection and other members of the racket. Officials say the operation will continue to dismantle the entire network.

A modern literary gallery will be built in the Allahabad Museum, with four programs scheduled each month

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. Important decisions have been taken to present the literary heritage in a new format and regularize activities at the Allahabad Museum. A meeting chaired by Divisional Commissioner and Director-in-Charge Soumya Agarwal outlined the museum's modernization, increased public participation, and annual programs. Instructions were given to prepare a detailed proposal for the inauguration of the renovated Sumitranandan Pant Literary Gallery. An exhibition dedicated to Prayagraj's rich literary tradition will be developed in the gallery, showcasing manuscripts, personal items, honors, and other literary treasures related to Sumitranandan Pant, Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, Harivansh Rai Bachchan, Firaq Gorakhpuri, Mahadevi Verma, Maitrisharan Gupta, and Suryakant Tripathi Nirala. The gallery will also introduce the lives and works of literary figures



through modern audio-visual technology. In particular, there are plans to screen a special documentary on Nirala, which is being touted as a special achievement of the museum. To ensure regular and attractive museum activities, an annual event calendar will be developed. Under this, at least four educational, cultural, or literary programs will be organized each month. Instructions were given to engage social media experts to promote the programs and ensure exten-

sive coverage through print and electronic media. To increase the participation of school students, their experiences will be shared on the museum's website and social media. It has also been decided to prepare special visit packages for students, including mementos. Proposals have been sought for special programs on Chandra Shekhar Azad's martyrdom day on February 27th and the museum's foundation day on February 28th. Following the meeting, the

Divisional Commissioner inspected the museum premises and reviewed the proposed elevator installation site. Instructions were given to coordinate with other major museums and prepare collaborative proposals for the display of selected artworks. He was asked to coordinate with the Central Public Works Department to prepare a detailed plan for the renovation of the museum guesthouse. During the inspection, he also interacted with visiting students.

Youth arrested with illegal weapons, Muthiganj police take action

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. Police arrested a youth in the Muthiganj area of the city with illegal weapons. A country-made pistol, a country-made pistol, and live cartridges were recovered from the accused. Police have

registered a case against him under the Arms Act and initiated legal action. According to police, acting on a tip-off from an informant, the team laid a siege near Baradari Ghat, Bandha Road, on the banks of the Yamuna River, late Monday night. During the raid,

Omji Jaiswal alias Bhola (20), a resident of Raja Bara Ka Hata, a lane near the Bhole Giri Temple, Muthiganj police station, was apprehended.

Upon searching him, an illegal .315 bore pistol, an illegal 0.32 bore pistol, and a live .315

bore cartridge were recovered. Based on this recovery, a case has been registered at Muthiganj police station under FIR No. 19/2026, Section 3/25 of the Arms Act. Police say that the accused is being interrogated and it is being ascertained from where he had pro-

cured the illegal weapon and whether he was planning to commit any crime. The action was led by station in-charge Arun Kumar Singh, along with sub-inspectors Rahul Kumar Singh, Soumyapunj Pandey, Kundan Lal Gautam, Nirmal Sharma and other policemen.

Editorial

India's online gaming ban shows today's thriving sector could be tomorrow's casualty

It took a mere six minutes in the Lok Sabha and a few minutes more in the Rajya Sabha to wipe out an established industry. In a matter of 48 hours, the passing of the Bill on Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill 2025 has adversely impacted 2,00,000 direct employees, Rs 23,613 crore in investments, over Rs 4,500 crore in advertisements and Rs 20,000 crores in direct and indirect taxes. The Bill, now an Act, was introduced in Parliament without undergoing the due process of a draft for public opinion, stakeholder consultations, or, at the very least, a warning. Policy corridor whispers imply that even allies were not aware of such a move. A decade-old, established sector constitutionally guaranteed under Article 19 has been asked to wrap up operations and told it will be held liable for criminal actions, including those of its employees, if it doesn't comply. While the Act aims to safeguard public health and address the concern of offshore illegal platforms, any ban, especially in the digital space, has consistently proven to have amplified the issue multiple times. The immediate fallout would include economic disruptions, shifts in user behaviour, and social harms. The opaque strategy adopted by the government in this case highlights the grave direction that policy-making is taking in India. The uncertainty goes far beyond the online real money gaming sector and will set a precedent for future policies in each sector. This swift and unconsulted legislative strike is not just a regulatory misstep but a stark warning of the growing unpredictability in India's policy landscape, one that could unravel investor confidence, domestic business trust, and exacerbate systemic issues like brain drain of talent and businesses. The immediate economic toll is staggering and underscores the bill's shortsightedness. Beyond the 2,00,000 direct jobs at risk, it affects ancillary industries like fintech, advertising, and content creation. Annual GST revenues of Rs 20,000-25,000 crore and TDS of Rs 1,080 crore (FY24) will evaporate, creating fiscal gaps at a time when India's fiscal deficit stands at Rs 15.77 lakh crore, amounting to 4.8 per cent of GDP. But the real cautionary tale lies in the investor disarray this creates. A reported foreign direct investment (FDI) of \$2.7 billion and startup funding of \$2.8 billion in real money gaming are now stranded. This unpredictability echoes broader patterns in India's policy environment, where sudden changes deter long-term commitments. For instance, the 2019 e-commerce FDI rules, which restricted inventory models for e-commerce platforms, led to a reported slowdown in US-India tech investments, with firms citing regulatory whiplash as a key barrier. Similarly, retrospective tax demands in the past (e.g., the Vodafone case) have been linked to a dip in FDI inflows, with studies showing that economic policy uncertainty reduces FDI by up to 30 per cent in emerging markets like India. The 2025 Kearney FDI Confidence Index highlights regulatory complexity and ease of doing business as concerns for investors in India, potentially shoving off billions in inflows amid global uncertainties like US tariffs. Businesses, particularly in the digital economy, thrive on stability. This bill's passage without stakeholder input, bypassing the Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy, sends a chilling message: Today's thriving sector could be tomorrow's casualty. As the industry voices alarm, with petitions likely heading to courts, the precedent risks cascading effects on adjacent digital fields where India aims for global leadership but faces investor hesitation due to such volatility. In the larger scheme, this policy unpredictability is accelerating India's brain drain, particularly in tech and digital innovation, where skilled professionals seek more stable environments abroad. Data from 2025 reveals a stark reality: Over 1,05,000 global tech layoffs this year alone, with 20 per cent occurring in India, have pushed thousands of engineers and developers to migrate.

India understood the need to widen its partnerships



The problem was that the Indian Army just didn't have the resources. In 1954, India formalised this reality, ceding many of its colonial-era rights, like stationing troops in Lhasa, historian Karunakar Gupta has written. The Intelligence Bureau, though, looked the other way, as the CIA supplied weapons and equipment to Khampa insurgents from 1958 on, historian Claude Arpi has written. India also ignored CIA flights in support of Tibetan insurgents, which crossed over its territory en route from Dhaka. Langley supported the founding of the Special Frontier Force, intended to carry the PLA along the China-India Line of Actual Control. The CIA also oversaw the insertion of nuclear-powered surveillance equipment to gather intelligence on China's nuclear-weapons programme. Even as this intelligence cooperation continued, Prime Minister Nehru publicly complained that the United States was interfering in Indian politics, "buying up newspapers and spreading a network of publicity organisations." Later, Prime Minister Indira assailed foreign powers plotting to "run down India." CIA agents, American intelligence officer Russell Jack Smith wrote sharply, "were to be found according to Madame Gandhi, beneath every charpoy and behind every neem tree." Even as Prime Minister Indira frequently railed against CIA intervention to bring about regime change—and public outrage erupted when the

Journal Ramparts disclosed CIA funding for Indian anti-Communist political parties in 1967—the relationship carried on in the darkness, as it were. As Sanjeevi told CIA interlocutors in 1950, "he frequently had to take independent action without the knowledge of his government". The intelligence relationship survived even in the face of contradictory United States objectives. For example, CIA personnel told India they had detected signals linking the jihadist warlord Sirajuddin Haqqani.

