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Briefs

CHATRA (JHARKHAND) Man lynched over kidnap rumours

A mentally challenged man was beaten to death in Jharkhand's Chatra district, police said on Tuesday.

The 45-year-old man, who was allegedly severely beaten up by some people in Chatra district on Sunday on suspicion of being a childlifter, succumbed to his injuries at the Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in Ranchi on Monday, a police officer said.

Piparwar police station officer-in-charge Abhay Kumar said, "It is a clear case of mob lynching and police have initiated a thorough probe into the matter." So far, no arrest has been made.

COIMBATORE Sidhu's wife attacks RaGa

Former Congress leader Navjot Kaur Sidhu has launched a scathing critique of Rahul Gandhi, accusing the Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition of being completely "disconnected from ground realities" and failing to address internal corruption in the Punjab unit.

Speaking in Coimbatore, Sidhu claimed Gandhi's inaction is "killing Congress in Punjab," alleging that his inner circle is busy selling election tickets while he remains unaware.

LUCKNOW 'Ayodhya growth tied to temple'

A detailed case study by Indian Institute of Management Lucknow has underlined a sharp economic transformation in Ayodhya following the consecration of the Ram Temple, citing strong gains in tourism, investment, employment and tax revenue.

The report, titled "Economic Renaissance of Ayodhya", presents a comparative assessment of the city's economy before and after the consecration and credits policy support and infrastructure push by the state government for accelerating growth.

JAIPUR Farmers' platform in Raj launched

Union Minister for Agriculture Shivraj Singh launched the AI-based farmers' platform 'Bharat-VISTAAR' in Jaipur on Tuesday. This platform will provide farmers with information on weather, market prices, pests and diseases, soil, crop advice, and government schemes all in one place, eventually on an app.

Addressing the nationwide launching ceremony, Shivraj Singh, without naming, took a jibe at leader of opposition Rahul Gandhi and said, "One leader is... a part-time politician and a full-time drama king. He has neither understanding of trade nor tradition. He hasn't seen a field, a crop, or dirt."

'TURBULENT LANDSCAPE' | World is seeing weaponisation of finance, says Jaishankar

India is in position of strength: EAM

MUMBAI

India is engaging with international partners more intensively and from a "position of strength", External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Tuesday, citing a string of recent trade agreements as evidence of the country's growing economic clout.

In an address at the Global Economic Cooperation Conference, Jaishankar highlighted the successful negotiation of several high-profile deals, including a significant trade pact with the US.

The Global Economic Cooperation is organised by the Future Economic Cooperation Council in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Government of Maharashtra.

Describing the current international landscape as perhaps the most turbulent in living memory, the minister warned that the world is witnessing the "weaponisation" of production and finance, alongside tightening export controls and volatile market shifts.

"The established global order is clearly changing. Replacements are hard to create, and we appear to be headed to a long twilight zone. This will be messy, risky,



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar speaking at the Global Economic Cooperation Conference. - ANI

unpredictable, perhaps even dangerous," he said.

Key dimensions are transforming simultaneously, be it strategic, political, economic or technological. Solutions lie in derisking and diversifying across multiple domains. This approach is increasingly visible in the policy of nations, the EAM said.

"From a position of strength, India is engaging international partners more intensively. This is demonstrated in the recently concluded trade deals," he said.

Economic security is best served through stronger self-reliance and more trusted partners, the minister added.

Jaishankar said that the world has entered a volatile and uncertain era, possibly the most turbulent in living mem-

ory. He emphasised that India will also be more salient in the global calculus of production, on services, technology, skills and knowledge.

Economics will give way to politics and security when it comes to making choices and technology in the age of AI (Artificial Intelligence), he noted.

Technology competition is intensifying and polarising. Energy trade flows are being significantly redefined. New mindsets are encouraging greater risk-taking, including through military means. Migration and even mobility are getting contentious, he emphasised.

"Each nation and each society will respond as per their interests and calculations," Jaishankar said.

Obeys the law; don't let caste trap you: RSS chief Bhagwat

LUCKNOW

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Tuesday weighed in on the controversy surrounding the new University Grants Commission guidelines, and said the rules were not targeted against any community. He said the government frames laws and those who disagree should place their objections through constitutional channels. The matter, he said, is pending before the Supreme Court and the law framed by the government must be followed.

Addressing a social harmony meeting, Bhagwat, who is on a two-day visit to Lucknow, also voiced concern over society being divided along caste lines and said people should not remain trapped in caste identities. He said efforts had been underway for decades to eliminate caste divisions, but the problem continued to persist.

