

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Title Code - UPENG04488

NATIONAL ENGLISH DAILY

MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

Friday, 30 January, 2026

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

## Briefs

VARANASI

### Seer slams UP govt over Magh Mela

A day after returning from Prayagraj, Shankaracharya Swami Avimuktেশ্বরান and on Thursday strongly criticised the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh. He referred to videos from Prayagraj that showed young batuks being allegedly humiliated and dragged by their hair. He said the incident was now in the public domain, but those responsible were unwilling to admit their mistake.

LUCKNOW

### Cashless healthcare for teachers

The Uttar Pradesh government on Tuesday gave its nod to extend cashless medical treatment facilities for teachers on the lines of state government employees. Under the proposal, more than 11.92 lakh teachers will be covered through the Ayushman framework. Beneficiaries will include teachers, shiksha mitras, instructors and cooks working in the education system. The scheme is expected to involve an estimated expenditure of Rs 358.61 crore.

KOLKATA

### Shah to visit Bengal today for poll meet

After the visit of newly elected BJP national president Nitin Raju, Union Home Minister Amit Shah is scheduled to make a two-day visit to poll-bound Bengal on January 30. According to party sources, the Union Home Minister will reach Kolkata on January 30 evening and then in a private hotel will hold a meeting with the state's core committee members to discuss poll preparedness issues.

PATNA

### Bihar cabinet nod for extra aid to women

Bihar cabinet on Thursday gave its nod to a proposal to provide additional financial aid of up to Rs 2 lakh to women under "Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana". CM Nitish Kumar said, "This amount will be given in phases, provided that the amount previously given has been properly utilised for employment purposes."

-Dheeraj Kumar

PATNA

### Sarpanches can vote in MLC polls

Now, panch (members of village courts) and sarpanches (heads of village courts) have been granted the right to vote in elections to Bihar legislative council from local authorities' constituencies. Earlier, mainly Mukhiyas (village heads), ward members, Panchayat Samiti members, Zila Parishad members, and representatives of urban local bodies used to vote.

CHANDIGARH

### 2 held with heroin, four grenades

Punjab police on Thursday claimed to have busted a major cross-border narco-terror network with the support of village defence committee (VDC) and recovered 42.9 kg heroin, four hand grenades and one Star-mark pistol along with 46 live cartridges in Amritsar district.

## VOICE OF SUPPORT | BJP, Congress, SP & BSP welcome verdict, students call it their victory; but DMK backs anti-bias regulations

# Right step: Parties hail SC stay on UGC equity rules

NEW DELHI

Cutting across the political divide, BJP as well as opposition parties on Thursday welcomed the Supreme Court's stay on the recent UGC equity regulations on preventing caste-based discrimination on campuses.

While leaders from Congress, SP, BSP and TMC called the SC ruling a "right step", Union minister Giriraj Singh of BJP said the decision was significant in protecting India's cultural unity and Sanatan values.

However, TN CM and DMK leader MK Stalin strongly backed the UGC regulations, calling them "delayed but welcome step" to correct systemic inequities in Indian higher education.

In Lucknow University, students raised "Chhatra ekta



People distribute sweets after the Supreme Court's decision on UGC's equity regulations, in Lucknow

zindabad (Hail students' unity) slogan to greet the judgment. "It's a victory for students," said a student, Shakti Dubey, recalling the role of youngsters in protests across the country. "The regulations should be reviewed, discussed, and changes incorporated," he said.

"True justice does not

involve injustice to anyone, and the honourable court ensures precisely this. The language of the law must also be clear, and so must the intent. It's not just about rules, but also about intention," former UP CM and SP leader Akhilesh Yadav posted on X.

BSP chief Mayawati said the court's order is appropriate in

view of the current situation, as the regulations had led to an atmosphere of tension.

Congress leader Pramod Tiwari accused BJP of creating conflicts to divert attention from real issues. Another Congress leader, Ranjit Ranjan, suggested that the regulations should be sent to a parliamentary panel for scrutiny. TMC leader Kalyan Banerjee said, "The SC has done the right thing, the UGC guidelines were unconstitutional."

"The equity regulations do not have a provision to safeguard the accused or take action against false or malicious complaints. How is that fair to us," said a Mumbai representative member of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad.

## Goyal terms Cong's criticism of FTA a case of 'sour grapes'

NEW DELHI

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday countered the Congress's labelling of the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement as "hugely-hyped" by asking if this was a story of "sour grapes".

In a post on "X", Goyal shared a post by Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh in which he had stated, "This hugely-hyped FTA is the biggest trade opening India has given to any trade partner (tariff reduction or relief on over 96% of EU exports to India) and it is expected to double India's imports from the EU. Its impact on India's trade deficit will have to be monitored closely."

He also said there are also flagged "concerns about the EU's strict health and product safety rules, which will continue to be in force over Indian exports even after the FTA."

The Congress leader had also stated that inclusion of the auto sector in FTA "opens up



Piyush Goyal meets Canada Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Tim Hodgson in New Delhi on Thursday

## Cong slams PM's remarks ahead of Budget session

New Delhi: The Congress on Thursday hit out at PM Narendra Modi over his remarks on the Budget session, saying he delivers his "usual hypocrisy-laden message to the nation" before the beginning of each session. Congress general secretary in-charge Jairam Ramesh said, "He (PM) will not convene and chair all-party meetings to take the opposition into confidence on national issues and will instead make election rally speeches in both Houses." He will suddenly have Bills introduced at the last minute and bulldozed through Parliament, Ramesh claimed.

further risks for domestic automobile manufacturers."

In his response, Goyal took a swipe at the Congress saying, it "could not take decisions

because they had no connect with the people on the ground" and that "our people have paid immense costs for this lost opportunity"

## Monitoring atrocities on minorities in B'desh: Govt

NEW DELHI

India continues to monitor reports of incidents of attacks against minorities in Bangladesh including on their homes and places of worship, and New Delhi has "consistently raised" the issue with the authorities in Dhaka, the government informed Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

In a written response to a query, Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh also said it is the expectation of India that the interim government of Bangladesh will discharge its responsibility

ities by "thoroughly investigating" these incidents and "bring all perpetrators of killings, arson and violence against minorities to justice without excuses". CPI(M) member John Brittas asked the Ministry of External Affairs whether the government has taken cognisance of reports of attacks, killings, arson and intimidation targeting minorities in Bangladesh and the deterioration of law and order.

**Govt: Conviction rate not reflection of performance**  
Conviction rates are not necessarily reflective of courts' performance and must be



PARLIAMENT DIARY

considered holistically taking into consideration all the verticals across the criminal justice system, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Thursday. In a written reply, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said factors such as police, forensic labs and lawyers also play a role in conviction rate.

### SPEAKER SCOLDS TALKATIVE MPS

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Thursday scolded members of the House seen talking to each other constantly during the Question Hour, asking them to step out of the chamber if they want prolonged discussions among themselves. Birla said such behaviour is against the dignity of the House. He remarked that brief talks were allowed but not prolonged discussions.

### Govt says 2.22 cr jobs provided in past year

A total of 2.22 crore people across the country were provided jobs in over 18,000 job fairs during the past year, Minister of Labour and Employment Mansukh Mandaviya informed the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. The minister also said that employment generation is growing and unemployment rate (3.2 per cent) is reducing in the country.

## AYODHYA POCSO CASE

### SP neta cleared for lack of proof; employee convicted

AYODHYA

After over a year of the alleged gang-rape of a 12-year-old girl in Ayodhya district, Samajwadi Party leader Moid Khan, one of the two accused, was acquitted on Wednesday after the prosecution failed to produce sufficient evidence against him.

The court of Ayodhya special judge (POCSO Act) Nirupama Vikram, however, convicted co-accused Raju Khan, who was employed by

the SP functionary, reported the Hindustan Times. It will pronounce the quantum of sentence against Raju on Thursday. With the trial court delivering a split verdict, the state is now likely to appeal against Moid Khan's acquittal in the high court.

As per the court's findings, Moid Khan's DNA did not match with forensic samples collected during probe, while Raju Khan's did. The court extended benefit of doubt to Moid Khan while holding Raju Khan guilty.

### Oppn walks out of House over K'taka govt ad on VB-G RAM G

BENGALURU

The Karnataka Legislative Assembly on Thursday witnessed uproar over a state government advertisement published in newspapers criticising the Centre's VB-G RAM G Act, with the opposition BJP and JD(S) accusing the Siddaramaiah-led government of misusing taxpayers' money for "false propaganda".

The House was briefly adjourned amid loud protests, even as the government defended the advertisement. BJP and JD(S) members later staged a walkout.

## Ahead of US visit, EAM holds talks with envoy Gor on trade

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar met US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor in New Delhi ahead of his upcoming visit to the United States, reported News 18.

He said the discussion covered "the many dimensions of our partnership" and expressed confidence that Gor would contribute to further strengthening India-US relations.

Sharing the update on X, Jaishankar said, "Pleased to meet @USAmbIndia Sergio Gor today in New Delhi. Our conversation covered the many dimensions of our part-



nership. Welcomed him and expressed confidence that he would contribute to the strengthening of India-US relations."

Sergio Gor said he held a "highly substantive discussion" with S Jaishankar, covering a wide range of issues including defence, trade and critical

## Rajasthan Gov returns bill on honour killing

JAIPUR

The Governor of Rajasthan, Haribhau Bagade, has returned the bill aimed at curbing honour killings in the state, citing legal reasons. This was announced in the Rajasthan Assembly on Wednesday, the first day of the budget session. The Rajasthan Prohibition of Interference with the Freedom of Matrimonial Alliances in the Name of Honour and Tradition Bill was passed by the previous Congress government in 2019.

The Governor stated that the Bill deals with certain sections of IPC and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC),

which have now been repealed. He added that Section 103 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, is sufficient to deal with honour killings, as it provides for punishment of murder with death, life imprisonment, and a fine.

The 2019 Bill had outlined various punishments, with the maximum being death, for causing the death of one or both individuals in such couples. It also allowed for imprisonment for life and a fine of up to Rs 5 lakh. The Congress government had introduced the Bill, noting a rise in illegal intimidation by self-appointed bodies against inter-caste, inter-community, and inter-religious marriages between consenting adults.

## Sadhvi's death roils Rajasthan, probe sought

JODHPUR

A religious preacher died after she allegedly "collapsed" while being treated for a "fever" at her ashram, triggering the wrath of devotees who demanded a fair probe into her sudden and "suspicious death". A purported suicide note on her official Instagram handle posted after her death on Wednesday evening has added questions about the sadhvi's death.

ACP (West) Chhavi Sharma said the 25-year-old sadhvi was brought to a hospital by her father in a car around 6 pm. After an examination, the doctor declared her dead, the officer said.

### Cong hijacked by pro-Pak forces, says Assam BJP

**Guwahati:** The Assam BJP on Thursday accused Congress leaders — APCC president Gaurav Gogoi and Dhubri MP Rakibul Hussain — of pursuing a political agenda "hostile to national interests." State BJP spokesperson Kamal Kumar Medhi alleged Rakibul's father, Nurul Hussain, had supported the Muslim League and campaigned in favour of Pakistan during Partition era, extending the accusation to Gogoi by alleging ideological alignment.

-Digyoti Lahkar

## BJP wins Chandigarh mayor poll, bags two more key posts

CHANDIGARH

The BJP on Thursday secured a clean sweep in the Chandigarh mayoral polls, bagging all the top three posts — mayor, senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor — as the rival Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Congress chose to fight the elections separately.