With the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate after the 2008 bombing of the Indian embassy in Kabul, journalist Carlotta Gall has revealed. And although the FBI failed to pass on credible intelligence that Lashkar-e-Taiba operative David Headley was a terrorist, it later helped the National Investigation Agency tie the 26/11 attack to Pakistan. Even though President Trump's administration has shown lit-

tle interest in building a deeper counter-terrorism relationship—seeing jihadist violence as a secondary concern, unless it directly threatens the United States—the ties built between intelligence services are likely to prove durable. Will the intelligence relationship solve the broader crisis in India-US ties? Almost certainly, no. But it does mean there are strong pillars that will hold up the relationship until a saner political leadership takes charge.

Edward Heath, Great Britain's Prime Minister, felt the words wash over him, hot like a dragon's breath: "The United States had received nothing from India except a kick in the teeth, in exchange for \$¾ billion last year," President Richard Nixon raged. The Indians, Nixon went on, thought "the white nations had no choice but to come in and bail India out." Alarmed, British Foreign Secretary Alec Douglas-Home stepped in. "The Indians were admittedly intolerably high-minded," he

accepted. "But there was an important common interest in preserving Indian independence from Soviet and Chinese domination." The invective against Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her nation, provoked by her refusal to back down on Bangladesh, continued in the privacy of Nixon's office, though: "A slippery, treacherous people," "bastards," "old witch," "b*tch". Even as the political leadership in both countries raged against each other, the relationship between the Central Intelligence Agency and the Research and Analysis Wing remained robust, historian Paul McGarr writes. In 1973, the head of Prime Minister Indira's secretariat, Prithvi Nath Dhar, and the chief of R&AW, Rameshwar Nath Kao, lobbied for CIA chief William Colby to visit New Delhi. As President Donald Trump appears to be leading the India-United States relationship into an abyss from which there is no return—adding restrictions to the outsourcing of jobs on the back of crippling tariffs—the period between 1971 and 1973 shows the two countries have been locked in airless places before. The intelligence services of both countries, though, found ways to bypass potholes and cul-de-sacs, ensuring strategic conversation continued. Little understood, India-US intelligence ties flourished in the shadow of the Cold War, as New Delhi resolutely proclaimed its commitment to non-alignment. Late in the summer of

1949, India was struggling to contain its first post-Independence insurgency, an uprising by communists in the Telangana region. The Indian Army, sent to Hyderabad to battle the Nizam's armies, found itself at war with peasant insurgents in Telangana. Thousands died in the brutal conflict, Jonathan Kennedy and Sunil Purushotham have recorded, as the Army herded Adivasis into concentration camps in near-starvation conditions. Less than forty-seven years old and with little experience in global politics, an unassuming police officer was tasked with helping India find the right tools to deal with the crisis. TG Sanjeevi, earlier a Superintendent of Police in Madras, and now Director of the Intelligence Bureau, was ordered to make a three-week visit to Washington. For decades before Independence, the Intelligence Bureau had been relentlessly focused on the threat of communist terrorism. Telangana was its first challenge after Independence—and, it seemed, its first potential failure. To Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, it seemed that the threat was transnational and a danger to the survival of the Indian republic. The colonial legacy meant India had a substantial relationship with the United Kingdom's intelligence services. The Security Service, popularly known as MI5, was a critical source of assistance in the first years after Independence. India became debilitingly reliant.

China will be more central to India now. Though an anti-US unity is premature

As I write this column from Boston, the biggest American newspapers have the Tianjin meeting of Prime Minister Modi, President Putin, and President Xi—all three smiling and shaking hands—as a leading news item. The sub-theme is also that President Trump's policies are driving them closer, perhaps opening the door to an anti-US unity in international geopolitics. The talk of an anti-American unity is perhaps premature. At least two of the three nations, China and India, have significant ties with the US, which can be ruptured only at a very great cost. Despite the talk of a decline, the US is still the world's largest economy. At the end of 2024, according to the World Bank, America's GDP was \$29.18 trillion, which amounted to 26.2 per cent of the world economy (\$111.33 trillion). A market of that size cannot easily be shunned. Indeed, most countries and corporations would covet access to it. But there is no doubt that Trump's radi-

cal break from America's post-Cold War foreign policy, especially his use of tariffs as an economic and political tool, is creating new geopolitical and economic scenarios. Countries must take into account these changes as they make adjustments in their foreign policies. Of course, Trump is known to be mercurial and abrupt changes in his policies cannot be wholly ruled out. However, three things are likely to remain constant: use of trade tariffs, opposition to immigration, and smaller American investments in international security. The changes in these realms, if any, are likely to be of degree. Fundamental changes can take place only if the results of these policies are catastrophic for his MAGA base, especially via inflation or if the judiciary intervenes more firmly than it has done so far. How should India, severely jolted by Trump's tariffs, imagine its way forward? Let me suggest that China will even more central to India's foreign policy.

Vijay is winning the nickname war in Tamil Nadu. He's attacking Brand Stalin with 'uncle' taunt

In the world of marketing, a new entrant's toughest task is to break the perception built around the old guard. Established brands don't crumble because of direct attacks. They erode when their aura is punctured, when their carefully constructed image is made to look smaller, or even laughable. Politics is not different. Though for decades, MK Stalin was no more than a 'possible' political heir to former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu M Karunanidhi, things changed in 2019. Stalin was turned into a brand, crafted meticulously as the only answer, as an able administrator, and a calm and composed CM post the 2021 elections. He was presented as the inevitable figure, the steady numero uno of contemporary Tamil Nadu Politics, a man positioned above ridicule. Even his critics rarely succeed in dismantling his image. Actor turned politician Vijay was out to destroy that brand when he called him, "My dear Stalin uncle." With such an open taunt at his second public rally, Vijay wasn't merely addressing the Chief Minister; he was reframing him. What at first sounds like cinema dialogue is, in LinkedIn lingo, classic

disruption. A single word that wedges into the aura of authority, triggering what one might call the 'uncle-ification of a statesman'. Stalin was recast as just another politician, a figure who is now the subject of memes. This is not an insult for insult's sake, but rather is a strategy through vocabulary. Political authority in Tamil Nadu has always been theatrical. MGR's heroism, Jayalithaa's imperiousness, Karunanidhi's oratory skills, Stalin's calm—these are curated performances. Brands with narratives. "Uncle" in this context is not reverential. It's casual, familiar, and even patronising. The strength of Stalin's brand lies in the distance it creates, and Vijay's jab collapses that distance instantly. It is lethal in politics. It forces a new narrative onto the mainstream discourse, away from discussions on policy and performance, and instead drags it into a battle of personalities. Marketing teaches us that the most viral campaigns are not the longest ones, but the most repeatable ones. The same applies to political communication in the social media age. 'Uncle' is not just a word but a weapon in what Tamil politics increasingly resembles—nickname war-

