

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Title Code - UPENG04488

NATIONAL ENGLISH DAILY

MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

Saturday, 07 February, 2026

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

## Briefs

### Gold-lover pigeon causes market chaos

**JAIPUR**  
At a time when rates of gold are flying high, a pigeon caused chaos in the bullion market of Degana city of Nagaur in Rajasthan. In an unusual and surprising incident on Thursday, a pigeon flew away with a gold chain worth approx Rs 1 lakh from a jewelry shop, holding it in its beak. The incident happened in the bullion market of Degana, where some craftsmen were making gold ornaments on the upper floor of a jewelry shop. Suddenly, a pigeon entered the shop and, within moments, grabbed a gold chain that was recently made in its beak and flew away. The chain was later recovered safely from the roof of the market.

### Hoardings campaign targets Rahul

**RAE BARELI**  
Political tensions escalated in Rae Bareilly after hoardings targeting Congress MP and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi appeared. The posters were put up by supporters of Union Minister of State Dinesh Pratap Singh and labelled Gandhi a "fake Gandhi". They asked whether Rahul Gandhi or "real Sardar Raveet Singh Bittu" was the "real traitor". The hoardings claimed that "devout people of the country" had abandoned the Congress due to its betrayal and questioned why Gandhi called them traitors while describing West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as loyal. They accused the Congress of betraying India, Indian culture and values, and invoked figures such as Lord Ram, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Subhas Chandra Bose, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, Feroze Gandhi, Maneka Gandhi and the Vadera family.

### SIR: Final voter list for UP on April 10

**NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW**  
The final electoral rolls of Uttar Pradesh will now be published on April 10 instead of March 6, the Election Commission (EC) has said. In a letter to the state chief electoral officer (CEO) on Thursday, the poll panel said it has considered his request made on February 2 and also upon consideration of other relevant factors, it has decided to revise the schedule of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Uttar Pradesh. The final voter list for the state will now be published on April 10, the EC said. Uttar Pradesh CEO Navdeep Rinwa told reporters in Lucknow that as part of the SIR schedule revision, the EC has also extended the deadline for filing claims and objections by a month, to March 6. He said the SIR exercise began on October 27 last year and the draft electoral roll was published on January 6 after the completion of the enumeration phase.

## HOUSE STANDOFF | Lok Sabha Speaker says 19 hours, 13 minutes wasted due to disruptions during first week of Budget session

# 'Jo uchit samjho wahi karo': RaGa jibe at PM

NEW DELHI

Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Friday took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech in the Rajya Sabha, and said "Jo uchit samjho wahi karo" (Do whatever you think is right).

Opposition MPs staged a protest against the government at the Makar Dwar of Parliament, raising slogans of "Jo uchit samjho wahi karo" and holding placards that read "trap deal".

As soon as the Lok Sabha assembled, the Opposition members trooped into the Well holding placards and raising slogans. Though the House was to take up the discussion on the Union Budget 2026-27, Speaker Om Birla adjourned the proceedings till



Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi, suspended Lok Sabha MPs Dean Kuriakose and Prashant Yadaorao Padole, protest at Parliament premises in New Delhi on Friday

12 noon.

When the House reconvened, the Opposition members resumed their protest. BJP MP Krishna Prasad Tenneti who was in the Chair, repeatedly urged the Opposition members to stop displaying placards and maintain the decorum of the

House. However, as the protests continued, he adjourned the House for the day.

Later, the Speaker said "19 hours 13 minutes have been wasted due to disruptions" during the first week of the Budget Session of Parliament.

The Rajya Sabha, however, managed to transact some

### OPPN PROTESTS 'TRAP DEAL'

Opposition parties on Friday termed the India-US trade deal a "trap deal" and protested outside the Makar Dwar of the Parliament building. Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra joined the protest, with lawmakers raising slogans like "Jo uchit samjho wahi karo" and "tanashahi nahi chalegi".

—Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar

business. Speaking during the Zero Hour here, Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnav spoke about how the Railways continues to play the role of a big employer. He said 1.5 lakh people have been employed by it under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's term and that it has received over 2.5 crore applications.

## Kerala actor Raju arrested in hit-and-run case, released on bail

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Two youngsters suffered serious injuries after the motorcycle they were riding collided with a car driven by film actor Maniyanpilla Raju here, police said on Friday.

Raju was arrested by the police and released on bail.

The injured were identified as Sooraj (20) and Nidev (20), residents of Thiruvananthapuram. Police said the accident occurred at around 9.30 pm on Thursday in front of the Trivandrum Club on the Vellayambalam-Vazhuthakkad road. Police said Raju, after attending an event at Subrahmanium Hall, was entering the Vellayambalam-Vazhuthakkad road when his car hit the motorcycle.

However, the actor did not stop the vehicle and left the scene without attending to the injured, police said.

People who gathered at the spot rushed the duo to a hospital and both suffered multiple fractures, police said.

## Biker falls into pit dug by DJB in Delhi, dies



Policemen carry the bike at the spot in Janakpuri where a biker fell to death, in New Delhi on Friday

NEW DELHI

A motorcyclist died after falling into a 15-foot-deep pit dug by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) for construction work in west Delhi's Janakpuri area, police said on Friday.

The deceased has been identified as Kamal Bhayani (25), a resident of Kailashpuri, who worked at the call centre of a private bank, police said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Darade Sharad Bhaskar said, "At around 8 am, a woman called the police control room to report that a man was lying inside a pit

approximately 15 feet deep and was not moving. A police team immediately rushed to the spot."

"A pit had been dug by the Delhi Jal Board, into which Kamal Bhayani fell and unfortunately died," the DCP said.

Preliminary investigation suggests that the pit was dug at a DJB construction site, which was barricaded, a senior police officer said.

"This road has been closed for the past few days, and the pit was dug on Thursday. It is possible that the person used to take this route every day for commuting and was unaware of the pit," the DCP said.

## Kharge: Modi lacks courage

NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday charged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi lacked courage to answer questions and that is why he stayed away from the Lok Sabha during the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address.

In reply to the charges levelled by Modi on Congress — while replying to the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address in Rajya Sabha — Kharge said, "the truth is that for past few days, Modi ji has been troubled because things related to Modi ji have come up in the Epstein files. After that, Modi ji surrendered in front of Trump and signed the trade deal."

## 'India still monitoring situation in Bangladesh'

India's relationship with Bangladesh is "independent of its relationship with third countries" and New Delhi continues to monitor developments having a bearing on its national interests, taking all necessary measures to safeguard them, the government told Parliament on Friday. MoS for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh also said India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful, progressive and inclusive Bangladesh has been "conveyed to the interim government in all relevant engagements".



## 'Railways' financial health better

Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Friday said the financial health of the railways department has improved a lot in the last 10 years and it now has a small revenue surplus after meeting all costs. The minister said 5.04 lakh jobs were generated in 2014-24 period while 1.5 lakh employment is being provided in the 3rd term of the government.

## High focus on medical education infra, LS told

The Union government has made concerted efforts to expand medical college infrastructure under various centrally-sponsored schemes over the past decade to make medical education more affordable, Minister of State for Health Prataprao Jadhav told the Lok Sabha on Friday. A total of 157 medical colleges have been approved across districts. Support has also been provided for upgrade of existing medical colleges to increase the number of MBBS seats under another CSS scheme.

## Focus not only on marks but on improving life: PM to students

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday advised students not to waste time on internet just because data is cheap in the country and focus on honing their life and educational skills.

Education should not be a burden and everyone should be totally involved as half-hearted education does not make life successful, he said while interacting with students during the ninth edition of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha 2026 with PM'. "Education should not feel like a burden. It needs our total involvement. Education in bits and pieces



PM Narendra Modi interacts with students at the 9th edition of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha', in New Delhi on Friday

does not ensure success. Instead of focusing on marks, everyone should focus on where they have made it in life. No matter what your par-

ents, or teachers, or peers say, have faith in and follow your pattern, keeping in mind all the suggestions that come your way..." he said.

## FIR filed against makers of 'Ghooskhor Pandat' amid political furore

LUCKNOW

Acting on chief minister Yogi Adityanath's directives and the state government's zero tolerance policy against any attempt to disturb social harmony, an FIR has been registered in the Uttar Pradesh capital against the director and team of the upcoming film Ghooskhor Pandat.

The case has been lodged at Hazratganj police station over allegations of hurting caste-based sentiments, spreading social animosity and attempting to disrupt public peace.

Lucknow Police said the action was taken after taking cognisance of the teaser and promotional material of the film, which is slated for release on OTT platform Netflix. Police officials said the title and content of the film appeared objectionable and had the potential to inflame social tensions.

According to the FIR, the title of the film allegedly targets and demeans a particular caste, specifically the Brahmin community.

The controversy has snowballed into a major political issue, with several political leaders weighing in. Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati

### VHP objects

The VHP raised objections to the film, calling it an attack on the "most respectable" segment of society, and urged the government to look into the issue. VHP national spokesperson Vinod Bansal said, "It's totally unacceptable."

criticised the film's title, saying that such content insults a particular community and can damage social harmony. She said that films or creative content that provoke caste-based sentiments should not be allowed, as they only deepen social divisions and disturb peace.

Several social and community organisations have also objected to the film and warned of protests if corrective action is not taken. Police officials said the growing outrage has raised serious concerns over law and order, prompting swift intervention.

Hazratganj station house officer Vikram Singh said that, prima facie, it appears that the director and his team promoted the film with the intention of spreading animosity in society and disturbing communal harmony.

## Meghalaya mine case: 25 bodies found, many feared buried alive

GUWAHATI

A devastating dynamite explosion at an illegal rat-hole coal mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district has left at least 25 people dead, with fears that many more may still be trapped inside the mine.

The blast occurred on Thursday during mining operations at the Mynsyngat-Thangsko area, triggering scenes of chaos, grief and desperation at the site.

Soon after the explosion, women were seen weeping near the mine, while villagers gathered in large numbers amid cries from families and injured workers sheltering in



makeshift sheds. Local elders expressed fears that the actual number of those trapped could be much higher, reflecting the deep distress gripping the community.

Officials said most of the victims were labourers, many believed to be migrant workers from Assam's Barak Valley and neighbouring areas, though full identifica-

tion is still underway. By Friday, seven more bodies were recovered, taking the death toll to 25. Eighteen bodies had been pulled out on Thursday evening.

Among the deceased are two brothers from Nepal — Purna Bahadur Khapangi Magar (27) and Surendra Khapangi Magar (24), residents of Khotang district.

## K'taka CID busts massive cyber fraud racket

BENGALURU

Karnataka's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has intensified its crackdown on mule account-based online fraud, unearthing over 42,000 mule accounts across the State and neutralising more than 158 of them. The action follows the exposure of an online investment fraud

allegedly run by Dubai-based kingpin Prem Taneja and the arrest of two conduits, Mohammed Uzaif and his mother Shabana.

After the Bengaluru police tracked around 2,500 mule accounts linked to Taneja's operations, the case was handed over to the CID's Cyber Command Centre, which launched a statewide

drive. Within 20 days, investigators identified thousands of accounts that handled large transactions, though their account holders were untraceable. Most accounts were opened in the names of daily wage labourers and poor people with little access to banking services.

The CID has arrested a total of 13 masterminds who launched similar gaming and

investment apps to cheat people. Separately, the probe led to the arrest of six people by Mangaluru police in a Nepal-based online investment scam, taking the total arrests there to 11.

Mangaluru City Police Commissioner Sudhir Reddy said the racket operated from Nepal, Cambodia and Dubai. Police tracked 624 mule accounts linked to 4,580 cases.

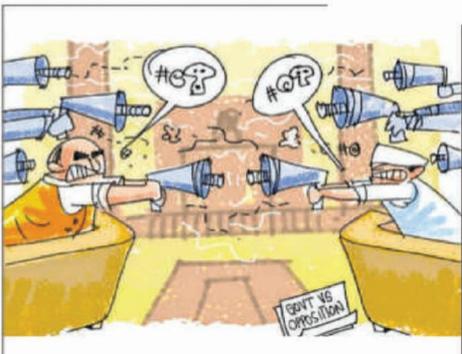
## AAP leader shot dead in Jalandhar

CHANDIGARH

A local leader of the ruling Aam Aadmi Party, Lucky Oberoi, was shot dead in broad daylight by unidentified assailants outside a gurdwara in Jalandhar's upscale Model Town area on Friday morning, police said.