While BJP councillor Saurabh Joshi was elected mayor, Jasmanpreet Singh

and Suman Sharma were elected senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor, respectively. The BJP has 18 councillors in 35-member MC House, AAP, 11 and the Congress has six and while the Chandigarh's MP (Congress' Manish Tiwari) also has an ex-officio vote; an AAP-Congress alliance would have tied the race at 18 votes each and in that case the election would have been done through toss of a coin, giving the latter, a chance to win.

### Karnataka min threatens to quit, placated

**Bengaluru:** Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's close associate and Energy Minister KJ George is now irked by interference in his department.

George threatened to resign from the ministry, but calmed down after mediation by Siddaramaiah's political secretary Ponnanna. It is no secret that Siddaramaiah's son Dr Yatindra is handling most of the departments, irrespective of who the minister is. —Vinay Madhava Gowda

## Husband murders SWAT commando with dumbbell

NEW DELHI

A desperate phone call, a husband allegedly announcing a killing in real time, and a brother forced to listen helplessly to his sister's screams — these were the chilling final moments of a 27-year-old Delhi Police SWAT commando who later died after being brutally assaulted at her Delhi home.

"He told me to put the call on recording, said it could be used as police evidence; (then)

told me he was killing her. And then, I heard her screams," recalled Kajal Chaudhary's brother Nikhil, a constable posted at Parliament Street Police Station.

Kajal's husband Ankur, a clerk in the Ministry of Defence and posted in Delhi Cantt, allegedly smashed her head with a heavy dumbbell. He was arrested hours later. After battling for life for five days, Kajal succumbed to her injuries at a hospital in Ghaziabad on January 27.

## Indian tunes regale at Beating Retreat

NEW DELHI

The iconic Vijay Chowk reverberated with captivating Indian tunes on Thursday as the Beating Retreat ceremony marked the culmination of the 77th Republic Day celebrations.

The bands of the Indian Army, the Indian Navy, the Indian Air Force and the



Central Armed Police Forces played foot-tapping melodies. People cheered and applauded the synchronised marches as soldiers formed various

shapes, some drawn from Indian traditions.

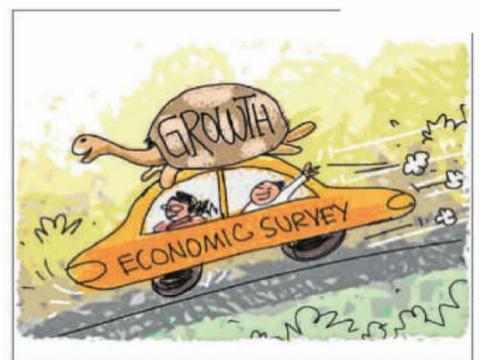
The ceremony began with the massed band's 'Kadam Kadam Badhaye Ja', Earlier,

President Droupadi Murmu, Vice-President CP Radhakrishnan, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, arrived for the ceremony. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and several other Union Ministers were among those present.

PM Modi earlier said that the 'Beating Retreat' ceremony reflects the "strength of India's rich military heritage".

He said that the ceremony showcases the traditions, discipline and valour of the Indian armed forces, who remain steadfast in safeguarding the nation.

"This evening, the Beating Retreat ceremony will be held. It symbolises the conclusion of the Republic Day celebrations. In it, the strength of India's rich military heritage will be displayed," PM Modi posted on X.



## District-Level Career Guidance Fair Held at Government Girls Inter College

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj.** Under the Career Guidance program of Samagra Shiksha Secondary, a district-level career guidance fair was organized on Wednesday at Government Girls Inter College (near Swaroop Rani), Civil Lines, Prayagraj. Students from all government secondary schools operating under the Secondary Education Department, career guidance nodal teachers, principals, and a large number of parents participated in the fair. The career guidance fair, organized under the guidance of District School Inspector Prayagraj P.N. Singh, was inaugurated by District Basic Education Officer Anil Kumar, Senior Surgeon of SRN Hospital Dr. Santosh Singh, Professor Shashikant Tripathi of Kulbhaskar Ashram PG College, and Joint District School Inspector Jitendra Pratap Singh by offering garlands and lighting lamps before the idol of Goddess Saraswati. Principal Neelam Mishra welcomed the guests with bouquets. Badge presentation was done by Kiran Rai, Lata Kumari, and Scout in-charge Dr. Akanksha Kesari. The students presented Saraswati Vandana and a welcome song. Joint District School Inspector Jitendra Pratap Singh delivered the welcome



address. In the program, Professor and agricultural expert Dr. Shashikant Tripathi, Associate Professor Dr. Jai Singh from the Department of Psychology, Allahabad University, advocate Ayushi Gautam of Allahabad High Court, Sub-Inspector Rahul Kumar of Uttar Pradesh Police, counselor Dr. Sugreev Singh from the Model Career Center, and other subject experts shared new information about higher education and career options related to their respective fields and motivated the students for their future. Senior Surgeon Dr. Santosh Singh provided important information related to entering the medical field. District Basic Education Officer Anil Kumar

said that in today's time, it is necessary for students to not only acquire academic knowledge but also to be proficient in various skills. This career fair, organized with this objective, will prove to be extremely useful for the students. Pankh Portal in-charge Dr. Madhu Yadav presented a brief outline of the program. After this, the officials and experts visited the stalls set up by various institutions. The stalls of the Psychology Department Uttar Pradesh, Bharat Scouts and Guides Prayagraj, RK Group of Institutions, United Group of Institutions, UP Rural Livelihood Mission, Radio Adda, HN Singh Degree College, AKS University Satna (Madhya Pradesh), Ganpat



University Gujarat, Parul University, Lakme Salon, Jan Shikshan Sansthan, State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank and the Institute of Company Secretaries of India were major attractions at the fair. Vocational trainers from all government schools also set up their respective stalls at the event. Students and parents visited the stalls to gather information about various career options and get their queries answered.

On this occasion, PP Singh, Shashibala Chaudhary, Manjulesh Vishwakarma, Sunil Kumar, Mohammad Rafiq, Jyoti Singh, Sarita Verma, Pratigya Chauhan, BS Yadav, Ravi Bhushan, KP Singh, KK

Tripathi, Sushma Gupta, Neelam Chaturvedi, along with principals of several schools and Accounts Officer Vinay Prakash were present. Rashmi Singh, Dr. Ranjana Yadav, Iffat Zia, Vandana, Anita Uttam, Dr. Preeti Mishra, Rekha Ram, Manju Srivastava, Sandhya Sailani, Shubhdarshini Singh, Manisha, Vandana Pandey, Mridula Yadav, Pushpa Shukla, Jyoti Agarwal, Kiran Gupta, Pallavi Srivastava, Rupali, Kshama, Kirti Pandey, Charu and the entire staff contributed to the successful organization of the program. The vote of thanks was given by Joint District School Inspector Vijay Singh, while the program was conducted by Dr. Prabhakar Tripathi.

## Assam Darrang District Development Committee Meeting Held at Mangaldai

The monthly meeting of the District Development Committee (DDC), Darrang, Assam was held on Thursday at the

Conference Hall of the District Commissioner's Office, Mangaldai, under the chairmanship of District Commissioner Pubali Gohain.



During the meeting, the District Commissioner reviewed the functioning and progress of works of various departments, including Panchayat & Rural Development, PWD (Buildings), Social Welfare, Fisheries, Social Justice & Empowerment, Housing & Urban Affairs, Agriculture, Veterinary and other allied departments. The status of several key developmental projects of the district such as the Model Women College, Kharupetia, Model Residential School, Sipajhar and Jagannath Community Hall-cum-Skill Centres at Kaupati and Tangni were discussed in detail. Progress of major infrastructure projects including Darrang Medical College & Hospital, Critical Care Hospital Block, Anganwadi Model Centres and Garukhuti Integrated Park was also reviewed. The District Commissioner stressed the need for timely completion of all ongoing projects and instructed the concerned departments to strictly adhere to prescribed quality standards and timeliness. The meeting was attended by DDC Debajit Baruah, Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad, Karabi Saikia Karan, Additional District Commissioner Santana Bora, heads of various departments and other Senior Officials.

## BJP District General Secretary and BLA-1 Inspects Four Booths in Aliganj Assembly Constituency

Etah

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) District General Secretary and BLA-1 for the Aliganj Assembly constituency, Ashish Rajput, conducted an inspection of four polling booths in the Aliganj Assembly area on Thursday. During the visit, he reviewed the ongoing voter list revision and name inclusion process at the booth level and issued necessary guidelines to party workers. As part of the outreach programme, Rajput went door to door to spread awareness among voters and encouraged them to motivate others to participate in the



electoral process. The primary objective of the inspection was to ensure that the names of eligible but left-out voters are added to the electoral roll and to enhance public awareness about the importance of voting rights. In the villages of Mugrahar, Sasutiya, Jagdish Kanchanpur, and Booth No.1, a total of 42

Form-6 applications were filled by women voters for inclusion of their names in the voter list. Interacting with villagers and voters present at the sites, Rajput emphasized that for the strengthening of democracy, it is essential that every eligible citizen's name is included in the voter list. He informed residents during door-to-door

visits that many people, for various reasons, could not get their names registered during the SIR process. Such individuals, he said, can easily get their names added by filling Form-6. He appealed to citizens to remain vigilant and also encourage their family members and neighbours to verify their names in the voter list. During the inspection, Rajput also provided detailed information about the form-filling procedure, required documents and the stipulated time frame. Booth-level workers and local residents were present during the Programme.

## Participants showcase their talent at the District Sports Competition

Ghazipur

**My Bharat Ghazipur:** A two-day district sports competition, organized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India was successfully concluded at Buddha Hostel, Cantonment Line. The Chief guest, Sarita Agarwal, Chairperson of the Municipal Council, said in her address that sports are a powerful medium for the all-round development of youth. Sports foster discipline, leadership qualities, and team spirit. She appreciated the efforts being made by My Bharat and urged the youth to remain continuously involved in sports. District Youth Welfare Officer Dilip Kumar said that My Bharat is an important initiative of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, which is working to connect youth with sports, social service, and nation-building. District Sports Officer Arvind Yadav said in his address that block and district-level competitions lay the foundation for future state and national-level players. Seema Pathak,



Chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee Ghazipur, said that sports are not limited to winning and losing, but they pave the way for struggle, perseverance, and success in life. My Bharat's Deputy Director Kapil Dev welcomed everyone and highlighted the objectives of the competition. At the end of the program, prizes and certificates were distributed to the winning and runner-up players. In the group game of Kabaddi, Mohammadabad block was the winner and Kasimabad was the runner-up. In Volleyball, Mohammadabad was the winner and Sadar was the runner-up. In the long jump, Ashutosh Singh of

Kasimabad secured first place and Shubham Yadav of Sadat secured second place. In the high jump, Shubham Yadav of Sadat secured first place and Akshay Rao of Kasimabad secured second place. In Badminton, Priya of Sadat was the winner and Shreya of Birno was the runner-up. In the 100-meter race, Priya Yadav of Sadat secured first place, Shreya Chauhan of Birno secured second place, and Anjali Deep of Sadar and Seema Kumari of Sadar shared third place with equal points. The program was conducted by Angad Singh Yadav, and the vote of thanks was given by Accounts and Program Assistant Naveen Singh.