fare. A meme-ready shorthand handed over to the trolls, clipped into reels, recycled into jokes, hash-tagged into tweets. DMK's own and meticulously built digital army, usually skilled at dictating the narrative, is now forced to rebut it. And rebuttal, sadly, is half the battle lost. As one would have expected, social media is abuzz with the keyword 'Uncle'. Not one but a thousand iterations of the same comment are afloat across the state's digital space — "What uncle. It is very wrong uncle." Every attempt at creating a 'third and alternate force' in Tamil Nadu—be it Kamal Haasan, Seeman, Vijayakanth, Vaiko, or GK Moopanar before them—has struggled because they failed to dent the DMK-AIADMK binary. Voters saw them as the 'Third' person outside of the duel, not mainstream players. Vijay is trying a different path. Not with a policy vision, not with organisational might, nor with uniquely positioned ideological sermons, but with classic brand disruption. By making Stalin react, or at least by forcing his sympathisers to, Vijay dug a pit in the binary. He no longer wants to be the outsider. He wants to insert himself into it.

Why hasn't India won the Nobel Prize for literature after Independence? Quality of education

Speaking in a distinguished institution, a political leader expressed concern that after Rabindranath Tagore in 1913, no Indian has received the Nobel Prize in Literature. His question—"Is the writing of our country not at the level anymore? Or has it been ignored by international institutions?"—was thought-provoking. But the tone was aloof. However, when you think about it, the answer is obvious. During the British Raj, India produced a number of great poets, artists, scientists, scholars, and thinkers. Many of

them have an international reputation. The solitary Nobel Prize in literature was also received during the British period. Under the British, our talents flourished. The educational institutions of the British rulers encouraged talents without discrimination on any ground. Did our desi leaders, post-British rule, continue that noble tradition? It is well-recognised that the educational institutions of British India declined rapidly after Independence. Instead of nurturing talent, new policies, knowingly or unknowingly,

worked toward their suppression or migration to the West. Isn't it curious that during the British Raj, hardly any Indian writer, scientist, artist, or scholar decided to settle abroad? Whereas in Independent India, talent of all kinds began settling in Europe and America, leaving India for good. To come to the issue, the leader who pointed out our lack of Nobels seems unaware that there are two essential prerequisites to help grow quality writers. One, to connect children & youth with great literature, taking care that they also get time

and encouragement to savour it. Second, to maintain a whole system of good institutions and platforms for learning, teaching, writing, publishing, and interacting. To ensure all this, staying away from narrowness or compromise must be a rule. But desi leaders, preachy and voluble, did the opposite! The British made arrangements in every field of knowledge and science to promote talent—modern public institutions, great libraries, newspapers, magazines, entire new learning disciplines like history, civics, etc.

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 Raghenth 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.

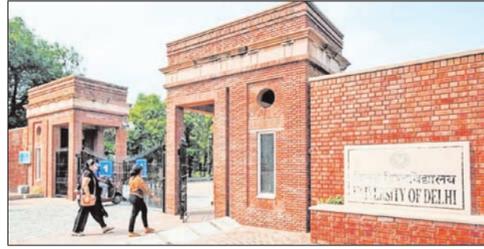
Children of a Kerala resident posted in Telangana for four years who complete Class 9-12 in Telangana are eligible for state quota medical seats. He said youngsters who study outside Telangana despite their parents being natural citizens cannot apply for state quota medical seats.

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.

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

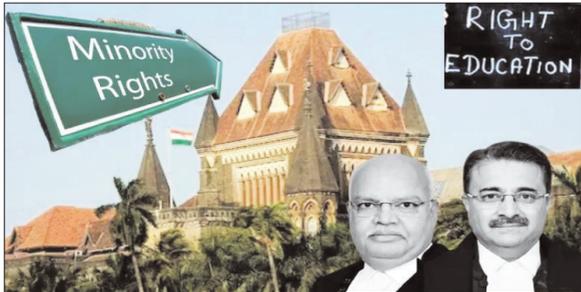
Delhi : Delhi University's Hindu College has topped the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025 list, followed by Miranda House, Hans Raj, Kirori Mal and St Stephen's, emerging as the top five colleges in the country. Delhi University (DU) also recorded its best-ever performance in the Universities 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 and 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.

Huma welcomes Toxic, Dhurandhar 2 face-off

Huma Qureshi says *Toxic* clashing with Ranveer's *Dhurandhar 2* is a win for the Indian film industry

Actress Huma Qureshi, who will next star as Elizabeth in *Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups*, is gearing up for what is arguably the biggest box-office showdown of the year with Ranveer Singh's *Dhurandhar: The Revenge* (also known as *Dhurandhar 2*). As her film prepares to clash with the major release, the actress reacted to the high-stakes face-off, calling it a 'win' for the Indian film industry.

Speaking to Variety India, Huma said, "No matter what I say, I think whichever way I look at it, it is a win for the Indian film industry and it's going to be great for the audiences. It's a win-win, the way I look at it and I think it's going to be like just a fantastic time for movie-going audiences, and there is space for everyone to do well."

As of now, the lead actors Yash and Ranveer Singh have not reacted to the major clash ahead of their film's release.

Apart from Yash and Huma Qureshi, *Toxic*, a gangster film directed by Geetu Mohandas, also features Kiara Advani, Nayanthara, Tara Sutaria, and Rukmini Vasanth. The film was simultaneously shot in Kannada and English.

Dhurandhar: The Revenge, a sequel to *Dhurandhar* and the second and final instalment of the duology, will see the original cast, Ranveer Singh, Arjun Rampal, Sanjay Dutt, R. Madhavan, Sara Arjun, Rakesh Bedi, Danish Pandor, Gaurav Gera, Manav Gohil, and several supporting actors from the first part, reprising their roles. The second instalment was shot simultaneously with the first.

Reports also state that Yami Gautam, Vicky Kaushal, and Emraan Hashmi will be a part of *Dhurandhar 2*. However, an official confirmation is awaited.



