

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Title Code - UPENG04488

NATIONAL ENGLISH DAILY

MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

Thursday, 26 December, 2024

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

## PM Modi launches Ken-Betwa link project, hails Ambedkar vision



**KHAJURAHO:** Attacking the Congress for not acknowledging the vision and contribution of BR Ambedkar in developing water resources, harnessing jal shakti and construction of dams, PM Narendra Modi Wednesday said no one knows about his work since the "truth was suppressed to give credit to just one person while the real idol (Ambedkar) was forgotten." Modi was addressing Bundelkhand farmers and BJP workers here

Wednesday after laying the foundation stone for the Ken-Betwa national river linking project, to mark the birth centenary of former PM Atal Behari Vajpayee whose govt first planned the Ken-Betwa river linking 23 years ago. The project will bring 8.11 lakh hectare land under irrigation in 10 districts in the parched Bundelkhand region in Madhya Pradesh while the 221-km-long Ken-Betwa canal will irrigate 59,000 hectares

of agricultural land in Uttar Pradesh and stabilise water supply over 1.92 hectares in the state's Mahoba, Jhansi, Lalitpur and Banda districts. "After Independence, who worked for jal shakti and water resources? No one knows," PM Modi said, adding, "If one person is to be credited for his work on India's jal shakti, water resources and construction of dams, it is Babasaheb Ambedkar. Not only did the Congress not give him any recognition for it,

**It was Ambedkar's vision behind the construction of mega dams**

He said it was Ambedkar's vision behind the construction of mega dams in the country and the creation of the Central Water Commission. Modi said when his govt was formed in 2014, there were more than a hundred incomplete irrigation projects in the country. "In the past, just made announcements, cut ribbons, lit lamps and got photographs printed in newspapers. Their objective was just that and people never benefitted," Modi said. "After taking charge of the Prime Minister's office, I reviewed past projects and I was amazed. Not an iota of work was done on projects where foundation stones were laid 35 to 40 years ago. Congress govts did not have either the intention or the seriousness to implement.

## Shah launches 10k multipurpose co-ops, eyes 2 lakh target before-time

**NEW DELHI:** Union home and cooperation minister Amit Shah on Wednesday announced the launch of 10,000 Multipurpose Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (M-PACS), and said govt's target to establish 2 lakh such new societies within the next five years would be achieved ahead of schedule under a vision to have "presence of cooperatives in every panchayat" across the country. The new M-PACS, which include credit societies as well as dairy and fisheries



cooperatives, will be engaged in 32 activities, including storage and distribution of manure, gas, fertilisers, and water, making them more versatile and effective. The minister said once the target of 2 lakh PACS is

achieved, it will play a vital role in ensuring easy availability of essential agricultural resources and facilitate seamless integration of farmers' produce into global markets through robust forward and backward linkages.

On the occasion, coinciding with the birth centenary of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Shah distributed RuPay Kisan Credit Cards to farmers and micro-ATMs to 10 new cooperative societies. Shah said every primary dairy will soon be equipped with a micro-ATM and these tools will enable farmers to access low-cost loans, facilitating financial inclusion and support. The minister said Nabard will form 22,750 PACS in the first phase and 47,250 in the second.

## 'Elon is a Russian agent' claims reportedly worry US Air Force chief; Elon Musk and SpaceX under probe

**Elon Musk and his aerospace company, SpaceX, are reportedly currently under investigation by three separate US military branches for potential violations of reporting protocols. The New York Times reports that Musk has repeatedly**



disregarded requirements to disclose meetings with foreign

leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The investigations are being conducted by the Defense Department's Inspector General, the Air Force, and the Pentagon's intelligence and security office. The Air Force has reportedly denied Musk's request for higher-level security clearance.

## RS deputy chairman Harivansh dismisses opposition notice seeking removal of VP Dhankhar



**NEW DELHI:** Rajya Sabha deputy chairman Harivansh has dismissed the impeachment notice submitted by the opposition seeking the removal of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday. He ruled that it was an attempt of the opposition of impropriety, being severely flawed and drawn in haste to damage the reputation of Dhankhar. The ruling given by the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha today on the motion of no confidence in the Chairman submitted by INDIA parties contains a reference to some remarks made by me in a press conference held on Dec 12, 2024. This reference takes liberties with facts - to put it mildly. The ruling, presented to the House by Secretary General P C Mody, said that the notice was designed to undermine constitutional institutions and malign the incumbent the Vice President. The impeachment notice was signed by 60 opposition members seeking the removal of Dhankhar from his post on December 10. They alleged him of being "biased."

The deputy chairman further said that the "personally targeted" notice lacked a factual basis and appeared to be aimed at securing publicity. He ruled that the notice was a "misadventure" in "deliberate trivialising and demeaning" of the high constitutional office of the Vice President of the largest democracy. According to sources, the deputy chairman's ruling emphasised that the notice contained

## ED to contest SC freeze on probe against lottery king

**NEW DELHI:** ED will contest an order passed by Supreme Court on Dec 13 putting on hold all investigation against Chennai-based 'lottery king' Santiago Martin, where the apex court, in an ex-parte interim order, barred the agency from unlocking and looking into the contents of his iPhone 15 Pro and electronic devices seized from



his employees during last month's searches on his premises. The top court has also put on hold summons issued to Martin for two months. Sources in the agency said the court order

was "unprecedented" as it had put on hold all investigation against Martin "indefinitely" and also stopped the agency from routine work related to the probe, such as examining the

seizure documents and devices, and summoning the accused. "These days, all documents and communications are digitally stored, either in phones or laptops/computers. Where do you look for evidence if you don't recover them from phones or other digital devices?" a source said. An SC bench of Justices Abhay S Oka

## Can't blame EVMs without proof, says NCP's Supriya Sule

**PUNE:** Baramati MP and NCP(SP) senior functionary Supriya Sule on Wednesday said she cannot find fault with EVMs without proof, but added that discussions were needed to uncover the truth as others have claimed to possess evidence



of manipulation. "I think it is not right for me to make allegations until I have some concrete evidence

in hand. I won four polls with the same EVMs," she told reporters during her visit to Pune. She, however,

noted that several people and political parties, including BJD and AAP, have claimed to possess data proving their allegations of EVM manipulation. She mentioned that BJD's Amar Patnaik had shared some data in a letter to her.

## 'Irom was also under medical watch': SC asks Punjab to conduct Dallewal's health tests

**NEW DELHI:** Irom Sharmila also continued with her protest under medical supervision, the Supreme Court on Thursday said and asked the Punjab government to convince 70-year-old farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who is on an indefinite fast, to undergo a health examination. The top court pulled



up the Punjab government

for not conducting medical tests on Dallewal, who is on an indefinite fast at Punjab-Haryana Khanauri border. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan said while no one was trying to uproot the farmers' protest, it only wanted to ensure Dallewal's safety, calling him a "mass leader".

## Comes to aid of ex-soldier's kin, grants disability pension

**CHANDIGARH:** Punjab and Haryana HC has ordered that a disability pension be granted to the legal heirs of a soldier who was discharged on medical grounds for neurosis which manifested as recurrent nightmares after his lover killed herself, reports Ajay Sura. A division bench comprising Justice Sureshwar Thakur and Justice Sudeepti Sharma passed these orders recently while allowing a plea filed by a former Indian Army gunner from Punjab's Hoshiarpur. The petitioner, who had moved HC in 2020, died on May 14, 2021, during the pendency of the case, which was represented by his legal heirs after his death. The soldier was enrolled in the Indian Army on July 30, 1971.

## Elon Musk says his \$1 billion offer to Wikipedia "still stands"



**Elon Musk's** unconventional proposal to rename Wikipedia for \$1 billion remains open. Musk made the offer in response to a post stating, "Wikipedia is not for sale," and noted that the offer would be valid for at least one year. Doge Designer, a frequent recipient of Musk's replies on X, recently shared the contents of the post, prompting a response from Musk confirming that the offer still stands. "Elon Musk

once offered Wikipedia \$1 billion to change their name to 'Dickipedia,' the post from Doge Designer read. Musk was quick to respond saying, "True. Offer still stands." Whether Wikipedia will take Musk up on his offer remains to be seen. However, the offer itself - extended in October last year - has generated significant attention. Last year, Musk shared a photo which read, "Wikipedia is not for sale."



## Today Event

Veer Bal Diwas program will be organized by North Central Region Cultural Centre, Ministry of Culture, Government of India on Thursday in the auditorium of the Cultural Center from 2 pm onwards.

## Sub Inspector Romesh Mani, Constable Hansraj Yadav, Yogendra suspended BJP members surrounded Dhumanganj police station and demanded suspension

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: Succumbing to the pressure by BJP leaders, Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Bharti has suspended Sub Inspector Romesh Mani, Constable Hansraj Yadav, and Yogendra suspended with immediate effect.

BJP Pritam Nagar Mandal President Sanjay Kushwaha was beaten with sticks and slaps in front of his own house by Inspector Romesh Mani Tripathi of Dhumanganj police station along with two of his constables. According to the information, Inspector Romesh Mani Tripathi asked Sanjay Kushwaha about someone's address. When they were not told, they started abusing



and being rude and when Mandal President Sanjay Kushwaha protested, they started beating them. They were taken to the police station and put in lock-up, on receiving information on the spot, a large number of workers reached Dhumanganj police station and sat on a dharna, there is a lot of anger among the workers regarding this, on the spot BJP Mahanagar Nagar President Rajendra Mishra, General Secretary Ravi Kesarwani, District Spokesperson Rajesh Kesarwani, Yuva Morcha President Pappu Pandey, Councilor Amarjeet Kushwaha Pappu Kesarwani Prem Narayan Kesarwani Rakesh Jain, Shubham Bala Mandal President Yamuna Patti Gyan Babu Kesarwani reached Dhooman Ganj police station and demanded the Police Commissioner to register a case against the culprits and Inspector Romesh Mani Tripathi.

## Fire dept conducted mock drill in Netra Kumbh complex

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: On Wednesday, the fire department conducted a fire mock drill in the Netra Kumbh complex located in Mahakumbh Nagar. About a dozen fire department personnel including officers participated in the mock drill. During this period, rehearsals were conducted to deal with any possible emergency situation. There was also a fire fast kit response vehicle and two fire tender vehicles at the spot. Along with this, practice will be conducted on a large scale in a day or two. It is known that the construction work for Netra Kumbh Camp in Sector 6 of Mahakumbh Nagar is going on in full swing. About five lakh eye patients will be treated here till Mahakumbh. Besides, there will be free distribution of three lakh spectacles. Netra Kumbh will be inaugurated on January 5.



Renowned ophthalmology specialist doctors of the country will treat eye patients. Three vehicles of the fire department reached the Netra Kumbh camp at around 1 pm on Wednesday afternoon. This included two fire tender vehicles with the capacity to hold two and a half thousand liters of water and one fire fast kit response vehicle. When the vehicles reached the camp premises with sirens playing, hundreds of employees working there became alert. Fire personnel immediately started practicing to deal with disaster in case of emergency. This program lasted for about an hour. In this context, Fire Officer II, Ketan Kumar and Sandeep Tanwar said that the fire mock drill was successful. Officials said that on normal days, fire department vehicles would reach here within a minute or two of receiving the information. It may take longer on busy days. At the same time, in a day or two, a mock drill will be conducted here on a large scale in the presence of the department's Deputy Director Aman Sharma and Sector Magistrate Rajesh Shukla.

## Karishma Hada paid obeisance to Bade Hanumanji

Prayagraj: Karishma Hada, founder of Karni Kripa Foundation, visited the famous temple of Lord Hanuman and offered prayers while lying down. Today, Karishma Hada, founder of Karni Kripa Foundation, who came to Prayagraj from Jaipur, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, visited the famous temple situated on the banks of Sangam in Prayagraj and offered prayers to Lord Hanuman while lying down. In which Vishwa Hindu Mahasangh state vice president of Uttar Pradesh Cow Protection Cell Ashutosh Tripathi, Karni Kripa Foundation Media national media in-charge Praveen Singh Chandel, Gajpal Singh Chauhan, Ravi Bhaskar were mainly present.



# MUNPL installs 100 solar streetlights across key areas

Meja. MUNPL recently completed two impactful CSR programmes aimed at helping local communities. As part of its commitment to sustainable development, MUNPL installed 100 solar streetlights across key areas, including the Kasturba Gandhi Awasiya Balika Vidyalay in Meja. This initiative enhances safety, security, and promotes sustainability & renewable energy usage in the region.