## Brahmarshi Jagran Chaupal Delivers Message of Social Awareness

Ghazipur

The fifth day of the grand campaign of the Brahmarshi Jagran Chaupal, organized by the Brahmarshi Welfare Association, concluded successfully. The organization office bearers visited various villages in the district and delivered a message of social awareness through community meetings. On the fifth day, Chaupal meetings were held in Hasanpura and Pakri villages, where extensive discussions took place regarding social welfare, mutual harmony, strengthening the organization and future direction. On this occasion, National spokesperson Triloki Nath Rai said that "this campaign is not limited to just meetings, but it is a powerful means of connecting



only when we forget our differences and move forward unitedly. The objective of the Brahmarshi Jagran Chaupal is to unite society, create awareness among the new generation, and develop positive thinking for the benefit of society. He said that this grand campaign will work to give a new direction to society. National spokesperson Triloki Nath Rai said that "this campaign is not limited to just meetings, but it is a powerful means of connecting

the scattered relationships within society and strengthening social consciousness." He informed that this program will be conducted continuously for several days and efforts will be made to connect people from all sections of society. At the end of the program, a resolution was taken to keep the society united and to continue such events. The entire atmosphere was filled with a sense of social consciousness and unity.

## Peaceful Public Awareness Meet Held in Etah Against UGC Regulations-2026, Withdrawal Demanded

Etah

A peaceful public awareness meeting and sit-in protest were organized on Thursday at Mehta Park in Etah town against several provisions of the UGC Regulations-2026 issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC). Participants raised serious objections to the new regulations, terming them contrary to the basic spirit of the Indian Constitution, judicial impartiality and the principles of natural justice and demanded their immediate withdrawal. Addressing the gathering, speakers stated that while caste-based discrimination is a social evil and must be dealt with firmly, no law should promote social division or create scope for misuse of legal processes. The protesters expressed concern over the absence of clear safeguards to prevent



misuse, what they described as a one-sided definition of discrimination, a tendency to view the general category with prejudice, and the possibility of increased classification within academic institutions instead of promoting harmony. Following the meeting, a peaceful march was taken out from Mehta Park via Thandi Sadak to GT Road. A memorandum addressed to the President of India was submitted through the District Magistrate. Speakers appealed for the protection of the constitutional principles

of equality and justice. Indian Media Foundation District President and Kshatriya Samaj Ekta Trust State President Thakur Anil Solanki said that the balance ensuring protection of innocent individuals, which existed in the 2012 regulations, was missing in the new framework. He urged the government to immediately review the regulations and formulate a balanced policy after wide-ranging consultations. Sachin Gupta called for the withdrawal of the UGC Regulations-2026 and the creation of a frame-

work that ensures justice for all citizens while offering a genuine solution to caste-based discrimination. Advocate Nishkant Sharma informed that a Supreme Court order received during the protest was welcomed by those present, reaffirming their faith in constitutional processes. Other speakers included Dulare Bhadoria, Vishan Pal Chauhan, Prashant Gupta (former councillor), Wasim Hussain, Advocate Shyamveer Singh Solanki, Brijkishor Dixit, Bablu Pandit, Abhishek Tomar, Sanjeev Gupta, and Ramu Chauhan, among others. Representatives of the Savarna community appealed to the government to withdraw the regulations and ensure a fair and balanced system for all sections of society. Those who submitted the memorandum included Goldy Gupta, Abhishek Tomar,

Sanjeev Gupta, Amit Kumar Gupta, Dayanand Singh, Heera Parashar, Gajendra Chauhan, Ritik Chauhan, Rudra Pratap Singh, Rohit Pratap Singh, Ajit Singh, Rajeev Solanki, Nikhil Rathore, Deepak Rathore, Vinod Rathore, Avadesh Singh, Mrs. Sulekha, Himanshu Solanki, Nikki Bhadoria, Rishabh Chauhan, Satyam Sharma, Shivam Dubey, Ujjwal Pratap Singh Tomar, Siddharth Bhadoria, Divyansh Chauhan, Ankit Baghel, Suraj Chauhan, Prateek Dubey, Thakur Sanjay Solanki, Pandit Harshit Upadhyay, Kunal Gupta, Adarsh Pandit, Devansh Chaturvedi, Anurag Chauhan, Vishal Gupta, Krishna Chauhan, Akash Sharma, Balram Singh, Sahdev Sisodia, Tarun Sharma, Kamal Gupta, Anshul Mishra, Ansh Brijesh Kumar, along with many other prominent citizens and social activists.

# Married Woman Brutally Murdered in Phulpur, Body Stuffed in a Sack and Thrown into a Well, Missing for a Week

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj.** A sensational case of the brutal murder of a married woman has come to light in Balikaranpur village under the Phulpur police station area. Unidentified persons murdered the woman, stuffed her body into a white sack, and threw it into a deserted well. Bricks were placed inside the sack, and wood was piled on top to prevent the body from surfacing. The deceased had been missing since January 22nd. On Thursday evening, some villagers went to collect wood near a tube well when they noticed a sack floating in the well. A strong foul odor emanating from the sack caused panic among the villagers, and a crowd gathered at the spot. Upon receiving the information, the Phulpur police arrived and retrieved the sack from the well, which contained the decomposed body of a woman. The deceased



was identified as Seema Saroj (approximately 35 years old), a resident of Balikaranpur village. The body was in a highly decomposed state. The police took the body into custody and sent it for post-mortem examination. Considering the seriousness of the incident, ACP Phulpur Vivek Yadav also visited the spot, inspected the scene, and gathered information from the family members.

**Body Hidden in a Deserted Well**

It is reported that Ranvijay Singh, a resident of the village, owns a tube well some distance from the village, which has been closed for about ten years. There is little movement of people in that area. On Thursday, Rakesh and Rajendra from the village went there to collect wood. While collecting wood, they saw a sack in the well, from which a foul odor was emanating. They then informed the police.

**Affair with Another Woman**

The deceased, Seema, was married about 17 years ago to Anil Gautam, son of Sangam Lal, a resident of Balikaranpur village. Seema's parental home is in Gauhani Bahariya. Anil is a mason by profession and lives in Prayagraj city. According to sources, he had been living in the city with another woman from the village for the past few years. Seema has four children, who



are now left without their mother. Family had expressed suspicions earlier. After Seema went missing, her family accused her in-laws of making her disappear. A village council meeting was also held regarding this matter. A missing person report was also filed at the Phulpur police station.

**Retrieving the body was a difficult task**  
The police had to work for about two and a half hours to retrieve the body from the well. The

body was pulled out with the help of ladders and ropes. The body was completely bloated, and the sack in which it was wrapped had also disintegrated in the water. Phulpur police station in-charge Praveen Gautam said that the matter is being investigated. The investigation is being conducted keeping all aspects in mind. The incident will be revealed soon, and action will be taken against the culprits.

## 77th Republic Day Celebration at Durgawati International School



**Meja.** Durgawati International School celebrated the 26th of January with great enthusiasm, patriotism, and pride. The entire school campus was filled with a spirit of nationalism as students, teachers, and guests gathered to commemorate the Republic Day of India. The program began with the welcome of the guests by the bouquet, followed by badge pinning. An introduction of the event was given to highlight the importance of Republic Day. The ceremony continued with the auspicious lamp lighting. A disciplined march past was presented by the students, after which the unfurling of the national flag took place. All present stood in respect during the national anthem, expressing unity and love for the nation. The cultural program started with a speech by a student, followed by a beautiful classical dance on "Ghar More Pardesiya." A powerful Mangal Pandey skit showcased the bravery and sacrifice of our freedom fighters. The young students of LKG and UKG delighted the audience with their energetic dance performance. A motivating speech by Mr. Himanshu Sahu Sir inspired students to be responsible citizens. This was followed by a vibrant performance titled "Desh Rangeela" and an impressive pyramid formation by the students. The dance by classes 5 and 6 added charm and enthusiasm to the celebration. The program concluded with an encouraging speech by the Chairman Sir Mr. Sushil Mishra and Manager Mam Dr. (Mrs) Swatantra Mishra, appreciating the efforts of students and teachers. The celebration ended with a heartfelt vote of thanks given by Vice Principal Mr. Srijan Mishra. The Republic Day celebration at Durgawati International School was a grand success and instilled a sense of patriotism, discipline, and unity among all present.

## National Parshuram Sena stages protest against new UGC rules, memorandum sent to the Prime Minister

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj.** A peaceful protest was held on Wednesday at Pathar Girjagarh, Civil Lines, at the call of the National Parshuram Sena (Brahmahini) against the new rules implemented by the University Grants Commission (UGC). The protest, organized under the leadership of the organization's national president, Pt. Vimal Tiwari, saw the participation of a large number of office bearers, workers, and members of the upper caste community. Addressing the protest, the speakers said that the new UGC rules are against the interests of the country's education system, teachers, and students. This is affecting the autonomy of higher education institutions and is likely to have an adverse impact on social balance. The speakers alleged that taking such decisions without consulting all



stakeholders is not justified. National President Pt. Vimal Tiwari said that this UGC rule is not an education reform, but a direct attack on the education system. It is an injustice to the future of deserving students and teachers, which will not be accepted under any circumstances. He also alleged that these rules are indirectly targeting a section of society, which could create

an atmosphere of tension and discontent in educational institutions. Other speakers said that policies should be formulated through dialogue, not imposed. If this rule is not withdrawn in time, social imbalance will increase, for which the government and administration will be responsible. The protesters warned that if their demands are not met, the movement will be

intensified. During the protest, a memorandum addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi was sent through the Commissioner of Prayagraj Division, demanding the immediate withdrawal of the new UGC rules. Jagadguru Swami Ramanujacharya Yogeshwaracharya Ji Maharaj also participated in the program and said that if the government does not take a decision in time, the saint community will also join the movement. The protest was attended by patron Pt. Jagat Prasad Mishra, National Secretary Ashok Pandey, State Secretary Manish Pandey, District President Kunwar Ji Tiwari, District President Dwarika Bhardwaj, District Spokesperson Sunita Mishra, District President of the Legal Cell Ganesh Shankar Shukla, Kashi Province President Vivek Dubey, General Secretary Anoop Shukla, and hundreds of other workers.

## Angry Anganwadi workers protested at the DM's office and submitted a memorandum

**Phaphamau:** Responding to a call from their state leadership, thousands of Anganwadi workers and helpers from various blocks of Prayagraj district gathered on Thursday. They marched from the PWD office, chanting slogans, and proceeded through the Vikas Bhawan to the DM's office. The procession was led by the union's divisional president Santosh Mishra, district president Mauji Lal Rawat, and labor leader and state in-charge Shyam Surat Pandey. They accused the central and state governments of breaking their promises, stating that the current governments are extracting more work from Anganwadi workers but not paying them adequately, leading to deep resentment among them. The leaders said that if the Chief Minister and Prime Minister



do not seriously consider and implement their demands before March 8th, all Anganwadi workers and helpers will be forced to launch a major agitation in Lucknow under the banner of the Joint Front on International Women's Day. The Anganwadi workers' main demands are that they be declared government employees and be given minimum wage, pension, and gratuity benefits. The government has made promises several times, but is now

renege on them. Geetanjali Maurya has formed a Joint Front to wage a long struggle against the government, and all Anganwadi workers and helpers have joined forces. Anganwadi workers and helpers from blocks including Utha, Shankargarh, Manda, Kaudhiyara, Phulpur, Holagarh, Mauaima, Kaudihar, Jasra, Meja, Soraon, Bahariya, Dhanupur, Bahadurpur, Chaka, Handia, and Koraon were present on this occasion.