Photo: Instagram @iamhumaq



A still from Dhurandhar



A still from Toxic



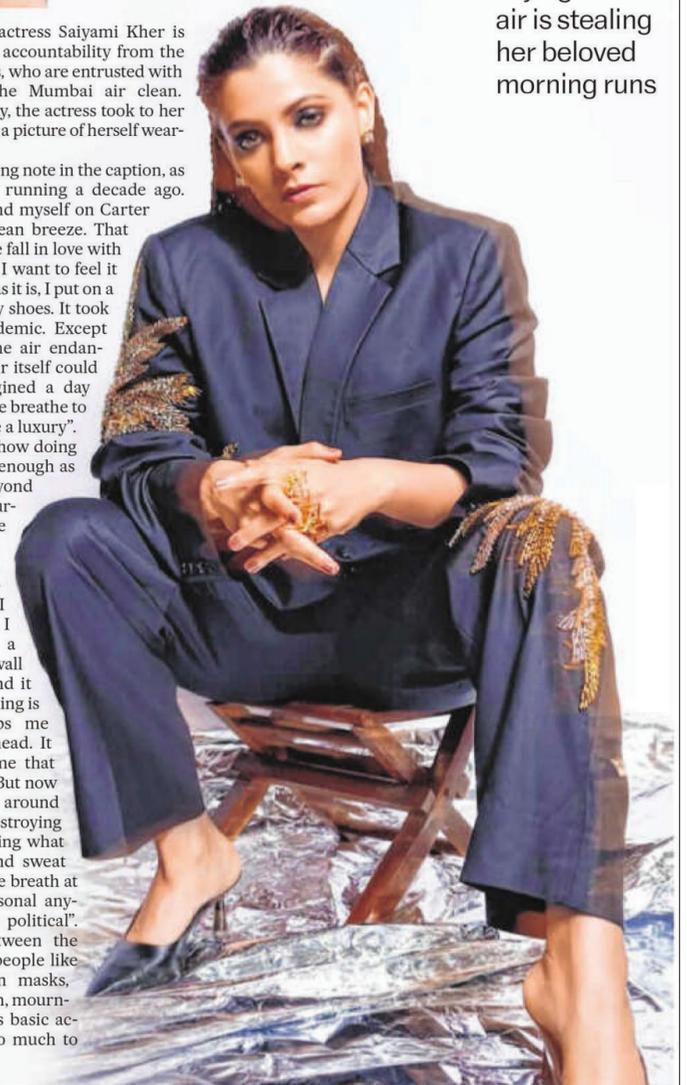
Saiyami Kher questions Mumbai air

Actress demands accountability over Mumbai's worsening air pollution, saying toxic air is stealing her beloved morning runs

Bollywood actress Saiyami Kher is asking for accountability from the authorities, who are entrusted with keeping the Mumbai air clean. On Tuesday, the actress took to her Instagram, and shared a picture of herself wearing a mask.

She also penned a long note in the caption, as she wrote, "I started running a decade ago. Every morning, I'd find myself on Carter Road, chasing the ocean breeze. That wind is what made me fall in love with this city and running. I want to feel it again. And dystopian as it is, I put on a mask before lacing my shoes. It took me back to the pandemic. Except there's no virus in the air endangering our life. The air itself could kill us. I never imagined a day when the very thing we breathe to survive would become a luxury".

The actress shared how doing everything is still not enough as the air is polluted beyond repair, and it needs urgent attention of the authorities. She further mentioned, "My doors and windows stay shut. I bought an air purifier. I moved my runs to a treadmill, staring at a wall instead of the sea. And it still isn't enough. Running is the thing that keeps me whole. It clears my head. It heals something in me that nothing else reaches. But now the act I built my life around feels like it's quietly destroying me. Pollution is undoing what years of discipline and sweat and devotion built, one breath at a time. This isn't seasonal anymore. It shouldn't be political". "But somewhere between the data and the denial, people like me are out there in masks, grieving a morning run, mourning a city we loved. Is basic accountability really too much to ask for?", she added.



Big B shares BTS photo with Kamal Haasan

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has shared behind the scenes photos with Tamil superstar Kamal Haasan from the sets of the *Kalki 2*, which marks their first project together since 1985's *Geraftaar*.

In a post on his official blog on Tumblr, the 83-year-old said he has begun shooting for the project, which is a follow-up to the 2024 Telugu blockbuster *Kalki 2898 AD*. "Meeting up with the great KAMAL HAASAN... we shall be working together after ages... last in 'Geraftaar'", Bachchan wrote. In the photos, the two cinema

icons are seen sharing a warm hug, with Bachchan dressed as Ashwatthama, the character he essayed in the first part. "*Kalki 2* begun the work... and shall ever cherish the love and affection of anticipated presence on the Sunday... but hopefully shall be with all this coming Sunday," he added.



Vikrant Massey and Manushi Chhillar spark buzz as they shoot together in Nainital, leaving fans curious about their project



'I'm just full of gratitude'

After 40 years in cinema, Anil Kapoor reflects on his journey and says *Subedar* pushed him physically and emotionally



Photo: Instagram

Anil Kapoor has done all kinds of roles in his career of over 40 years and the Bollywood star says his wonderful journey in cinema continues to motivate and challenge the action in him.

Known for films such as *Welcome*, *Ram Laxman*, *Mr. India*, *Nayak*, *Tezaab*, *Taal* and *Dil Dhadakne Do*, Kapoor stars as a retired soldier in his next film *Subedar* and he said the project tested him with its action sequences.

"I'm really grateful to the audience, to the media, to all my friends, co-stars, leading ladies and directors. It's been absolutely wonderful, fulfilling. I never thought I would do so many films and sit in front of you all. I'm just full of gratitude. It's just not my journey but the audience's journey."

"Looking all this, I feel I must work hard and do good films and associate with good people. That motivates me when I see all the characters I did (in

the past) even more it just motivated me even more to go forward and think ahead," he told reporters here.

The film, which will be released on the streaming service on March 5, is directed by Suresh Triveni of *Tumhari Sulu* and *Jalsa* fame.

Described as an "adrenaline fuelled action drama", the film follows subedar Arjun Singh who grapples with civilian life, navigating a strained relationship with his daughter and societal dysfunction.

"When this role was offered, I knew there will be a lot of action. I was little tense before starting the shoot. There were some issues in my legs but I didn't tell Suresh," Kapoor said.

"But when camera rolls, I could do everything. I didn't understand this at all. I could do action, horse riding, bike riding, car driving, work in dust. Sometimes I work for 16 hours. Sometimes I work straight from 7 am to 7am to 12 noon of other day and packed up at 3 pm. I don't know what happens when camera rolls, I could do anything," he added.



A still from Subedar

Randeep seeks blessings



Randeep Hooda was recently seen at the revered Mahalaxmi Temple in Kolhapur, where he offered prayers amid the final schedule of his upcoming film *Eetha*. The actor is shooting for the project, directed by Laxman Utekar, alongside Shraddha Kapoor. Taking a brief break from work commitments, Hooda visited the historic shrine to seek blessings. The visit comes at a significant time in his life, as he and wife Lin Laishram are expecting their first child in March. Sources say the phase is both professionally and personally transformative for the actor, who is preparing to embrace fatherhood soon after completing the film.

SPOTTED IN NAINITAL!

Vikrant Massey and Manushi Chhillar have been spotted shooting together in Nainital, sparking excitement among fans. Pictures and videos from the hill station have surfaced online, generating curiosity about their upcoming project. While the film's title and details are yet to be officially announced, the fresh pairing has already caught attention. Many viewers feel their on-screen combination looks promising and different.

Speculation about the genre is also doing the rounds. Some believe it could be a romantic drama set against the scenic backdrop, while others think it may explore slice-of-life themes or even a light thriller. For now, the makers are keeping details under wraps, adding to the growing buzz around the project.



Vikrant Massey and Manushi Chhillar

Photos: Instagram

Briefs

SEOUL
Ex-president challenges jail sentence

Jailed former South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol appealed his life sentence for rebellion on Tuesday, following his conviction for the brief December 2024 martial law decree. Yoon's legal team labeled the ruling "illogical" and biased, arguing his actions were intended to protect the nation from "anti-state forces." The case now moves to a specialized Seoul High Court panel. Yoon was removed from office in April 2025 after his six-hour power grab triggered a historic political crisis. While prosecutors previously sought the death penalty, Yoon remains the first leader sentenced to life since dictator Chun Doo-hwan. His lawyers maintain that the lower court committed significant errors in fact-finding and misinterpreted constitutional law during the initial trial.