The attack took place around 7.30 am when Oberoi arrived at the gurdwara in his SUV. According to police, as he was preparing to leave after paying obeisance, two assailants riding a two-wheeler opened fire at close range. At least five rounds were fired before the attackers fled the scene.

Oberoi sustained multiple gunshot wounds to the head and chest and was rushed to a hospital in Jalandhar in an unconscious state, where he later succumbed to his injuries. Assistant Commissioner of Police Parminder Singh said,



## Large-scale crow deaths spark bird flu scare in TN

CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government on Friday sounded a high alert following reports of large-scale crow deaths in various parts of the state, triggering concerns over a potential outbreak of avian influenza.

In a swift response to the mounting biosecurity threat, the Department of Animal

Husbandry, Dairying, and Fisheries issued a comprehensive advisory mandating stringent precautionary measures for poultry farmers and handlers of wild birds across the state.

Speaking to PTI, Director of Public Health, Dr A Somasundaram said, the Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine (DPH) has also released a separate communication, appeal-

ing to the public to follow strict safety protocols.

"Based on the Central government's circular regarding the prevalence of Avian Flu in Tamil Nadu, we have issued the advisory," he added.

The DPH has advised individuals to seek immediate medical assistance if they experience flu-like symptoms, including cough, cold, fever, or breathing difficulties. Specific caution has been

urged for those working in slaughterhouses and personal handling sick or dead birds.

Meanwhile, the Animal Husbandry department has directed its officials to intensify surveillance and step up vigil to detect any unusual sickness or mortality among crows, migratory birds, and commercial poultry.

Sources said under the new protocols, veterinary staff

have been strictly instructed to refrain from conducting autopsies of dead birds in the field. Instead, they have been advised to refer all carcasses to designated Regional Disease Diagnostic Labs to ensure clinical accuracy and containment.

To prevent the spread of infection through scavenging, the advisory further mandated that dead birds must be either burnt or buried deep.

## Brahma Vahini takes to the streets against web series, burns effigies at Subhash Chowk

Allegations of insult to the Brahmin community in 'Ghushkor Pandit' and 'Mr & Mrs Parshuram'

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj.** Workers of the National Parshuram Sena (Brahma Vahini) staged a protest at Subhash Chowk in Civil Lines against the alleged derogatory portrayal of the Brahmin community in web series and films. During the protest, effigies of the directors and actors associated with the web series 'Ghushkor Pandit' and the film 'Mr & Mrs Parshuram' were burned. The protesters said that some films and web series are deliberately attempting to tarnish the image of a respected community, which will not be tolerated under any circumstances. The organization strongly protested against such content, calling it divisive. Addressing the gathering, Brahma Vahini's National President Pandit Vimal Tiwari said that some people are compromising their values and principles for financial gain and are engaged in defaming the entire community. He said that such people are not representatives of the community and should introspect on their actions. Pandit Tiwari said that while the Brahmin community is tolerant, it also knows how to fight against



injustice and insult. He warned that if the trend of creating false and derogatory narratives against the community does not stop, a nationwide organized and democratic movement will be launched against it. He also said that spreading hatred against any particular community and harming social harmony is unacceptable. The tolerance of the community should not be mistaken for weakness. Several male and

female office-bearers of the organization were present at the protest. These included Swarika Bhardwaj, Sunita Mishra, Sarla Mishra, Poonam Anita Mishra, Saumya Ojha, Annapurna Mishra, Manish Pandey, Dheeraj Mishra, Som Dev Mishra, Shailendra Mishra, State Secretary Sanjeev Kumar Mishra, District President Brijendra Tripathi, Vishakha Mishra and Kameshwar Mishra.

## Science exhibition organized at Baba Kadhera Singh Vidya Mandir



Mathura

Chairman Suresh Singh, Managing Director Gaurav Singh, Manager Prahlad Singh, Principal Devashish Sen were Present on the Occasion. Chairman Suresh Singh said that today era is the era of science. Science exhibition Plays an important role in developing scientific thinking, interest, awareness and innovations. He encouraged the students and asked other students to participate in such exhibitions. School Principal Devashish Sen, appreciated the various attractive and important

models made by the students and encouraged them. More than 200 students participated in the exhibition and were honored by distributing Prizes today. Awards were distributed to 250 students of the school today. Chairman Suresh Singh, Managing Director Gaurav Singh, Manager Prahlad Singh, Principal Devashish Sen, Birpal Pradhan, G.S. Satanand Sharma, Deputy Principal Rambabu Dr. Ashok, Head Master Surendra Singh, Coordinator Bipin Singh, Ramveer Singh, Deepak, Amit Kumar.

## Arrangements are being made to run Transport Corporation buses to every village in the state: Minister Dr. Dayashankar Ghazipur

In Sidhauna, Minister of State for AYUSH, Dr. Dayashankar Mishra, honored prominent citizens at a senior citizen felicitation ceremony. On the sixth death anniversary of his father, late Ramadhar Mishra, he distributed blankets to needy people. While honoring the prominent citizens on this occasion, Minister of State for Food Security and AYUSH, Dr. Dayashankar

Mishra, said that the respect for senior citizens in society has always been maintained. Senior citizens have always guided the new generation with their experienced knowledge. Sadhvi Lakshimimani Shastri said that when we feed the hungry or help the distressed, we are actually serving God. Just as satsang (spiritual gathering) purifies the mind by removing evil thoughts and sins and makes consciousness positive. On this occasion, homeopathy and Ayurveda doctors organized a free medical camp where medicines were distributed to two hundred people. Minister of State for Transport, Dayashankar Singh, accepted the Public demand to build a (Roadways) bus stop in Sidhauna market and to run buses from Varanasi to Maudha. Dayashankar Singh said that in the BJP government, education, culture and civilization are all safe. Complete attention is being paid to every section of society. The saint community is enjoying their spiritual environment. Employment is being provided to the youth and ample facilities are being provided to ensure that Transport Corporation buses run to every village in the state. Every possible effort is being made to provide cheap and convenient transportation to the general public. Bus facilities are being provided to important religious and historically Significant Sites



## Lawyers Outraged by FIRs, Stage Protest in Front of IG's Office Road blocked in Civil Lines, demands for arrest of tire businessman and withdrawal of case

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj:** Lawyers' anger erupted on Friday over the assault on lawyers in the Civil Lines area and the FIRs registered against them at Maheshganj police station in Pratapgarh. A large number of lawyers staged a sit-in protest in front of the Inspector General of Police (IG) office and blocked the road. This disrupted traffic, leading to long queues of vehicles. The protesting lawyers demanded the immediate arrest of the tire businessman who allegedly assaulted the lawyers in Civil Lines and the withdrawal of the case registered at Maheshganj police station. The lawyers also raised slogans against the police administration, accusing



the IG of misbehavior. According to the police, Sub-Inspector Shiva Prajapati, posted at Maheshganj police station, was on patrol on the night of February 2. Around 11:15 pm, he received information about a fight between a wedding procession going to a wedding ceremony near a guesthouse in Hiraganj market and truck driver Sanjeev Maurya, a

resident of Annawa in the Maheshganj police station area. Some people present at the spot identified themselves as lawyers. When the dispute escalated, police personnel stationed at the intersection were called. Based on the complaint filed by the Sub-Inspector, an FIR was registered against Umapati Tripathi, a resident of Rajrooppur in

the Dhoomanganj police station area, Himanshu Agrahari, Virendra Singh, Raja Shukla, Anshuman, Avneesh Shukla, all residents of Jhalwa, and Osama, a resident of Kalindipur. Several lawyers reached the police station in support of those detained during the night, where an argument ensued between Station House Officer Radheshyam and the lawyers. According to police officials, on the instructions of CO Sadar Karishma Gupta, a case has been registered against the concerned individuals for arguing with the Sub-Inspector and assaulting the truck driver. However, the lawyers allege that the action taken in the case was one-sided. Considering the situation, additional police force was deployed at the spot.

## High Court takes strict stance on seniority dispute of 2015 batch constables, orders decision within two months

**Prayagraj:** The Allahabad High Court, considering the seniority dispute of 172 constables of the Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment 2015 batch as serious, has directed the Additional Director General of Police (Personnel), Lucknow, to take a decision within two months. This order was passed by Justice Vikas Budhwar on a petition filed by 72 petitioners, including Vivek Kumar Tripathi. The petitioners stated that the department deducted 26 days from their service period while determining their seniority, contrary to the rules,

making them junior to other constables of their own batch. The constables had reported to the police line for JTC training on December 2, 2015, but their joining date was shown as December 28, 2015, in the departmental records. The petitioners informed the court that they had also deposited Rs. 3,000 as advance mess fees at the time of reporting, and receipts for the same are available. The court observed that when the constables were present at the police line and mess fees were being deducted, showing a delayed joining date in

the records is incorrect and inconsistent. It also came to light in the case that the Superintendent of Police (South) of Gorakhpur had accepted the departmental error after an inquiry in April 2023. Despite this, no correction has been made in the records at the police headquarters level so far. Considering the entire matter, the High Court directed the Additional Director General of Police (Personnel) to consider all the facts and take a final decision regarding the seniority of the constables within two months.

## Court expresses displeasure over flawed investigation, orders inquiry and action against negligent police officers

**Prayagraj:** The Allahabad High Court dismissed an appeal filed against the trial court's acquittal of the accused in a murder case. The court also expressed displeasure over the police investigation and ordered an inquiry against the negligent police officers. It directed that strict action be taken against those found guilty, even if they have retired.

This order was passed by a division bench of Justice Rajiv Mishra and Justice Dr. Ajay Kumar (II) on an appeal filed by Indrawati Devi.

Sarju Prasad Patel was murdered on November 22, 2015, in the Utraon police station area. The police had arrested Pankaj Mishra and others and claimed to have recovered weapons. However, the trial court acquitted all of them on September 10, 2025, due to lack of evidence and witnesses turning hostile.

The deceased's family members filed an appeal against this decision in the High Court. During the hearing, the court found that the weapon and cartridges used in the

murder were not sent for forensic examination. No concrete steps were taken to confirm the identity of the accused. The investigating officer and the inspector shifted the responsibility onto each other. The court directed the judicial officers of the state to inform the concerned police chief if they find any flaws in the investigation report. It also directed that a copy of the order be sent to all police superintendents and judicial officers to prevent such negligence in the future.

## Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi Interacts with Farmers on the Second Day of the Grand Kisan Mela



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj.** The second day of the five-day Grand Kisan Mela, organized by the Agriculture Department, was held on Friday at the Ganga Pandal in Sector-3 of the Magh Mela area. The program was presided over by Uttar Pradesh Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi, while Water Resources Minister Swatantra Dev Singh was present as the chief guest. The program commenced with the lighting of the lamp. More than

40 stalls were set up at the fair by the Agriculture Department, Dairy Department, Horticulture Department, and various farmer producer organizations, showcasing fertilizers, seeds, agricultural chemicals, solar pumps, drones, and agricultural machinery. The ministers inspected the stalls and instructed the officials to connect farmers with advanced technologies. Approximately 1500 farmers participated in the program. Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi listened to



the farmers' problems through a question-and-answer session and directed that they be resolved promptly. He informed them that the government has waived electricity bills for private tube wells and is providing subsidies on agricultural inputs through POS machines. Information was given about the Soil Health Card scheme, Farmer Registry, the mandatory farmer identity card, and the PM Kisan Yojana. The minister reiterated the goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-

Reliant India) 2047 and encouraged farmers to adopt seed production and natural farming. At the end of the program, beneficiary farmers were honored, and seed mini-kits were distributed to 10 farmers, agricultural chemicals to 10 farmers, and custom hiring certificates to 10 farmers. Following this, the Agriculture Minister held a review meeting with the district's agriculture officers and instructed them to accelerate the progress of the schemes.