Additionally, MUNPL distributed 485 blankets to residents in many areas including Salaiya Kala, Mahuli Kala and Mai Khurd, providing essential warmth during the cold season. These initiatives underscore MUNPL's unwavering dedication to creating positive, long-term impacts through responsible and thoughtful CSR activities.



## Christmas celebrated with pomp at SHUATS

Jesus Christ comes to world as a light: VC Prof. R.B. Lal

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Science (SHUATS) celebrated Christmas with pomp in the University Church (Yeshu Darbar Church). On this occasion, children performed various devotional and cultural programs. SHUATS Vice Chancellor and Bishop of Yeshu Darbar Church Prof. Rajendra B. Lal congratulated everyone on Christmas and said that today the whole world is celebrating the birth anniversary of Lord Jesus Christ Who has come to the world as a light.

The program started with prayer. The children of University Yeshu Darbar Church performed a dance on the devotional song 'Shor Duniya Mein Ye Ho Gaya, Aaj Paida Masih Ho Gaya'. The Punjabi song 'Jesus Tere Naam Liya Galla'

was also performed. Lakshmi performed a bhajan 'Kaisa Pyara Masiha Mera' written by Bishop R.B. Lal. The Sunday School stu-



dents performed a group dance on the song 'Woh Hai Mahan Sarvashaktiman'. Jai Masih and Hanuk Masih performed Qawwali. Mercy Prakash also presented the hymn 'Tumhari Chamak Humse Kuch Kahti Hai'. Ghanshyam etc. also pre-

sented songs and hymns. The VC Bishop Prof. Rajendra B. Lal said that Jesus Christ is the Messiah who liberates us from sins.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the light of God opens the spiritual eyes, removes darkness, leads towards goodness. Jesus Christ is the true shepherd who takes care of his sheep, he is the living God who healed the sick, showed the

path of truth and peace. Bishop Lal added that God has created man in his own image and likeness, God wants to give his life to man. He appealed to follow the path of truth and peace shown by Jesus Christ, love your neighbor as yourself, stay away from greed, evil, violence.

Vice President of University Yeshu Darbar Church Dr. Sudha Lal, Pro Vice Chancellor (Academics) Prof. Jonathan A. Lal, Pro Vice Chancellor (Administration) Prof. Bishwarup Mehra, Rev. David Phillips, Director HRM & R Dr. Abhilasha J. Lal, Director Public Relation Dr. Ramakant Dubey along with a large number of employees, students and Church devotees were present on the occasion. At the end, everyone participated in the community meal.

## Atal ji will continue to shine like Pole Star: Mayor

Atal ji will remain pillar of independent Indian politics: Rajesh Kesarwani

Prayagraj: On the occasion of the centenary birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a seminar was organized in Narayan Vatika by the workers of Mayor Camp Office, Kidganj and Muthiganj Division. On this occasion, the Mayor Ganesh Kesarwani said that former Prime Minister, revered founder of BJP Atal Bihari ji started a new era of development and good governance in the country with his dedication to ideology and value-based politics. Vajpayee ji, who made cultural nationalism a working culture, always kept the country's security and public welfare paramount. With his purity and self-control in political life, he made BJP popular. Atal ji will continue to shine like the Pole Star and will continue to guide the countrymen on the path of national service till eternity. District spokesperson Rajesh Kesarwani said that Atal ji Azad has been such a pillar of Indian politics who set new standards both in terms of politics and diplomacy. He worked throughout his life with the determination to build a strong and prosperous India. The coordinators of the program were Councilor Mukesh Dhara and Ajay Agrahari. On this occasion, Pramod Modi, Vivek Aggarwal, Dilip Kesarwani, Councilor Mukesh Lara, former board president Manoj Mishra, Shatrughan Jaiswal, Ajay Agrahari, Kishan Chandra Jaiswal, Harish Mishra, Neeraj Kesarwani, Sunil Kesarwani, Deepak Kesarwani, Hundreds of workers like Kamlesh Kesharwani, Rakesh Jaiswal, Vishnu Tripathi etc. be present.



## New hope for HIV patients, COBAS 6800 machine launched

Prayagraj: Principal Dr. Vatsala Mishra inaugurated the HIV viral load testing facility on COBAS 6800 machine in the Department of Microbiology at Motilal Nehru Medical College today. This facility is not only technologically advanced but is also a ray of new hope for the patients battling HIV. On this occasion, Lieutenant (Dr.) Reena Sachan (Head, Department of Microbiology), Dr. Garima Gaur (Assistant Professor), Dr. Sanjay Kumar (Technical Officer, HIV State Reference Laboratory) and technical staff Smt. Mamta Tripathi, Mr. Ashish Kumar Singh and others were present.

Dedication to the service of patients, Principal Dr. Vatsala Mishra said, "HIV patients are often hidden in the eyes of the society. But for them, timely and accurate treat-

ment is like giving life back to life. This machine will not only give us a technically capable", but also brings us closer to these patients and helps them improve their lives." The COBAS 6800 machine, known for its accuracy and rapid results, now helps HIV infected patients get timely treatment Will provide opportunity for change and effective monitoring. Whereas earlier patients had to send their samples to Lucknow or Varanasi, now this facility will be available at the local level, which will save time and resources.

Dedicated Efforts and Training Programme Under this



initiative, a special training program was organized from 10 to 12 December 2024, in which faculty, residents, and technical staff were trained in collaboration with NACO, SHARE India and Roche Personnel. During this, special attention was paid to the technical aspects of machine operation, problem solving, and report generation. Dr. Vatsala

Mishra also said, "This is not just a machine, it is a message that the government is making every patient's life better." "In the coming time, other districts of Uttar Pradesh will also be connected to this lab, so that the standards of care of HIV patients in the state can be raised.

## Grand function of Khelgaon Public School "Winter Carnival-Udaan" on X-mas

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: Winter Carnival program was organized at Khelgaon Public School on Christmas Day in which students, parents and teachers etc. participated. On this occasion, to usher in the New Year 2025, a program was also organized. The program was inaugurated by Chief Guest Dr. U.K. Mishra, Chairman, Khelgaon Public School, Anil Mishra, Vice Chairman, Khelgaon Public School, Rajeev Verma, Director and Ram Pujan Tiwari, Academic Head, Khelgaon Public School jointly lit the lamp. Today, on this occasion, students who have achieved remarkable success in education and sports were felicitated in their various competitions. 1300 certificates and 440 gold medals, 450 silver medals and 390 bronze medals were awarded for success.

In the "Winter Carnival" organized in the school premises, a planetarium was organized for the children, in which they were given amazing information related to astronomy and the stalls giving a glimpse of different states attracted everyone's attention. These stalls were not only a display of cultural diversity. Not only did it become a symbol of parenthood but also a center of learning and enjoyment for the students, parents and visitors. In today's function, many entertaining programs and competitions were also organized for the parents and they were also felicitated with mementos and certificates. Among the various attractive programs and competitions organized for the parents, the main ones were Bucket Feeling with Balls, Follow the Footprint, Stake and Challenge, Hurdle Race and Tug-o-War etc. "Winter Carnival - Udaan" was organized today for the students, parents and teachers. It became a memorable experience for the students.

Speaking on this occasion, Chairman of the school, Dr. UK Mishra said that awards have special importance in student life; it helps in strengthening the willpower. Awards help in enhancing the feelings and self-confidence of the talent. On this occasion, the Vice Chairman of the school, Anil Mishra told the children that Santa Claus



comes to share happiness with us and also wishes us to always be happy and prosperous. On this occasion, School Director Dr. Rajeev Verma said that Khelgaon Public School is well known for high level education and world class sports. The students here have always raised the pride of the school by setting remarkable records in education and sports and thanked all the honorable guests, parents and dignitaries present for participating in the program and making it a success. Various cultural programs were organized in the carnival. Everyone's heart was captivated. Highlights of the programme: Welcome Dance - "Smile on the Face..." Children in colorful costumes gave a grand start to the program by presenting the welcome dance. Young children enthralled the program with their innocent expressions and enthusiastic dance through Western Dance and Toddlers Dance won everyone's heart. Group Song - "Never Give Up..." Children gave the message of never giving up in life: This dance gives a glimpse of the culture of different states. The drama was a special attraction. "This presentation based on the birth of Jesus left the audience emotional and inspired. It was accompanied by dance - Ninja Hathaudi, group song - "Zindagi Ek Safar Hai Suhana...", ramp walk etc.

Expressing his gratitude to the visiting guests and parents, Ram Pujan Tiwari, Academic Head, said that I heartily thank all the teachers and staff members who played an important role in making this program a success with their tireless hard work, dedication and organized efforts. The program ended with a bonfire, where everyone wished each other a happy new year with warmth and enthusiasm. The objective of this carnival was to not only provide entertainment to the students but also to motivate them through educational and cultural activities. Children and parents thoroughly enjoyed this event and described it as a memorable experience. The program was conducted by Shubhi, Aakriti Mishra and Sunil Tiwari.

## Radheshyam Kushwaha passes away; pall of gloom descends in PWD

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: A condolence meeting of PWD Regular Work Charge Employees Union Prayagraj was held on the demise of former District Minister of the Union and District Patron Radheshyam Kushwaha at the age of 80, which was presided over by Phoolchand Yadav District President and District Operations Minister Ram Achal Pal. Employee leader Ravi Shankar Mishra paid tribute. Said that Provincial President Shri Bharat Singh Yadav, while expressing condolence on the demise of Radheshyam Kushwaha ji on telephone, said that Kushwaha Ji continued to struggle for the welfare of the employees and laborers till his last breath. His demise is an irreparable loss for the union and the employees which cannot be compensated. Employee leader Ravi Shankar Mishra said that Radheshyam Kushwaha Ji was simple, easy-going, polite and friendly towards the employees. Purodha was always adept at solving the problems of laborers and employees by sitting on the road and getting the officers to follow the government orders. With the departure of Kushwaha ji, the laborers and employees There is a wave of mourning in the organizations. Those who expressed grief include Rajendra Babu Kesharwani, Mukesh Kumar, Ram Sufal Verma, Vijay Kushwaha, Dharmaraj Yadav, Premshankar Patel, Jai Prakash Kushwaha, Vijay Bharat, Lal Ji Pal, Santosh Kumar Gupta, Shobha Tiwari, Jangli Prasad, Sharda, Ramdev, Ashok Kumar, Jaiprakash, Paras, Ramchandra, Suryabali, Suresh Maurya, Suresh Bhartia, Amritlal Yadav, Ram Asare. Hundreds of laborers and employees were present.





# Bharat Ratna Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya's birth anniv celebrated with pomp

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: The birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya was celebrated in the courtyard of Saraswati Shishu Vidya Niketan Katghar Prayagraj. Gopal ji Malviya, media in-charge of All India Malviya Sabha Prayag told. On the birth anniversary of Mahamana, former Higher Education Minister, Government of Uttar Pradesh (Chief Guest), Dr. Narendra Singh inaugurated the program by lighting the Gaur Nidhi. Special guest Vivek

Nirala ji. The guests seated on the stage unveiled the portrait of Mahamana Pandit Pradhan Mohan Malviya ji, lighting of the lamp and garlanding of the portrait of Mahamana ji was done by Dr. Narendra Singh Gaur ji. The guests were honored with bouquets by the officials of the Malviya Sabha. The guests were welcomed by the address of Deputy Minister of the Sabha, Prakhar Malviya ji. Swastiva recitation was done by Pandit Satyam Malviya and Arpit Mishra



ji and Saraswati Vandana was done by Kumari Bhavya Malviya. After the address of the guests, the address of respected guest Kamlesh Mishra ji, Principal of Saraswati Shishu Niketan Katghar Prayagraj was given, followed by the ad-

dress of honored special guest Vivek Nirala ji. Mayor Prayagraj, Umesh Chandra Ganesh Kesarwani's speech, former Higher Education Minister, Government of Uttar Pradesh (Chief Guest) Dr. Narendra Singh Gaur ji said

in his address that Malviya ji had an active contribution in the freedom movement of India and in the field of Hindi. There was a huge contribution. In place of Malashree Samman (Shri Ravi Shankar Malviya) ji, his son Rahul was present. Talent recognition award by Dr. Purnima Malviya ji, financial support from Kamal Narayan Vyas Fund and competition prize distribution by treasurer Rohit Malviya ji. The vote of thanks was given by Chairman Ashok Malviya.