He also said that Muslims living in India are Hindus and advocated their ghar wapsi, adding that the process should happen gradually.

Bhagwat said Muslims in India did not come from Arab lands and were part of the country's civilisational roots. He said any effort towards social integration should move forward step by step and with mutual understanding.

Mamata lashes out at EC, calls it 'Tughlaqi'

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday accused the Election Commission of behaving like a "Tughlaqi Commission" and alleged that it was acting at the behest of the BJP to manipulate voters' lists in the state.

Speaking to reporters at the state secretariat, she drew parallels with Delhi's Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq, known for whimsical decisions, and Adolf Hitler.

Banerjee alleged that the EC was violating rules, defying Supreme Court directives, and creating confusion that had even resulted in deaths.

"There were complaints in Haryana, Bihar and Maharashtra. Then why is Bengal being targeted? The EC is doing all this just to please the BJP," Banerjee told reporters.

The Bengal CM also pointed out that documents accepted in other states like Bihar were being rejected in Bengal.

"Why is Bihar not part of India, or is Bengal not part of India?" she questioned.

On the suspension of seven assistant electoral registration officers (AEROs) deputed from the state, she said the officials were not given a chance to speak for themselves.

"In the name of deletion of voters' names the poll body is snatching away the rights of the voters. A woman functionary in the BJP IT cell removed



She said documents accepted in other states like Bihar were being rejected in Bengal, asking why the state was targeted.

names of 58 lakh voters' from Bengal using AI. The EC is defying Supreme Court orders and undermining democracy. If Bengal officers are being victimised then we will 100 per cent protect them. In the name of logical discrepancies Bengal is being targeted to please BJP. The same manipulation was done in Haryana and Maharashtra," she said.

The chief minister cautioned the EC to ensure that genuine voters from all religions and social backgrounds were included in the final voters' list.

She also highlighted potential voter deletions in her constituency, Bhowanipore, claiming that 40,000 out of over two lakh voters had disappeared from the rolls.

SC declines to take up plea against hate speech

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court of India on Tuesday refused to entertain a public interest litigation filed by twelve petitioners, including former Delhi Lieutenant Governor Najeeb Jung and academic Roop Rekha Verma, seeking guidelines for public officials, constitutional functionaries and executive administrators to follow constitutional morality in their conduct.

The plea had specifically alleged discriminatory remarks by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, among others and sought guidelines to tackle such remarks made by public figures.

A three-judge bench of the Chief Justice of India, Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and BV Nagarathna expressed disapproval of the selective nature of the allegations.

"The petitioners are eminent persons. We respect them. Ask the petitioners not to target any particular individual. Only selected individuals. Others were very conveniently ignored. It is not fair."

The Bench indicated that it would be inclined to hear a plea that was framed with complete objectivity and impartiality.

Himanta: Sonia asked me to fix oath date, Rahul scuttled move

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday claimed that then Congress president Sonia Gandhi had asked him to decide on the date for his swearing in as CM when 58 party MLAs had supported him in 2014.

The scenario, however, changed after Rahul Gandhi, who was then in the USA, made phone calls to party leaders, Sarma told reporters here after a cabinet meeting at the state legislative assembly.

Assam Congress had witnessed dissidence after the 2011 assembly polls, with a section of the MLAs supporting Sarma as the chief minister, replacing the incumbent Tarun Gogoi. He left the party

to join the BJP in 2015 and played a pivotal role in ensuring the saffron party's first victory in the assembly polls.

"Madam (Sonia Gandhi), whom I still refer to as such, had asked me to decide on the date and I had told her that I would take oath the day after the Ambubachi Mela at Kamakhya Temple in June (2014)," Sarma said.

The situation changed after

Rahul Gandhi made the calls, he said.

"I was hurt then, but God has given me much more than what I would have got, had I remained in the Congress," he said.

"As the BJP CM, I got a chance to serve both Assam and Sanatan dharma wholeheartedly, which would not have been possible had I been in the Congress," he said.

Cong neta Borah set to join BJP

Guwahati: In a development that has sent shockwaves through the regional political landscape, the former President of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC), Bhupen Kumar Borah, is officially defecting to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). This high-profile transition, confirmed on Tuesday, is expected to fundamentally alter the electoral dynamics ahead of the upcoming Assam Assembly elections.

- Digjyoti Lahkar

SC ON VANUATU

'No country like that, it's like Kailasa'

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday observed that there is no such country as Vanuatu while hearing a bail plea filed by a man described as a Vanuatu national.