# Sub-Divisional Magistrate conducts surprise inspection, issues strict instructions on sanitation

she reviewed the cleanliness, drainage system, and encroachment situation along the roadside

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Ghazipur.** Sub-Divisional Magistrate Dr. Harshita Tiwari conducted a surprise inspection on Tuesday of Pandey Tola, Noniapura, Ram Chabutra wards, and the main Sadar Road Chowk area under the Mohammadabad Municipal Council in the district. During the inspection, she reviewed the cleanliness, drainage system, and encroachment situation along the roadside. While inspecting the main Sadar Road Chowk, Dr. Tiwari strictly instructed the shopkeepers who had set up shops along the roadside not to throw garbage in the open. She directed all shopkeepers to keep dustbins near their shops and dispose of waste regularly so that the area remains clean and the general public can have a clean environment. The Sub-Divisional Magistrate instructed the municipal staff to ensure regular cleaning of the drains and prevent waterlogging anywhere. She clearly stated that negligence in sanitation would not be tolerated at any level, and the responsible employees would be held accountable. During the inspection, the municipal staff was instructed to pay special attention to the sanitation system and waste management. Lekhpal Mrityunjay Rai and other municipal employees were also present



on this occasion. The surprise inspection by the SDM created a

stir in the municipal administration, and the employees received

a message to be more active regarding the cleanliness system.

Local residents also appreciated this initiative of the administration

and demanded regular inspections.

## Distance Education Has a Wide Scope, Opens New Employment Opportunities: Prof. Satyakam

**BBAU Students Conduct Educational Visit to Rajarshi Tandon Open University**

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj.** A group of students from Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow, visited Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University, Prayagraj, on Friday to learn about the distance education

system and academic activities. The visiting group comprised approximately 60 students and research scholars from the MSc Food and Nutrition program under the School of Home Science at BBAU. Upon their arrival at the university campus, Professor Meera Pal, in-charge of the Faculty of Health Sciences, welcomed the visiting group. Following this, a dialogue program held at the

Lokmanya Tilak Debate Hall, Vice-Chancellor Professor Satyakam addressed the students, stating that the field of distance education is very broad and provides new opportunities for both study and employment. He said that students studying in traditional educational institutions can further develop their skills by connecting with the employment-oriented and knowledge-enhancing programs of

the open university. The Vice-Chancellor described the Uttar Pradesh government's 'One District One Product' scheme as encouraging and said that young people should actively participate in this scheme. This will open new dimensions of research and give local products global recognition.

On this occasion, a documentary based on Uttar Pradesh was shown, showcasing internationally

renowned products and the work plans of skilled entrepreneurs. Professor Satyakam said that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will soon be signed between BBAU and Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University, enabling both institutions to collaborate in the fields of education and research. On this occasion, the teacher representatives from BBAU, Dr. Madhuri

Daniel and Dr. Ashish Kumar Jatav, expressed their gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor and thanked him for the university visit.

During the visit, the students observed the academic activities related to online recording at the Atal Auditorium, Yoga Mandapam, Central Library, Zoology Laboratory, and the Center for Online Education located on the Saraswati campus.

**Wanted Accused Arrested by Baldev Police Station**

Mathura

The police team of Baldev Police Station arrested a wanted accused on 22.01.2026 based on information received from a confidential informant. In Case Crime No. 001/2026, registered under Sections 191(2), 191(3), 190, 109(1), 115(2), 352, 351(3), 125 of the BNS and Sections 5/25/27 of the Arms Act,

## A Right Strategy Can Build a Strong Foundation for Good Marks: Dr. Akanksha Keshari

**Success comes from practicing previous years' question papers and studying point by point**

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj.** Home Science is often taken lightly, but if studied with interest and understanding, this subject can prove helpful in securing good marks. Experts say that this subject is practical in nature, making it relatively easy to score marks by answering multiple-choice and very short answer questions correctly and carefully. With the right preparation, students can easily achieve a good division. Home Science is a science connected to the entire lifestyle. It includes the study of almost every aspect of human life. Important chapters such as culinary arts, nutrition, home economics, consumer science, child development, child rearing, human development, interior design, textiles and clothing, and home construction are taught under this subject. Keep these things in mind during the exam: Reach the examination center at least 30 minutes in advance. Read the question



paper carefully upon receiving it. Avoid haste and write the answers after understanding the question. If the question is not clear the first time, read it again. Write the answers to the questions in sequence as far as possible. Take care of your health during the exam. Consume plenty of fluids and avoid heavy meals.

Useful tips for getting better marks: Students should practice writing answers within the time limit regularly. Adhering to the word limit as instructed is also important. Clean and neat handwriting helps in creating a good impression and

increasing marks. Instead of rote learning, understand the subject, stay away from stress, and maintain a positive attitude. Pay special attention to headings while writing answers. Get enough sleep and revise important lessons repeatedly before the exam. Also try this: Answer multiple-choice and very short answer questions with special care. Make concise and point-wise notes of important chapters, which will make it easier to understand and revise the subject. Be sure to review the prepared notes a day or two before the exam. Be quick in writing answers in the examination hall, but do not leave any room for mistakes. After answering all the questions, be sure to review your answer sheet.

With proper planning, discipline, and a positive attitude, Home Science can not only become an easy subject but also prove to be the key to scoring good marks.

## Mega Legal Aid Camp to be held on February 22; Meeting held to review preparations

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj.** A meeting was held on Friday in the District Court auditorium to review the preparations for the Mega/Large-scale Legal Aid and Service Camp to be held on February 22, 2026, as per the directions of the National Legal Services Authority and the Uttar Pradesh State Legal Services Authority. The meeting was chaired by the Honorable District Judge and Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Prayagraj, Shri Satyaprakash Tripathi. The meeting was attended by Chief Development Officer Harshika Singh, District Lead Manager, Social Welfare Officer, District Development Officer, District Information Officer, District Basic Education Officer, and officers from various other departments. During the



meeting, emphasis was placed on coordination among various departments for the successful organization of the camp. The Honorable District Judge directed the officials to identify departmental welfare schemes related to weaker sections, persons with disabilities, women, children, unorganized sector workers, and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and to connect them with the mega camp. He

emphasized making women's empowerment, insurance schemes for the poor, schemes related to unorganized workers, and water conservation programs a part of legal literacy and ensuring their wide-spread

publicity. Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Prayagraj, Shri Shashi Kumar, informed that eligible beneficiaries will be identified at the tehsil and gram panchayat levels with the help of para-legal volunteers, so that they can benefit from government schemes. He appealed to all departments to work together and connect as many people as possible with the schemes. Chief Development Officer Harshika Singh gave necessary instructions to all departments and said that maximum participation of eligible people should be

### Information

This is to inform the general public that my daughter's correct name is Manvi, daughter of Surjeet, as recorded in her educational records. Due to an error, her name is incorrectly listed as Anshuman Prajapati on her Aadhaar card (number 3592 77 054 469). This is incorrect. In the future, my daughter should be known and identified by her correct name, Manvi, daughter of Surjeet.

Surjeet, son of Rajaram, resident of Garhi Bazar, Post Andhawa, Paschim Sharira, Kaushambi, Uttar Pradesh 212214

## Editorial

## Narendra Modi, Naya Bharat and a war of narratives

**Modi's Rajya Sabha speech rekindles Sitaram's humiliating ouster from Congress**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reference to former Congress president Sitaram Kesri during the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address in the Rajya Sabha has rekindled a lot of memories particularly in the context of how Kesri was unceremoniously removed as head of the grand old party. "Sitaram Kesri who belonged to a backward caste and was the Congress president, was thrown onto the footpath. The country saw what the Congress did to Sitaram Kesri," Modi had said.

**Here is an account of what had happened to Kesri.**

On 14 March, 1998, the Congress' 24 Akbar Road headquarters was a mute witness to a coup that saw the rather unsavoury exit of an "elected" Congress president and the appointment of Sonia Gandhi as party chief. Kesri, then in his 79th year, had arrived at the CWC meeting convinced that a party president could not be forced out. He did not know that before the 11 am meeting, most CWC members had gathered at Pranab Mukherjee's house to endorse two crucial statements. The first was an ultimatum asking Kesri to step down; the second, a resolution replacing him with Sonia. The moment Kesri stepped into the hall, he knew something was amiss. Loyalist Tariq Anwar was the only one who stood up to greet him. After Kesri sat down, Mukherjee began reading out a resolution "thanking" him for his services. A horrified Kesri shouted, "Arre yeh kya keh rahe ho (What are you saying)", but there was a smirk on the faces of his colleagues. Kesri raved against the "unconstitutional" meeting and stormed out, followed by loyalist Anwar. As he was getting into his car, he was heckled and some Youth Congress workers even tried to pull down his dhoti. By the time Kesri exited 24 Akbar Road, the nameplate outside what used to be his room had already been replaced with a computer printout that read: "Congress President Sonia Gandhi." When Kesri reached his Purana Qila residence, he was in no mood for his favourite Pomeranian Ruchi's joyous welcome. Eyewitnesses, however, recalled that the moment he kicked her, Kesri was overcome with remorse. The finest of biscuits — presented to Kesri during his tenure — were offered to the puzzled Ruchi. Arriving journalists found the Congress veteran calmer. He bad-mouthed Mukherjee, Jitendra Prasad and Arjun Singh but the ingrained reverence for the "Family" prevented him from attacking Sonia. Kesri later told this writer he was hoping for "correction" from Sonia after his ouster. When the new party chief arrived a few hours later to comfort him, Kesri rushed to greet her. Neither mentioned the "coup". Sonia sought Kesri's blessings and guidance and the old man puffed up with pleasure. By 7 pm, he was singing paeans to the Nehru-Gandhis while promising to get even with Mukherjee, Prasad and Arjun Singh. The Congress had become disillusioned with "Chacha" Kesri after the 1998 general election, when it won only 142 seats. The party had asked "nephews" Ahmad Patel and Ghulam Nabi Azad to persuade the old man to quit but Kesri had refused. Then Manmohan Singh, Mukherjee and AK Antony had called on Kesri and got him to meet Sonia. On 9 March, five days before his ouster, Kesri announced he would resign to make way for Sonia but soon changed tack. He said he wanted a meeting of the 1,300-member AICC, which would need over a month to arrange, before quitting. On 13 March, Prasad hosted a lunch where 13 of the 17 CWC members signed Kesri's political death warrant. Patel, Prasad, Mukherjee, RK Dhawan, Arjun, Azad, Sharad Pawar, Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy, Antony, Manmohan, Meira Kumar, Oscar Fernandes and Madhavsingh Solanki signed the ultimatum to Kesri.

Noted journalist Javed Anand, on the morning of 22 January, 2024, writing in a prominent newspaper said, "For the Muslims it (Babri Masjid) was only a property dispute. It (the mosque) had no religious or historical significance. It was so obscure that locating it in the then narrow and dusty lanes of Ayodhya was bit of a task." He holds forth that the Muslim leadership should have volunteered to hand over the structure to the Hindus, whose sentiments were so deeply ingrained in the structure. While Anand blames the Muslim leadership of failing to see the sentiments, he has not placed on record the role of Left-leaning historians like Irfan Habib, RS Sharma and DN Jha, who derided the Hindu belief in the location being the place of birth of their cultural and not just religious icon — Ram, the Prince, and later the King of Ayodhya. The role of the Left-'liberal' influence on the succeeding governments of post-Independence was not just limited to their position on the Ram Mandir issue but in different sectors of policy-making. In the midst of the high-energy celebrations over the consecration of the Ram temple, Utpal Kumar's recently launched tome *Bharat Rising: Dharma, Democracy, Diplomacy* may not get a viral-type reception in the market but it's set for a



long inning in the world of books.

Speaking at the launch of the book, Bibek Debroy, the Chairman to the Economic Advisory Committee to the Prime Minister, mentioned that the Narendra Modi regime would be judged by history but for sure it did unseat the deeply entrenched thoughts and ideas in post-colonial India. There is no disagreement on this, however, the problem that Modi would pose for future historians is the lack of quality work to justify his acceptance as a mass leader, who changed the grammar of Indian politics for good. To Utpal Kumar's own confession, he is no Nehru-baiter for the sake of being part of a nationalist jingoism. In fact, he says that there are no doubts about first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru being a patriot, who wanted his country to do well. He, however, says that his policies cannot be held in the same high esteem as they were

flawed and reflective of the mindset which resisted taking pride in our civilisational roots.