## Three Young Men Who Saved Pilots' Lives in Plane Crash Honored by District Magistrate, Awarded Rs. 1 Lakh Incentive



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj,** January 29. Three young men who saved the lives of both pilots of a plane that crashed into a pond near Vidya Vahini School during a training exercise were honored by District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma on Thursday. At a program held at the Sangam Auditorium, Pankaj Sonkar, Lal Saheb Nishad, and Alok Yadav were presented with an incentive of Rs. 1 lakh under the District Sports Development and Promotion Committee. The District Magistrate said that the

courage, presence of mind, and humanity displayed by these young men are an inspiration to society. Such actions not only strengthen human values but also send a message of helping others in emergency situations. He said that this courageous act has brought glory to the image of Prayagraj district. It is noteworthy that a few days ago, a training aircraft crashed into a pond near Vidya Vahini School. The lives of both pilots on board were in danger. Upon receiving information about the incident, local citizens from the surrounding area rushed to the spot. Pankaj

Sonkar, Lal Saheb Nishad, and Alok Yadav displayed immense courage, immediately jumping into the pond and safely rescuing both pilots, thus saving their lives. The program was attended by Chief Development Officer Harshika Singh, Additional District Magistrate (Administration) Pooja Mishra, City Magistrate Vinod Kumar Singh, Regional Sports Officer, Deputy Sports Officer, and other officers and dignitaries. The administration wished the three young men a bright future and appreciated their contribution.

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj:** A review meeting was held on Thursday at the Sangam Auditorium, chaired by District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma, with officials of the Electricity Department to review the progress of providing electricity connections by constructing power infrastructure in unelectrified households under the Government of India's RDSS-UEHH scheme. The District Magistrate expressed displeasure over the slow progress of the scheme and issued necessary directions. The meeting was informed that under the scheme, 929 hamlets in Prayagraj district are to be electrified, and a target of



issuing electricity connections to 19,461 houses has been set. So far, electrification work has been completed in 316 hamlets, while work is in progress in 186 hamlets. Connections were to be provided to 10,754 houses in these hamlets, but only 5,902 applications have been received so far. Electrification work has not yet started in 424 hamlets because no applica-

tions for connections have been received there. The District Magistrate directed that villagers be made aware of the availability of electricity connections in the remaining houses. He instructed that the cooperation of village heads and public representatives be sought for this purpose. He also directed that letters be sent to village heads and village sec-

retaries through the District Panchayati Raj Officer to establish communication. The Electricity Bill Relief Scheme-2025 was also reviewed in the meeting. This scheme is applicable from December 1, 2025, for domestic consumers (up to two kilowatts) and commercial consumers (up to one kilowatt).

The scheme is being implemented in three phases, in which consumers are being given a 100 percent waiver on the interest charged on electricity bills up to November 2025. In addition, there is a provision for a discount on the principal amount: 25 percent in the first phase, 20 percent in the second phase, and

15 percent in the third phase. The review revealed that a total of 3,74,927 consumers are to be registered in the Yamunapar and Gangapar regions, but only 90,850 consumers have registered and availed the benefits of the scheme by January 28, 2026. The District Magistrate instructed the officials and employees of the electricity department to expedite the registration of the remaining consumers. Chief Development Officer Harshika Singh, Chief Engineer (Distribution) Prayagraj Region-II Ashok Kumar, Superintending Engineer Electricity Distribution Division-I Prayagraj Lokesh Chandra, and other officers were present at the meeting.

## DM reviews plan to provide electricity to unelectrified hamlets, directs officials to seek cooperation from public representatives

## Editorial

## Investors line-up for Excitel's \$200-million

## Total capex outlay

The Union government's capital expenditure (capex) continues to be a cause for concern. Of course, the extent of its decline has reduced somewhat — from 35 per cent at the end of the first quarter of the current financial year to 15 per cent at the end of six months. But the latest number for the April-November 2024-25 period shows that the Union government's capex was still 12 per cent lower than what it was in the same period of 2023-24. Instead of aiming for the targeted 17 per cent growth to ~11.11 trillion in capex for 2024-25, the government will have to strive hard to at least cross the figure of ~9.48 trillion reached last year. What has led to this decline? A widely held view is that the seven-phase general elections, which began on April 19 and ended on June 1 last year, caused a slowdown in capex. But if that indeed is the reason, the decline in capex in the first quarter should have been reversed in the second quarter of 2024-25. And certainly, the first two months of the third quarter should have raised the trajectory of capex growth to a higher level. There has been some improvement, but a 12 per cent decline in the April-November 2024-25 period is no comfort. Look at the slightly different trajectory seen in the Union government's revenue expenditure growth during the same period. The Budget for 2024-25 had projected a rise of over 6 per cent to ~37.1 trillion in revenue expenditure. At the end of June 2024, the growth was just about 2 per cent, but it has been rising since then, reaching 4.2 per cent by the end of the first six months of 2024-25 and climbing even higher to 7.8 per cent during April-November 2024-25. So, if revenue expenditure has gained momentum, why has capex failed to follow suit? A close analysis of the government's capex numbers presents an interesting picture. Over 90 per cent of the Centre's total capex during 2024-25 was accounted for by just six sectors — roads, railways, defence, telecom, transfer to states and new schemes. Their share in total capex in 2023-24 was a little less at 87 per cent. But the 12 per cent decline in the first eight months of 2024-25 is primarily the result of a marked slowdown in only two of these six areas — roads and defence, which accounted for over 40 per cent of the total capex outlay for 2024-25. Capex on the construction of roads and highways fell by 16 per cent, while defence saw a decline of 15 per cent. This is serious and has worrying implications for both infrastructure and defence. The problem of slowing expenditure in these two areas should not have been difficult to fix. Either effective monitoring of spending is lacking, or there are serious problems with project execution, reflecting the poor expenditure-absorbing capacity of these two sectors. This is borne out by a relatively good performance of the Indian Railways, which accounts for over 22 per cent of this year's capex. At ~1.68 trillion, the Indian Railways' capex is just about 1 per cent lower than its spending during April-November 2023. With regard to the transfer of special assistance as loans to states for their capex and additional central assistance for their externally aided projects, the Union government's performance was slightly better. In the April-November 2024-25 period, these transfers rose by about 5 per cent, although much lower than the budgeted increase of 41 per cent.

In contrast, such transfers during the entire 2023-24 had risen sharply by about 24 per cent to ~1.15 trillion. It appears that these transfers will take a hit in the current year and for the first time since this initiative to help states boost their capex was undertaken a couple of years ago.



Extension of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for solar energy value chain, increased allocation towards PM Suryaghar Muft Bijlee Yojana, and greater thrust to distribution and transmission infrastructure are likely to be the key features of the upcoming Budget, as far as the energy sector is concerned. Sources said these proposals figured not only in the budget wish lists of the industry, but also in the respective recommendations from the ministries of power and renewable energy to the finance ministry, ahead of the Budget. "Given the success of PM Suryaghar scheme with almost 600,000 installations in just nine months since its launch, one could probably see additional allocation to target more households," said Ashwin Jacob, partner at Deloitte India. "As far as evacuation of power from offshore wind projects is concerned, we would want to see the VGF or budgetary support to continue or get enhanced," he added. "We hope to see a decisive increase in funding to accelerate the green energy transition. Priorities must include scaling renewable energy by addressing grid and transmission challenges, advancing Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) for grid stability and reliable power, doubling energy efficiency and digitalizing the energy sector through AI, smart meters, and data-driven solutions. Streamlining rooftop solar



programs with simplified approvals, financing, and monitoring is equally vital," said Saurabh Kumar, Vice President — India, Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP). Sharat Goyal, CEO of Impact Infracap also expects the government to remove restrictions on state wise caps on roof top capacity for net-metering for industrial establishments. "Further, adoption of batteries to substitute use of diesel generators for backup power should receive incentives and policy support given their role in reducing dependence on imports," he said. While the government is increasingly working towards enhancing the country's RE capacity, the distribution and transmission infrastructure for its evacuation still needs to be strengthened. With the peak demand for power growing at a rate of 8-9% annually, the industry is looking forward to strengthening of climate

resilient infrastructure augmentation. "One can expect new allocations towards augmentation of power distribution infrastructure, especially in high density/ urban load centres, in view of the sharp rise in peak demand over the last few years," said Anujesh Dwivedi, Partner at Deloitte India. He noted that there may be some allocation towards supporting the preparatory work especially on the listing of power utilities, or some incentive mechanism for promoting initiatives on private sector participation or listing of utilities at the state level because they are increasingly being seen as the much needed structural reforms the sector needs. The industry is optimistic of a wider coverage of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme by including smart metering in infrastructure definition. "This would direct more financing for a sector which seeks to bring down India's

transmission and distribution losses to 12% and improve recovery for state utilities," Goyal said. Goyal also noted that power transmission has not seen any notable monetisation events which could address the latent investor demand. "Government should announce a time-bound privatisation programme for assets owned by PGCIL," he said. The sector also sees the PLI scheme for solar value chain to continue with possible reduction in the duty structures for solar equipment. Jacob highlighted.

that there may be some rationalisation of duties on capital goods required for solar upstream manufacturing could be seen so that overall that industry can really take off. "We expect continuation and maybe broadening of the PLI support towards the solar module value chain. We already have a few interventions there, which are likely to be extended deeper," Dwivedi said. Similarly, on the battery manufacturing front, the industry expects localization of the value chain given competing countries have already advanced beyond India. In the green hydrogen segment, the industry believes the government may bring in hydrogen purchase for specific sectors like (green) steel. On the EV front, the industry seeks more support towards building public charging infrastructure given the anticipated

increase in the EV penetration. "Under the PM E-drive, we already have an allocation of about Rs 1,100 crores for FY26. Given that the final guidelines have not been released until now, I think even the allocation under FY25 may get added and FY26 budget may be increased as the country expects an acceleration in EV adoption in FY26," Dwivedi said. While the government has already launched a rooftop solar scheme and announced viability gap funding for offshore wind projects, industry players expect increased allocations, particularly towards solar and wind, along with higher budgetary capital expenditure in green hydrogen and battery storage infrastructure. Along with this, the sector also expects the government to increase its coverage of households under PM Suryaghar. "Under the Atmannirbhar Bharat scheme, there should be a scheme for the home grown EPCM companies to create indigenous technical capabilities in the country and reduce the foreign exchange outflow. We would also like to see a reduction on GST for engineering equipment and a reduction in import duties on chemicals in India," said Umesh Sood, CEO Simon India Ltd. Sunil Singhvi, President, Indian Electrical and Electronics Manufacturers Association noted that there is a need for strong policy support to fos-

## The rigging thereafter Post-poll fixing is not that easy

Post-poll fixing is not that easy, though there were no shortage of attempts. The most widely discussed case is that of Nawaz Sharif himself, whose win at the Lahore seat (NA-130) and the Mansehra seat are both highly suspicious. In the first, the numbers don't match on Form 47, which the Election Commission of Pakistan issues, and in the latter, a fact check seems to conclude that Nawaz bagged 80,382 votes to PTI's Gushtap Khan, who secured 105,249 votes and won the seat. There's more, which this author noticed while watching emerging numbers. In Multan, where PTI leader Shah Mehmood Qureshi's family has been winning for decades given his spiri-

tual background in the 'city of saints', his daughter Meher Bano, who was leading comfortably in the count (as reported), followed by a Pakistan People's Party candidate, suddenly lost to the son of former Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani, who was trailing third—in another much delayed count. On the other hand, there were notable wins that were 'allowed'. That includes Latif Khosa of the PTI, who won against veteran Pakistan Muslim League leader Khwaja Asif. Khosa left the PPP in a huff and joined the PTI at a time when almost everyone was leaving it. Another win for Zartaj Gul in DI Khan, who had earlier a dramatic escape from being arrested for mul-

tipl cases and then granted protective bail.