## Jagrook Vikas Samiti celebrated Late RS Lal Srivastava Painting Competition

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: Jagrook Vikas Samiti, under the auspices of the Chief Patron of the Committee, Late RS Lal Srivastava, a painting competition was organized on Wednesday at K.D.L.C. It was organized in the Convent School in which an art competition was organized for the children of class one to five and at the same time, Tulsi Day was also celebrated by garlanding Tulsi Mata. The chief guest of the program, Dr. Harishchandra Malviya, Professor, Allahabad University, delivered his address. He said that the importance of December 25 as Tulsi Diwas should be told to every child of the society so that Sanatan Dharma continues to move forward. Committee Chairman Abhishek Thakur, School Manager Dinesh Chandra Kanojia and School Principal Mithali Devnath honored all the participants by giving mementos and certificates. Inspector Attar Suiya Sanjay Kumar Dwivedi, who came as a special guest in the program, mainly Rajesh Srivastava, Sunil Srivastava, Anil Srivastava, Shri Ram Chaurasia Bhai, Lal Sahu, Ratnesh Khare, Deepak Gupta etc. officials gave their full support.



## IFFCO Senior Manager (Finance & Accounts) Chandrashekhar Mishra passes away

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: The IFFCO family suffered a deep shock on Wednesday, when Chandrashekhar Mishra, Senior Manager (Finance & Accounts), passed away. Mishra joined IFFCO on 12 January 1987 and played an important role in the organization for a long time. He was planning his retirement in June 2025.

The residence of Chandrashekhar Mishra was in Allahpur area of Allahabad (now Prayagraj). He is survived by his wife Sheema Mishra and two sons. One son is working in Noida, while the other is active in business. IFFCO Officers Association and IFFCO Employees Union have deeply condoled his demise and expressed their condolences to his family in this difficult time. His contribution to the IFFCO family will always be remembered, and his contribution will be of utmost importance to the organization. We pray to God that Chandrashekhar Mishra's family gets strength in this sad time and his soul rests in peace.



## IAF to play pivotal role in Mahakumbh-2025

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: The Indian Air Force (IAF) is fully committed to support civil administration in successful conduct of Maha Kumbh-2025, one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, scheduled to be held in Prayagraj. Maha Kumbh-2025 is expected to be an unparalleled manifestation of faith that would project Prayagraj on global stage. Headquarters Central Air Command will provide crucial support ranging from promotion of civil aviation activity at Prayagraj to provision of Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) cover so as to render effective

support to the Government of Uttar Pradesh in befitting conduct of this religious extravaganza.

Multiple meetings with Mela Adhikari, District Magistrate Prayagraj and other local functionaries have been conducted towards facilitating operations and administrative support. The Air Force Station Bamrauli will act as a nodal centre towards facilitating flying operations for Mahakumbh-2025 for civil scheduled, non-scheduled and chartered flight on 24 X 7 basis from 20 December 2024 to 28 February 2025. The Instrument Landing

System at Bamrauli Air Force Station has been maintained as Cat-II ILS to facilitate flying operations

Highway and Railway Over Bridge (ROB) at Begum Bazar, by transferring IAF land for road development



even during poor visibility conditions that are expected to prevail during winter season. The station has facilitated construction and swift opening up of four lane Kaushambi to Airport

and displacing Landing threshold of Runway 12 at Air Force Station Bamrauli airfield that would have otherwise prevented construction of ROB. All possible assistance has been pro-

vided to Airport Authority of India (AAI) towards timely expansion of the civil airport terminal. IAF has also planned to maintain a dedicated Rescue Coordination Team at the Mela site which would be equipped with Specialist Equipment for first Aid, triage and casualty evacuation. The involvement of IAF in the Maha Kumbh-2025 highlights the unwavering dedication to national service, disaster response and public safety, informed Samir Gangakhedkar, Group Captain, Public Relations Officer, Ministry of Defence, Prayagraj.

## Book fair: Increased demand for translated books & older ones of foreign authors

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: In drawing competition, everything from Santa Claus to Mahakumbh and the book fair was depicted on paper, Prayagraj. Rich reading material is available for readers of all sections in the fourth ten-day Prayagraj Book Fair going on at Anglo Bengali Inter College (ABIC). Crowds are being seen at special stalls for students pre-



paring for competitive exams. There is a huge demand for old magazines at the stalls of the Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. Hindi and English magazines like 'Rozgaar', 'Bharat 2024', 'Rashtrapati Bhavan', 'Signature of Indian Art', 'Economy Survey' and 'Yojana' are being sold in abundance. Business executive Sushant Shrotriya said that discounts ranging from 10 pc to 90 pc are being given on these books. Apart from this, books like 'Kashi Ank' and 'Geet Govind' were sold instantly. Old issues of children's book 'Bal Bharti' are also popular among the people. The attraction of translated books of foreign authors was seen at the stall of the famous publishing house of New Delhi. Stall representative Mahesh told that this time Russian writers are popular. Anton Chekhov's 'Wife', 'Doctor and Other Stories' and 'Poor People', which have been translated by Yogesh Bhatnagar, are

being liked very much. Mikhail Bulgakov's 'Master and Margarita', translated by A. Charumati Ramdas has done it, is also in great demand.

Book fair co-coordinator Manish Garg said that 'Theater 2.0' competition was organized on Wednesday. Hundreds of participants aged 7 to 18 years took part in face painting, drawing and painting, and essay writing competitions in Hindi-English, organized in collaboration with Rotary Prayagraj Platinum. Children from many schools including Girls High School, Patanjali Rishikul, Tagore Public School, Jwala Devi, Army Public School, Bishop Johnson School, DP Public School, Kingston Quad School and St. Mary's showcased their talent. In the art competition, someone made Santa Claus and some-

one decorated the scene of Maha Kumbh and Book Fair with colors. The winning participants will be awarded on the cultural stage on December 29. Book fair coordinator Manoj Singh Chandel said that due to the Christmas holiday on Wednesday, a huge crowd of book lovers gathered in the fair. Families selected books on their favorite subjects. Despite the bad weather, there was no reduction in people's curiosity. He informed that this free book fair is being jointly organized by Forson Books and Bookwala.

## Congmen remembered Malviyaji

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: Prominent Congressmen of the district and city paid emotional tribute to Bharat Ratna and former Congress President Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya on his 163rd birth anniversary. Former UP Congress Committee spokesperson Kishore Varshney along with Fuzail Hashmi, Harikesh Tripathi, Ajay Srivastava, Omprakash Tripathi, Ajay Srivastava Parvez Siddiqui, Gopal Krishna Dwivedi alias Raja Babu, Rakesh Patel, Vijay Yadav along with former UP Congress Committee spokesperson Kishore Varshney at the statue of the national leader at Hindu Hostel intersection at 10 am. Keshav Pasi, Kailash Nishad etc. paid tribute by garlanding them. Varshney said that Malviya ji was a multi-dimensional personality. He was a great educationist, politician, journalist, high-ranking lawyer and freedom fighter who served as the President of the Indian National Congress three times in an important manner. With the aim of educating the youth, he had established a world class central university like BHU. During this time there were Fuzail Hashmi, Harikesh Tripathi, Omprakash Tripathi, Ajay Mishra, Parvez Siddiqui, Kameshwar Sonkar etc.

## Rich tributes paid to Shamsur Rehman Faruqi on his death anniv Elevating Urdu literature to new heights

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: Kidwai Memorial Girls Inter College commemorated the death anniversary of Padma Shri Shamsur Rehman Faruqi, one of the most celebrated and insightful critics of Urdu literature. Faruqi sahab remains a towering figure whose contributions continue to inspire generations of writers and readers. The solemn occasion was marked by the recital of ghazals, rubaiyats by the students. The event began with a rendering of his ghazal by Priyanshi. Other notable recitations were by Falak Fatima, Rimsha Alam, Shivangi Kushwaha, Kanak Prajapati, Sandlin Bano, Roshni and Bushra.

Speaking on the occasion the principal of Kidwai Memorial Girls Inter College, Anjum Afshan highlighted the role of Shamsur Rehman Faruqi in elevating Urdu

literature to new heights. Faruqi sahab was conferred the Padma Shri in 2009. He was also the recipient of the Saraswati Samman for his work Sher e Shor Angez in 1996 and the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1986 for Tanqidi Afkar. Paying glowing tributes



Nishat Anjum, Lecturer, emphasised that Faruqi Sahab was not just a critic but a guide, mentor and philosopher whose writings remain a beacon for those seeking to understand the essence of Urdu literature. The programme ended with the singing of the school song.

## Demand for action against Lekhpal-Kanungo involved in bribery and corruption Public troubled by arbitrariness of Kanungo and Lekhpal! : Despite stay order, Lekhpal and Kanungo showing contempt!

Even after intervention of High Court, DM, SDM, Civil Court, the Lekhpal - Kanungo duo are resorting to arbitrariness and misleading court and officials

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj/Bhadohi: Due to the arbitrariness of a kanoongo and lekhpal in the district, huge administrative chaos is arising in the area. Due to the arbitrariness of the kanoongo and lekhpal, the public is suffering and there is panic among the people. The image of the government is being tarnished due to their corruption and bribery. In Gram Sabha Ithara, Koniya, Gyanpur Bhadohi's lekhpal Sarvesh Shukla and Kanungo Indu Tiwari are defying the law in such a way that the rule of law seemingly ceases to exist. The vicious cycle of their fraud is going on unabated. A living example of this is that the victims of village Ithara, police station Koirauna, district Bhadohi,

through Sharda Prasad Tiwari etc in High Court Allahabad a case no. 19920/1999 Gulab Dhar etc vs. D.D.C. Filed from, in which Hon. The High Court passed a stay order, after the death of the plaintiff in the said case, Gulabdhara, a restoration was filed by the plaintiff on behalf of Sharda Prasad, which is pending in the High Court, despite this, both of them have sued the victim in relation to the same land. The opposition, hiding the fact of the High Court case, filed a civil case Savitri Devi vs Government before SDM Gyanpur.

On receiving the information, the victims attended and filed a reply, which is still under consideration. When the plan of

these fraudsters was foiled, then they again hid the above two cases and filed another case Anil vs Government in SDM Gyanpur itself and on the strength of their conspiracy obtained a one-sided measurement order. When the victims came to know about this, they came here also and gave all the above mentioned information, despite this, Halka Lekhpal, Kanungo continued to create evil circles, after getting information about which the victimized parties filed a case before the District Magistrate against all these above mentioned conspiratorial powers. In which the District Magistrate, Bhadohi had also put a stay, meanwhile the troubled people filed a civil suit Sharda

Prasad vs. Anil Kumar etc. in the District Court, in which the court gave relief to the aggrieved parties and passed an order in their favour.

The aggrieved parties told that despite this, being



above the law, kanoongo and lekhpal are hell-bent on measuring the sown fields, and say that I do whatever I want, everything remains in my pocket. It has been claimed that every day he comes with the police administration and threatens

to accept whatever he says otherwise it will prove costly for the victim.

Quoting the errant officials, he cited their words as saying, "You must have also seen from our force that I have arrested only 1-2

people from your opposition and from your side dozens of people were booked under Section 126/135 B.N.S.S." In fact, if we keep in mind the statements of the above victims and the above facts, then it clearly seems that the above men-

tioned kanoongo and lekhpal are appearing bigger than the High Court and the Court. Well, big is big and small is small, now it has to be seen which one will actually be able to prove himself to be bigger, that these kanoongo and lekhpal will be superior to everyone else.

Information has also been received from the sources that this gang of kanoongo and lekhpal is involved in such a big fraud that the house of Bhairav Lal, in whose favor they are working, has also been built on the land of Gram Sabha and Forest Department with their help. Similarly, there are some people in this gang who are using the land of Gram Sabha, village society and the poor without

deed of law, defying the law and have built big buildings. It has also been told by the victims that there is such a big gang of fraudsters that they say that if you do not listen to me, we will also register someone else's name in your list. The aggrieved party says that whatever land they have in the original Chak in this sector, they should take it in the Chak adjacent to their Chak, this is the consolidation rule and that is why the consolidation takes place, but these fraudsters have made a rule and law of their own. After dancing in one sector, they want to take it to every corner. The aggrieved party said that if the call details of these two corrupt employees and the opposition

are investigated, then the faces of the people who did wrong in this incident will come to light, because of similar employees, the way in which the situation in Pratappur of Deoria district, Prayagraj is affected. Incidents have happened since then and people who act in this manner are responsible for them. This news highlights the serious and sensitive issues that local people are facing. The arbitrariness of kanoongo and lekhpal proves that unless strict legal steps are taken, it is difficult to return to the rule of law. For this, it is the responsibility of the administration and the judiciary to take united action against corruption and violation of law, so that the victims get justice.