The author, through the 12 diverse essays, tries to establish the viewpoint that Nehruvian influence on Indian polity, culture and economy have been the biggest impediments in the rise of a new post-colonial India. This he does as a virtuoso of a seasoned researcher. His arguments are pegged on convincing facts, which somebody disagreeing with this line could find difficult to demolish intellectually. His most lucid remark on page 103: "Nehru could not always run with the hare and hunt with the hounds." This imaging of Nehruvian policies can be seen in many governance initiatives of post-colonial India. Utpal Kumar's arguments can be likened to those of the best legal minds. Like on pages 165-166, he deflates the British Broadcasting

Corporation's claims of journalistic autonomy by pitching the Modi documentary issue of 2023 to the sacking of their highest-paid anchor Gary Linekar two months later in March. The book is full with each argument having a counter-argument. At a time when debates on television have been reduced to very medieval blood and gore duels, such arguments and counterarguments are very refreshing. It helps one to understand the philosophic grounding of many policies of the Narendra Modi regime.

The author is very critical of Lutyens' elite which he doesn't consider any less vicious than a cabal, "fiercely defending entry" and the elite prospering on the patronage of the rise of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. The author, however, fails to suggest how 'Moditva' was going to guard against the emergence of a similar clique under the present establishment. He quotes from Raj and Romesh Thapar's, 'All These Years', "PN Haksar looked after the Left intellectuals and academia; Inder Kumar Gujral managed the media; and Pupul Jaykar looked after the 'needs' of the art world." But can he contest that this role has now been passed on to certain apparatchiks of a different hue, who have been as unfairly benevolent to their own favourites as were their predecessors in the Lutyens' cabal? A book would have its shortcomings; in fact, what's a book without shortcomings? It's also true that the more rigorous the work of scholarship, the more rigorous the evaluation is. The look becomes harder if the book advocates the thoughts and philosophies of the establishment. There are several arguments which can be effectively countered but for sure not dismissed. The essays in 'Bharat Rising: Dharma, Democracy, Diplomacy' are advised as compulsory reading for those averse to the Moditva especially the Left-'liberals' for several reasons. First being the emergence of a scholar like Utpal Kumar on the Right, and second being the presence of several students at his book launch despite the winter chill at the prestigious Shri Ram College of Commerce of Delhi University. New establishment throws up pretenders, their books sell well with the official patronage but they do not invite scholastic respect beyond the regime. Regimes come and go, books live beyond them. The post-independence discourse is finding a new passage which for sure is through belief in India's civilisational roots. This may not be getting effective and appreciative replications in the official organs and publications of the establishment but certainly.

## Ahmadis: Pakistan's persecuted 'others' struggle for recognition

Ahmadis in Pakistan society suffer from social, religious, economic persecution, hatred and violent attacks. They face constant threats from Pakistani authorities and extremists. Even worse, in death, Ahmadi tombstones are desecrated and expunged of their Muslim identity if not outright destroyed. Besides, criminal charges are brought against its leadership in Pakistan and abroad. In one such incident, on 26 January, 2024, police under pressure from religious extremists destroyed the tombstones of 80 graves of the Ahmadi community in Punjab province. The incident occurred in Daska, some 100 km from Lahore, the provincial capital. According to the Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya Pakistan, "The police destroyed the tomb-

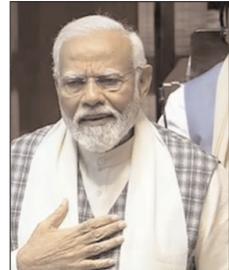
stones of Ahmadi graves even though the graveyard land was allocated to the Ahmadi community by the government of Punjab". The 500,000-member Ahmadi community is a well-proclaimed and mostly neglected religious minority in Pakistan. A decision of the Lahore High Court in August 2023 said the 1984 prohibition on building Ahmadi places of worship did not allow authorities to destroy or alter structures built before then. Still, such a verdict does not deter the ruthless demolition of Ahmadi mosques and other religious edifices.

As written above, police continue to demolish Ahmadi mosques and graves over allegations against them masquerading as Muslim worship places. Ahmadis are barred from giving the

Islamic call to prayer or even displaying "Muslim names" in front of their homes. The Pakistani Constitution formally declares the Ahmadi sect of Islam to be "infidels" and bars members of the community from "posing as Muslims". As reported in September 2023, approximately 75 graves and minarets of two worship places belonging to the Ahmadi minority community have been demolished by police and radical Islamists in Punjab province. Also, it is reported that since 1984, some 4,000 Ahmadis have faced criminal charges because of their faith. Religious bigots who continue to consider themselves as saviours of Islam fail to comprehend that tarnishing graves is not exactly associated with the traditions.

## PM Modi's Rajya Sabha address: Shock and awe for Congress; vision for 'Vikshit Bharat'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech at Rajya Sabha, his reply to the Motion of Thanks on President's statement, was his final address to the Parliament in this term. The prime minister seemed convinced that his third term is a mere formality, and as such his Wednesday's speech may be interpreted as the official launch of BJP's general election campaign. The prime minister is an orator nonpareil. His Rajya Sabha oration took off from where he left it at Lok Sabha on Monday, and both his addresses should be viewed as a coherent whole instead of two separate discourses. While he set the terms of election campaign with an audacious 370-seat target for BJP (and 400+ for NDA) at the Lower House, at the Upper House he revealed two major themes. The first was an unabashed attack on Congress packed with sardonic wit, humour and facts. The second was laying down the vision for Modi government 3.0 — with a subliminal message that election results are almost a foregone conclusion. This was as much a message to the voters as to the Opposition that they stop wasting time in forming unnatural alliances to keep him at bay. Mind



games aside, the speech was a masterclass in political messaging. Worth noting that Modi once again trained his guns exclusively on Congress, and he came to the floor well-prepared with a battery of facts, annotations and quotes to rebut and ridicule each of Congress's poll agendas one by one. It was excruciating or exhilarating, depending on which side of the political fence you sit. This facet needs to be explored. Given the fact that Congress is struggling to retain its relevance, footprint and has been reduced to a cipher, and given the fact that BJP's toughest opponents are regional outfits such as Trinamool Congress or DMK, why did the prime minister repeatedly and singularly attack the grand old party? Interesting to note that late on Wednesday night Telugu Desam president N Chandrababu Naidu called on Union home minister Amit Shah at his residence in New

Delhi late purportedly to join the NDA alliance ahead of elections in April-May. Evidently the BJP wants to keep its options open in pre-and-post-poll scenarios. Even though it appears to be the frontrunner in the upcoming elections with the Congress gasping for breath, the BJP wants to leave nothing to chance. That is the kind of realpolitik, tactical planning and killer instinct Modi and Shah bring to the table. Rahul Gandhi has been positioning himself as a 'champion' for Dalits, Adivasis and backward sections of the society and recently launched a high-octane campaign, promising to "throw out" the 50 per cent cap on reservation if INDI Alliance is voted to power. To rebut Congress's narrative on social justice, Modi sought to prove that Congress has always been anti-reservation and acted against the interests of backward classes, and presented BJP as the true champion of SC, ST and OBCs. Modi alluded to a letter written by former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru to then chief ministers, where the Congress leader writes, "I dislike any kind of reservation, more particularly in services. I react strongly against anything which leads to inefficiency.

## Why drug smuggling is more important than conspiracy to murder

Fans of true crime stories on OTT platforms in India may recall the tragic case of a little boy who was murdered in 2017 along with his uncle in the hinterland of Gujarat. The intrepid cops traced the crime to a non-resident Indian woman and her Gujarati immigrant toy boy. The closing scene of the episode had the patriotic inspector telling the smirking woman over an international call that he would get the two of them back to India to face justice. Sadly, he was wrong. That is because a British senior district judge refused the extradition of the diabolical duo—Arti Dhir and

Kaval Rajjada, now married—because they would face long prison terms in India which would breach Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights which protects against "inhumane sentences"! That judge, Emma Arbuthnot, would also be familiar to those who follow the cases of two other fugitives wanted by India, Vijay Mallya and Nirav Modi. Arbuthnot concluded in 2019 that as "there is no possibility of a review either at state level or by the President of India, in those circumstances, there will be no 'hope' or the possibility of exceptional release." So, she dis-

charged the two and scotched India's extradition request as there was "substantial grounds for believing that they would face a real risk of being subject to treatment, a lack of a review of a life sentence, which would be inhuman and degrading". Crime is mostly pretty inhuman and quite degrading too. But if it pertains to a non-third world country then the same perpetrators face a very different outcome, it seems. Having avoided extradition (and even prosecution in UK) for the murder of the two Indians, now Dhir, 59, and Rajjada, 35, have been sentenced to 33 years in

jail for smuggling 514 kg of cocaine, valued at £57 million, to Australia through their air freight business, as well as for money laundering. That is cold comfort for the rural Gujarati woman who lost her husband and 11-year-old brother to the avarice of Dhir and Rajjada. Clearly, the justice system of the UK considers a 33-year custodial sentence for smuggling cocaine from one First World country to another to be neither inhuman nor degrading but a potential similar sentence ordered by Indian courts for the masterminds of a double homicide to be both.

## Flipkart Under Investigation for GST Billing Loophole

Delhi : Walmart-owned Flipkart is under a preliminary tax probe for allegedly changing its invoicing processes to lessen its GST tax due. Investigators claimed the corporation disguised seller marketplace fees as "transportation costs" to claim reduced GST rates for small road transport operators. It would lower the company's tax bill. Online marketplace activities like buying, selling, charging vendors commission, listing, and facilitating payments normally incur 18% GST. The article said the Directorate General of Goods and Services Tax Intelligence (DGGI) is investigating Flipkart accusations. Mint said that regulators will submit a show-cause notice for prosecution if they have comprehensive proof against the corporation. A Madras High Court lawyer wrote to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Flipkart's invoicing practice. The



Federation of International Trade Investor Gunodaya Association raised the issue in a press statement on August 23, the article said. The Supreme Court of India monopolistic heat hit the company earlier this year. The apex court said the e-commerce giant created market monopolies and worried about smaller businesses' future. Flipkart's apparent use of its dominant position prompted the bench to notify the company's counsel of their monopoly investigation. The investigating Amazon and Flipkart's alleged anti-competitive actions in 2020, including subsidizing some e-retailers.

### PM to inaugurate SEMICON India 2025

Delhi : The administration boasted that the fourth edition of SEMICON India 2025, which has grown double the size of last year's edition, will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 2. New Delhi's Yashobhoomi (IICC) will host the gathering from September 2-4, 2025. Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, and South Korea will all have their very own pavilions during SEMICON India. The United States, Malaysia will each host one of six country-specific roundtables. The number of states

## In a \$235 million lawsuit against Byju's CEO, QIA

Delhi : Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) subsidiary Qatar Holding has petitioned the Karnataka high court to enforce an arbitral award of \$235 million (Rs 2,060 crore) against Byju Raveendran and Byju's Investments. From Feb 28, 2024, the claim includes 4% annual interest compounded every day, totaling over \$14 million (Rs 123 crore). The disagreement began in September 2022 when Qatar Holding loaned BIPL \$150 million. Raveendran personally insured the debt to buy 17.8 million Aakash Educational Services shares. The funding terms prohibited the transfer of those shares, but Raveendran trans-



ferred them to another Singapore corporation, breaking the agreement. Qatar Holding wanted \$235 million early payments after repeated failures. Arbitration in was held in March 2024 when BIPL and Raveendran failed to comply. An emergency arbitrator froze assets up to the disputed amount worldwide, which the

Singapore high court confirmed. Finally, on July 14, the panel ordered \$235 million plus interest paid immediately. The enforcement suit seeks recognition of the award as a court judgment and an injunction on transfers and attachment of Raveendran and BIPL's Indian moveable and immovable assets.