Senior Advocate Siddhartha Dave, appearing for the accused, was asked by the bench of justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and N V Anjaria which country his client was a citizen of.



When Dave said he was a citizen of Vanuatu, the bench asked, "Have you been there?"

When the lawyer said no, the bench observed, "There is no country like that. We also know a country called Kailasa. Similar to that."

Self-proclaimed godman Nithyananda claims to have set up a country called the "United States of Kailasa".

Dave said that the country was "somewhere in the Caribbean".

The plea was eventually withdrawn.

Incidentally, Vanuatu (above) is a country in the Melanesia subregion of the South Pacific Ocean.

Puri lying about Epstein files: Cong

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday accused Union minister Hardeep Puri of "lying" on the Epstein files issue, and asked the BJP leader to come clean on the "62 email exchanges" and "14 meetings" he had with convicted American sex offender Jeffrey Epstein between 2014 and 2017.

The opposition party also reiterated its demand that Puri must resign immediately.

Puri has, however, denied all the charges levelled at him by the opposition party. "Between 2014 and 2017, there were 62 email exchanges between Hardeep Puri and Epstein. Apart from that, what was discussed in the meetings on June 5, 6, 8 and 9, September 19, 23 and 24, and October 9 and 10 in 2014?" Congress' media and publicity department head, Pawan Khera, asked at a press conference here.

"Puri wrote 32 emails while Epstein sent him 30 emails. There were 14 meetings,



which began soon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to office in 2014, and went on till 2017.

"The question is — what position did Hardeep Puri hold in June 2014, and in what capacity did he meet Epstein?" Khera asked.

The Epstein files are thousands of pages of documents related to two criminal investigations into sex trafficking by financier Jeffrey Epstein and his accomplice Ghislaine Maxwell, including travel logs, recordings, and emails, which have been a topic of conversation since Epstein died in custody in 2019.

Savarkar kin moves court, seeks Rahul voice sample

PUNE

Satyaki Savarkar, VD Savarkar's grandnephew, on Tuesday filed an application in a local court seeking voice samples of Rahul Gandhi in relation to a defamation case against the Congress leader on his comments about the late revolutionary and Hindutva ideologue.

Advocate Sangram Kolhatkar, Satyaki's lawyer, moved the application before Judicial Magistrate (First Class) (MP/MLA Special Court) AA Shinde.

Satyaki has produced evidence to prove the case beyond reasonable doubts, but "for the proper adjudication of certain electronic recordings, the voice samples of accused (Rahul Gandhi) is an indispensable piece of evidence," the plea stated.

The court should direct the accused to provide his voice samples before the competent authority, Satyaki said, and also sought a direction to Forensic Science Laboratory authorities to conduct a scientific analysis and comparison of the collected samples with the recordings on court record.

Satyaki filed a complaint in 2023 before the magistrate alleging that Gandhi, currently Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, claimed in a speech in London that VD Savarkar had written in a book that he and 5-6 of his friends once beat up a Muslim man, and he (Savarkar) felt happy, VD Savarkar never wrote this, the complaint said.

K'taka leadership row heats up with minister's 'dog' remark

BENGALURU

The simmering leadership row in Karnataka took a sharp turn on Tuesday after Minister H C Mahadevappa made remarks invoking a High Court observation on stray dogs, drawing reactions from senior Congress leaders and the Opposition.

Speaking to reporters in Mysuru on Monday, Mahadevappa, considered close to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, in cryptic remarks said, "Where is the discussion on leadership? The High Court says time and again to catch stray dogs and confine them. Here the politi-

cal leadership is strong."

When asked whom he was referring to with the dog metaphor, the social welfare minister said he was only citing the High Court order.

"I was only referring to what the High Court had said. I do not know how you people perceive it," he added.

Mahadevappa's remarks come amid the ongoing speculation over the leadership tussle between Siddaramaiah and his deputy D K Shivakumar. The minister also dismissed talk of any change at the top.

Shivakumar's brother D K Suresh said he was unaware of the context of Mahadevappa's remark.

"I don't have the information whom Mahadevappa referred to as dogs," the former Lok Sabha member told reporters.

However, he added, "devout Congress leaders are not stray canines but honest dogs. They never ditch those who favoured them. They clear the debts of their master."

Taking a swipe at Mahadevappa, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy said the statement implies that all the leaders in Congress are dogs.