LONDON
UK to release papers linked to Andrew

Britain's House of Commons on Tuesday approved the release of papers related to former Prince Andrew's appointment as a trade envoy, a position he held for about a decade during which he is suspected of improperly passing government information to disgraced US financier Jeffrey Epstein. The approval came in a voice vote. It was unclear when the release could occur, as the former prince was arrested last week on suspicion of misconduct in public office. The government has made clear it does not want to interfere in the inquiry. Ed Davey, the leader of the opposition Liberal Democrats and the lawmaker who introduced the motion, argued that it was time for transparency. Andrew was stripped of his princely title last year due to revelations about his relationship with Epstein.

TEHRAN
Four killed in Iran military chopper crash

An Iranian military helicopter crashed into a fruit and vegetable market in central Iran on Tuesday, reportedly killing at least four people. The crash happened in the town of Dorcheh, some 330 kilometres (205 miles) south of Iran's capital, Tehran, in the country's Isfahan province, Iranian state television reported. Isfahan is home to a major Iranian air base, as well as a nuclear site struck by the US during the Iran-Israel war in June. The army helicopter had been on a training flight, state TV said. The pilot and co-pilot died in the crash, it added, showing footage of debris and smoke rising from the market. Iran's semi-official Fars news agency said two people on the ground at the market died in the crash.

BANGKOK
Japan firms face china import curbs

China restricted on Tuesday exports to 40 Japanese entities it says are contributing to Japan's "remilitarisation," in the latest escalation of tensions with Tokyo. Beijing has shown continued displeasure with Tokyo since Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi in November implied Japan could intervene if China used military force against Taiwan, an island democracy China claims as its own. The Chinese Commerce Ministry put 20 Japanese companies on an export control list and 20 others on a separate watchlist.

4 YEARS OF WAR | Kremlin haven't 'broken Ukrainians', says president as Moscow now holds 20% of his country's territory

Zelenskyy vows to fight on: 'Russia has not won'

KYIV

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy declared Tuesday that Russia has not "broken Ukrainians" nor triumphed in its war, four years after an invasion that has severely tested the resolve of Kyiv and its allies and fuelled European fears about the scale of Moscow's ambitions.

In a show of support, more than a dozen senior European officials headed to the Ukrainian capital to mark the grim anniversary of the conflict, which has killed tens of thousands of people, upended life for millions of Ukrainians, and created instability far beyond its borders.

Zelenskyy said his country has withstood the onslaught by Russia's bigger and better equipped army, which over the past year of fighting captured just 0.79 per cent of Ukraine's territory, according



A woman at the memorial to the fallen Ukrainian soldiers on Independence Square to mark the 4th anniversary of Russian attack, in Kyiv on Tuesday -AP

to the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank. Russia now holds nearly 20 per cent of Ukraine.

"Looking back at the beginning of the invasion and reflecting on today, we have every right to say: We have defended our independence, we have not lost our statehood," Zelenskyy said on

social media, adding that Russian President Vladimir Putin has "not achieved his goals." "He has not broken Ukrainians; he has not won this war," Zelenskyy said.

At a makeshift memorial in Kyiv's central square, where thousands of small flags and portraits show photos of fallen soldiers, Zelenskyy said

KILLING FIELDS

LIVES LOST
Russian soldiers killed **325,000**, missing & wounded **875,000**

Ukrainian soldiers killed **140,000**, missing & wounded **460,000**

Number of Ukrainian children killed **766**

LOSS OF HOME
Ukrainian refugees **6.9 mn**, internally displaced **3.7 mn**

REBUILDING
Over 10 years, Ukraine will need **\$524 bn**

he would like U.S. President Donald Trump to visit and witness for himself Ukrainian suffering.

"Only then can one truly understand what this war is really about," Zelenskyy said.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that the invasion would continue in pursuit of Moscow's goals.

How tryst with lover sealed El Mencho fate

MEXICO CITY

Mexican authorities successfully neutralised Nemesio Rubén Oseguera Cervantes, the elusive leader of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), by exploiting a rare lapse in his personal security: a romantic liaison.

According to details released by the country's defense secretary, the breakthrough in the years-long manhunt for "El Mencho" came when intelligence units identified and shadowed one of his romantic partners. By discreetly tracking her movements, investigators were led directly to a secluded safe house tucked away near the picturesque mountain town of Tapalpa, ending the anonymity of the world's most wanted drug trafficker.

The decision to follow the woman proved to be the undoing of a kingpin who had long evaded high-tech surveillance and military dragnets. Security officials revealed that the romantic partner unknowingly acted as a beacon, guiding elite units to a



A burned vehicle blocks a road leading to Tapalpa, a day after the Mexican army killed Jalisco New Generation Cartel leader Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, known as 'El Mencho' -AP

Mexico has deployed 10,000 troops to quell clashes sparked by the killing of El Mencho

fortified cabin in a wooded area 80 miles southwest of Guadalajara. The strategy relied on the gamble that even a man with a \$15 million bounty on his head would eventually risk contact with those closest to him.

When the military moved to encircle the cabin, the presence of the woman confirmed they had finally found their target.

The raid quickly turned into a chaotic battlefield as El Mencho's inner circle realized the security breach. Bodyguards unleashed a barrage of gunfire so intense it forced a military helicopter into an emergency landing. Amid the smoke and fire, the 59-year-old cartel leader attempted a desperate escape into the surrounding forest.

Trump to defend policies in speech

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump will use Tuesday's State of the Union address to champion his immigration crackdowns, his slashing of the federal government, his push to preserve widespread tariffs that the Supreme Court just struck down and his ability to direct quick-hit military actions around the world, including in Iran and Venezuela.

The Republican hopes he can convince increasingly wary Americans that his policies have improved their lives while ensuring that the U.S. economy is stronger than many believe — and that they should vote for more of the

same in November.

The balancing act of celebrating his whirlwind first year back in the White House while making a convincing case for his party in midterm races in which he personally won't be on the ballot is a tall order for any president. But it could prove especially delicate for Trump, given how happy he is to veer off script and ignore carefully crafted messaging.

A main theme will be that the country is booming with a rise in domestic manufacturing and new jobs, despite many Americans not feeling that way. "It's going to be a long speech because we have so much to talk about," said Trump, who promised a heavy dose of talk about the economy.

Kushner and Witkoff to shape Trump's Iran airstrike decision

WASHINGTON

Donald Trump's decision to order airstrikes against Iran will hinge in part on the judgment of Trump's special envoys, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, about whether Tehran is stalling over a deal to relinquish its capacity to produce nuclear weapons, according to people familiar with the matter.