Then were the charges (not allegations) by one of the most respected politicians, Jibran Nasir, who testified to a huge run for PTI, but that polling stations were making excuses by not giving the final form to polling agents. Then there are videos in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which are usually the most courted because they're pretty much open to 'selection', where voters are throwing out ballot boxes, not to mention terrorist attacks to prevent polling. All in all, the end verdict. The Pakistani army is terrible at this. The degree of blatant effort smacks either of desperation or inadequacy, or both.

## India's focus on its land borders has historically stemmed from past learnings from medieval-era

India's focus on its land borders has historically stemmed from past learnings from medieval-era invasions and in the current era, involved conflicts over land borders or around states contiguous to its boundaries. It is only in the last few decades that the role of the Indian Navy has gained prominence, as India aims to step up to a larger role in the global power hierarchy. In 2020, as India and China clashed in Galwan, several analysts pointed towards the need to use India's natural maritime advantages in its regional rivalry with China and in more effective power projection as an emerging and responsible global force. Keeping in mind India's ambitions in steering regional geopolitics, the role of the Indian Navy emerged from the shadows of India's arsenal to take on a more prominent role. Aside from developing its capabilities, India has recently played an active role in humanitarian and rescue missions, thus stamping its growing reputation as a responsible and capable maritime power. In the process, the navy has become a chief instrument in providing teeth to the country's aspirations outside the region. The Indian Navy is increasingly being

seen as a capable and confident naval power that can be relied upon to make the seas a safer zone. "I think the scale of India's naval deployment is quite unprecedented, and in some ways this represents the confidence the Indian Navy has in its own abilities and the requirement to be seen as a benevolent regional player that is not simply looking after its own interests but also the interests of the global common," says Harsh Pant of the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi. As the war wages in Gaza and with the Yemen-based Houthi rebels attempting to broaden the war by mounting attacks against passing ships, the US has retaliated by striking the Houthis. The war occasionally threatens to spill over to other parts of the region aside from the environmental risks that sinking of ships pose to the coral reefs in the region. Amidst this, India has made its presence felt by deploying warships and surveillance east of the Red Sea against any attack by the Houthis and pirates. In this context, it must be said that the Indian naval presence has made it safe for the conduct of commercial trade in the region.

With the states around India possess-

ing limited capacity to use naval capabilities in the high seas, there has been a regular concern around the lack of law enforcement in the seas as pirates have continued to enjoy the largesse of terrorist groups, smuggling contraband, trafficking and attacking commercial vessels and affecting trade. "Maritime power is more than a matter of policing the commons or accumulating and projecting military force in the littorals. Sea power is equally about creating prosperity for the people and meeting the needs of national development," writes Abhijit Singh, Head of the Maritime Policy Initiative at the Observer Research Foundation. It was China that sent its naval ships to the Gulf of Aden two decades ago to ensure that commercial vessels were safe from pirates. Over the years, China has muscled its way into the Indian Ocean Region and in doing so, has raised concerns about its intent of colonial expansion. On the other hand, an expanding Indian role in protecting waters is building its credibility as a naval power that has both the capacity and the willingness to deploy naval assets to protect the sea lanes of communication, without attracting.

## Russia-Ukraine war: How Zelensky's sacking of his General shows brewing conflict in the Kyiv regime

The Ukrainian forces under General Zaluzhnyi had contained the initial Russian onslaught. Image courtesy: Reuters On 8 February, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced that he was removing General Valerii Zaluzhnyi from command of the military and promoting General Oleksandr Syrskiy, the Commander of the Ukrainian Ground Forces, to replace him. "I thanked him for two years of defence of Ukraine," President Zelensky said on social media, adding: "We also discussed who could be in the renewed

leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine." General Zaluzhnyi had gained enormous credit for spearheading the successful effort by Ukraine's forces to halt and then reverse Russia's initial attack launched on 24 February 2022. He was appointed Commander-in-Chief in July 2021, just half a year before Russia launched its all-out invasion. The Armed Forces of Ukraine, under his leadership, had succeeded in pushing back initial Russian advances near the capital, Kyiv, and then led successful counter-offensives later in 2022,

freeing parts of eastern and southern Ukraine. Both General Zaluzhnyi and General Syrskiy played key roles in those campaigns. The dismissal ended weeks of speculation about the fate of General Valery Zaluzhnyi, whose relationship with President Zelensky had deteriorated, and there were strong rumours regarding his exit.

### Brewing friction

The Ukrainian forces under General Zaluzhnyi had contained the initial Russian onslaught. That was a great achievement, because almost

everybody expected the Russian forces to steamroll their way across the plains of Ukraine. But lately, his record has been tarnished by the failure of last year's counteroffensive, which ran into well-prepared Russian defences. Last year's highly anticipated Ukrainian counteroffensive, using soldiers trained by NATO allies and Western weapons and equipment, reclaimed little territory, falling far short of expectations. General Zaluzhnyi and his American counterparts disagreed sharply over tactics.

## IIM-A has topped the salary metric for the third straight year

Delhi: Seven of the world's top 10 B-schools in terms of weighted salary (average alumni pay three years post-graduation, adjusted across industries) are from India-up from six last year with IIM-Ahmedabad - (\$181,239) leading the pack, followed by IIM-Bangalore (\$173,707) and IIMCalcutta (\$164,383). IIM-A has topped the salary metric for the third straight year. However, in overall rankings, Indian B-schools remain far from the benchmark set over a decade ago when multiple IIMs regularly featured in the global top 20 of the Financial Times Masters in Management (FT MIM) list. The number of Indian schools in the top 100 dropped from 14 in 2024 to 11 in the latest 2025 edition. IIM-Bangalore, at 28th and tied with the University of Mannheim, Germany, re-entered the top 30 for the first time since 2021. The 2025 tally of 11 institutions matches 2023 and is the second best in the past decade.



### Grade two through eighteen public schools will implement a daily literacy and numeracy block

Delhi: Nipun Sankalp, a program that will introduce a daily period on literacy and numeracy, baseline tests for classes II to VIII, and peer-learning methods like buddy pairs to ensure all children acquire basic reading, writing, and math skills, is set to roll out in Delhi govt schools. This will cause a major shift in the classroom environment. Baseline tests in Hindi, English, and Mathematics will be administered till September 19th, in accordance with new

criteria released by the Directorate of Education (DOE). Instructors will grade the exams and electronically submit the results, with logistical support provided by DIET trainees to the schools. Which pupils require supplementary instruction will be decided by the results. Every school is required to include a set foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) session in the schedule once the examinations are finished. Classes II-V will have whole-class activities.

## IIM-Ahmedabad campus opens in Dubai, its first in any foreign country

Delhi: The first international campus of the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIM-A) was launched by Crown Prince Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum of Dubai, marking a major milestone in the growth plan of India's leading management institute. In attendance were Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan and Abdulrahman Abdulmannan Al Awar, the acting Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the United Arab Emirates. Her Highness Sheikh Hamdan has stat-



ed that the "deep-rooted ties and growing partnership" between India and the United Arab Emirates are reflected in the launch of the IIM-A Dubai campus. "The energy and ambition of our youth are the driving forces of Dubai's future, and by equipping them with the knowledge,

skills, and values to succeed in a rapidly changing international environment, we are empowering them to lead with confidence," added the governor. Pradhan praised the gathering, calling it a "glorious leaf in India-UAE knowledge collabora-

## Class IX students' Vigyan Pratibha test

Delhi: As a way to recognize and reward exceptional ninth graders in the city, the Mukhyamantri Vigyan Pratibha Pariksha will be held by the Directorate of Education (DoE). The purpose of the annual test is to pique students' interest in research-oriented professions by assessing their conceptu-

al knowledge, analytical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Along with merit awards, the top 1,000 rank holders will each receive a one-time scholarship of 5,000. Students in the ninth grade at NDMC, DCB, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, or any other publicly or privately fund-

ed school are eligible to take the exam. Class VIII qualifying requirements for students belonging to restricted categories (SC/ST/PH) are 55%, while students in the General and OBC categories need to secure 60%. A minimum of 15% of the seats are set aside for students from Scheduled Castes.

## Over tin-shed schools, Delhi HC scolds the state govt.



Delhi: In hearing a petition by the non-governmental organisation Social Jurist, a bench comprising Chief Justice DK Upadhyay and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela voiced their dismay at the state of the schools. Students at Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya in Kamla Market and the Government Boys and Girls Secondary Schools in Ashok Nagar are being compelled to study in makeshift classrooms made of tin that lack proper desks, walls, and other necessary facilities; the Delhi High Court scolded the Delhi government for this neglect on Wednesday. During a hearing, a bench comprising of chief justice DK Upadhyay and justice Tushar Rao Gedela voiced their dismay at the schools' terrible state. The petitioner, an NGO called Social Jurist, had asked the court to tell the Delhi government to tear down the tin-shed buildings and replace them with modern ones. Ashok Agarwal, an attorney for the NGO, submitted a petition in which he claimed that the government's refusal to fund essential infrastructure violated the right to education since it was capricious, unfair, and arbitrary.

## NAAC adopts e-inspections for new accreditation

Delhi: To eradicate corruption and speed up accreditation, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has stopped physical college inspections. Accreditation teams will now perform evaluations exclusively online, replacing on-cams visits with virtual examinations.

## Unacceptable amount of driving in DU elections

Delhi: The high court in Delhi condemned the DUSU election campaign's heavy reliance on motorized vehicles, calling it "unacceptable" for causing traffic jams and making pedestrians' lives more difficult. Additionally, the bench was unhappy with what it called Delhi University's "inadequate actions" against campaigners and their allies who used unlicensed vehicles to canvas. At the hearing, counsel Prashant Manchanda brought attention to the "blatant use of muscle and money power" leading up to the September 18 polls, including canvassing through lux-



ury automobiles. The bench, which consisted of chief judge DK Upadhyay and justice Tushar Rao Gedela, was hearing the case.

The petition demanded that the university and the Delhi Police punish candidates severely for

failing to attend. Rupal Mohinder, the lawyer for DU, stated during the court that the administration had issued show-cause notices to those who had violated the order and was "taking all necessary precautions" to keep the peace.

## SC calls Punjab's NRI quota a 'fraud' on medical education

Delhi: The Supreme Court called Punjab's medical colleges' extension of the non-resident Indian (NRI) quota a "fraud" that excludes meritorious candidates. Bench dismissed petitions challenging a Punjab and Haryana high court ruling that invalidated the Punjab government's proposal to widen the NRI quota criteria to include distant relatives. We must end NRI quotas today! The bench, which included Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said the NRI quota was being used to circumvent merit-based admissions. The bench called such a broad interpretation of NRI eligibility.

## Returning fourth-year students at 72% under NEP 2020's FYUP can opt out

Delhi: Nearly 72% of eligible students have opted to continue with the fourth year of Delhi University's Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) under NEP 2020, according to Vice Chancellor Yogesh Singh. Up to the start of the new academic session on August 1, the university has allowed students to choose not to complete the fourth year. Out of more than 72,000 pupils, 20,221 have chosen not to



continue, leaving more than 50,000. The fact that students are willing to opt out of the third year demonstrates their value, which is quite encouraging, Singh told the media. All institutions affiliated with Delhi University will begin

the fourth year on August 1. As part of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the FYUP provides several ways out: a certificate after the first year, a diploma after the second, and a degree after the third.