### The CCI approves Adani's plan to acquire JAL

Delhi : A regulator for fair trade If Adani Group is successful in its effort to acquire debt-ridden Jaiprakash Associates during the current insolvency process, the deal would be sanctioned in principle by CCI.

In a press release, the regulator described the proposed combination as involving the

acquisition of up to 100% of Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL) shares by Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL), Adani Infrastructure and Developers Pvt Ltd (AIDPL), or another entity within the Adani Group.

The Adani Group's acquisition of JAL has been authorized by the Competition

Commission of India (CCI). The firm in question must obtain the competition watchdog's approval before submitting a resolution plan, as a result of a recent Supreme Court decision pertaining to the interpretation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).



## Samsung partners with India R&D for next-gen phone speech AI



Delhi : Samsung is counting on its India research hub to drive a global push toward voice-first AI, putting its engineers at the center of the Galaxy AI ecosystem. At a media roundtable, Samsung R&D Institute India - Bengaluru (SRI-B) representative Mohan Rao said India is one of the company's main AI locations outside Korea. "When it will be voice-first relies on research discoveries. Current research is extensive." Rao stated. "We faced numerous hurdles in making AI models run in the gadget. Native platforms must develop and operate natural language ASRs well. We can then consider voice-only phones." Multiple ecosystem stakeholders say voice will be the main way consumers connect with AI. In an interview, IndiaAI Mission CEO Abhishek Singh said the organization was creating voice-first AI models for Indian languages. Tech companies like Google and OpenAI will favor voice interfaces globally. Voice-first AI could help Samsung's phones stand out from competitors, as it sells its AI directly in consumer hardware.

## CAG report criticizes income tax department's arrears

Delhi : The CAG report on Income Tax department performance, tabled in Parliament, raised concerns over non-sharing arrears and outstanding demand data with the audit team. The report (No. 14 of 2024) found that the I-T department failed to furnish information for over 42% of requisitioned instances, restricting audit scope. "The I-T dept did not provide data on cases closed after March 2020, preventing verification of the correctness of the closure of these cases," noted. On March 2021, CAG reported that the I-T outstanding demand, raised but not achieved, was Rs 14.41 lakh crore, with Rs 10.58 lakh crore 'under dispute', 73% of the total. "Audit noticed instances of exaggerated tax demands



raised by the I-T dept, such as not allowing credit for taxes already paid by the assessee, levying incorrect interest, and committing mistakes while giving effect to the appeal orders," the CAG said. The report also found that nullified demands remained in outstanding demand, and the delay in implementing appeal orders delayed refunds, result-

ing in the I-T department issuing refunds for the inflated demands with interest and harassing assessee. Audit found incorrect reporting of outstanding demand, failure or delay in recovery of outstanding demand, and systemic issues like lack of granular data, risk scoring technique in setting targets, dossier report non-maintenance.

### DGCA approves IndiGo's 6-month extension of agreement with Turkish Airlines

Delhi : The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has approved IndiGo's request to extend its agreement with Turkish Airlines, subject to regulatory conditions, the airline confirmed. Sources confirmed that the extension has been granted for 6 months, till February 28, 2026. The present extension was supposed to expire on August 31. In a statement issued by IndiGo, it said, "We acknowledge the acceptance of IndiGo's request for extension to its wet lease arrangement with Turkish Airlines, subject to conditions laid down by the regulator.

## Distributors want bottled water, aerated drinks and GST lowered

Delhi : Before the 56th GST Council meeting next month, a key consumer products distributor association has called for a reconsideration on classifying aerated beverages as "sin" commodities and a reduction in the 18% GST on bottled water. The All India Consumer Products Distributors Federation (AICPDF) said taxing aerated beverages as "sin" goods at 28% with cigarettes and tobacco ignores the fact that over 70% of sales come from small packs of 10-20 drinks, mostly consumed by



low-income groups. These products are in the highest GST slab (28%), plus a 12% compensatory cess. "Listing these with dangerous products like cigarettes and tobacco is unjust and disproportionate. It reduces affordability and demand in a sector that sustains millions of

shopkeepers "AICPDF national president Dhairyashil H Patil stated. Over 450,000 wholesalers and 13 million are represented by the federation. The federation also claimed lowering GST on bottled water from 18% will increase compliance, affordability.

## Suzuki commits to investing Rs 70,000 cr in India

Delhi : While speaking at the e-Vitara launch, Toshihiro Suzuki, President of Global Suzuki, announced that Suzuki will spend Rs 70,000 cr in India over the course of five to six years. According to the head of the manufacturer, the investment would help boost production, introduce new models, and protect the company's position in the world's third-largest automobile market. More than 11 lakh people have found direct employment in the value chain thanks to the Japanese company's investment of more than Rs 1 lakh crore in India. Production of the e-Vitara electric SUV will begin in Gujarat, India, and will go to 100 different nations. Nevertheless, e-Vitara's launch in India has not yet been scheduled. The business plans to



### Flight deck of Airbus helicopters to be manufactured by Mahindra

Delhi : An additional supplier for the main fuselage of the H125 helicopter, Mahindra Aerostructures (MASPL) has been given a contract by Airbus Helicopters, which is a boon to the "Make in India" aviation industry. Industrialization is scheduled to commence at the MASPL site in Bengaluru as per the contract, with the first fuselage delivery anticipated for 2027. After MASPL was awarded the contract to manufacture the fuselage of the H130 helicopter in April 2025, this work package was initiated. "This new contract

mence at the MASPL site in Bengaluru as per the contract, with the first fuselage delivery anticipated for 2027. After MASPL was awarded the contract to manufacture the fuselage of the H130 helicopter in April 2025, this work package was initiated. "This new contract

spend Rs 3,200 crore by FY26 to set up an electric vehicle line at the Gujarat site. There are three separate fac-

tories on the 640-acre property, with a total annual capacity of 750,000 units. image.png

## Cotton imports were duty-free till year-end

Delhi : The Centre has extended a cotton-import duty exemption until the end of the year to make the domestic garment sector more competitive, especially with the US's 50% tax on Indian exports. The Centre suspended 11% customs charges on raw fibre imports from August 19 until



September 30. The tax break would last until December 31, the finance minister declared.

Srijit Misri, a member of the Apparel Export Promotion Council, praised the decision, saying, "Council chairman Sudhir Sekhri wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting a policy initiative to save the sector and livelihoods due to the business environment and US tariffs. This move

is welcome." Tiruppur Exporters Association general secretary and Esstee Exports India Pvt Ltd chairman N Thirukumaran stated the exemption "stabilise the cotton prices in India to be at par with international prices". "The extension has come as a timely relief for the textile industry.

## Three Bangladesh-India border land ports to close

Delhi : Though the news of a decrease in the goods and services tax (GST) has brought joy to consumers and businesses alike, it has also created an unusual dilemma for brick-and-mortar and online stores. According to businesses, festive demand, which typically starts with the Ganesh holiday in Maharashtra and Onam in the south, is being subdued while consumers wait for the GST rates to truly decrease, leading to a decline in retail prices. In the days leading up to Dussehra and Diwali, the festive opening is typically a very busy time, so this



is causing us concern. Companies selling automobiles and consumer products, as well as retailers, are sitting on their hands until a decision is made on the ground, due to the news of a GST rate cut and the imminent fall in retail prices. Stores selling white goods, such as televisions, air conditioners, and dishwash-

ers, have the same challenge. Customers are already contacting us in droves to find out when they may expect to see price reductions. According to the CEO of a leading consumer products company, buyers are now saying they will wait for the price cut before taking delivery.

### Gangwal sold his 3.1% share in Indigo for more than Rs 7,000 crore.

Delhi : Interglobe Aviation (Indigo) promoter Rakesh Gangwal and the family trust are selling 1.2 crore shares, or 3.1% of the company's equity, for a minimum of Rs 7,028 crore, or \$801 million. 11 Improvements to the Cloud in 2025. The sale's term sheet said that the Indian branches of JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs, and Morgan Stanley are in charge of the block deal, which is set to conclude on Thursday at a floor price of Rs 5,808

per share, which represents a 4% discount to Interglobe Aviation's Tuesday closing. In September 2022, when he and Rahul Bhatia, another co-founder and promoter of the company, resolved their disagreement, Gangwal, one of the founding-promoters of India's leading airline, began selling his stake in the business. This will be Bhatia's eighth round of stake sale in Indigo, according to statistics from 2022.



# Ek Bhookha Magarmach!

Meet the artist who created Shanaya Kapoor's quirky 3D crocodile holding popcorn for her upcoming movie *Tu Yaa Main*



## An AI dress made for B-town celebs

A vivid red gown made completely with AI, using a 3D pen, was spotted at the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival. Created by the Mumbai-based 3D printing firm...

an entire dress and displayed it on a mannequin to show what's possible when technology meets creativity," said the team at WOL3D India. "For the dress creation, the wire goes through the PTFE tube to the nozzle, and at 200°C, the nozzle heats up, causing the wire filament to melt. The wire that melts begins to create layers, which is how we print in layers to produce the item, and that's how the dress was created."



Shanaya Kapoor and Adarsh Gourav-starrer *Tu Yaa Main* is gearing up for its release with a promising storyline where a crocodile plays a pivotal role. Around the same time, a 3D model of a popcorn-holding crocodile is grabbing attention in PVRs and on social media. A similar 3D model was spotted at the ongoing Kala Ghoda Arts Festival, and surprisingly, these non-living crocs are interconnected. These crocodile models are made by a small-sized 3D printing machine and the creative minds of WOL3D India. "We work with a lot of movies where we make their souvenirs, props, and some concepts which

are based on the movies," says Rahul Chandala, who is the CEO of WOL3D India. He mentions that the croc with a bucket of popcorn is also made by them. "In *Tu Yaa Main*, we have made this 3D-printed crocodile face for them, which has been put in all the PVR cinemas in Mumbai, with a popcorn holder in the centre. It's as realistic as any crocodile," Rahul adds. While Shanaya Kapoor and Adarsh Gourav are super occupied with the promotions of the film, the crocodile has also grabbed some eyeballs—not just in cinemas but also at the iconic Kala Ghoda Arts Festival. *Tu Yaa Main* is set to hit big screens this Valentine's Day on February 13.

## CAUGHT ON CAM

Celebs were snapped as they were out and about in Mumbai



## Game of Drones

With the recent *Dhurandhar 2* drone controversy, we look back at some of the films which have maximised the use of drone technology in Bollywood

The recent drone controversy surrounding *Dhurandhar 2* has once again put Bollywood's growing dependence on aerial filming under the scanner. Mumbai Police booked the film's location manager for allegedly flying a drone without permission in the high-security Fort area, reviving concerns over safety violations during shoots. While drones have added scale and cinematic flair to films like *Kick*, *Baby* and *Baahubali: The Conclusion*, this is probably the first time when a movie has run into trouble regarding drone usage. The bottomline, of course, is that as visual boundaries are pushed, authorities stress that creative ambition cannot override security.



**Dhurandhar 2**  
The latest controversy erupted after a drone was allegedly flown without clearance during the film's Fort shoot in South Mumbai. Police registered an FIR against the location manager under the *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita* for violating prohibitory orders. The incident occurred despite an existing ban on drone operations in sensitive zones, raising serious questions about on-set compliance and safety oversight.

**Kick**  
Salman Khan-starrer *Kick* was among the early Bollywood films to experiment with drone cameras for action sequences. The technology helped capture dynamic aerial shots during stunts and chases, adding to the thrilling scenes, and was seen as a significant technical advancement.



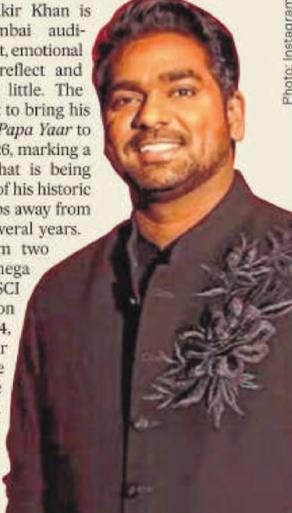
**Baby**  
The action thriller's use of octocopter drones for chase and surveillance scenes added scale, realism, tension, and cinematic flair, allowing smoother aerial movement, sharper perspectives, heightened visual impact, and a more immersive experience during high-stakes action sequences.