The president has not made a final determination on any strikes, as the administration prepares for Iran to send its latest proposal this week, ahead of what officials have described as a last-ditch round of negotiations scheduled for Thursday in Geneva. Those talks will be led by Witkoff and Kushner, whose

Iran looks to buy supersonic anti-ship missiles from China

London: Iran is close to a deal with China to purchase anti-ship cruise missiles, according to six people with knowledge of the negotiations, just as the United States deploys a vast naval force near the Iranian coast ahead of possible strikes on the Islamic Republic. The deal for the Chinese-made CM-302 missiles is near completion, though no delivery date has been agreed, the people said. The supersonic missiles have a range of about 290 kilometres and are designed to evade shipborne defences by flying low and fast. Their deployment would significantly enhance Iran's strike capabilities and pose a threat to U.S. naval forces in the region. -Agencies

assessment on the likelihood of a deal will shape Trump's calculus. If there is no deal, Trump has told advisers he is considering limited strikes to pressure Iran and, failing that, a far larger attack to force regime change.

A US official said on Monday that Witkoff was part of the group advising Trump on his decision about how to proceed with Iran and had been involved in all meetings related to the matter.

EPSTEIN FILES FALLOUT

Norwegian ex-PM attempts suicide

New Delhi: Former Prime Minister Thorbjørn Jagland was hospitalised after a suicide attempt, after he was charged with corruption in connection with his close relationship with convicted child sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein.

The press at the Norwegian Editors' Association and selected Norwegian editors had reached an agreement with Jagland's lawyer on February 17, that they would not be covering this incident. Sources suggest that Jagland's condition is currently serious.

Reports also indicated that when Jagland was charged, the police carried out an extensive search of his prop-

Mandelson granted bail

London: Police in Britain said Peter Mandelson, the former U.K. ambassador to the United States, has been released on bail after he was arrested in a misconduct probe stemming from his ties to the late Jeffrey Epstein. -Agencies

erties, including his apartment in Oslo and in Risør.

According to a BBC report, the charge against Jagland was brought after the Council of Europe lifted his immunity.

Dems table Senate bill on tariff refund

WASHINGTON

US Senate Democrats have introduced legislation to force the Trump administration to refund billions of dollars in tariffs after the Supreme Court struck them down as unlawful.

US Senator Ben Ray Lujan said President Donald Trump had "ignited a global trade war the moment he took office by illegally imposing sweeping tariffs and causing pain for millions of Americans."

The proposed Tariff Refund Act of 2026 would require full refunds, with interest, of tariffs imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. Lawmakers estimate the administration collected about \$175 billion.

"President Trump's sweeping, reckless tariffs are responsible for driving up prices and hurting small busi-

nesses and working families across New Mexico and the country," Lujan said.

"That is why I'm joining Senate Democrats in introducing legislation that requires the Trump administration to provide certainty to New Mexico's small businesses by refunding the costs they have endured."

Senator Ron Wyden said: "Trump's illegal tax scheme has already done lasting damage to American families, small businesses, and manufacturers who have been hammered by wave after wave of new Trump tariffs."

He added, "A crucial first step is helping people who need it most, by putting money back in the pockets of small businesses and manufacturers as soon as possible."

Senator Edward Markey said, "Trump's illegal tariff taxes cost small businesses, consumers, and families up to \$175 billion. That money must be repaid immediately."

Imran shifted back to prison after hospital eye treatment

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE

Pakistan's incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan was on Tuesday taken to a hospital at Islamabad for treating an eye ailment, officials said even as his party demanded "transparency, not secrecy" about his health updates.

The 73-year-old cricketer-turned-politician, who has been at the Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi, since 2023, was last month diagnosed with right central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO) affecting his vision.

Khan was brought to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) at Islamabad for a second dose of anti-VEGF (Vascular endothelial growth factor) intravitreal injection, a doctor at the hospital said. He was later shifted back to the Adiala Jail. He had received treatment earlier on January 24.

Bondi effect: Australia begins sweeping anti-semitism probe

MELBOURNE

A wide-ranging federal inquiry began on Tuesday into a rise in antisemitism across Australia before two gunmen believed to be inspired by the Islamic State group allegedly killed 15 people at a Sydney Jewish festival in December.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced last month that Australia's most powerful form of public inquiry, known as a royal commission, would investigate the Dec. 14 massacre at Bondi Beach.

Alleged shooter Sajid Naveed was shot dead by police. His son, Naveed Akram, faces charges including committing a terrorist act, 15 counts of murder and 40 counts of attempted murder. He has entered no pleas.

Royal Commissioner Virginia Bell, who heads the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social



Royal Commissioner Virginia Bell

Cohesion, said she did not want evidence that she heard to prejudice Akram's criminal trial.

"One might expect a royal commission set up to inquire into an attack would lead evidence of it and of the heroism of those who sort to confront the shooters and of those who ran toward the gunfire to offer medical assistance to the wounded," Bell said in an opening address.

"The trial of that individual (Akram) will be the occasion to lead evidence of the attack. This commission must do its

work without risking any prejudice to that criminal proceeding," she added.

Royal commissions, which can imprison witnesses who refuse to cooperate, often request time extensions as more evidence is discovered.

Bell is the sole commissioner. As well as lawyers, the commission's staff include analysts, researchers and other office workers, according to Richard Lancaster, who leads a team of lawyers in his role as the Senior Counsel Assisting the Royal Commission. Lancaster's job is to manage the investigation's direction, present Bell with evidence and question witnesses.

Completing her report by the deadline of the massacre's first anniversary is a "matter of critical importance," Bell said. "This imposes a tight time frame and it's going to impose limitations on how the commission approaches its terms of reference," the retired high court judge said.

Panama takes control of 2 key ports, Hong Kong protests

Bangkok: Hong Kong is protesting Panama's seizure of two ports on a canal vital for global trade that were operated by a Hong Kong-based company for decades, the city's government said Tuesday.

Hong Kong's Commerce and Economic Development Bureau said in a statement it had lodged "stern protests" with Panama's consulate, adding that it had expressed strong opposition and dissatisfaction and would "staunchly support the legitimate rights and interests of Hong Kong corporations overseas."

The ports located at the mouth and tail of the Panama Canal, which have been operated by a subsidiary of CK Hutchison since 1997, became embroiled in a legal dispute after getting caught in the middle of the US and China's competition for influence in the region.

Actor Robert Carradine dies

Los Angeles: Robert Carradine, a member of the famed acting family who was known for his roles in Revenge of the Nerds and Lizzie McGuire, has died aged 71. Carradine killed himself after years of living with bipolar disorder, his family said in a statement. "It is with profound sadness that we must share that our beloved father, grandfather, uncle, and brother Robert Carradine has passed away," the Carradine family said in a statement to Deadline on Monday.

offgrid | Northeast US digs out from brutal snowstorm

NEW YORK

Millions across the northeastern United States on Tuesday contended with treks to school and work as they dug out from a major — in some areas record-breaking — storm that blanketed the region with snow, cancelled flights, disrupted transit and downed power lines.

Even as the snow moved north Tuesday, giving way to sunshine in parts of the region, National Weather

Service forecasters warned another storm originating in the Great Lakes was right around the corner.

In New York City, more than a million students in the nation's largest public school system had a regular day, Mayor Zohran Mamdani declared, inviting kids to pelt him with snowballs over his decision.

Many students and their caregivers seemed open to taking the mayor up on that idea, as they scrambled over mountainous snow banks

and dodged salt spreaders during the morning drop-off.

"We're walking on thin ice here. One more day would've been fine," said Danielle Obloj, the parent of a Brooklyn fifth grader.