## Byju's loses \$533 million loan fraud case in US court

Delhi: U.S. bankruptcy court rules Riju Ravindran, Byju's parent business Think & Learn, and hedge fund Camshaft Capital guilty of \$533 million fraud and "breach of fiduciary duty." The beleaguered edtech business Byju's Alpha has been found to have engaged in several fraudulent financial transfers and conversions, according to a ruling issued by the Delaware Bankruptcy Court. Byju brother Riju Ravindran was found to have breached his fiduciary duty as director of Byju's Alpha, according to the court. The court's clear recogni-



tion that Riju Ravindran, Camshaft, and Byju's engaged in a world-wide fraud including the theft of \$533 million is something we are grateful for. In a statement, the lenders hailed this as a major victory in their fight to reclaim the stolen assets that properly belong to them. Byju successfully obtained a \$1.2 billion five-year term loan from Glas Trust through the establishment of his

Alpha special purpose financial organization. Having defaulted on its loans, Byju's Alpha was placed under trusteeship in March 2023. A group of 37 banks and other lending organizations gave Byju \$1.2 billion. Byju's Alpha's limited partnership interest in Camshaft Capital was transferred to William Morton's Hedge fund, Camshaft Capital Fund.

## A group of educators is against UGC's plan to hold admissions twice a year

Delhi: A group representing educators has spoken out against the University Grants Commission's plan to hold undergraduate and graduate admissions twice a year. The idea was criticized as "impractical and destabilising" in a lengthy letter sent to the UGC chairperson by the Indian National Teachers' Congress (INTEC). "No serious consultation was held with universities or colleges," the letter adds. "What looks like flexibility on paper will, in practice, deeply disrupt the academic framework of higher education institutions," according to it. A single admission cycle is already a significant challenge for many institutions.



### "The teachers' union voiced concerns that having admissions twice a year would disrupt class schedules, make evaluations more difficult, and put too much administrative work on teachers and staff all year long"

Classes did not begin in July as usual due to the Common University Entrance Test's implementation, which notably pushed back the start of the academic year to September or October. Professor Pankaj Garg, chair of the INTEC, stated that adding a second cycle will further

complicate existing delays and disrupt the entire academic year. The teachers' union voiced concerns that having admissions twice a year would disrupt class schedules, make evaluations more difficult, and put too much administrative work on teachers and staff all year long.

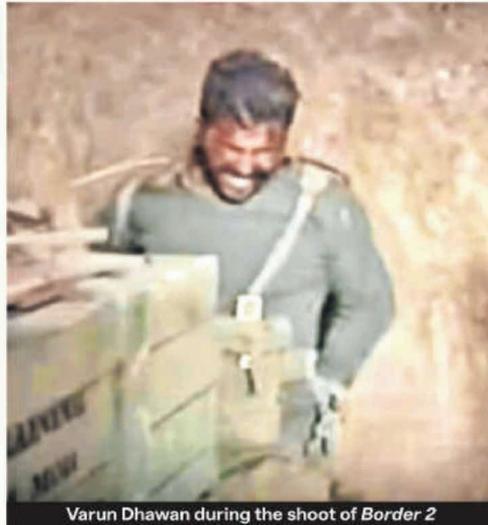
## Tech and sports: IIT will support SAI



Delhi: A partnership has been formed between the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IIT Delhi) and the Sports Authority of India's (SAI) National Centre of Sports Science Research (NCSSR) to improve cooperation in the fields of sports sciences, cutting-edge technology, and indigenous innovation. Union sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya stated, "This partnership reflects the ministry's commitment to integrating science and technology with sports to empower Indian athletes to compete at the highest international levels." "Our institute has significant competence in biomechanics, sensors, assistive technologies and AI and hope to create an impact in sports science and technology," stated Rangan Banerjee, head of IIT Delhi. The partnership is anticipated to pave the way for top-notch research in the fields of sports science and engineering, encourage initiatives driven by innovation to boost athletes' performance, facilitate the exchange of information, and make a substantial impact on the prevention of injuries and the overall health of athletes.

## 'Smashed tailbone into a rock'

Varun Dhawan recalls suffering his worst injury on *Border 2* set, hitting tailbone during action sequence but continuing shoot



Varun Dhawan during the shoot of *Border 2*

Actor Varun Dhawan has recalled suffering the worst injury of his career while shooting for his film *Border 2*, describing it as an excruciating tailbone injury that left him barely able to walk.

Varun took to Instagram, where he shared a BTS video from an action sequence featuring him. In the clip, the actor is seen being pushed into a wall during a fight sequence, hitting it hard and injuring himself. Calling it the "worst pain" he has ever experienced, Varun admitted that the incident was physically draining.

He wrote in the caption: "The worst injury i ever got on border 2. I smashed my tail bone into a rock when i tried avoid banging into the camera. It was the worst pain i ever felt (sic)." Despite the severe discomfort, the actor, who played the role of Major Hoshiar Singh Dahiya in *Border 2*, continued

**"The worst injury i ever got on Border 2. I smashed my tail bone into a rock when i tried avoid banging into the camera. It was the worst pain i ever felt"**

filming with the support of his team. He expressed gratitude to the crew for helping him push through the day, even though he could barely walk. "Thankful to my team for helping me continue that day i could barely walk, but I kept going. Grateful for the journey (sic)," he wrote.

*Border 2* is based on the 1971 war and real events. The film is presented by Gulshan Kumar & T-Series, in association with J.P. Dutta's J.P. Films. Backed by a powerful production team including Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, J.P. Dutta, and Nidhi Dutta, and directed by Anurag Singh.

## 'Women come with an expiry date in this industry'

Mona Singh says she has never cared about on-screen age, calls industry's 'expiry date' for women unfair, and celebrates a career high with acclaimed OTT work.



have never cared about my on-screen age, says actor Mona Singh who finds it strange that there is an expiry date attached to women while male stars continue to play romantic roles even in their sixties. Singh is enjoying a great phase in her career with critically-acclaimed performances in Netflix shows *Kaala Paani*, *The Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood* and Prime Video show *Made in Heaven 2*. She also played prominent roles in movies such as *Munhya*, *Happy Patel* and now *Border 2*.

The actor, who plays a challenging role of a cop investigating a woman's murder while dealing with personal tragedy in the second season of Sudip Sharma's hit Netflix show *Kohrra*, said she has always taken risks and now the time has come to celebrate. "I have not cared about my on-screen age. I really haven't because I'm very confident and I know who I am. There's nothing to prove, which is why I keep taking risks. People often ask me, 'Why are you so old on screen?' I would say it doesn't matter. It's the character that I'm playing and it really excites me," Singh said.

"People do think like that... You see, it's only in this industry that women come with an expiry date. And it is so sad. Whereas men in their 60s can still play the romantic leads, women can't. But I have never really cared about that because I didn't want to be that," she added.

### Barun Sobti's Garundi faces inner battles



The makers of *Kohrra* on Thursday unveiled the trailer of the second season of the upcoming crime series. Actor Barun Sobti, who is reprising his role as Amarpal Garundi, said that his character this time is "more introspective, guarded, and constantly negotiating with his own choices." Barun Sobti, reprising the role of Amarpal Garundi, shares, "Garundi begins this season hoping to start afresh, but in a world like *Kohrra*, the past never quite lets go. The mystery this time is denser and more layered, and that complexity reflects in Garundi's own journey." "He's more introspective, more guarded, and constantly negotiating with his own choices. Season 2 pushed me as an actor in new ways, and I'm excited for viewers to return to this world and experience how the story unfolds," Barun added.

### Not a lot of stuff was offered, says Rannvijay Singha

TV personality and actor Rannvijay Singha has opened up about receiving fewer acting roles in recent times, adding that he consciously chose to wait for the right project. Speaking to ANI, Rannvijay Singha said, "I watch a lot of shows that are made,

The ones that I watch, I feel like I'd love to work with these people - the creators of those shows. I don't want to do everything that's thrown at me but there's not a lot of stuff that's also offered to me, which is the honest truth. It took me time because I wanted to do that right thing." Reflecting on his journey, Rannvijay said he once considered enrolling in an acting course.

"After all the experiences, I once asked a director if I should do an acting course and learn somewhere. He told me, 'The more you live, the more experiences you have in your life, the more people you interact with, and the more you observe, it helps an actor,'" he said, adding that his role as a father in real life guided him in the journey.

## Kannada actor Mayur Patel booked

Kannada film actor Mayur Patel has landed in a legal trouble over allegedly causing a series of road accidents while driving under the influence of alcohol near Domlur in Bengaluru late in the night, police said.

As per the details shared by DCP East Traffic, the incident

occurred near the Command Hospital in the Domlur area, where a Toyota Fortuner car allegedly driven by the actor at high speed lost control and rammmed into three to four vehicles parked along the road, leaving them damaged.

The damaged vehicles belonged to individuals identified as Srinivas and Abhishek, along with a gov-

ernment vehicle.

The local residents immediately alerted the police control room, prompting the Hoysala police (patrol police) team to rush to the spot.

The actor was immediately taken into custody and subjected to a medical examination, which confirmed that he consumed alcohol at the time of driving.



## 'I am pregnant'

Rubina Dilaik shares joyful news 2 yrs after welcoming twin daughters with husband Abhinav Shukla

Television actress Rubina Dilaik surprised fans by sharing joyful news on her social media, revealing that she is pregnant. The actress is already a parent to twin daughters, Jeeva and Edhaa, whom she welcomed on November 27, 2023, with her husband, actor Abhinav Shukla.

On Wednesday, the actress took to her Instagram story, dressed in a printed saree, where she was heard saying, "I am pregnant." However, the announcement seemed unusual, as the actress had shared a post on her Instagram feed, tagging Abhinav, during her first pregnancy. Soon after the actress shared the news on her Instagram story, fans were confused, with some assuming it was part of an advertisement or an upcoming shoot. An official confirmation regarding Rubina's pregnancy is still awaited. In 2025, Rubina

revealed that people around her often draw comparisons between the skin complexion of her baby girls. While discussing beauty standards in her latest vlog, Rubina shared, "My one baby is little dusky, the other one is fair... and people come and compare, which is so bad. But I always tell them that my daughter is beautiful, forget fair or dusky. And I tell them, never bring this comparison in my home."

She also shared how she turns a deaf ear to the tips and home remedies shared by relatives. "Sometimes, even our family members and relatives advise that we should try applying dal paste or besan to lighten her complexion, but I tell them to not even think about it. My daughters are very beautiful."



Photo: Instagram @rubinadilaik

## Pankaj Tripathi calls *Lailaaj* a full-circle moment

Actor Pankaj Tripathi has described the selection of his play *Lailaaj* for the 25th *Bharat Rang Mahotsav* as a deeply emotional and humbling experience, calling it a moment that reconnects him with his roots.

Expressing his emotions about *Lailaaj* being part of *Bharat Rang Mahotsav*, Pankaj Tripathi shared in a heartfelt note: "*Bharat Rang Mahotsav* holds a very special place in the world of Indian theatre, and to have *Lailaaj* selected for its 25th edition is truly humbling. Theatre is where my roots lie, and NSD has always represented discipline, honesty, and deep respect for the craft."

Pankaj, along with his wife Mridula's maiden theatre production *Lailaaj*, a musical comedy play under their banner Roopkatha Rangmanch, has been officially selected to be showcased at *Bharat Rang Mahotsav*, India's largest and most prestigious theatre festival, hosted by the National School of Drama (NSD), Delhi. The festival will be held across January and February, beginning in the last week of January.