**Baahubali: The Conclusion**  
The film's extensive use of drones to capture large-scale sets enhanced the visual spectacle, offering dynamic aerial shots & immersive perspectives that elevated the overall cinematic experience and added scale and realism to key sequences.

## Zakir to perform in Mumbai after 5-year comedy break

Comedian Zakir Khan is giving Mumbai audiences one last, emotional reason to laugh, reflect and maybe tear up a little. The stand-up star is set to bring his much-loved show *Papa Yaar* to the city in June 2026, marking a special stop in what is being called the final leg of his historic tour, before he steps away from live comedy for several years. Zakir will perform two back-to-back mega shows at the NSCI Dome, Mumbai, on June 13 and June 14, 2026. Unlike regular tour stops, these performances are being presented as a limited Mumbai residency, making them especially significant for fans.



## PM Modi biopic *Maa Vande*'s first schedule wrapped up

The makers of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's biopic *Maa Vande*, featuring Malayalam actor Unni Mukundan in the lead, on Wednesday announced that the unit of the film had now successfully wrapped up the first schedule in Hyderabad. The makers made the announcement through a series of behind-the-scenes pictures from the sets, offering an early glimpse into the making of the ambitious biographical drama that has caught the attention of both fans and film buffs.

## *Dacoit* avoids head-to-head clash with *Dhurandhar 2* and *Toxic*

Actors Adivi Sesh and Mrunal Thakur's *Dacoit*, which was initially scheduled to release in theatres on March 19, now has a new release date. With the new release date confirmed, *Dacoit* is now set to hit cinemas on April 10, 2026. The move comes to steer clear of a head-to-head clash with other major releases, including Ranveer Singh's *Dhurandhar 2* and Yash's *Toxic*. *Dacoit* is led by Adivi Sesh, who has also co-written the film. Sesh has often supported films where the story takes centre stage, and *Dacoit* follows that pattern.



## And next up on Ott...

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ #Love</li> <li>■ Chumbak</li> <li>■ Desi Bling</li> <li>■ Dhindora Season 2</li> <li>■ Family Business</li> <li>■ Glory</li> <li>■ Hello Bachhon</li> <li>■ Kohrra Season 2</li> <li>■ Legacy</li> <li>■ Lock Upp</li> <li>■ Maamla Legal Hai Season 2</li> <li>■ Yeh Dil Sun Raha Hai</li> <li>■ Mismatched Season 4</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Musafir Cafe</li> <li>■ Operation Safed Sagar</li> <li>■ Super Subbu</li> <li>■ Talaash: A Mother's Search</li> <li>■ The Great Indian Kapil Show Season 5</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Movies</li> <li>■ Accused</li> <li>■ Gandhari</li> <li>■ Ghooskhor Pandat</li> <li>■ Hum Hindustani</li> <li>■ Ikka</li> <li>■ Kartavya</li> <li>■ Lust Stories 3</li> <li>■ Maa Behen</li> <li>■ Made In Korea</li> <li>■ Takshakudu</li> <li>■ Toaster</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|

## Briefs

## Top official of Russia's intel service shot

A deputy chief of Russia's military intelligence agency was shot and wounded in Moscow on Friday in an attack that follows a series of assassinations of senior military officers that Russia has blamed on Ukraine. Lt Gen Vladimir Alekseyev was hospitalised after being shot several times by an unidentified assailant at an apartment building in northwestern Moscow, Investigative Committee spokesperson Svetlana Petrenko said. She didn't say who could be behind the attack on the 64-year-old who has served as the first deputy head of Russia's military intelligence agency, known as the GRU, since 2011.

## Ottawa, Paris open missions in Greenland



Canada and France planned to open diplomatic consulates on Friday in the capital of Greenland, showing support for Nato ally Denmark and the Arctic island in the wake of US efforts to secure control of the semi-autonomous Danish territory. Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand was travelling to Nuuk to inaugurate the consulate officials say could help boost cooperation on issues like climate change and Inuit rights.

## Searches at Mandelson's properties

British police on Friday searched two properties linked to ex-ambassador Peter Mandelson as part of a probe into misconduct from his ties to Epstein. Metropolitan Police Deputy Assistant Commissioner Hayley Sewart said "officers from the Met's Central Specialist Crime team are in the process of carrying out search warrants at two addresses, one in Wiltshire, and another in Camden. The searches are related to a probe into misconduct in public office offences, involving a 72-year-old man."

## Storm kills 4 in Philippines

A tropical storm set off flooding and a landslide in Philippines, leaving four people dead, displacing over 6,000 and trapping residents in houses in two flooded villages, officials said. Tropical Storm Penha slammed ashore onto the southeastern Surigao del Sur from the Pacific late on Thursday. It was last tracked on Friday noon off central Bohol with sustained winds of up to 55 kmph and gusts of 70 kmph.

## Nepal bus crash kills 13

Thirteen people died when a bus carrying a wedding party met with an accident in Nepal's Sudoorpushchim on Thursday. The accident occurred when the bus fell 200 metres down the hilly road at 8pm, police said. A woman was among the 13 killed, and 40 were injured.

## PIO jailed for cheating in Singapore

An Indian-origin man has been sentenced to 23 months' jail for cheating a woman he met on Singapore's online marketplace of over SGD268,000. Thevendra Elan Goven, 31, was handed the sentence on Thursday, after he earlier pleaded guilty to one count of cheating. Two other similar charges were taken into consideration.

## IRAN-US NUCLEAR TALKS | Oman mediates negotiations as both sides prepare for war, but look to avoid confrontation

## Good start: Araghchi

MUSCAT

Iran and the United States held indirect talks in Oman over Tehran's nuclear programme on Friday, months after America bombed Iran's uranium enrichment sites and just weeks following nationwide protests that convulsed the Islamic Republic.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi described the talks as "a very good start" even as the parties met Oman's diplomat at different times at a palace in country's capital Muscat.

Both Araghchi and the Omanis described the talks themselves as focused on merely trying to find a way to hold future negotiations — seemingly returning to the start of discussions about the Iranian nuclear programme that unfolded over months a year ago, before Israel launched its 12-day war on Iran in June.

The US side, represented by US envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, President Trump's son-in-law, had no immediate comment.

In an unusual development, US Navy Admiral Brad



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) and US special envoy Steve Witkoff shake hands with Omani leader Badr al-Busaïdi, as Jared Kushner looks on in Muscat.

The consultations focused on preparing the appropriate circumstances for resuming the diplomatic and technical negotiations by ensuring the importance of these negotiations, in light of the parties' determination to ensure their success in achieving sustainable security and stability. **Omani announcement**

Cooper, the head of the American military's Central Command, also attended the meeting — something that did not happen in previous rounds and likely served as a signal to Tehran that Washington may still strike Iran if negotiations fail.

Araghchi offered cautious optimism as he spoke in a live interview from Muscat on Iranian state TV. He described talks as taking place over multiple rounds and said they were focused on finding a



framework for negotiations. "We will hold consultations with our capitals about the next steps, and the results will be conveyed to Oman foreign minister," Araghchi said. "The mistrust that has developed is a serious challenge facing the negotiations," Araghchi said.

The palace had been used by Oman in earlier talks Iran-US talks in 2025. Only after the Iranian vehicles left did another convoy, including an SUV flying the American flag, enter the grounds, where it

stayed for about an hour and a half. After that, Oman's foreign ministry said the sultanate's Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaïdi, met separately with Araghchi, the Americans.

Meanwhile, the US announced new sanctions to curb Iran's oil exports, including targeting 14 vessels. State Dept spokesman Tommy Pigott said Iran uses oil revenue to "fund destabilising activities around the world and step up its repression inside Iran". The US would order a block of any transactions with 14 vessels said to transport Iranian oil, including ships flagged from Turkey, India and the UAE. It also announced sanctions on 15 entities and two people.

## Trump rejects Putin's offer to continue nuclear limits

## START expiry: POTUS calls for new modernised treaty

Washington: US President Donald Trump has rejected a proposal from his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin to voluntarily continue observing limits on strategic nuclear weapons following the expiration of the landmark new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).

Criticising the agreement on Truth Social, Trump said, "Rather than extend 'NEW START' — a badly negotiated deal by the United States that, aside from everything else, is being grossly violated — we should have our nuclear experts work on a new, improved, and modernised treaty that can last long into the future."

The US president highlighted what he dubbed sweeping defence upgrades. "The US is the most powerful country in the world. I completely rebuilt its military in my first term, including new and many refurbished nuclear weapons." He referenced enhancements in naval forces, claiming the addition of battle-ships "100 times more powerful than the ones that roamed the seas during WWII," citing vessels such as the Iowa and the Missouri.

Trump repeated twice in a single day the claim he stopped the India-Pakistan conflict last year. "In one year, I've ended eight raging wars, such as (the war between) Cambodia and Thailand, Kosovo and Serbia, Pakistan and India, Israel and Iran, Armenia and Azerbaijan," Trump said at the National Prayer Breakfast on Thursday. Later on Truth Social, the Republican president reiterated the claim he stopped a

nuclear war from breaking out between India and Pakistan. It was his 90th claim.

Further, Trump told lawmakers and religious leaders faith was central to America's strength, declaring "prayer is America's superpower" as he addressed the National Prayer Breakfast (pic). "This is a beautiful American tradition," he said, adding, "Prayer strengthens. Prayer heals. Prayer empowers. Prayer saves."

He announced the launch of TrumpRx.gov, a new federal website offering steep discounts on dozens of prescription drugs. Meanwhile, in an essay, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said past arms control pacts helped make the US safer but warned bilateral treaties with Russia no longer reflect today's strategic realities. "Everything has its season, though, and yesterday, NEW START expired," Rubio wrote, rejecting claims the treaty's end signals a US-driven arms race. He noted Russia stopped implementing the deal in 2023 "after flouting its terms for years."

Also, a row erupted between Polish PM Donald Tusk and US envoy Tom Rose, who warned of action against Polish Speaker Włodzimierz Czarzasty for criticising Trump over Nobel nomination. —Agencies



## H-1B VISAS, 'INDIAN TAKEOVER' Meet turns combative

Washington: A furious clash over immigration, demographics, and belonging dominated a Frisco City Council meeting recently. This, after right-wing activists from across North Texas converged on the suburban Texas city to allege H-1B visa fraud.

They reportedly warned of what they described as an "Indian takeover." It prompted a forceful response from Indian-origin residents who said their presence strengthened the community rather than harmed it. The packed meeting became a verbal confrontation between dozens of individuals wearing America First hats, Punisher masks, and other right-wing symbols, and Indian-American citizens of Frisco.

Reports said the gathering was mobilised after conserva-

tive social media influencers Kaylee Campbell and Marc Palasciano urged disgruntled North Texans to attend and speak out against what they framed as a massive demographic shift driven by immigration. People came angry. Many were not from Frisco. They talked about fraud, visas, and fear. The room was loud and sharp, and the words "Indian takeover" were repeated. None of the right-wing speakers were residents of Frisco and they had come from different parts of North Texas to protest what they believed was large-scale fraud in the H-1B visa programme.

Indian-origin population in Frisco has risen sharply. Critics link it to H-1B visa system, noting 75% of all H-1B visas are issued to Indian professionals, as per USCIS. —Agencies

## HALL OF SHAME: 89 Indians on US list of 'criminal illegal aliens'

Washington: As many as 89 people of Indian origin feature on a US government list categorising "criminal illegal aliens" as part of President Donald Trump's renewed crackdown on illegal immigration, according to data released by Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The list is part of a publicly accessible database launched by DHS that includes details of roughly 25,000 individuals arrested by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement and US Customs and Border Protection.

The database identifies those convicted of serious offences, including murder, sexual crimes and drug trafficking. The portal provides names, photographs, nationalities and criminal records of



Amandeep Multani and Harjinder Singh are on DHS's 'worst of worst' list

those included. Announcing its launch on social media, DHS said the database was created "so Americans can see the criminal illegal aliens we are arresting, their crimes, and the communities we removed them from."