## Editorial

## The Surprise That Is New Saudi

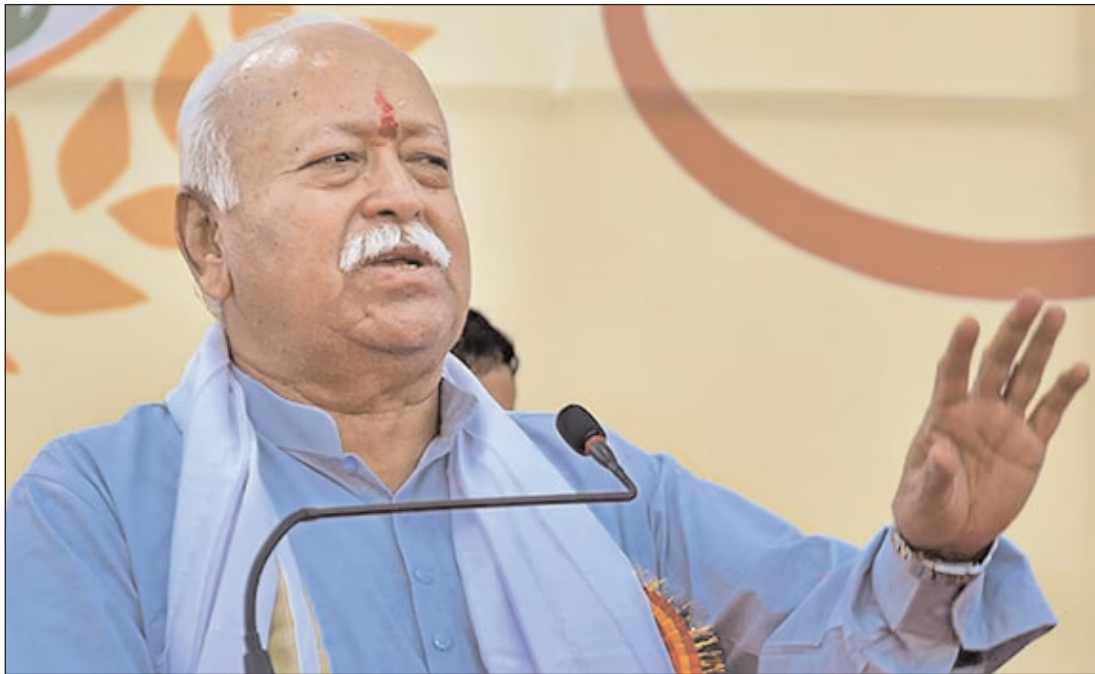
Roam around Riyadh, the capital, and you see it buzzing with young and aspirational Saudis making the most of the newfound freedoms and opportunities. According to the 2022 census, 63% of Saudis are under the age of 30. And the regime's policy changes are guided with this key statistic in mind. The biggest beneficiaries of the new openness are the Saudi women, who never had it so good. The Kingdom's inclusive Vision 2030 aims to diversify and strengthen the nation's economy. According to a World Bank report, Saudi Arabia is now ranked at the top in terms of economic and social progress for women out of 190 economies. The country's women are now truly in the driver's seat. The lifting of restrictions on their movement and choices has meant that Saudi women are steering the social, cultural and economic transformation of their country. Till a few years ago, they had to look to their fathers, husbands and brothers for even the basics like permission to travel or work. With Vision 2030, female workforce participation has gone up to nearly 40% now compared to about 15% a few years ago. This progress is evident in the increasing number of women receiving advanced degrees, enrolling in STEM fields, and owning 40% of small and medium-sized startups. Right from the moment you land in Riyadh, you see women taking up key jobs. From immigration counters to shopping malls to government offices, Saudi women are everywhere. I saw women making presentations at key government events, doing camera work, running stalls at local markets. The presence of women in the workforce has also meant increased intermingling of genders and rewriting of many social norms and gender behaviours. A big focus of Vision 2030 is also the cultural and social integration of all those living and working in Saudi Arabia. The Media Ministry's Global Harmony project is aimed at enhancing understanding and collaborations between diverse groups that call Saudi home. According to the Saudi Deputy Minister of Media, Dr Khaled Bin Abdulqader al Ghamdi, the Global Harmony project aims to make expats feel more at home. But more than that, it aspires to make local Saudis understand better the various communities that live among them. So, during the Riyadh Season, which starts in September and continues till February-March, you see a host of public cultural and social events to bring communities together. It's a true celebration and appreciation of diversity. Even among the expats, special attention is on Indians, who are the largest expat group in Saudi Arabia. At present, 2.6 million Indians live in the Kingdom, working in the domestic sector as well as private jobs, and running both start-ups as well as big companies. Recognising the role of India, Dr Khaled calls the community "an integral part of the Saudi story". This year, the Media Ministry dedicated the Suwaidi Park festival exclusively to India. The 10-day festival saw a celebration of Indian culture, food, music and art. People from all communities streamed into the vast Suwaidi Park to savour a slice of India. The Global Harmony project attempts to present Saudi as an inclusive and harmonious society where people from all backgrounds live and celebrate their own cultures, traditions and festivals. And, it's not some civil society gig.

It's a government policy initiative with clear objectives and plans. That makes it an attempt worth emulating for many countries that are facing social fissures due to their diversity. As Saudi strides into modernity, it is also conscious of its history and heritage. It's encouraging studies and excavations at heritage sites, such as at al Ula, and is promoting its pre-Islamic history too. Nouf Marwaai, a yoga instructor .



## The meaning of the Sangh chief's message

In India, people of more castes and religions live together than in any other country in the world. If we look at history, we will find that people from all over the world came to India and most of them stayed here. But today, Manipur has been burning for many months due to the hatred and bitterness that is prevalent among people of different religions in India. The leaders of the ruling party, especially the Prime Minister, are silent about this violence. Meanwhile, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (Sangh) chief Mohan Bhagwat, expressing concern over the Manipur violence, has taught the country to live with unity and love. But the Sangh chief's statement about living in unity in the country is being interpreted in different ways. The reason for this is that apart from the Manipur violence, Mohan Bhagwat has said many other things which need to be considered at this time. In fact, the Sangh chief gave a big message of unity in the Nagpur parade on the day of Vijayadashami regarding the increasing tension between Hindus and Muslims. The way the Sangh chief said in a questioning tone, how did people living in the same country become so alien? Political people, intellectuals, journalists and political analysts are trying to find out the meaning of everything Mohan Bhagwat says from this question. No one is able to understand its true meaning? The simple meaning of this question of Bhagwat is that hatred towards the people of one's own country is not a good



thing. But the question is arising for whom did Mohan Bhagwat say this? But before this it is important to understand that the Sangh chief also said that there should not be indiscretion and imbalance. There is a need to take our mind seriously and bind the country in the threads of unity. Because I believe that by expressing concern over the violence in Manipur, the Sangh chief has also hinted at Prime Minister Narendra Modi not speaking on Manipur. However, Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat also said that we have to be cautious in elections and we have to accept everyone as our own and keep everyone's influence cool. This is the call of belonging, whoever listens to it will be benefited. It will not be known what will happen to those who still do not listen. Many analysts have their own views on this statement of the Sangh chief, some are saying that he is threatening the government, some are

saying that he is warning the opposition, some are saying that he is giving advice to Muslims. So some are saying that they are giving advice to Hindus. At the same time, some are saying that Mohan Bhagwat is calling extremist people, no matter which religion they belong to. At the same time, some people are also saying that this statement of Mohan Bhagwat is just politics, which is for vote bank politics under the guise of religion. Its Indian meaning is also that Mohan Bhagwat has been accused of supporting the Janata Party. Is. However, I believe that Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat has been talking about unity in the country for the last several years. He is the first Sangh chief who went to mosques as well as madrasas and gave a big message of unity and brotherhood to the country. Before this, no Sangh chief had shown the courage to take such an initiative.

In such a situation, instead

of doing politics on the statement of the Sangh chief, do not come and vote for his statement. We have to vote for who is better. Along with this, Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat also praised some of the works of the government. It is clear from this that he has not spoken against the government.

So are they threatening those who are demanding caste census? Or those people who speak against the Modi government. Because if he was angry with the Modi government, he would not have said things with double meaning. However, the way he said everything in double meaning, there is a lot of confusion as to what he wants to say. It is not easy to play with words the way he played with them. Obviously, a person of such high status does not speak in simple and clear language, there is a lot hidden in his gestures. Be it the government, be it the oppo-

sition, be it the people spreading hatred, or be it the people spreading hatred under the guise of religions. In fact, the Sangh chief also said something which led to his statement that injustice is being done to us because of him. Victimhood mentality will not work. There is no victim. They say that I don't get a house in any colony, so I have to live in my own colony. But he also said that it is not right to take people's votes by inciting sentiments. In this way he indicated to the people what kind of people they should vote for. But at the same time he also indicated that the government's work is good. So what does this mean that on this day in 1995, the Chenav nuclear plant in Kiev in Ukraine was demolished due to safety related deficiencies? Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat also said that we have to be cautious in elections and should not vote under anyone's influence. We have to vote for who is better. Along with this, Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat also praised some of the works of the government. It is clear from this that he has not spoken against the government. So are they threatening those who are demanding caste census? Or those people who speak against the Modi government. Are you indicating to stand with the government? Because even in the year 2018, he had said that "Hindu Rashtra does not mean that there is no place for Muslims there. The day this happens, Hindutva will cease to exist. Hindutva speaks to one world, one family. But If we look at the other side,

## Maharashtra: MVA Or Mahayuti? All Depends On Who Wins 4 Zones

With elections due in a month, election fever has gripped the entire Maharashtra. While the MVA has released a list of 158 candidates, Mahayuti has announced candidates for 182 seats. Maharashtra has six key regions—Vidarbha, Marathwada, Western Maharashtra, North Maharashtra, Mumbai and Thane-Konkan—each of which has its own dynamics. Naturally, the alliance that wins four of these six regions will go on to form the government, and thus, parties are tailoring their strategies zone-wise. While Vidarbha has 62 seats, the Northern zone has 35, Marathwada 46, the Western zone 70, Mumbai 36, and Thane-Konkan 39. In the Lok Sabha elections earlier this year, the MVA was leading in Vidarbha, the West, Marathwada and Mumbai and was able to win 30 of the 48 Lok Sabha seats. The ruling Mahayuti was ahead in just the North and Thane-Konkan regions. The MVA and the Mahayuti each have three

players, with specific strengths. The Congress led from the front in Vidarbha, defeating the BJP in one-to-one contests. In Mumbai, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena held sway, and in Western Maharashtra, it was the Sharad Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) that came out on top.

In Marathwada, all three parties from the MVA played their part. On the other hand, from the Mahayuti, the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena was ahead in the Thane-Konkan, while the BJP dominated Northern Maharashtra.

The BJP and the two factions of the Shiv Sena have emerged as the only parties with a pan-state presence in the state and they led in assembly segments in all zones in the general elections. On the other hand, the Congress was not in the lead in any assembly segment in the Thane-Konkan region, as was the case with the Sharad Pawar-led NCP in the Mumbai segment.