Pankaj added, "To bring our very first production under *Roopkatha Rangmanch* to a platform like this feels like a full-circle moment. *Lailaaj* is a simple, musical, and heartfelt story, but behind it is the hard work of many people who believe in theatre as a living, breathing art form."



## Prices for Hyundai and Tata Motors' CVs are set to drop



### When oil prices drop every month, US stocks go up

**Delhi:** Wall Street indexes rose in choppy rises as in-line European markets ended flat, continuing their 10-week winning streak. The Federal Reserve is expected to decrease interest rates twice this year, according to U.S. inflation figures. Crude prices fell 1%, the first monthly decline since November, as markets braced for fresh levies from Washington and crude exports from Iraq's Kurdistan

er based in M u m b a i . A n announcement to lower prices across the board for passenger vehicles has already been made by the corporation.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

Prices for the CV range would drop between Rs 30,000 to Rs 4.65 lakh, according to the car manufacturer.

September 22, 2025.

## SC to hear Centre's plea seeking transfer of online gaming law challenges



**Delhi :** The Supreme Court agreed to hear the Centre's plea to transfer petitions challenging the constitutionality of the new law banning online money gaming from multiple high courts to the apex court. Gaming companies have filed writ petitions before the high courts of Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, and Delhi. Union has filed a transfer plea... The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act has been challenged before three high courts. If it

can be listed (8 September) since it's listed for interim orders before the Karnataka high court," the counsel representing the Centre told the court.

The plea was mentioned before the Chief Justice B.R. Gavai-led bench, which directed it to be

listed before Justice J.B. Pardiwala-led bench on 8 September.

Justice Pardiwala's bench had earlier heard challenges related to the 28% goods and services tax (GST) on online gaming for several months and had reserved its judgment.

## Gadkari says Mercedes-Benz wants to export 'made in India' cars

**Delhi:** According to Nitin Gadkari, India's minister of road transport and highways, Mercedes-Benz has told the government that it plans to increase production at its plant outside of Pune in order to fulfill its goal of exporting "Made in India" automobiles to

markets worldwide. The chairman of Mercedes, according to Gadkari, informed him that the production quality in India is strong, which has led the company to consider increasing manufacturing in the nation to fulfill the demands of worldwide

markets. "The chairman of Mercedes was telling me that they are going to look at increasing the productivity of Mercedes in India... And they want to export Mercedes from here to (markets) all over the world," Gadkari said. at the Auto Retail

## India resists full crypto framework, fears systemic risks

**Delhi:** A government paper reveals that India is considering not regulating cryptocurrencies but rather maintaining partial monitoring, due to concerns that integrating digital assets into the country's mainstream financial system could pose systemic dangers. According to the memo reviewed by Reuters, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) believes that it would be impossible to regulate cryptocurrencies in a way that effectively limits their dangers. The inauguration of U.S. President



Donald Trump has coincided with a rise in the price of bitcoin, the most valuable cryptocurrency by market capitalization, and a general improvement in the worldwide acceptability of cryptocurrencies. Stablecoins, a type of cryptocurrency

that is backed by fiat currency and hence less susceptible to violent swings, have also been legalized in the US. Despite China's ongoing cryptocurrency ban, Reuters reported last month that the country is looking into a stablecoin.

### India, UAE set \$100 bn non-oil trade goal by 2030

**Delhi :** India and the United Arab Emirates are targeting \$100 billion in trade by 2030, excluding oil and precious metals, India's commerce ministry said in a statement. The target was decided during a meeting between Union commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal and the UAE's minister of foreign trade, Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, in New Delhi last week. They were reviewing bilateral trade between the two countries under the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) that came into effect in 2022. Both leaders stressed deeper cooperation in emerging sectors renewable energy.

**OpenAI** has asked a federal judge to dismiss a lawsuit from Elon Musk's AI startup xAI, which claims that the company lured away its employees to steal trade secrets. OpenAI called the case part of Musk's "ongoing harassment" and denied all allegations as "false and unsubstantiated." In its court filing, OpenAI said, "Under Musk's leadership, talented xAI employees are leaving in droves, and some are coming to OpenAI to help advance



OpenAI's mission," Reuters reported citing the filing. "Those employees have every right to go where they choose, and OpenAI has the right to hire them." The lawsuit, filed last week in San Francisco federal court, accuses

OpenAI of targeting former xAI staff to gain access to trade secrets tied to xAI's AI chatbot Grok, which the company claims is more advanced than OpenAI's ChatGPT. one part of a broader clash between Musk and OpenAI.

## GST cut for mid-market hotel segment may spur travel

**Delhi :** As part of the next generation Goods and Services Tax (GST) reforms announced late The GST rate on the mid and upper-mid segment hotel accommodation are set to reduce to 5 per cent from 12 per cent, a move that the travel and hospitality sector stakeholders believe will spur domestic travel and hotel demand by easing the tax burden for consumers in this volume-heavy accommodation segments. The hotel industry, however, is disappointed on a few counts, primarily the removal of the input tax credit (ITC) benefit on the reduced tax rate. On



### Govt allows companies to display revised MRP on old unsold packs

**Delhi:** As a comfort to packaged goods makers who were waiting for labelling and packaging clarity to figure out how to pass the GST gains on to customers, the government has authorized them to display revised MRPs on unsold old packets of items. But before the

air travel, the decision to keep tax on economy class fares at the prevailing 5

end of the year, businesses must sell off their old inventory. The consumer affairs ministry announced on Tuesday that until December 31 or until supplies run out, whichever comes first, makers, packers, or importers of pre-packaged goods can show amended MRPs.

per cent rate is also being seen as a positive from the lens of accessibility.

## EU to Give a Hand to India's Seafood Exports Following US Tariff

**Delhi:** After suffering under the US's harsh tariff regime, Indian seafood exporters are about to receive a vital lifeline in the EU. Shrimp exports, which were struck particularly hard by Washington's recent 50% tariff on Indian goods, could see an immediate 20%



increase, according to the Commerce Ministry. The European Union (EU) cleared

102 new Indian fishing operations for export this month, effectively eliminating all pending permissions, marking a significant milestone. With the listings in place, which encompass aquaculture units, sea-caught processing factories, and cold storage facilities,

all of India's main seafood exporters can now begin shipping to the EU. India sent \$1.1 billion worth of seafood to the European Union in FY24, making it the country's second-biggest seafood export market. The ministry anticipates that

## Fujifilm Electronic aims to build a facility in India

**Delhi :** Fujifilm Electronic Materials, a Japanese supply chain giant, has expressed interest in establishing a facility in India as part of its efforts to invest and recruit in the country's burgeoning fabrication ecosystem, lending credence to India's semiconductor ambitions. When it comes to supply chain management, semiconductor production, and even the development of new technology, innovations, and capabilities, India is a promising country. India is attracting the



attention of multinational corporations like Micron. General manager of Fujifilm's Electronic Materials Business Division Tetsuya Iwasaki told on the sidelines of the Semicon India 2025 event that India's strong foundation in

technology is founded on its skilled people, unlike China or other countries. Fujifilm serves customers such as TSMC and GlobalFoundries by providing semiconductor materials for wafer processing in production.

## Amazon eyes bumper sales

**Delhi:** Amazon is preparing for an even greater surge in festive sales this year as a result of the reorganization of GST slabs, which would lower the prices of many consumer goods. This will increase spending by the salaried class, many of whom look for online offers when purchasing products, especially for expensive ones. Outside of ethnic clothing, which is the norm for festivals, the most purchased items during festivals tend to be smartphones, gadgets,

and durables. We anticipate a greater increase in holiday sales compared to previous year. Regardless, consumers typically wait for sales to begin before making large purchases; however, this time around, the trend has quickened thanks to the GST cuts. Customers can expect to save a ton of money this holiday season because to merchants' enticing bargains and a drop in GST on millions of products, according to Saurabh Srivastava, VP of categories at Amazon India.

## Briefs

SYDNEY

**Molineux to succeed Alyssa Healy**



Spin bowling all-rounder **Sophie Molineux** was on Thursday appointed the Australian women's T20 captain for the series against ODI world champions India next month and will succeed Alyssa Healy as the leader across formats after the home assignment. Healy had announced that she would retire from international cricket after playing against India in which she will captain the Australian team in three ODIs and a one-off Test. India's tour of Australia begins on February 15 with a three-match T20I series starting at Sydney.

NEW DELHI

**Rashid Khan shrugs off 'figured out' tag**



Afghanistan skipper **Rashid Khan** has brushed aside suggestions that batters have "figured him out", insisting that precision, not re-invention, will define his impact as his side gears up for next month's ICC T20 World Cup. After redefining the role of leg-spinners in T20 cricket over the last decade, Rashid had comparatively modest returns in the previous two IPL seasons with Gujarat Titans, prompting debate around predictability. "Well, I feel like it's not about like I should be changing my variation or the line and length...things like that," Rashid told PTI.

NEW DELHI

**Manpreet dropped from probables' list**



Midfield stalwart, **Manpreet Singh** is the biggest name missing from the list of 33 probables announced by Hockey India for the senior men's national coaching camp ahead of the upcoming FIH Pro League season, set to begin in Rourkela next month. The 33-year-old former India captain, a member of two Olympic bronze medal-winning teams and just one game away from becoming the joint highest-capped Indian player alongside

**AUSTRALIAN OPEN | Top-ranked Belarusian overpowers Svitolina to set up rematch of the 2023 final with Rybakina**

## Sabalenka storms into fourth straight final

MELBOURNE

Not even a point penalty for hindrance slowed Aryna Sabalenka's run to a fourth consecutive Australian Open final. The top-ranked Sabalenka overpowered Elena Svitolina 6-2, 6-3 Thursday night to move within one victory of a third Australian Open title in four years.

A rematch of the 2023 final against Elena Rybakina was set up when the No. 5 seed ousted No. 6 Jessica Pegula 6-3, 7-6 (7) in the second semifinal.

"It was a great battle (against Sabalenka in 2023)," Rybakina said. "In the end, she played a bit better and it was well deserved. I want to enjoy the final and hopefully I can serve better than today. I am so excited."

Her semifinal was mostly one way until Rybakina had match point. The 2022 Wimbledon champion missed three match points on Pegula's serve and then was broken twice while serving for the match.

Pegula rallied and had two set points in the tiebreaker but wasn't able to convert, and Rybakina finally clinched it 29 minutes after her first match point.

"Really, really stressful," Rybakina said. She admitted to flashbacks from the 2024 Open when she lost the longest women's tiebreaker ever at a Grand Slam to Anna Blinkova 22-20 in a three-set defeat.

"I'm proud no matter the situation. It got very tight. I stayed there," she said of the win over Pegula. "I was fighting for each point."

All four players reached the



Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan plays a forehand return to Jessica Pegula during their Australian Open women's singles semifinal match in Melbourne on Thursday. AP

semifinals without dropping a set — in Australia for the first time in 56 years — and Sabalenka and Svitolina were each on 10-match winning streaks to start the season after titles in warmup events.

Sabalenka kept both of her streaks alive. She hit 19 winners and broke Svitolina's serve twice in the first set. She finished with 29 winners to 12 for her Ukrainian rival.

As has become customary for Ukrainians against players from Russia and Belarus, there was no handshakes at the net. There was also no group photo before the match.

Sabalenka is the third woman in the Open era to reach four consecutive singles finals at the Australian Open

## SCORELINES

Aryna Sabalenka-Elena Svitolina 6-2, 6-3

Elena Rybakina-Jessica Pegula 6-3, 7-6 (7)

after Evonne Goolagong and Martina Hingis.