Describing the data as only a partial picture, it said the list represents "a snapshot" of arrests made under the Trump administration.

"These individuals have terrorised our communities," DHS said, adding, enforce-

ment efforts would continue until such offenders are removed. It said Americans should not be victimised by illegal people.

Meanwhile, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said no illegal immigrants had been released into the US over the past nine months, calling it a "remarkable achievement" of the Trump administration.

Furthermore, a Minneapolis man was arrested for cyberstalking and threatening to kill or assault ICE agents in Minnesota. Federal prosecutors said Kyle Wagner, 37, of Minneapolis, was charged by complaint, and a decision to seek an indictment, necessary to take the case to trial, would be made soon. —Agencies

## Baloch activist to Norway: Do not host Pak's rights abusers

Quetta: Leading Baloch human rights defender Mir Yar Baloch on Friday cautioned the Norwegian Government against hosting Pakistan's former caretaker PM Anwar ul Haq Kakar and Balochistan's "puppet" CM Sarfaraz Bugti during their scheduled visit from February 15-17, accusing them of human rights violations.

The rights activist alleged Pakistani leaders set to visit Norway on the pretext of a "briefing" on Balochistan are linked to Pakistan's ISI, have collaborated with terror groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIS, and are responsible for the alleged genocide of the Baloch people.

Meanwhile, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) has claimed its operation "Operation Herof II" is continuing into its sixth consecutive day, rejecting statements issued by Pakistan's military media wing as propaganda.

The claims were made on February 5 by BLA spokesperson Jeevand Baloch. —Agencies

## US TO INVEST \$1.3BN IN BALOCHISTAN

Pakistan has secured nearly \$1.3 billion worth of commitments from the US for a copper and gold mining project in the South Asian nation's sensitive Balochistan province, marking a major foreign investment in one of the world's largest undeveloped mineral deposits. The Reko Diq project, located near the Pakistan-Iran border, is a total \$7 billion project in the remote, insurgency-hit western province and is expected to start production by the end of 2028.

## PAK KILLS 24 ULTRAS

Pakistani forces have killed 24 terrorists in separate intelligence-based operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the military's media wing said. "On Feb 4-5, 24 khawarij (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan terrorists) belonging to Fitna-al-Khawarij were killed in two engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," Inter-Services Public Relations said. —Agencies

## Cuba open to talks with US but not under pressure: Prez

Havana: President Miguel Diaz-Canel stated Cuba was open to dialogue with the US on any issue but firmly rejected talks under duress, amid escalating tensions and severe fuel shortages triggered by US pressure following a military operation in Venezuela.

Diaz-Canel insisted, "Cuba is willing to engage in dialogue with the United States, a dialogue on any topic... but without pressure or preconditions." He emphasised negotiations must occur "from a position of equals, with respect for our sovereignty, our independence and our self-determination", and without "interference in our internal affairs."

Further, after tensions rose between Cuba and the US, Santa Cruz del Norte has plunged into darkness and people cook here with coal and firewood. —Agencies

## Hadi killing: Clashes outside Yunus house



Dhaka: More than 50 people were injured on Friday when police used force to disperse protests by students and supporters of Inqilab Moncho outside the official residence of Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus in Dhaka, days ahead of the general election on February 12.

The protests were called to demand punishment for the accused of killing Inqilab Moncho founder Osman Hadi. Demonstrators gathered near Shahbagh and tried to march towards Yunus' residence, the state guest house Jamuna, where they were stopped by police barricades.

When protesters tried to

push through, police used batons, water cannons, tear gas and sound grenades to disperse the crowd. Protesters threw bricks, according to media reports. Uniformed troops were also deployed to block access to the residence.

Bangladesh's 'Daily Sun' reported Inqilab Moncho member secretary Abdullah Al Jaber suffered "bullet injuries" during the clashes, citing a statement posted by the group on social media.

Fresh violence also erupted earlier in the day when govt employees protesting over the implementation of the 9th pay scale were dispersed using similar methods. —Agencies

## FRANCE MOVES TO FIGHT INFERTILITY

PARIS

With highest fertility rates in Europe, France has reported its lowest birth rate since the World War II with only 6,43,773 births in 2025, according to the French national statistical bureau INSEE.

As the birth rate continues to plummet, the government has launched an ambitious plan to fight infertility and help citizens have children.

The plan, launched by French Health Minister Stéphanie Rist, comprises 16 measures to cover prevention, diagnosis, treatment and medical innovation. It is also in line with French President Emmanuel Macron's appeal for "demographic rearmament" he made in 2024.

Strikingly, it will send out letters to citizens aged 29 or older by this summer-end; 29 is the legal age to freeze eggs or sperm, as per the bioethics law passed by French government in 2021.

"This is not about telling people to have children," Rist emphasised, "but about ensuring everyone can make

informed personal choices."

The ministry explains one of every eight infertile couples in France suffers due to medical, environmental, behavioural and social causes. To encourage people to consider preservation of eggs, the government plans to increase egg-freezing facilities from 40 to 70 by 2028. Negotiations to involve private players and maintain the long-standing French tradition of free egg donation are in progress.

It is also focusing on the study of fertility and maternal health, including diagnosis and study of endometriosis and PCOD (polycystic ovarian disease), the major causes of infertility among women. Research on the effects of environmental pollutants and endocrine disruptors will be given priority.

MP Jérémie Patrier-Leitus, who assisted with drafting a report on France's declining birth rate, believes France can increase its fertility rates without adopting a pro-natalist strategy. "Too many people are giving up on having children," Rist says. "We need to help people, not convince them."

## Three African nations to take back UK illegals

London: Three African nations have agreed to take back their nationals who entered the UK illegally or were convicted of other offences following a threat to shut down their visas.

Officials said Namibia and Angola have agreed to cooperate on migrant returns a month after Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood threatened visa penalties. The Democratic Republic of Congo fell in line weeks after the minister stripped VIPs and decision-makers from the country of preferential visa treatment, revoking fast-track visa processing services for DR Congo. —PTI

## Close to trade deal with China: South Africa

Cape Town: China and South Africa signed a framework agreement for a new trade deal on Friday as Africa's leading economy looks to other options following the high import tariffs imposed on it by the US and its diplomatic fallout with the Trump administration.

South Africa's Ministry of Trade and Industry said the pact would start negotiations over a deal that would give South African goods, such as fruit, duty-free access to the Chinese market. It expected the trade deal to be finalised by the end of March. —AP

## Crisis-hit Lebanon finds itself sitting on gold mine

Bourj Hammoud: Tiny Lebanon sits on one of the largest gold reserves in West Asia and its government is weighing whether it can use that stockpile to restore a crippled economy while its citizens are looking at gold as a way to protect their battered assets.

Lebanon's economy hobbled into 2026 with ongoing inflation and state decay, and no reforms to combat corruption in sight. Its banks collapsed in late 2019 in a crippling fiscal crisis that



evaporated depositors' savings and plunged about half its population of 6.5 million into poverty, after decades of rampant corruption, waste, and

mismanagement. The country suffered \$70 billion in losses in its financial sector, further compounded by \$11 billion in the 2024 war between Israel

and the Hezbollah militant group.

Global central banks have been among the most avid buyers of the yellow metal. Silver prices have also surged due to industrial demand and the attractiveness of a much lower price than gold.

The central bank in Beirut has maintained a reserve of 286 tons of gold — some nine million ounces — since the 1960s. Only Saudi Arabia's central bank holds more in the region.

The government is con-

sidering using some of its gold reserves to bail out the banks and pay back depositors who got wiped out. But doing so would not only go against historical precedent, but also violate a 1980s-era law. Meanwhile, those depositors would like to make up some of their losses by buying gold and silver, hoping prices will bounce back from the downturn of recent days and hit new highs. At one point, the value of Lebanon's gold reserves reached \$50 billion — over double Lebanon's own GDP.

## Trump backs Japan's Takaichi ahead of poll

Donald Trump has endorsed Japan's PM Sanae Takaichi ahead of a snap poll in her country on Sunday, BBC reported.

Takaichi has "already proven to be a strong, powerful, and wise leader... one that truly loves her country," the US president wrote in a Truth Social post on Thursday, adding: "She will not let the people of Japan down!"

While it is rare for US presidents to publicly back candi-



dates in foreign elections, Trump has done so before, endorsing Argentina's Javier Milei and Hungary's Viktor Orban most recently. Takaichi has courted the US president as Tokyo seeks stability in its ties with Washington.

## Briefs

CHANDIGARH  
**'Fed Cup trials eligibility norms unfair'**



Questioning the eligibility norms for Federation Cup trials, international wrestler-turned politician **Vinesh Phogat**, who is Congress MLA from Julana constituency in Haryana's Jind district, has termed them unfair. Vinesh, a three-time Olympian, who has won gold medals at both the Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games, had announced her retirement from wrestling following her disqualification from the 2024 Paris Olympics gold medal bout.

MUMBAI  
**'Netravalkar feels defence best to attack'**



He played a key role in victory over Pakistan and also snaffed two key wickets against India to push USA's charge in the last T20 World Cup. But while playing in the Indian subcontinent, defence may be the best form of attack, says USA's **Saurabh Netravalkar**. One of the three players from Mumbai to take the field against India in the T20 World Cup opener here on Saturday, Netravalkar is on the cusp of making "dream debut" here at the Wankhede Stadium but is aware of the challenges.

MUMBAI  
**'USA team not underdogs anymore'**



Having sprung a few surprises in the previous edition of the T20 World Cup, the USA team is not underdogs anymore and the world No. 1 India will be "just another opponent" this time around, says vice-captain **Jasdeep Singh**. USA will begin their campaign with a clash against defending champions India here on Saturday at the Wankhede Stadium, looking to build on their impressive show from last edition when they made it to Super Eight. "We are a far better team than 2024, we were pretty new on the scene but this time surely we are not the underdogs."

## Suryakumar all praise for power-packed Kishan

Harshit Rana has been ruled out of the competition; Siraj replaces him

MUMBAI

India captain Suryakumar Yadav lavished praise on the in-form Ishan Kishan stating the southpaw has been maintaining his form from domestic cricket in the international arena as well.

Suryakumar was addressing the media during the pre-match press conference prior to the T20 World Cup opener against the USA at the Wankhede Stadium.

"The way he played cricket in the last 5 T20Is. It was an international game. That's why he showed so much aggression. But if you look at his batting in domestic cricket he was playing, in the Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20. He batted like this.

And he came here and carried the same thing. Whether it was while opening the batting or at number three. He has grabbed the opportunities he has got," he added.

Kishan was on song against South Africa in the World Cup warm-up clobbering a brilliant 53 off just 20 balls showcasing his devastating form lately. "He opened in the warm-up game. So I hope he bats like this. Whatever position he plays. He won't play below 3. But he will bat like this," Suryakumar added.

**Rana ruled out**

Suryakumar indicated it will be a big blow for India to miss out on the services of all-rounder **Harshit Rana** as he has

We have 11 players for tomorrow. But it is a big blow not to have Harshit in the XI. If you make a squad of 15 players, you make a lot of

been ruled out of the World Cup with pacer Mohammad Siraj approved by the ICC as replacement player.

"We have 11 players for tomorrow. But it is a big blow not to have Harshit in the XI. If you make a squad of 15 players, you make a lot of combinations. You make this squad with that in mind. We made it with that in mind."

"And if he's not available for us going forward. Then we will set other combinations. But we have enough players. We have enough combinations against all the teams," he added.

"We will definitely miss him." Suryakumar said all games that India play in the World Cup will be important matches.

"All the games we will play from tomorrow, like from the warm up game. Warm up game was important for us. To set the tone for the World Cup.

And if you play against any team all the games will be important. You can't take any team lightly."



PREVIEW | Monank Patel's side will be up against it when they face the holders

## Superpower India take on USA

MUMBAI

When defending champions India take on Monank Patel's USA side in their ICC Men's T20 World Cup opener at the Wankhede Stadium, here on Saturday, Suryakumar Yadav and his men will leave no stone unturned to put up a command performance.