## The Curious Case Of Iran

What will, for example, be India's stand should Iran want a revival of its nuclear plan? India's past tussles with the West over its own nuclear programme may trigger another round of strategic unpleasantness over New Delhi's stance. India has a long-standing policy of strategic autonomy, and the complexity of its relations with the West is par for the course. The question is only of degree. The scope of India's support to its alliance partners in any overtures, real or perceived, against the West needs to be clearly defined, if not announced. While BRICS has achieved precious little in tangible terms in the past 15 years, the symbolism of grouping may have consequences for India as ongoing conflicts stretch into the future and new challenges around them emerge. On the other hand, the internal dynamics of the expanded BRICS are going to pose another challenge. BRICS, only a little more than an ad hoc grouping with diverse challenges and interests, has miles to go to emerge as a counterforce to alliances like the G7 or the Five Eyes, where members have been able to thrash out at least a common minimum programme. All eyes have been on Iran for more than a year. Naturally, the first BRICS summit with Tehran's membership is bound to breed speculation about what the prospective new world order would look like. At home, there needs to be an examination of India's bilateral ties with a country that is seen firmly anti-West in its outlook. Iran and India are sailing in the same boat, at least momentarily: of the West's castigation. The temptation may be high on both sides to form a joint front against Western hegemony in the security space. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has held bilateral talks with the new Iranian President, Masoud Pezeshkian, with a focus on strategic cooperation in and beyond the Middle East. It can be endlessly debated without itching anywhere close to a resolution whether multi-

lateral global groupings make any difference to realpolitik either domestically or internationally. The signalling, however, remains crucial. To begin with, the West is already perceiving the summit as Russia's show of strength. Headlines like 'Putin Gathers Allies' and 'Putin Hosts Global South Leaders at BRICS Summit Meant to Counterbalance Western Clout' in Western media outlets expose apprehension. A complex interplay of sectarian interests and regional dynamics shapes Iran's geopolitical strategy. It is in the direct line of fire, thanks to Israel's unchecked belligerence. Already reeling under economic pressure owing to various international sanctions, the post-October 7 reality for Tehran is even grimmer. Iran blames the US for almost all of its problems. As such, during the last summit, former president Ebrahim Raisi had anointed Iran's proposed BRICS membership as one of the ways of getting even with the US and the West at large. "Iran's membership in the bloc is opposition to American unilateralism." Russia and China share this sentiment of BRICS emerging as a counterbalance to the West. But what about India? India has lauded and endorsed Iran's presence in BRICS, but will New Delhi also endorse Tehran's oppressive domestic policies in the name of this cooperative alliance? India has plans of buying oil from Iran despite the sanctions and disapproving remarks from the West. Yet, bilateral trade between the two countries has dropped by 26% in one year. Geoeconomics informs Iranian perceptions of the bloc as a critical driver. Iran aims to secure increased volumes of oil and non-oil exports to fellow BRICS members, bypassing the dollar. Like Russia, Iran is engaged in a high-stakes battle with the West. China doesn't particularly enjoy a friendly status, either. New Delhi's balancing act, therefore, is set to be tested on many tricky issues in the near future.

## India's Dance Of Diplomacy With China And The West

The meeting though is a natural progression following a key announcement earlier in the week by both countries on completing the disengagement process at the border, effectively returning the situation to how it was in 2020. Interestingly, the meeting has sparked a sense that India is once again warming to China, with a picture of PM Modi, President Vladimir Putin, and Xi Jinping circulating online, fuelling the belief that Russia-India-China camaraderie is not that dead after all. These sentiments are further fuelled by what India has faced from the West in recent weeks. This includes coordinated efforts to target India with unfound-

ed allegations of government-backed assassinations on Canadian and American soil. If Canada, under Justin Trudeau, has tried to blame India for 'interference', then the United States has also initiated action against what it calls the conspirators of a plot to assassinate Khalistani GURPATWANT Singh Panun. In fact, a serious geopolitics expert would not deny that what transpired at the BRICS summit was, in part, a response to the West's attempts to corner India over the Khalistan issue. The optics of PM Modi showing a thumbs-up sign in the company of Putin and Xi were unmissable. It almost seemed like India was reminding the

West that it has alternative alliances to pursue if its interests are not respected. In fact, over the past year, the West—led by the US—has behaved more like a strategic foe than a strategic partner. The only time when India and the United States shared a little warmth in relations was during PM Modi's state visit in September this year. Otherwise, whether through the tacit backing of Khalistani terrorists against India or the regime change in Bangladesh to unseat pro-India Hasina, Indian interests have been thrown out of the window by our so-called 'strategic partner', the West. However, concluding that India's tilt

towards the West is over and that it will now firmly pursue a Russia-India-China trilateral alignment would be inaccurate. Firstly, despite the resolution of the border standoff and the recent bilateral meeting between the two leaders, the systemic reality of India-China relations remains unchanged. China, for all practical purposes, has a massive power asymmetry over India, and its current conciliatory behaviour is an exception, not the norm. It has internalised the lesson of what followed after the Galwan Valley attack very well. India's westward shift has made it realise its own folly in alienating one of the biggest.



# 'Mentioned as pond in revenue records': Stepwell, tunnel 'used by 1857 revolutionaries'

**BAREILLY:** A stepwell believed to be 150 years old, along with a tunnel that may have served as an escape route during the 1857 rebellion against the British Raj, was discovered during an anti-encroachment drive in the Laxman Ganj area of Chandausi, Sambhal. The structure is located near the Banke Bihari temple, which has fallen into disrepair and is part of ongoing efforts to uncover historical sites in the area. Sambhal DM Rajender Pensiya and SP Krishan Kumar Bishnoi inspected the site on Sunday. Pensiya said, "The stepwell (baoli) spans 400 square



metres and is recorded as a pond in revenue records. The excavation is proceeding carefully to avoid damage. Encroachments around the site will also be removed." An Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) team surveyed five shrines and 19 wells in the region, including the newly discovered site. The inspection

lasted nearly 10 hours and covered 24 locations. Pensiya said, "The ASI's findings will guide our next steps in preserving Sambhal's rich historical heritage." Excavation efforts, led by Krishna Kumar Sonkar, executive officer of the Chandausi nagar palika, revealed approximately 210 square metres of the site so far.

## Dalit staffer ends life amid CBI probe into fraud case

**MEERUT:** A Dalit post office employee in Bulandshahr allegedly ended his life by jumping in front of a train early Sunday morning, a day after CBI questioned him in connection with a Rs 2.5 crore embezzlement case. Rahul Kumar (28), a sub-postmaster at Lakhaothi block post office and a resident of Bulandshahr city area, was found dead on a railway track in Girdhari Nagar area. Kumar was suspended on Nov 26 for "negligence in duty." Shortly after, corruption allegations were levelled against him, leading to his



interrogation on Saturday. His cousin, Ankit Kumar, said, "Rahul was under immense stress. He believed that he wouldn't be able to clear his name, which led him to take the extreme step." Police said that in a suicide note found in his pocket, Rahul claimed innocence and accused his colleagues of harassment and caste discrimination.

## Injured BJP MPs Pratap Sarangi and Mukesh Rajput discharged from hospital



**NEW DELHI:** BJP MPs Pratap Sarangi and Mukesh Rajput, who were injured in a scuffle at the new Parliament building on December 19, were discharged from the hospital Monday morning. Dr Ajay Shukla, RML medical superintendent said, "Both the MPs were discharged in the morning. Their blood pressure is under control now, and they have been kept on SOS medication. Follow-ups on their health will continue." Earlier, Dr Shukla had told, that Sarangi suffered a deep cut on his forehead, while Rajput fell unconscious due to elevated blood pressure during the confrontation. The ruckus unfolded at the Makar Dwar entrance just before the Houses were set to convene at 11am. A group of BJP

MPs had gathered to protest Congress's alleged disrespect toward architect of Constitution Dr BR Ambedkar. As Congress leader and LoP in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi approached, he attempted to walk through the gathering, leading to a scuffle. Sarangi, the 70-year-old MP from Balasore, Odisha, claimed that Rahul shoved Mukesh Rajput, causing both MPs to fall. Sarangi sustained injuries to his forehead and knee during the incident. They were later admitted to ICU in Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital. The BJP accused Rahul Gandhi of physical aggression, calling his actions "goonish." In response, Congress MPs filed complaints, alleging that Rahul was manhandled by three BJP MPs.

# 'Sunny Leone, wife of Johnny Sins': How Chhattisgarh man dodged govt?

**RAIPUR:** A man from Bastar was booked for opening a fraudulent bank account in the name of famous actress Sunny Leone to avail benefits under Chhattisgarh government's popular Mahtari Vandan Yojana, through which 70 lakh married women in the state receive Rs 1,000 monthly via online transactions. As soon as the 'Sunny Leone' account became the talk of the town, the Bastar district administration swiftly took action on Sunday, prompting authorities to freeze the account and lodge an FIR against the accused. This is one of the cases that have come to light among the 70 lakh beneficiaries across the state. The Mahtari Vandan Yojana was launched soon after the BJP came to power and



was a key highlight in the party's poll manifesto, aimed at financially empowering women in the state. The scheme's website lists 'Johnny Sins' as 'Sunny Leone's' husband. Based on a preliminary investigation, it was found that the account holder was Virendra Joshi, a resident of Talur village in Bastar. Joshi had withdrawn Rs 10,000 from the account since its activation in March, with Rs 1,000 being transferred every month. Joshi works for a private company in Jagdalpur, and his wife is a homemaker.

It is unclear if she is aware of the fake account. A senior official stated that this is a clear case of fraud that requires a thorough investigation, as Joshi's application would have been cleared and verified by supervisors. How it was approved is under investigation. According to Bastar district collector Harish S, the amount deposited by the government and withdrawn by Joshi will be recovered. Appropriate action will also be taken against all those involved, including the supervisor.

## Shah inspects Bru package rollout; gets feedback from Brus

**DHALAI:** "Are you receiving 35 kg rations per family....and do you check if it's actually 35 kg?" "Have all of you received your Ayushman scheme cards?" "Does the school in your settlement here have teachers?" Home minister Amit Shah, here on Sunday to visit a Bru village in Bruha Para, put these queries to members of the Bru-Reang community now resettled in Tripura as part of a quadripartite agreement signed in 2020. The purpose was to take stock of the sta-



tus of implementation of the resettlement package offered to Brus as part of the 2020 agreement among the Centre, Mizoram govt, Tripura govt and Bru-Reang organisations. The pact provided for permanent settlement and rehabilitation of 6,958 Bru-Reang fami-

lies, comprising around 38,000 people, in Tripura, almost 25 years after they were displaced from Mizoram due to ethnic violence between the Mizo and Bru-Reang communities. Shah saw the latter appreciating the Govt of India for keeping its promises regarding housing, free ration supplies, schools, skill building and medical care etc, Shah said: "I am happier than you all are...Prime Minister Narendra Modi too is happy that he could ensure your permanent settlement in Tripura"

## MP: ED registers money laundering case against ex-constable Sharma

**BHOPAL:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) against former constable of the Madhya Pradesh State Road Transportation Department, Saurabh Sharma, and his associate, Chetan Singh Gaur, under the Prevention



of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). This action follows the Bhopal unit of Lokayukta's Special Police Establishment (SPE) filing an FIR and recovering assets worth crores from their

residential premises. On December 19 and 20, the Lokayukta conducted search operations that revealed substantial assets believed to be disproportionate to Sharma's income. An official release from the SPE, issued on Saturday, confirmed the case against Sharma for acquiring property beyond his

## In-laws living in man's home sans his nod cruelty: HC

**KOLKATA:** Friends and family of a married woman staying at the house of her husband against his will for a long period can amount to cruelty, Calcutta high court said on Dec 19 while granting divorce to a man on grounds of cruelty. "Such imposition of friend and family by the woman on her husband at his quarters against his will, sometimes even when the respondent (wife) was herself not there, over a continuous period of time, can definitely be constituted as cruelty, since it might very well have made life impossible for the appellant, which would come



within the broader purview of cruelty," the court held. The divorce application was filed by the husband in 2008 after three years of marriage. They got married in West Bengal's Nabadwip and moved to Kolaghat in 2006 where the husband worked. In 2008, the wife moved to Narkeldanga in Kolkata, claiming it was more convenient.