"It's an incredible achievement but the job's not done yet," an emotional Sabalenka said in her on-court TV interview. "I've been watching her game, (Svitolina) was playing incredible. I felt like I had to step in and put as much pressure as I could back on her."

## Svitolina's exit

After reaching her first semifinal in Australia and winning a title in a warmup tournament

in New Zealand, Svitolina will return to the top 10 for the first time since she took a maternity break in 2022.

The Auckland title was her first foray back on tour after an early end to the 2025 season for a mental health break. She said the rest and time out prolonged her career.

"Definitely very, very happy with the two weeks here and in New Zealand, as well, winning," she said. "Gutted to not make it through tonight but it's very difficult when you're playing the world No. 1, who is really on fire."

Svitolina was playing her fourth semifinal at a major — 2019 and 2023 at Wimbledon and the 2019 U.S. Open — but again wasn't able to go to the championship match.

## Djokovic plans on creating 'own history' in semifinals

The Serb faces defending champion Sinner of Italy, Alcaraz meets Zverev in the first semifinal on Friday

MELBOURNE

The most successful player ever in men's tennis felt disrespected, and had to pause before summarizing the offending question out loud just to process it again.

Novak Djokovic, winner of 24 Grand Slam singles titles, including 10 at the Australian Open, was fielding questions about his pending semifinal with defending champion Jannik Sinner when he returned serve on one that he didn't like.

In a nutshell, he was asked to compare eras from when he broke onto the scene while Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal were at the top of tennis to now, when Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz have blocked him from winning a major for the last two seasons.

"I'm chasing Jannik and Carlos?" he responded. "In which sense?"

In terms of trying to break the "Sincaraz" streak of eight titles.

"So I'm always the chaser, and I'm never being chased?" he asked. "I find it a little bit disrespectful that you kind of miss out on what happened in between where the times when I started chasing, as you say, Rafa and Roger, and now that I'm chasing Carlos and Jannik, and there's probably about a 15-year period in between where I was dominating the Grand Slams."

"It's important to put that in perspective. I don't feel like I'm chasing, to be honest. I'm creating my own history."

The top four seeds reached the final four in the Australian Open men's draw, with No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz and No. 3 Alexander Zverev set to meet in Friday's other semifinal. The winners will advance to the Sunday's final.



Serbian Novak Djokovic (L) and Italian Jannik Sinner. AP

## HEAD TO HEAD

Sinner 6 Djokovic 4

Alcaraz 6 Zverev 6

## Sinner vs. Djokovic, 2 vs. 4

Make no mistake, the 38-year-old Djokovic is in Melbourne with one objective: to win a 25th Grand Slam singles title. That would cement him as the most decorated tennis player of all time. He reached the semis at all four majors last year, but didn't contest a final.

He concedes he's "lucky this time" to still be in the running, after trailing fifth-seeded Lorenzo Musetti 6-4, 6-3 in Wednesday's quarterfinal before the 23-year-old Italian retired in the third set with an injured right leg.

And that followed a walk-over in the fourth round. In pure statistics, he hasn't won a set since the third round.

But Sinner is also counting his luck. He was on the verge of a third-round exit when he was cramping and stumbling while down a break against No. 85-ranked Eliot Spizzirri in the third set.

He only got a reprieve when the Extreme Heat Policy was activated, and an eight-minute delay to close the roof completely swung momentum.



Sinner is on a 19-match winning streak at Melbourne Park after his comprehensive 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 quarterfinal win over eighth-seeded Ben Shelton.

The 22-year-old Italian has a 6-4 lead in head-to-heads with Djokovic, including wins in the last five. The sequence includes semifinals at the 2024 Australian Open and at Roland Garros and Wimbledon last year.

It was the semifinal win over Djokovic here two years ago that propelled him toward the first of his four Grand Slam titles.

## Alcaraz vs. Zverev, 1 vs. 3

The 22-year-old Alcaraz is bidding to become the youngest player to complete a career Grand Slam — which is winning all four major titles.

The 28-year-old Zverev, seeded third, is bidding for his first major trophy. He's been runner-up three times, including last year in Australia when his trip was overshadowed by German court proceedings.

Alcaraz said Zverev edged him in a recent practice match with a "high level of tennis, high level of intensity, so it's going to be a great battle."

## Pak's T20 WC boycott unlikely

Team to leave for Colombo on February 2: Sources

LAHORE

The Pakistan Cricket Board has already scheduled its T20 World Cup squad to depart for Colombo early on February 2, virtually ruling out any possibility of boycotting either the tournament or the marquee clash against India on February 15, sources close to the board said on Thursday.

"The PCB has already made travel arrangements for the World Cup squad to leave early morning on February 2 for Colombo," he said.

The source added that PCB had shown its full support to Bangladesh Cricket Board over their "security concerns" in playing in India and could not do anything further without damaging its own position within the ICC.

The BCCI, PCB and ICC had also entered into a tripartite agreement under which all India-Pakistan matches in ICC events until 2027 will be played at neutral venues.

"Keep in mind Pakistan's entire World Cup schedule is in Sri Lanka, including the final if they qualify. So on what grounds can they boycott the tournament or the match



Pakistan cricket team players in a file pic. PTI

against India?" he asked.

It is expected that the PCB would confirm their participation on Friday. There has been speculation in sections of the media that Pakistan could pull out of the tournament or refuse to play India. But an insider dismissed such reports as rumours.

"When the PCB Chairman, Mohsin Naqvi, met with Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, he made it clear that all options under consideration should ensure a stable and prosperous future for Pakistan cricket and maintain good relations with the ICC and member boards," the

insider said.

He added that the speculation lacked logic and failed to explain on what grounds the PCB could skip the World Cup or boycott the India match.

"The Indian government has said no to its team playing in Pakistan, but there is no bar on India playing Pakistan in Asia Cup-level events or in ICC events at neutral venues," he said.

"So how will Pakistan justify boycotting the match against India when its government has always claimed politics should not be mixed with sports?" he asked.

## I'm getting better with my mindset: Dube

The all-rounder says he has learned to be smarter after scoring 23-ball 65

VISAKHAPATNAM

On a clement Vizag night, Shivam Dube underlined his growing comfort against pace bowling during his 23-ball 65 blitz against New Zealand, and the India all-rounder attributed the upgrade to an improved "mindset" that made him a "smarter" cricketer.

Of course, Dube's 29-run barrage against leg-spinner Ish Sodhi will hog the limelight, but equally important were the three sixes he fetched against pacers Jacob Duffy and Matt Henry.

It was a clear statement that he can no longer be kept quiet by simply bringing in a pacer, and many oppositions will be squirming in the planning room with that new angle in Dube's batting.

But for the man himself, the improvement was because of the regular chance he is getting in top-flight cricket. "It's just the hard work which I'm doing, I'm getting better with my mindset because I'm playing all those matches and batting in that situation. So, I know what's going to happen, what are the main things which a bowler is



India's Shivam Dube plays a shot during the fourth T20I against NZ in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday. PTI

going to come to me," Dube said in the post-match press conference here.

Dube has also got regular chances to bowl in this series, though he was not used here because India stuck to their five frontline bowlers, as even Hardik Pandya did not get to bowl.

"That's the key point for my batting and bowling as well. I'm bowling thanks to Gauti bhai (Gautam Gambhir) and Surya bhai (Suryakumar Yadav). They have given me the bowling opportunity. So, when you bowl, you become a little smart. So, I'm working on

that as well and trying to develop some more skills," he added.

The regular game time, Dube admitted, has made him a lot "smarter" as a cricketer in the last few months.

"Yes, I worked really hard, but I have got the opportunity to bowl, bat, and do everything in the match. So, there is something called experience and that has come to me and that is going in the right direction. There are many things people upgrade.

"All the players, the spinners, fast bowlers, the teams upgrade themselves. So,

I can't be the same as I was. I try to be a little better, a little smarter in the next game. So, I learned how to be a little smarter and what my strengths are and where I can target those."

Dube believes his improved comfort levels against fast bowlers helps him put more pressure on the opposition.

"It's really important, it's about the matchup. So, they want me to hit spinners. That is my role to get the strike-rate high in the middle overs. That is what I always try. It's just not about the spinners, but fast bowlers as well.

"But yeah, definitely there is something where I know that this (hitting against spinners) is my strength. I can give pressure to the opponents at that time. So, my mindset is very clear at that time," he said.

Dube said he was not targeting a particular number of balls to get his runs. The left-hander's 15-ball half-century was the third fastest in T20Is after Yuvraj Singh (12), Abhishek Sharma and Colin Munro (14).

"As a batsman, I don't think about getting 15 less balls. I just try to focus on every ball. That is what I did today."

## Champions League

# Real dropped by Mourinho's Benfica into playoffs round

LONDON

Real Madrid was stunningly dumped into the knockout playoffs of the Champions League by its former coach Jose Mourinho — whose Benfica team advanced on a last-gasp goal by its goalkeeper — on Wednesday and will be joined there by title holder Paris Saint-Germain.

Madrid started play third in the 36-team standings and despite two goals by Kylian

and fell to ninth — one place below advancing direct to the round of 16.

Astonishingly, Benfica only advanced to the knockout phase in 24th place on goal difference because Ukrainian goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin scored in the eighth minute of stoppage time with a dramatic header when Madrid was down to nine players. Red cards were shown minutes earlier for Raul Asencio and Rodrygo.

"This victory is historic

said, adding of his goalkeeper: "We knew that he could do it. You have to put the ball there, but it's an amazing goal for the guy."

Trubin said it was a "crazy moment. I'm not used to scoring. I'm 24 years old and it's the first time."

Madrid fell out of the top-eight places when Sporting Lisbon got a stoppage-time goal in a 3-2 win at Athletic Bilbao.

"They have outplayed us," Real Madrid coach Alvaro

"We've been far from the version we should be."

Sporting surprisingly joined Liverpool — which beat Qarabag 6-0 and got a goal from Mohamed Salah — Tottenham, Barcelona, Chelsea and Manchester City in sealing top-eight finishes.

Table-topping Arsenal, which completed a perfect eight-win program beating Kairat Almaty 3-2, and second-place Bayern Munich had already advanced to the round of 16 that starts in

## PSG falls

PSG and Newcastle both started in the top eight but drew 1-1 in Paris which sent both falling in the standings to 11th and 12th. Newcastle conceded a penalty for a handball in the first minute, and Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele's spot-kick was saved by Nick Pope.

Madrid, PSG, Newcastle and last year's beaten finalist Inter Milan all will be in the qualifying playoffs draw Friday for teams that placed



Benfica's head coach Jose Mourinho runs celebrating at

English Daily  
**AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH**  
Title Code  
**UPENG04488**  
Prayagraj  
Printer, Publisher &  
Owner Swami Shree  
Yogi Satyam for  
Yog Satsanga Samiti  
Printed at  
**PARASHAKTI OFFSET**  
118A/2A Chaukhandi  
Kydganj, Prayagraj-211003  
Uttar Pradesh  
Published from  
Kriyayoga Asharam  
& Anusandhan Sansthan  
Jhansi, Prayagraj-211019  
Editor:  
**SWAMI SHREE YOGI SATYAM**  
All disputes of news and  
publication against the  
AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH  
are the subject matter of  
Allahabad Jurisdiction.  
Email ID:  
akhandbharatsandesh@gmail.com  
Mob. 9415235084, 9565333000