"Mahadevappa has subtly explained whether the dog is wagging its tail or tail is wagging the dog."

offgrid

Bee corridors along highways planned

NEW DELHI

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is planning bee corridors to aid pollination and reduce ecological stress, an official statement said on Tuesday.

At least three such corridors are expected to come up along national highways within the next financial year, starting April 1, the Union Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) said.

The bee corridors will have

a continuous linear stretch of bee-friendly vegetation comprising flowering trees and plants that will ensure the availability of nectar and pollen throughout the year, the ministry said.

The Bee Corridor initiative is expected to help reduce the increasing ecological stress faced by honeybees and other pollinators, which is adversely impacting pollination services, agricultural and horticultural productivity, and overall ecological balance, MoRTH said.

The corridors will be developed along national highway stretches and other vacant NHAI land parcels, depending upon agro-climatic conditions and local suitability. NHAI field offices across the country will identify national highway sections where clusters of flowering trees can be planted at intervals of approximately 500 metres to 1 km, corresponding to the average foraging distance of honeybees and wild bees.

NHAI field offices will also plan and develop at least

The corridors will have a stretch of bee-friendly vegetation to ensure availability of nectar and pollen.

three pollinator corridors during 2026-27.

NHAI plans to plant around 40 lakh trees along national highways during the year 2026-27, around 60 per cent of which will be planted

under the Bee Corridor initiative.

The Bee Corridor initiative will help enhance ecological outcomes, contribute to pollinator conservation, and further strengthen NHAI's commitment to environmentally responsible National Highway development.

In the statement, the ministry did not share any further details related to particular highway stretches along which the corridors will be developed.

PALGHAR

The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) has announced the successful reconnection of Tarapur Atomic Power Station's Unit-1 (TAPS-1) to the electricity grid following a landmark life-extension programme.

The achievement marks a major milestone for the country's oldest nuclear facility, which has undergone extensive renovation and modernisation to ensure long-term operational reliability.

the NPCIL said on Monday.

An official release issued by the NPCIL said the life-extension activities were executed under "stringent regulatory oversight" and align with global nuclear safety standards.

"The successful completion of such complex activities in this reactor type reflects NPCIL's engineering excellence and strong renovation and modernisation capability," it said, noting that TAPS-1 and its twin Unit-2 are currently the oldest reactors in operation globally.

The comprehensive upgrade involved high-end

engineering interventions to enhance safety margins.

The NPCIL also confirmed that similar renovation activities for Unit-2 are in an "advanced stage of completion". The second unit is expected to be reconnected to the grid shortly.

Commissioned in 1969, TAPS-1 and 2 were Asia's first nuclear power reactors outside the erstwhile Soviet Union. Through more than five decades of service, the twin units have generated over 1,00,000 million units of clean electricity, the statement said.

Negligence in schemes will be dealt with, Divisional Commissioner issues stern warning

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. A review meeting of divisional development works was held on Tuesday in Prayagraj's Gandhi Auditorium, chaired by Divisional Commissioner Mrs. Soumya Agarwal. While reviewing the progress of various public welfare schemes, officials were instructed to ensure 100% achievement of targets. She clarified that strict action will be taken against the concerned officials if any negligence is found in progress. The Divisional Commissioner expressed displeasure over the poor progress in Prayagraj's PM Suryaghar Yojana and directed the Electricity Department to coordinate with the Electricity



Department to expedite solar rooftop installations. He also directed meetings with vendors to ensure targets are met. The situation in Prayagraj and Kaushambi was also found to be unsatisfactory under the Post-Matric/Pre-Matric Scholarship and Fee Reimbursement

Scheme, prompting the concerned departments to increase coordination with educational institutions. Dissatisfaction was also expressed over the slow progress in solar pump installations under the PM Kusum Yojana and the Chief Minister's Rural Housing Scheme. During the

review of the Health Department, instructions were given to ensure cleanliness at community and primary health centers, institutional deliveries, audit of newborn and maternal deaths and timely payment of incentive amount.

The Animal Husbandry Department was

asked to complete the construction work of Kanha Upvan and Gaushala centers soon and ensure proper care of destitute cattle. The Electricity Department was instructed to replace burnt transformers within the stipulated time frame and maintain the avail-

ability of additional transformers. In the review of taxes and cesses, the departments were asked to prepare an action plan and ensure 100% revenue collection. All the District Magistrates of the division and officers of the concerned departments were present in the meeting.