## Epigamia co-founder Rohan Mirchandani passes away at 42 due to cardiac arrest

**NEW DELHI:** Rohan Mirchandani, the 42-year-old co-founder of the renowned yogurt brand Epigamia, passed away on December 21 following a sudden cardiac arrest, as confirmed by parent company Drums Food International in an official statement. "It is with deep sorrow that Drums Food International confirms the untimely passing of its beloved founder, Rohan Mirchandani, who suffered a sudden cardiac arrest yesterday. The company requests the media and the public to respect the privacy of Rohan's family during this diffi-



His passing follows other recent losses in the startup world, raising concerns about stress-related illnesses among young professionals

cult time," read the statement shared by the company. "The senior leadership of Epigamia, led by Ankur Goel (COO & Founding Member) and Uday Thakker (Co-founder & Director), continues to steer the company's

day-to-day operations with the full support of the Board of Directors, including Rohan's family, Raj Mirchandani, Verlinvest, and DSG Consumer Partners," the statement added. Rohan Mirchandani, an alumnus of NYU Stern

and the Wharton School, founded Drums Food International in 2013. Under his leadership, Epigamia rose to prominence as a new-age FMCG brand, becoming a household name in India's urban centers. The brand's innovative range of flavored Greek yogurts resonated with health-conscious consumers and cemented its position as one of the country's leading yogurt brands. Mirchandani's passing adds to a series of tragic losses within the startup ecosystem in recent months including the death of Rohan Malhotra, co-founder



## 685 eminent Indians write open letter to people of Bangladesh, urge them to prioritise peace, friendship

**More** than 650 eminent personalities including former judges, bureaucrats and ambassadors have written an open letter to the people of Bangladesh, urging them to continue being on the path of peace and friendship which have sustained the two countries well for over five decades. The letter, whose signatories include former chief election commissioner S Y Quraishi, also called for an immediate end to attacks on minorities, their properties, business establishments and coercion to force them to leave. The signatories said a close and trustful bilateral relationship is in the long-term interest of the citizens of both the countries, and the people of Bangladesh should not be swayed by malicious anti-India campaigns that seek to weaken the bedrock of the mutually beneficial cooperation that has been steadily developed. "People of India view with increasing alarm and concern the deteriorating situation in Bangladesh. An atmosphere of anarchy prevails in Bangladesh, with mobocracy the preferred method of decision-making. A pattern of enforced resignations has been followed across the country in the public and private sectors, covering the judiciary, the executive (including the police), academia and even media houses.

## Citing US court Pegasus verdict, Congress asks SC to reopen spyware probe

**NEW DELHI:** Congress leader Randeep Singh Surjewala on Sunday, highlighting the recent verdict by a US court in a Pegasus case, asked if the Supreme Court would carry out a further inquiry into the alleged use of software to illegally hack the devices. On Friday, a US judge ruled against Israel's NSO Group, holding it responsible for hacking WhatsApp and breaching its contract. The lawsuit accused NSO of exploiting a flaw in WhatsApp to install spyware called Pegasus. The case will now proceed to trial to determine the damages NSO must pay. Surjewala, citing the US ruling, claimed that 300 WhatsApp numbers of Indians were targeted. "The Pegasus spyware case verdict proves how 300 WhatsApp numbers of Indians were targeted in the illegal spyware racket," Surjewala said in a post on X. The Congress's Rajya Sabha MP further said it was time for the central government to disclose the 300 names targeted through the spyware. "Who are the two Union ministers? Who are the three opposition leaders? Who is the constitutional authority? Who are the journalists? Who are the business persons? What information was retrieved by the BJP government and agencies? How was it used - misused and to what consequence?" the Congress leader asked.



## Biden's mental decline managed by White House staff

An explosive report reveals that White House aides have worked tirelessly to shield President Joe Biden from public scrutiny, carefully managing his schedule and limiting interactions due to concerns over his mental and physical stamina. The Wall Street Journal's investigation sheds light on how Biden's cognitive struggles were concealed from the public, with aides making tactical adjustments to his daily activities, often rescheduling meetings to his "good days and bad days." From the moment Biden, 82, assumed office in January 2021, staffers were tasked with managing his public appearances. With the backdrop of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the White House formed a protective shell around the aging commander-in-chief. By spring 2021, the administration began adjusting Biden's schedule to reflect his fluctuating energy levels, a pattern that became evident after



he stumbled on the world stage. Meetings were often pushed to the afternoon, as Biden struggled with long hours and required a shorter window for functioning. One national security official told an aide in 2021: "He has good days and bad days, and today was a bad day so we're going to address this tomorrow." As his public appearances continued, Biden frequently relied on notecards and struggled with off-script moments, misremembering names of foreign dignitaries or important facts, reported the Post. The White House was also concerned about Biden's health affecting his public image.

### Opposition from key republicans

House Appropriations Committee Chairman Tom Cole acknowledged that Musk's opposition could have a significant impact. "They are very influential guys, and people put a lot of stock in what they are saying," Cole said, referring to Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy, another Trump ally who also opposes the deal. House Speaker Mike attempted to downplay the conflict. In an interview with Fox News, he explained that despite Musk and opposition the bill was necessary to keep the government operating.

## Elon flexes his political strength as US government shutdown looms

WASHINGTON: When President-elect Donald Trump picked "the Great Elon Musk," the world's richest man, to slash government spending and waste, he mused that the effort might be "the Manhattan Project of our time." By Thursday, that prediction looked spot on. Wielding the social media platform he bought for \$44 billion in 2022, Musk detonated a rhetorical nuclear bomb in the middle of government shutdown negotiations on Capitol Hill. In more than 150 separate posts on X, starting before dawn on Wednesday, Musk



demanding that Republicans back away from a bipartisan spending deal that was meant to avoid a government shutdown over Christmas. He vowed political retribution against anyone voting for the sprawling bill

backed by House Speaker Mike Johnson, who called Musk on Wednesday to ask that he stop posting about the bill. Musk also shared misinformation about the bill, including false claims that it contained new aid for Ukraine.

## Wounds reopen as sectarian clashes flare in Pakistan's border region

PARACHINAR: Once again, Ali Ghulam receives mourners at his home -- his brother and nephew killed 40 years apart in the same sectarian conflict that was reignited this year in northwest Pakistan, claiming 200 lives since July alone.

Thousands of residents are stranded without food and medicine in parts of remote Kurram district, which borders Afghanistan, as the government struggles to end clashes between Sunni and Shiite Muslims stemming from decades-old tensions

over farmland. "Our generations yearn for peace," 72-year-old Ghulam told AFP at his home in Parachinar, the main town and a Shiite bastion of the restive district. The latest flare-up of violence has "reopened wounds" he said.

## Islamabad orders FIA action after 5 Pakistan nationals die in Greece boat capsizes

ISLAMABAD: After Pakistani nationals lost their lives attempting to illegally enter Europe by boat, Pakistan interior minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday directed the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to launch a nationwide crackdown on human smuggling networks. The News International reported on Sunday. Naqvi stressed the urgent need to dismantle the criminal mafias, which have devastated families. Acting on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's orders, a committee led by the additional secretary of the ministry of interior has been established to investigate the tragedy. The committee has been tasked with completing its inquiry and submitting a report within five days. Notably, at least five migrants drowned after their wooden boat capsized off Greece's southern island of Gavdos, the coastguard said on Saturday, and witnesses said many were still missing as search operations continued. So far 39 men -- most of them from Pakistan -- have been rescued by cargo vessels sailing in the area. They have been transferred to the island of Crete, the coastguard said, adding that the number of those missing had not yet been confirmed. The News International reported. Following the tragedy, President Asif Ali Zardari in a statement condemned human trafficking as a "heinous practice" that leads to immense suffering. He expressed his condolences to the victims' families. Calling human smuggling a heinous crime that destroys numerous lives every year, he stressed the need for strict punishments and concrete measures to prevent such incidents in the future. Sharif further said that the deceptive tactics were used by smuggling mafias to get money by making false promises, according to The News International. On June 14, 2023, a boat carrying an estimated 750 people, primarily from Pakistan, Syria, and Egypt, capsized and sank in open seas off Greece. Of the total passengers, 104 managed to survive while the bodies of 82 victims were recovered.

## Pakistan developing missiles that could eventually hit US: Official

The White House has voiced serious concerns over Pakistan's advancing missile program, calling it an emerging threat to the US. New sanctions target Pakistani entities, including a state-owned enterprise, for contributing to long-range ballistic missile development. Officials warn Pakistan could soon possess missiles capable of reaching beyond South Asia, questioning Islamabad's intentions despite US support and diplomatic efforts. **White House flags Pakistan's missile advances** A senior White House official on Thursday said that Pakistan's development of sophisticated missile technology, including long range bal-



listic missiles, represents an emerging threat to the United States. The statement comes in the wake of sanctions imposed on four Pakistani entities, including the state-owned national development complex (NDC), for their role in advancing Pakistan's missile program. Principal deputy national security advisor Jon Finer, speaking at the Carnegie

Endowment for International Peace on Thursday, outlined the Biden administration's growing concerns over Pakistan's missile development activities. "Simply put, we are going to keep the pressure on Pakistan regarding its long-range missile program, even as we also continue to seek diplomatic resolutions to address our concerns," Finer said.

### 'Settle issues' of 1971, Yunus urges Pakistan PM, but mum on apology

Bangladesh's chief adviser, Muhammad Yunus, urged Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif to resolve outstanding issues from 1971 to improve bilateral relations. While Sharif highlighted the 1974 tripartite agreement, Yunus emphasized the importance of a SAARC summit. Both leaders agreed to strengthen ties through trade, cultural exchanges, and cooperation in areas like sugar industry and dengue management.

## Online surveillance slows mobile, internet speed in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has been ranked among the lowest globally for slow mobile and broadband internet speeds in the world in Oct, revealed data shared by Ookla's Speedtest Global Index on Monday. Since Mid-July, internet users in Pakistan have reported frequent slowdowns and persistent connectivity challenges in the country, causing widespread disruptions to browsing and media sharing. The global index placed Pakistan at 100 out of 111 countries in mobile internet speeds, and 141 out of 158 coun-



tries in broadband speeds. The country's regular internet interruptions were accompanied by reports of restricted access to virtual private networks (VPNs), which many Pakistanis use to access X and other restricted websites. According to the World Population Review, which analysed data from Ookla's Speedtest

Global Index and Cable, Pakistan's average download speed was 7.85 MBPS, with a median mobile download speed of 19.59 MBPS and a median broadband download speed of 15.52 MBPS. Internet service providers and the business community blamed the slump in services on the govt's installation of a Chinese-built national internet firewall, a combination of hardware and software used by authorities to control and monitor internet traffic, acting as a digital gatekeeper that decides.

## Luigi and rapper Sean 'Diddy' Combs to be cellmates at 'hellish' Brooklyn Jail?

**Luigi Mangione**, the accused murderer of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, will reportedly be held at the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) in Brooklyn, New York. The same facility currently housing rapper Sean "Diddy" Combs, who is facing sex-trafficking charges. Mangione made his appearance in a Manhattan federal court on Thursday in connection with the murder charges. From Pennsylvania to Brooklyn Mangione arrived in New York after being apprehended in Pennsylvania following a five-day manhunt. Once in New York, Mangione was placed under federal custody and will be detained at the notorious Metropolitan Detention Center, as reported by CNN and ABC News. This federal lockup is infamous for its harsh conditions



and has housed several high-profile inmates over the years. In an interesting twist, Mangione and Diddy have more in common than just their shared location -- they also share the same lawyer. Marc Agnifilo, who represents Combs in his federal sex-trafficking case, will also defend Mangione in his upcoming trial. On Thursday, Agnifilo and his wife, Karen Friedman Agnifilo, announced their involvement, in Mangione's case. In a brief statement to the press, Karen Agnifilo shared, "Mangione

### Russia detains Uzbek man over general Igor Kirillov's killing

Russia has detained a 29-year-old Uzbek citizen accused of planting the bomb that killed lieutenant general Igor Kirillov, head of Russia's Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Protection Troops, in Moscow on Wednesday. The suspect, who has confessed to the crime, said he was acting on the instructions of Ukraine's security service, as reported by Reuters news agency. appreciates everyone's support."

## 'From 500 to over 600 nuclear warheads': Key findings on China

NEW DELHI: The Pentagon in its annual report to the US Congress on China's military expansion said that Beijing is pushing "to modernize, diversify, and expand its nuclear forces rapidly". The report said that China's stockpile of operational nuclear warheads has increased from more than 500 to over 600 in 2024 and it will reach up to 1,000 by 2030. Citing intelligence and open source data, the report added that China would be able to "target more US cities, military facilities, and leadership sites than ever before in a potential nuclear conflict". Beijing is also developing intercontinental ballistic missiles that will "significantly improve" its nuclear-capable missile forces and require increased nuclear warhead production, the Pentagon in its report said.



The report said that the Chinese navy has more than 370 ships and submarines, up from the approximately 340 that the Pentagon said China had in its 2022 report.

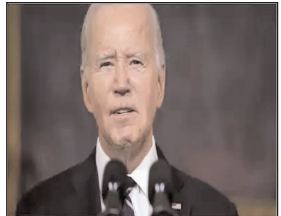
The country also "probably completed" the construction of three new silo fields in 2022, which would contain at least 300 new ICBM silos where it has loaded some of the missiles. Beijing may also be exploring the development of conventionally armed intercontinental-range missile systems that could threaten the United States, it

added.