"They should never have let these kids come back to school." Others hailed the city's efforts at snow-clearing.

"It was much better than last time — an easy commute, no problems whatsoever," said Raul Garcia, as he exited a cab with his three

school-age children. "We thought it was going to be really bad walking, but looking at the streets, they're so clean." Philadelphia switched to online learning on Monday and Tuesday.

Districts on Long Island and elsewhere in the New York suburbs said they would cancel school again on Tuesday.

Monday's storm, which meteorologists are calling the strongest in a decade, dumped more than 2 feet (61 centimetres) of snow in parts of the Northeast.



Briefs

COLOMBO

SL seek course correction



Sri Lanka will need to improve their batting against slower bowlers when they take on New Zealand in a must-win Super Eight game of the T20 World Cup here on Wednesday. The home team batters failed to chase a below par 147 against England on a slow turner in Pallekele. The pitches in Sri Lanka have been tougher for batting compared to co-hosts India and the trend is likely to continue at the Premadasa where bigger boundaries make six-hitting difficult.

BRISBANE

Australia outplay India in opening ODI



Australia outplayed reigning world champions India in all departments to pick up a comfortable six-wicket win in the first Women's ODI here on Tuesday. India put up an ordinary performance with the bat to be bowled out for 214 despite solid fifties from Smriti Mandhana (58 off 68) and captain Harmanpreet Kaur (53 off 84). Australia chased down the modest target with little difficulty following fifties from skipper Alyssa Healy (50 off 70), who is in the middle of her farewell series.

CHENNAI

Rinku returns home due to emergency



Middle-order batter **Rinku Singh** on Tuesday returned home, owing to an emergency situation in the family, BCCI sources informed PTI. Rinku did not attend India's training session at the MA Chidambaram Stadium here, while rest of his colleagues were present at the nets. "Rinku Singh has flown back home from Chennai due to a family emergency. He did not join India's practice session at the Chepauk," the source close to the development said. As per sources, Rinku's father Khanchand Singh is reportedly admitted in a hospital in Greater Noida.

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SCENARIOS | West Indies' dominant win over Zimbabwe at the Wankhede Stadium has changed the equation overnight

Plenty to ponder for Team India's think tank

AHMEDABAD

After the crushing loss against South Africa in the Super Eights Group 1 match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup here on Sunday, Indian batting coach Sitanshu Kotak and Assistant coach Ryan Ten Doeschate have made it clear that there will be deliberations to make a change at the top, and Sanju Samson's name will be discussed.

However, the West Indies' dominant win over Zimbabwe at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Monday has changed the equation overnight. India will not only have to win their remaining two games but also boost their dismal net run rate in the process.

The scenario will make Team India's think tank sweat more on selecting the playing XI against Zimbabwe in Chennai.

India's eyes will be glued on South Africa and the West Indies here on Thursday. A South Africa win will make the semifinal route simpler for them, and a West Indies victory will make things more complicated. However, that game in Ahmedabad is just before their crucial clash against Zimbabwe in Chennai, and India won't have enough time to plan according to the outcome of that crucial match.

India will want to bounce back strongly from a 76-run defeat against South Africa to stay in contention for a semifinal berth. The loss broke India's 17-match winning streak in ICC events in white-ball cricket (2024 T20 World Cup, Champions Trophy, and 2026 T20 World Cup).



Indian skipper Suryakumar Yadav during the match against South Africa. ANI

Incidentally, the last defeat in the ICC events was also in Ahmedabad in the 2023 ODI World Cup final. Sunday's humiliating defeat against the Proteas made over 82,000 fans at the stadium go completely silent again.

The Suryakumar Yadav-led side will hope Proteas beat West Indies to have their destiny in their own hands and avoid permutations and combinations. Currently, India is in third spot with zero points and a negative net run rate (-3.800) while South Africa is second with two points and NRR +3.800, and West Indies top the group with two points and best NRR +5.350.

India will fancy their chances against Zimbabwe to improve their net run rate. However, India has to counter the black soil wicket in Chennai again. They have struggled on such a wicket in Ahmedabad. Openers will be

key and must fire to set the platform for a big total and allow the middle-order to consolidate.

It remains to be seen whether they mull any change in the top order or stick to the combination that has been working for them for the last 18 months. Abhishek Sharma and Tilak Varma's performance is under the scanner. But India may need Abhishek's flamboyance to go after bowling and put pressure on the opposition.

Samson brings in a right-handed option in a bid to break the three-match streak of rival off-spinners striking in the first over. But Samson hasn't grabbed his chances yet and might not be an automatic selection. There is a possibility that the team will stick to opening combinations of Abhishek and Ishan Kishan, and Suryakumar will come at No 3 if a wicket goes early.

Varma is the likely candidate to be dropped if Samson is drafted into the playing XI. Arshdeep Singh may miss out if the team wants an extra spinner in Kuldeep Yadav, as Chepauk wicket has traditionally assisted the spinners. Arshdeep bowled well against South Africa, but Yadav gives a more attacking option on spin-friendly tracks to pick wickets and restrict Zimbabwe to a below-par score. India has enough seamers in Jasprit Bumrah, Hardik Pandya, and Shivam Dube.

Vice-captain Axar Patel is likely to return in place of Washington Sundar. Zimbabwe has just a couple of left-handers in the top order who aren't as dangerous as South Africa's Quinton de Kock, Ryan Rickelton, and David Miller, which prompted team management to go for an off-spin option in Sundar.

Super Brook ton powers England

England skipper's scintillating hundred helps them beat Pakistan by two wickets and enter the semifinals

PALLEKELE

Harry Brook smashed a sensational hundred off just 50 balls to single-handedly take England to a two-wicket victory over Pakistan, and not before a late wobble saw them face some jitters, of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Super Eights match on Tuesday.

Chasing a not-so-daunting 165 for a win, England were struggling at one stage at 58/4 but Brook did a spectacular rescue act all by himself as he struck 100 off 51 balls with 10 fours and four sixes to power England home.

After Brook fell with England at 153/5, Will Jacks and Jamie Overton also perished quickly but Jofra Archer kept his nerve to score a four off the first ball of the 20th over to take England to victory and the last four stage.

Earlier, Sahibzada Farhan continued his fine form with yet another half-century as Pakistan scored a competitive 164 for 9 on a sluggish surface against England.

Farhan scored 63 off 45 balls, and his knock was laced with seven fours and two sixes against the English spinners, who were on target for the better part of the Pakistan innings. Left-arm spinner Liam Dawson was the pick of the England bowlers with 3 for 24 and also he didn't let Pakistan reach the 175-run target with back-to-back breakthroughs in the 18th over. Dawson first claimed Usman Khan, whose wild slog was gobbled up by Jamie Overton, while Mohammed Nawaz was caught plumb in front off the very next ball.



England's captain Harry Brook hits a six during the match against Pakistan. AP

Scoreboard

PAKISTAN: S Farhan lbw Overton 63, S Ayub c Bethell b Archer 7, S Agha c Overton b Dawson 5, B Azam b Overton 25, F Zaman c Dawson b R 25, S Khan (run out) 23, U Khan c Overton b Dawson 8, M Nawaz lbw Dawson 0, S Shah Afridi c Curran b Archer 2, S Mirza (not out) 2. **Extras:** (NB-1, W-3) 4. **Total** (For 9 wkts, 20 overs) 164. **Fall of wickets:** 1-14, 2-27, 3-73, 4-122, 5-132, 6-146, 7-146, 8-149, 9-164. **Bowling:** J Archer 4-0-32-2, J Overton 3-0-26-2, L Dawson 4-0-24-3, S Curran 3-0-24-0, A Rashid 4-0-31-1, W Jacks 2-0-27-0.