For India, the overwhelming favourites to clinch and defend their world crown, no match is to be taken lightly and not at the least a World Cup opener against a team that stunned Pakistan in the previous edition in 2024.

To get a sense of how dominant India have been in the format, the world champions have a win-loss record of 48-8 (excluding Super Over results, where they are 3-0) in T20Is since October 2023 and it is no wonder why they are hands down favourites from that point of view.

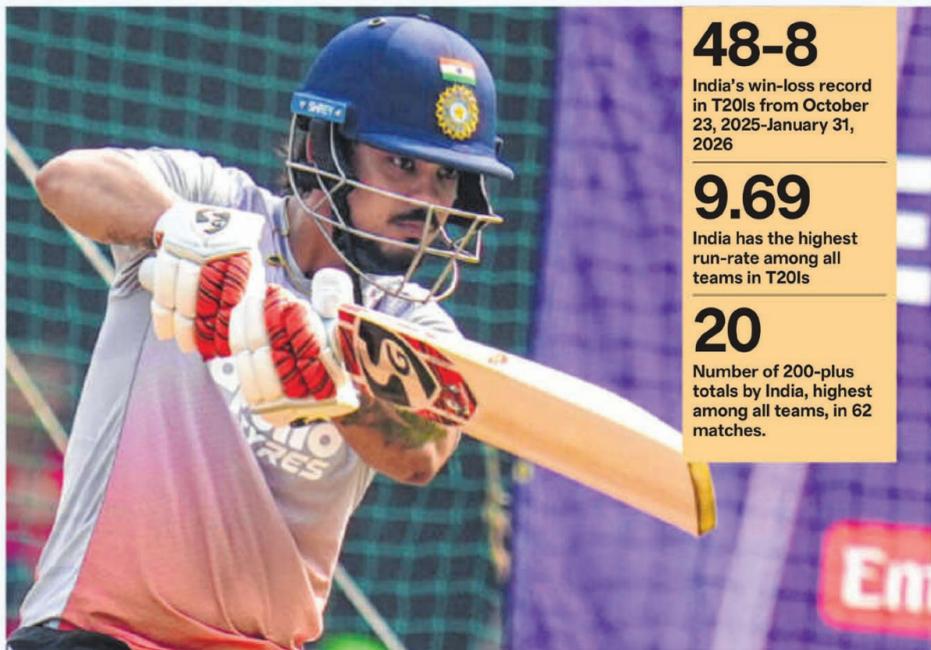
What makes their case even stronger is the ominous batting they possess in their ranks and the stats don't lie in this case as well.

The explosive willow power that India bring to the table can be illustrated well by the fact that they have the highest run-rate of 9.69, which is the best among all T20I teams while also being the team with the most 200-plus totals between October 2023 and January 2026, which is 20 in 62 matches.

West Indies are second in this regard at 13 from 61 matches and New Zealand have 10 in 51.

It is in this context that the amateurs from the United States of America take on the cricketing superpower in their own backyard at the iconic Wankhede.

There won't be much respite for Monank Patel and his men except for the fact that India will in all likelihood be without the services of all-



India's Ishan Kishan bats during a training session ahead of the T20 World Cup match against USA. PTI

### Teams

**India:** Suryakumar Yadav (c), Ishan Kishan (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Axar

Patel (vc), Shivam Dube, Hardik Pandya, Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh, Kuldeep Yadav, Harshit Rana, Varun Chakravarthy.

**USA:** Monank Patel (c), Andries Gous (wk), Saiteja Mulkamallu, Shayan Jahangir, Harmeet Singh, Shehan Jayasuriya, Sanjay Krishnamurthi, Milind Kumar, Mohammad

Mohsin, Shubham Ranjane, Shadley van Schalkwyk, Ali Khan, Jasdeep Singh, Nosthush Kenjige, Saurabh Netravalkar.

**48-8**

India's win-loss record in T20Is from October 23, 2025-January 31, 2026

**9.69**

India has the highest run-rate among all teams in T20Is

**20**

Number of 200-plus totals by India, highest among all teams, in 62 matches.

rounder Harshit Rana as he is down with an injury, which as per sources is believed to be joint tenderness and is under the observation of the physios.

Apart from that, India are all good to go and the turbo-charged opening combo from the warm-up match against South Africa, Abhishek Sharma and Ishan Kishan, are likely to front up for India again on Saturday when they play USA.

Sanju Samson's loss of form has perhaps come at the wrong time for him as India are firing on all cylinders and

the team management would not like to lose that momentum and especially up the order.

The rest of the batters are in rollicking form and would be raring to go come Saturday against the USA.

Be it skipper Suryakumar Yadav, who has regained form and touch just in time for the marquee event, or Tilak Varma or Hardik Pandya or Rinku Singh.

India have an enviable lineup of batting riches and although it is left-hand heavy, the management would not

mind that as long as they keep delivering the goods every single time as they have done in the last two years or so.

Expecting USA to create an upset here would be asking for too much perhaps but Monank Patel will have to play the finest innings of his life to run India close. He has struck a half-century against

Pakistan in their famous win at the 2024 T20 World Cup and would probably take inspiration from there.

USA had won a thrilling North America T20 Cup final against Canada, also trium-

phant 3-0 in a series against Oman last February.

Saiteja Mulkamallu is the visiting side's highest-ranked batter at 25th in the world, sitting above the likes of Harry Brook and Cameron Green.

The 21-year-old already has international hundreds in both white-ball formats and possesses an average of 42.60 in T20s. To put it in short, USA will be playing perhaps the biggest match in their history.

Having made a name for themselves two years ago, the USA will be searching to beat it up on foreign soil.

## India runaway favourites in most politicised global event

The event gets underway across three different venues in India and SL

NEW DELHI

It's the largest ever but also perhaps the most politically charged with off-field drama hogging the limelight in a turbulent buildup.

The T20 World Cup gets underway across three different venues in India and Sri Lanka on Saturday. And though the title favourites tag is firmly attached to the Suryakumar Yadav-led defending champion India, potential winners or players to look forward to have hardly been the talking point so far.

It's been an unprecedented mixing of politics with sport in the run up to the event, which has expanded from 16 to 20 teams this time.

Bangladesh have been ousted after refusing to play in India because of their security concerns and Pakistan have announced a boycott of their game against India as a gesture of support to the neighbours.

Both countries have held India responsible for the turmoil, which began after Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur



India's captain Suryakumar Yadav during a training session. PTI

Rahman was released from an IPL contract on BCCI instructions.

Bangladesh's refusal to be in India was also down to Rahman's exit, which hurt their "national pride".

As a result, it would be Scotland padding up against the West Indies in Kolkata on Saturday.

The entire drama got doubly intriguing after Pakistan decided to go on a proverbial fishing expedition in muddied waters by show-

ing their solidarity looking at the bigger political picture.

Pakistan had their Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif, diving in to justify the decision, calling it appropriate.

Even before a delivery has been bowled, ICC and its broadcasters are staring at potential losses while Pakistan is preparing for some severe sanctions that can have far-reaching consequences.

While the recent Indo-Pak contests at global events have more often than not been lop-

### ONLY INDIA CAN SPOIL OWN PARTY

While T20 remains a format of bare minimum margins, it seems India would be vulnerable only to a self-inflicted implosion, rather than opposition brilliance.

sided, there is no denying the fact that the game still remains a cash-cow for the global cricket economy.

Aside from the drama, the cricket looks set to be dominated by India.

Despite the hype associated with this edition's scale of participation, one isn't really sure that there are enough teams to challenge India's hegemony at least in this format.

If the game against Pakistan eventually happens at Premadasa, it would test the young Indian batters on a slightly tricky surface where Mohammed Nawaz, Abrar Ahmed and surprise package -- side-armer Usman Tariq -- have the best chance of asking a few questions.

KOLKATA

Scotland will look to show their last-minute entry into the T20 World Cup was no fluke when they open their campaign against two-time champions West Indies here on Saturday, turning an unexpected opportunity into a chance to rattle bigger rivals.

Following negotiations with the Bangladesh Cricket Board for close to a month, the ICC were eventually forced to replace Bangladesh with Scotland, who thus made a dramatic entry to the global showpiece barely two weeks before the start.

Bangladesh had four group matches scheduled in India, including three in Kolkata, but the BCB remained adamant about not travelling, citing "security concerns".

It all began after the BCCI on January 3 instructed Kolkata Knight Riders to release Mustafizur Rahman from their IPL 2026 squad amid deteriorating relations between India and Bangladesh.

All hell broke loose a day later as the BCB informed the ICC that the Bangladesh team would not travel for its matches to India and remained adamant, opening the door for Scotland based on their ranking.

But the late entrants Scotland, who came fourth in the European Qualifier, behind Netherlands, Italy and Jersey, insisted they are not merely stand-ins.

Scotland: Richie Berrington (captain), Tom Bruce, Matthew Cross, Bradley Currie, Oliver Davidson, Chris Greaves, Zainulab Hsan, Michael Jones, Michael Leask, Finlay McCreath, Brandon McMullen, George Munsey, Safyaan Sharif, Mark Watt, Brad Wheel.

### Teams

**West Indies:** Shai Hope (captain), Johnson Charles, Roston Chase, Matthew Forde, Shimron Hetmyer, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Gudakesh Motie, Rovman Powell, Sherfane Rutherford, Quentin Simpson, Jayden Seales, Romario Shepherd.

**Scotland:** Richie Berrington (captain), Tom Bruce, Matthew Cross, Bradley Currie, Oliver Davidson, Chris Greaves, Zainulab Hsan, Michael Jones, Michael Leask, Finlay McCreath, Brandon McMullen, George Munsey, Safyaan Sharif, Mark Watt, Brad Wheel.

### Preview

## Avoiding outside noise best way, says Pak's Salman



PTI

COLOMBO

Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha on Friday said the team will try to shut out the off-field noise surrounding its planned boycott of the India match and instead focus on winning remaining group games to qualify for the T20 World Cup Super Eight stage.

Pakistan, who won the title in 2009, are coming into the tournament in the wake of their decision to boycott

the February 15 group game against arch-rivals India in solidarity with Bangladesh, who were replaced by Scotland after refusing to travel to India citing security concerns.

Asked how he would deal with the situation, Salman told reporters: "By just avoiding that. It's something we, as a group, we don't really talk about and we don't really see what's happening outside in the group. And I think that's the best we can do. We can avoid all this and just focus

on our game." Since September last year, Indian cricket teams have adopted a no-handshake policy with Pakistan counterparts in international matches in solidarity with victims of the Pahalgam attack.

"We don't really feel hurt or anything like that. But for the game it is not good. These things obviously should not happen," Salman said.

"Growing up as a kid, I've always seen people doing what was required for the

game to be improved. We, to some extent, are role models. If you do that, then kids are going to pick up this and tomorrow, they are going to do the same things.

"So, I think these things should not happen. Because if you think of role models, I think role models don't do this stuff." Boycotting the match against India means Pakistan will lose the 2 points on offer and thus the former champions need to win their remaining three group games to enter the

knock out stage.

Apart from the India, Pakistan also have the Netherlands, USA and Namibia in their group.

Asked if there is any pressure on the team to win the first two matches, Salman said: "No, there is no pressure at all because whenever you come to an ICC tournament, you have to win almost all of your games.

And when we came here, we thought that we will win all the games and give our best," he added.

English Daily  
**AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH**

Title Code  
**UPENG04488**

Prayagraj  
Printer, Publisher &  
Owner Swami Shree  
Yogi Satyam for  
Yog Satsanga Samiti

Printed at  
**PARASHAKTI OFFSET**  
118A/2A Chaukhandi  
Kydganj, Prayagraj-211003  
Uttar Pradesh

Published from  
Kriyayoga Asharam  
& Anusandhan Sansthan  
Jhansi, Prayagraj-211019

Editor:  
**SWAMI SHREE YOGI SATYAM**

All disputes of news and  
publication against the  
**AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH**  
are the subject matter of  
Allahabad Jurisdiction.

Email ID:  
akhandbharatsandesh1@gmail.com  
Mob. 9415235084, 9565333000