The report said that the Chinese navy has more than 370 ships and submarines, up from the approximately 340 that the Pentagon said China had in its 2022 report. The Pentagon also warned about the growing capabilities of the Chinese navy and said that it has continued to grow its ability to perform missions.

## US govt shutdown looms ahead of Christmas: What could happen? What's at stake for workers

Now the United States government is racing toward a shutdown, just days before Christmas, as Trump and Musk scuttled a cross-party deal to keep federal agencies running. With the Friday midnight deadline approaching, millions of Americans, including federal workers, are bracing for disruptions that could stretch into the holiday season. Federal workers, essential services, and the economy as a whole will feel the weight of this impending crisis.



### Who is impacted?

A shutdown would likely affect hundreds of thousands of federal workers. An estimated 875,000 could be furloughed, while 1.4 million essential workers, including those in air traffic control and law enforcement, would continue working without pay. The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) warned that these essential workers would face financial strain, as pay is only issued retroactively after the shutdown ends. Contractors, however, may not be guaranteed back pay. The shutdown would significantly disrupt the lives of federal employees. Many of the over 2 million federal workers, including clerical and administrative staff, would face delayed paychecks. This has caused anguish in past shutdowns, with workers struggling to afford basic necessities. Long lines at food banks were reported during the 2018 shutdown, which lasted over a month. In addition, many workers who are furloughed.



## 'Australia ko bhi WTC final ka darr baith gaya hai'

**By managing** to draw the third Test in Brisbane after a gritty effort by tailenders Akash Deep and Jasprit Bumrah, India have given themselves the best chance to retain the Border Gavaskar Trophy (BGT) and get a foot inside the World Test Championship (WTC) final -- feels former Pakistan batter Basit Ali. A last-wicket stand of 47 runs between Akash (31) and Bumrah (10\*), along with persistent rain, pushed the Gabba Test to a draw and kept the five-Test series level at 1-1 going into the fourth Test. And with pitches in Melbourne and Sydney expected to not trouble the Indian batters as much as Perth, Adelaide and Brisbane, Basit believes Australia will be a bit concerned about their chances of qualifying for the WTC final and ending a 10-year wait to win the BGT.The fourth Test begins in Melbourne on Boxing Day, December 26, and the



concluding match of the series will be played in Sydney from January 3, 2025. **Rohit Sharma:** "Virat Kohli is a modern day great. He will figure it out" "Melbourne will offer the best wicket (compared to the ones used in three earlier Tests). It will be India's best chance to win," said Basit on his YouTube channel.It is being speculated that India may go in with two spinners in Melbourne, which will most likely require the impressive and in-form all-rounder Nitish Reddy to sit out. If that happens, India might include off-spinner Washington Sundar to accompany Jadeja as the two spin-

bowling all-rounders, with Ravichandran Ashwin having retired. "Kya India Nitish Reddy ki qurbani dega do spinners ke saath ja ke (will India be willing to sacrifice Reddy to include a second spinner in the eleven)?" Basit asked. "Sydney and Melbourne (pitches) can allow (teams to play) two spinners." The series had been scheduled in a way that Australian pacers got to attack Indian batters on the fastest tracks in the country in the first three matches, followed by historically not-as-threatening pitches in and Sydney. But India have done well to keep the series at 1-1 heading into the last two Tests.

## Pant, Gill, Yashasvi know what's expected of them: Rohit Sharma

**NEW DELHI:** Regarding their inconsistent play in the current Test series against Australia, Rishabh Pant, Shubman Gill, and Yashasvi Jaiswal are all aboard "the same boat." However, captain Rohit Sharma believes that all three players shouldn't be "overburdened" with ideas because that would make things more difficult.White-ball vice-captain Gill and maverick match-winner Pant have suffered from low scores in the three Tests thus far, with the exception of Jaiswal's 161 in the second innings of the first Test in Perth. "All these boys like Gill, Jaiswal and Pant are all in the same



boat. (They know) what they are capable of doing, we shouldn't complicate those things," Rohit was categorical in his assessment ahead of Boxing Day Test in Melbourne when asked individually about the troika will form the core of Indian batting in the next decade.In the first innings of Perth, , and

Brisbane, the soon-to-be 23-year-old Jaiswal did not score in the double figures, but the captain is aware of his potential. "Jaiswal is coming here for the first time. He has already shown what he is capable of. He has got so much talent, when you have a guy like him, you don't want to tamper too much with his mindset.

## 'Modern-day great Virat Kohli will figure it out' - Rohit Sharma

**Virat** Kohli's form remains the centre of attention as India and Australia get ready for another battle in the fourth Test of the ongoing Border Gavaskar Trophy, which stands level at 1-1 with all to play for.Kohli has had an up and down tour so far,

starting it with a century in the Perth Test to end his wait for a red-ball hundred but dwindling away in the next two Tests in and Brisbane. Kohli's five Test innings in this series Down Under read 5, 100\*, 7, 11 and 3 for an aggregate of 126 runs at an

average of 31.50. But captain Rohit is not losing his sleep over it and is confident about Kohli turning it around once again."Modern-day greats will figure out their own way of (carving out their) path," said the skipper when asked about Kohli's form.

## ILT20 squad analysis: The retentions, new signings, and strategies ahead of 2025 season

The ILT20 has quickly become a key cricket event despite overlapping with other major T20 leagues. The 2025 edition will feature star-studded squads from six teams, each aiming for glory with new signings and strong retentions, including international legends and promising talents. MI Emirates won the 2024 ILT20 title when they beat Dubai Capitals in the final. (Image: ILT20)



It's only two seasons old, and already the ILT20 has become a significant event on the cricket calendar. The third edition of the tournament will take place in UAE from January 11 to February 9, 2025.That is a window that overlaps with Big Bash League (BBL) in Australia, SAT20 in South Africa and Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) in Bangladesh. Despite that, each of the six teams in the ILT20 are filled with international stars. Each side has the mix of match-winners necessary to dream of lifting the trophy. Who each side retained, and the players they picked to complete their squads gives an indication of the direction each team is thinking of. This year, with no drafts or auctions, each franchise signed players individually.

### Abu Dhabi Knight Riders

They had an extremely potent core to retain, led by captain Sunil Narine and Andre Russell. Both are well-established legends in T20 cricket, who have shown across the world that they can power their teams to victory on their own performances alone.They've got batting might in the retained Laurie Evans, Joe Clarke and Michael Pepper, while also adding the talents of Roston Chase for solidity.They've strengthened their spin-bowling with the addition of Allah Ghazanfar.

## FIFA introduces interim regulatory framework for player transfers

**NEW DELHI:** FIFA, the international governing body for football, has implemented an "interim regulatory framework" concerning player transfers. This decision follows a ruling by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) earlier this year in a case involving former French midfielder Lassana Diarra. The changes come just over a week before the January transfer window opens and were made after consulting with key stakeholders. The interim framework addresses several aspects of FIFA's regulations governing the status and transfer of players, including compensation for contract breaches, joint and several liability, inducement for contract breaches, International Transfer Certificates, and proceedings before the Football



Tribunal. The objective is to provide clarity and stability ahead of upcoming registration periods while upholding globally uniform rules. The ECJ ruling in October found that certain FIFA rules regarding transfers were contrary to European Union laws on freedom of movement, siding with Diarra in a case dating back to 2014. Diarra's contract with Lokomotiv Moscow was terminated, and the Russian club sought €20 million in com-

pensation from the player. Diarra refused and requested compensation from Lokomotiv. FIFA initially ordered Diarra to pay €10 million to his former club, a decision upheld by the Court of Arbitration for Sport, and he received a backdated 15-month suspension.The ECJ ruled that FIFA's regulations, which could make clubs liable for fines if they signed Diarra, were contrary to EU law and hindered free movement and competition between clubs.

### Manu Khel Ratna row: Why exception was made for Shami

**NEW DELHI:** Manu Bhaker's name going missing from the recommendation list for the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award is not the first instance of its kind. Manu created history at the Paris Olympics earlier this year after clinching back-to-back bronze medals in the women's individual 10m air pistol and in the mixed team event partnering Sarabjot Singh, cementing her place as one of the greatest Indian athletes in Olympic sports. The 22-year-old from Haryana's Jhajjar district became the first Indian to win two medals at a single Olympics .

**Nishesh** Basavareddy has earned himself a wildcard for the 2025 Australian Open after impressive showing on the Challenger Tour. There's a quasi-Indian story brewing in world tennis that has set tongues wagging. A Guntur-chili eating, Tollywood-watching teenager is burning the rectangle. Only the icon against his name is the United States flag, the country he was born and raised in. Nishesh, born in Newport Beach, California and grew up in Carmel, Indiana, started the 2024 season ranked No. 457; he's at a career-high No. 138 in



the ATP ranking presently. The 19-year-old enjoyed a rousing run on the Challenger Tour where he made six finals, winning two titles, including one in his last outing in Mexico. The American's show, racking up a 41-13 record, not only earned him a place in the ATP Next Gen Finals in Jeddah, starting December 18, but also

saw him clinch the USTA Australian Open wildcard that secured his spot in the Melbourne Park main draw. Basavareddy studied Data Science at Stanford University for two years before announcing in early December that he was turning professional. The American teenager, bespectacled, with a studious appearance, explained the Collegiate route was what the doctor ordered for him. "I was 17 when I graduated," he said. "I had a lot of areas where I needed to mature, it was not just physically.

## Arsenal's Bukayo Saka out for 'many weeks' with hamstring injury

**Arsenal** manager Mikel Arteta confirmed Bukayo Saka's hamstring injury will keep him out for "many weeks." This news comes after Arsenal's 5-1 victory against Crystal Palace. "It is not looking good. He will be out for many weeks," Arteta said at a press conference about the 23-year-old England international's condition Saka's injury became apparent when he was seen leaving Selhurst Park on crutches following the match. This dampened the celebratory mood after Arsenal's second decisive win over Crystal Palace in just four days."He felt something in his hamstring. He couldn't continue. He will have to be assessed, so I'm pretty worried about that one."Arteta also revealed Raheem Sterling's knee injury, which will also sideline



him for a considerable period. Both players will be out for "many weeks." Arteta dismissed concerns about Saka's potential unavailability for the remainder of the season. He expressed optimism about Saka's return before the season concludes."No (there's no fear). I'm very optimistic he'll be back before the end of the season."Arteta framed the injury as a part of a player's development process. He emphasized the relative fortune of avoiding a more severe, long-term

### Virgil Van Dijk says 'no deadline' on deciding Liverpool future

**NEW DELHI:** Virgil van Dijk has addressed his contract situation at Liverpool on Monday, stating there isn't a set timeframe for negotiations as his current agreement approaches its conclusion.The centre-back will be free to discuss terms with clubs abroad from January 1, as his present contract concludes at the season's end, though he reportedly wishes to remain at Anfield.

injury.

## 'Super afraid': Jannik-Iga doping issues heighten tension among players

**Top** tennis players like Jannik Sinner and Iga Swiatek faced doping accusations due to contamination, sparking fear among fellow athletes. Emma Raducanu and Andrey Rublev voiced concerns about the high cost and risk of unintentional violations. Experts highlight the need for vigilance and acknowledge the unequal access to resources for athletes worldwide. Professional tennis players are increasingly worried about unintentional doping violations due to contamination, especially after recent high-profile cases involving Jannik Sinner and Iga Swiatek. Both players faced doping charges but were eventually cleared. These incidents highlight the challenges athletes face regarding supplement contamination and the complexities of



the anti-doping system. Sinner and Swiatek, who both reached the top ranking in professional tennis, incurred substantial expenses to demonstrate the unintentional nature of the banned substances found in their systems. This financial burden raises concerns for players with fewer resources. "A lot of the players I know are quite apprehensive," former U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu said. Raducanu expressed her concerns about the risk of contamination in supplements and the financial burden of

batch testing. Many players are cautious about the supplements they take due to the risk of contamination. "Everything we take, we're aware of the situation and how easily things can be contaminated. There are certain supplements that I may want to take, but I can't take them because they're sold over the counter and not batch tested." The cost of batch testing, exceeding \$1,000, creates a financial barrier for many athletes. Russian tennis player Andrey Rublev, a former world number five, shared similar anxieties .