ENGLAND: P Salt c U Khan b SS Afridi 0, J Buttler c U Khan b SS Afridi 2, H Brook b SS Afridi 100, J Bethell c S Farhan b SS Afridi 8, T Banton c U Khan b U Tariq 2, S Curran c M Nawaz b U Tariq 16, W Jacks b M Nawaz 28, J Overton st U Khan b M Nawaz 0, L Dawson (not out) 1, J Archer (not out) 5. **Extras** (LB-1, W-3) 4. **Total** (For 8 wkts, 19.1 overs) 166. **Fall of wickets:** 1-0, 2-17, 3-35, 4-58, 5-103, 6-155, 7-160, 8-161. **Bowling:** SS Afridi 4-0-30-4, S Mirza 3-1-0-26-0, S Ayub 2-0-21-0, M Nawaz 3-0-26-2, S Khan 3-0-31-0, U Tariq 4-0-31-2.

Hope's praise for Hetmyer after Wankhede blitz

West Indies skipper described southpaw's knock as a confidence-booster ahead of sterner tests

MUMBAI

West Indies skipper Shai Hope was all praise for the swashbuckling Shimron Hetmyer stating he was an asset for the team at No 3 after his brilliant innings of 85 against Zimbabwe at the Wankhede Stadium, on Monday.

Hetmyer's 34-ball 85 was the catalyst behind the two-time World Champions' massive 107-run win over Zimbabwe in their Super Eight match here on Monday, which Hope described as a great "confidence booster" ahead of clashes against South Africa and India.

The left-hander struck seven sixes and as many fours to help the West Indies post 254/6 -- the second highest total in T20 World Cup history.

"The way he is batting, I think sometimes, he was kind of wasted down the bottom in the innings. He's such a good player, he can bat in all situations... (against) spin (and) pace," Hope told reporters



West Indies' Shimron Hetmyer in action against Zimbabwe. PTI

after the match. "To utilise him in that phase, he comes out and plays with that freedom that we wanted him to play with. He's been an asset for us, especially in this tournament. We gave him the role from South Africa (series) and he has embraced it," he added.

The Windies captain was elated with the all-round efforts of his players against Zimbabwe with spinners Gudakesh Motie and Akeal

Hosein contributing with four and three wickets respectively.

"The way we've been playing, it certainly gives us a lot of confidence," Hope said after the West Indies notched up their fifth consecutive win in the tournament.

"(It was) a great, great start, great confidence booster. But those games are gone. We've got to look ahead now. We've got South Africa next, and then India after that," he said.

Sammons expects India to come hard

MUMBAI

With a huge game coming up in Chennai against wounded tigers India, Zimbabwe head coach Justin Sammons is anticipating Team India to come at them with all their firepower.

However, Sammons also believes that the underdogs would be much better prepared after the huge defeat to mighty West Indies in their Super Eight match at the iconic Wankhede Stadium.

The Caribbean outfit had posted the second highest total in the history of the T20 World Cup, 254/6, in their Super Eight match here on Monday.

Sammons is quite sure that India too will come hard at them in Chennai after being handed an 83-run defeat by South Africa.

"We know the way India is going to come out and it's going to be very similar to the way West Indies approached their innings. They're (India) not going to hold back," Sammons said after the match. "There will be good learnings from that and how we deal with that, under pressure in the moment."

Hosein states being fearless is his mantra against batters

West Indies spinner had a field day against Zimbabwe

MUMBAI

West Indies spinner Akeal Hosein had a productive day against Zimbabwe as he scalped 3/28 in his four overs and felt being fearless was the core philosophy in his mind while bowling.

Hosein was speaking to reporters at the mixed zone after the Windies' big win against Zimbabwe at the Wankhede Stadium.

"We all know powerplay, bowling is difficult, you have two fielders out. But with that being said, I don't think it's what you bowl in the powerplay, it's who. Depends on the opposition, conditions. And for me as a spinner, one thing I try to get out of my head is the fear of being shot for boundaries. And it's just about sticking to the plan, trying to get the batter to hit where you have your two fielders out," he added. Gudakesh Motie and Hosein picked up seven wickets between them with the former returning figures of 4/28 and the latter was happy with the way they combined in the game.

"I enjoy bowling in tandem



West Indies' Akeal Hosein bowls a delivery during the match against Zimbabwe. PTI

with Motie. And like you rightfully said, the ball has been flying around Wankhede the last couple of games, so it's good for us to get some success here. And we've just been practising hard, we had a couple of sessions here. And sometimes you turn up, you think the pitch isn't spinning when you look at the opposition bowl, but then you have to go out there and make your own assessment and see what's going on. It worked for us today, there was a lot of spin for us, so I'm very happy that

we could get some success." When asked how much he enjoyed bowling at the Wankhede, Hosein responded in the negative with a smile. "Wankhede is not spin-friendly for me. I've barely played here, but so far I think it's a tricky one," he added. "It's not a venue where you can just come and toss the ball. The ball does fly quite easily, it does travel. So again, it's about picking your batters and understanding what the pitch is offering, and it's not one where you can just come and toss the ball."

sensation

Samra excited to practice on turf wickets in Mumbai

MUMBAI

Young Canadian cricketer **Yuvraj Singh Samra**, who created a sensation in the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup by becoming the youngest batter to score a World Cup hundred, has stayed back in Mumbai to get the hang of turf wickets.

He is currently training in Mumbai under the renowned cricket coach Jwala Singh at the Mumbai Cricket Club. Jwala is

credited with the development of Indian Test cricketer Yashasvi Jaiswal in junior cricket.

"I come from a place where temperatures can drop -20 (Celsius) degrees. We mostly practice indoors and don't have turf wickets. It is amazing to be here in Mumbai for the first time and get the hang of turf wickets with Jwala sir. I am practicing as much as I can; it has been really good so far," said Samra in an online interaction from Mumbai on

Tuesday. Born in Brampton, Ontario, and emerging as one of the most exciting talents among associate nations, Yuvraj sets ultimate goal to play in the Indian Premier League, and for now, he wants to play franchise cricket all over the world.

"We (associate) nations don't play much cricket. My goal is to play franchise cricket around the world and in the IPL. It is hard to make a living out of cricket in Canada, and many of our

cricketers are doing other jobs for a living. I want to change that," said Samra while elaborating that Associate nations get to play only in World Cup qualifiers and in the mega event after two to four years if they qualify. In between, there are just a few List A games back home and very few tournaments.

The 19-year-old, who scored a 65-ball hundred against New Zealand at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai, said, "It was

great to score a hundred against New Zealand. I can't express those feelings. My parents, who have sacrificed a lot for me, are happy too. I just played the ball and didn't look at the opposition and reputation of the bowler," he said.

Samra, who has been named after his favourite cricketer, Yuvraj Singh (former Indian swashbuckling cricketer) smashed 110 against the much-fancied Kiwis, which included 11 boundaries and six sixes.