## Tennis player Max provisionally suspended for doping

**Max** Purcell said he was "devastated" after taking a voluntary suspension for breaking anti-doping rules.Purcell, who is ranked 12th in the world for doubles, admitted to breaching regulations relating to the use of a "prohibited method".

The International Tennis Integrity Agency (IITA) confirmed the development, saying that Purcell had "requested to enter into a provisional suspension on December 10" after he admitted breaking the rules related to the use of a "prohibited method" The ban will be effective from December 12. During his suspension period, the 26-year-old athlete faces a comprehensive ban that prevents his participation, coaching duties or attendance at any tennis tournaments sanctioned by official governing bodies or national associations."Time served under provisional suspension will be credited against any future sanction," the ITIA said.Purcell has succeeded twice in winning majors: most recently at the US Open alongside Jordan Thompson. Before this, he had triumphed in 2022, when he won the men's doubles Wimbledon title alongside Matt Ebden. He also finished as a runner-up in the Australian Open men's doubles final in 2020 and 2022. Purcell said he told the ITIA he had "unknowingly received an IV infusion of vitamins above the allowable limit of 100ml"."I was fully convinced that I had done everything to ensure that I had followed the WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) regulations and methods," he said on Instagram, adding that he had been as transparent.





## Low affordability hits car demand: Kia India MD

**NEW DELHI:** With car prices going up between 35-50% over the past 3-4 years, owing to safety and emissions mandates, affording a vehicle has become difficult for mass consumers and sales are likely to see a moderate growth of 3-4% in the coming year, Kia India MD Gwanggu Lee said on Thursday.

To generate demand, Lee suggests, govt can look at reducing taxes on cars from the current levels where mid-sized cars and bigger ones have a GST rate of over 45%, while smaller ones (under 4-meters) are taxed at over 28%. As the company prepares to launch affordable EVs as well as other mainstream cars, Lee said that the increase in car prices came at a time when incomes for many middle-class users did not go up at the same pace. As part of its strategy to perk up demand in the volume-laden entry SUV market, Kia drove in the all-new Syros mini offroader, which will stand besides its Sonet



model, also an under 4-meter car. Lee said that the boxy Syros, which will come with a 1-litre petrol engine and a 1.5-litre diesel, will also be offered with an electric version over the next one year. The company has developed the new vehicle after taking into account the customer preferences here, something it also did during the development of the Seltos and Sonet SUVs and the Carens MPV. But while the company expects to generate healthy volumes from the new model, whose price will be revealed at a later date, the Syros also comes in a segment that is crowded.

### Amazon's cloud unit bets on new models

**LAS VEGAS:** Amazon's cloud unit AWS unveiled new AI models and chips to take on rivals like Microsoft, which has had an edge due to its ties with ChatGPT-maker OpenAI. Exactly two years ago, the launch of ChatGPT forced tech giants to redraw plans, wiping out billions from market caps of companies that were slow to adapt pioneered renting out data infrastructure, was seen to be losing grip on its cloud dominance over the past two years.

## Government plans law to ban unregulated lending

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre has circulated a draft legislation to ban lending by unregulated entities, including by platforms, with violators facing imprisonment of up to seven years. Lenders, who harass and use unlawful means for recovery, face up to 10 years in jail, with those promoting such lending facing a term of up to five years.

The move comes amid several complaints of borrowers taking loans from digital lending platforms, including those operated by Chinese entities, at exorbitant rates. And these platforms often harass cus-



tomers by blackmailing them in case of defaults. There have been instances of borrowers committing suicides due to harassment, prompting the Centre and the regulator to step in. The plan is to notify certain activities as "unregulated lending" with a

"competent authority" tasked with regulating the segment and also maintain a database on lenders. The authority headed by a secretary-rank officer will have powers to provisionally attach the accounts of the lender and call for data.

## Private Equity and Venture Capital investments surge 156% year-on-year

**NEW DELHI:** Private Equity and Venture Capitalist funds invested \$4 billion in November, according to a joint report by IVCA and EY released on Wednesday. This shows a 156 per cent year-on-year increase while a 15 per cent decline from the

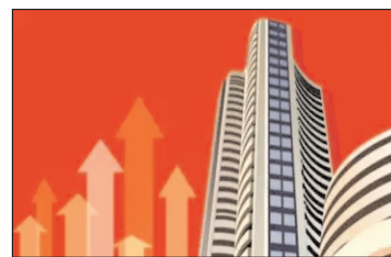
previous month. The month recorded 87 transactions, up 47 per cent from 59 deals in November 2023. "While 2024 had started off on a strong note, geopolitical tensions, uncertainty over US elections outcome, and inflation weighed on the markets,

as did the bid-ask spread between seller expectations and buyer valuations," EY's Vivek Soni said. He further said that pure-play PE/VC investments showed significant growth, reaching \$3.5 billion in November, representing a 297 per cent rise.

## Sensex tanks nearly 1,000 pts on US Fed's cautious stance

**MUMBAI:** Hawkish statements from the US central bank chief on Wednesday night led to a global sell-off in stocks that also weighed on investor sentiment on Dalal Street. Sensex opened weak, remained in the red through the session and closed 964 points down at 79,218 points.

This was the first time since Nov 29 that the index closed below the psychologically important 80K mark, BSE data showed.



In the last four sessions the sensex has lost a little over 2,900 points, translating to 3.6%. On the NSE, the fifty too followed a similar path and closed 247 points lower at 23,952 points. This was nifty's first close below the 24K mark since Nov 28, NSE data showed. In Thursday's session selling was across the board with foreign funds again leading. At close, net selling by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) was Rs 4,225 crore. In comparison, domestic funds were net buyers at Rs 3,943 crore, data from BSE showed. According to Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities, domestic markets tanked tracking negative global cues as benchmark indices slipped below their psychological levels. There was broad-based selling as the US Fed's hawkish stance raised concerns over further rate cuts next year. "Rising US bond yields have pushed global currencies, including the rupee to new lows while renewed foreign fund outflows from domestic equities could prompt investors to turn risk averse," he said. So far in the month, foreign funds are still a net buyer. But this came mainly on the back of their investments in IPOs, market players said. Combined data from NSDL and BSE showed that in Dec.

## SME IPO mania: Infrastructure company's Rs 10cr offer gets Rs 14k crore bids

**MUMBAI:** The IPO mania in the SME space reached a new high on Thursday. NACDAC Infrastructure, a Ghaziabad-based construction company eyeing to raise Rs 10 crore from the market, got bids totalling Rs 14,386 crore, a subscription of 1,976 times (excluding the Rs 2.7 crore anchor part). This made the IPO the most subscribed one in India's capital market history, data from primary market analytics company Chittorgarh showed. Bidding data on BSE showed that the non-institutional (high net worth investors') part of the offer was subscribed 2,635 times while the retail part was subscribed 2,504 times. In comparison, the portion reserved



"Cardholders will enjoy welcome privileges of complimentary doorstep visa services, lounge access, and concierge support through OneVasco with visa fee waivers via Atlys, a luxury stay gift card via EaseMyTrip, discounts and event access through The Quorum Club"

for institutional investors like mutual funds, insurance companies, foreign funds etc, was subscribed a decent 236 times. The company is set to list on BSE's SME platform.

### KKR invests in Behrouz Biryani parent

**MUMBAI:** Private equity giant KKR has invested in cloud kitchen startup Rebel Foods, which owns brands like Behrouz Biryani and Faasos.

The deal amount was not disclosed but it is understood to be a secondary transaction conducted at a lower valuation of around \$800 million. KKR said it will back the firm's expansion.

**Nuvama** recommends holding Ambuja Cements, anticipating growth after its merger with Shanghai Industries and Penna Cement. Kotak advises reducing Indiamart Intermesh holdings due to high churn. Yes Securities initiates coverage on Hyundai Motor India with a buy rating, citing the company's evolving tech landscape. JP Morgan gives Swiggy an overweight rating, expecting growth in food delivery and quick commerce. Stocks on brokerages' radar for December 20. Nuvama has a 'hold' recommendation on



Ambuja Cements with a target price of Rs 667 (+19%). The company is merging Shanghai Industries and Penna Cement with itself for operational efficiencies and to improve efficiencies. Analysts feel this decision to streamline the structure of the company is a welcome move. Kotak Institutional Equities has given a 'reduce'

reco on Indiamart Intermesh with a target price of Rs 2,350 (-0.5%). Analysts believe that there is no easy fix for the high churn that the company is facing that is leading to lower collection. Yes Securities has initiated coverage of Hyundai Motor India with a 'buy' rating and a target price of Rs 2,194 (+23%).

## The timeless taste of tradition: Mattanchere spice

As the festive season draws near, one name resonates with connoisseurs of fine cakes – Mattanchere Spice Matured Plum Cake. A true embodiment of time-honoured tradition and meticulous craftsmanship, this cake is more than a treat; it is a rich legacy passed down through generations. The Mattanchere Spice



Matured Plum Cake is available globally. Customers in India can order through Amazon, while those in the UAE can find it via Fresh to Home, in Singapore available in Dolly aunty. With worldwide shipping, cake lovers in Europe and North America, New Zealand can also enjoy this traditional holiday delight. The Mattanchere Spice Matured Plum Cake has its roots in centuries-old recipes, perfected with care and expertise. Its distinctive flavor comes from the thoughtful maturation process, where an

### 'No impact of suspension of MFN status'

**NEW DELHI:** Swiss major Nestle said suspension of MFN (most favoured nation) status given to India by Switzerland will have no impact on the company. Switzerland recently suspended MFN status under the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement. A Nestle India spokesperson said: "The matter is not a Nestle specific issue."

abundance of hand-picked fruits and spices

## 'Indian tech sector to grow to \$350 billion from \$254 billion by 2030'

**BENGALURU:** India's tech industry is poised to expand to \$350 billion by 2030, up from \$254 billion in the 2023-24 financial year, Nasscom's president Rajesh Nambiar told TOI. The sector's expansion reflects a CAGR of 6.4%. "We will work towards getting to about a \$350-billion mark by 2030. Of course, the growth rate came down significantly in the last two years. But even with all of that, we are seeing a lot of green shoots. I believe that we are in a pivotal moment. The emergence of GenAI has transformed the global landscape. Our focus must transition from AI PoCs to achieving measurable return on investments that we can put together on the board," said Nambiar. He succeeds his predecessor Debjani Ghosh, who completed her term in Nov. Prior to that,



"Nasscom initially forecasted the tech sector's revenues of \$350 billion for FY26, driven by demand for advanced technologies such as cloud computing and analytics. However, the IT industry body had to reset these growth "

Nambiar was chairman and MD of Cognizant India. Nasscom initially forecasted the tech sector's revenues of \$350 billion for FY26, driven by demand for advanced technologies such as cloud computing and analytics. However, the IT industry body had to reset these growth estimates, extending the timeline by five years to achieve the targeted figures. The Indian IT

services sector faces a significant slowdown in the last fiscal, with minimal expansion in both revenue and employment. IT exports grew a modest 3.3% in constant currency, reaching \$199 billion in FY24. This represents a substantial decline from the previous year's 11.4% growth, marking one of the sector's lowest growth rates.

## \$11.3 billion: Startup funding sees marginal rise in 2024

**MUMBAI:** After two years of funding slump, investments into India's startups are seeing some revival. Investors infused about \$11.3 billion into startups this year, a slight improvement from funding worth \$10.7 billion recorded last year, data sourced from market research firm Tracxn showed. In the coming year, companies are expected to see a sizeable amount of funding cheques but the deployment of capital will be cautious, keeping in line with the trend seen for quite sometime now and late-stage deals (over \$100 million) will take time to close, venture capital (VC) firms said. Not to say that there's a lack of capital-VC firms raised an estimated \$2.5 billion in funding in 2024 alone compared to less than \$2 billion in 2023 and some of them plan to raise new funds in 2025; but investors want to ensure they make the right bets. "As investors, we are very clear that we need to see a company's path to profitability, we need to see good governance structures, assess firms' go-to market strategies deeply and figure out founders' ability to deliver. When you diligence all of these, it takes some time and investing capital takes longer," Padmaja Ruparel, co-founder at IAN (Indian Angel Network) Group told. Quick commerce player Zepto led startup funding this year having bagged \$1.4 billion in investments alone amid a surge in investor appetite for rapid deliveries. A clutch of companies including PhysicsWallah, Rebel Foods, Eruditus and Purple also managed to raise funD.