Woman undergoes abortion, admitted to SRN Hospital in critical condition, case filed against doctor and three others

Prayagraj. A 21-year-old woman living in Phaphamau, Ganganagar, was aborted by some doctors. Her condition deteriorated. The woman has been admitted to Swaroop Rani Nehru (SRN) Hospital, where she is undergoing treatment. Based on a complaint from the woman's brother, Phaphamau police have filed a case against Dr. Satyendra Patel, a resident of Baradari Bazaar Holagarh, Rahul, and the woman's friend, Raviraj of Jagdishpur Shuklani Nawabganj. The accused are being searched for. According to information received, a man living in a village in the Phaphamau police station area alleges that Raviraj used to visit his house frequently. During this time, he became friends with his sister. A week ago, his sister suddenly experienced stomach pain. The sister called Raviraj and told him. He called his sister to Soraon and asked her to see a doctor he knew. The sister arrived in Soraon with her mother, where Raviraj was found. After this, his sister was taken to Rahul Clinic in Baradari Bazaar, Holagarh. There, doctors Satyendra Patel and Rahul examined her and said that the pain would subside with medication. Together, the two doctors administered the medication, and shortly thereafter, blood began to flow from her private parts. Raviraj, along with his mother, took his sister to Dev Hospital in Soraon, where doctors examined her and determined that an abortion had been performed. As her condition worsened, she was admitted to Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital. Police Station Officer, Phaphamau, stated that the accused will be arrested soon. In this regard, Police Station Officer, Phaphamau, Ashwini Singh, stated that a case has been registered based on the complaint and investigations are underway. The accused will be arrested soon.

Student on her way to board exam center crushed by truck, dies on the spot

Prayagraj. A tragic accident occurred on Monday afternoon in the Baharia area, where Vaishnavi (17), a 12th-grade student, daughter of Shailendra Kumar Maurya, died on the spot after being hit by a speeding truck. Her cousin, Pratap, who was riding the bike, was seriously injured and has been hospitalized. Vaishnavi was traveling with her cousin to Maa Kaushalya Devi Inter College, about a kilometer and a half away, where her board exam center was located. As they reached the road near the Saraigani-Dhamour Idgah turn, a speeding truck coming from behind hit their bike. Pratap was thrown off the bike upon impact, while Vaishnavi fell in the middle of the road, and the truck ran over her. Family members and a large number of villagers rushed to the spot upon receiving information about the incident. Villagers said that due to the lack of speed breakers or safe traffic arrangements on this route, truck drivers often drive at reckless speeds, leading to frequent accidents. Vaishnavi was the eldest of two brothers and two sisters. Her parents say she aspired to become an IAS officer and was extremely bright in her studies. This accident has shattered all the family's hopes. Bahria Police Station Officer Brijesh Kumar Singh said that the search for the truck driver is ongoing and the police are investigating the case. The body has been sent for post-mortem, and the family has been informed.

Kuldeep Bind murder case: Four accused arrested within 24 hours, wooden sticks recovered

Jhansi, Prayagraj.

Police solved the murder of a young man in the Jhansi police station area within 24 hours. They arrested four wanted accused and recovered two wooden sticks used in the crime. The action caused a stir in the area. Case number 50/2026, under Section 103(1)/238 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), was registered at Jhansi police station based on the complaint of



Kuldeep Bind's father, Rammurat Bind, a resident of

Daultapur Bajhan village. Upon receiving information about the

incident, police and forensic teams arrived at the scene and collected evidence. On the instructions of senior officers, several teams were formed to arrest the accused. On Tuesday, police raided a railway underpass and arrested Munna Lal alias Munmun (29), Pappu Bind (45), Desi Bind (40), and Babni Devi (65). During interrogation, the accused admitted their involvement in the crime. At their behest, two wooden sticks used in the murder were

recovered. According to police officials, preliminary investigations suggest a personal rivalry as the motive. However, other aspects are also being investigated. The arrested accused will be presented in court and legal action is underway. The prompt action by the team formed under the leadership of the station in-charge, Jhansi, allowed the police to quickly solve the murder case. Local residents have also praised the police's promptness.

The three-day fair at Pandeshwar Nath Dham, Padila, concluded successfully



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Tharwai. A grand fair was held at Pandeshwar Nath Dham, Padila, on the occasion of Mahashivratri. People enjoyed the fair in abundance, with women shopping for household items and children enjoying the fair, buying toys and other items. Devotees of Lord Shiva flocked to the temple from early morning on Mahashivratri, with over a million devotees

arriving for the Jalabhishek ceremony. On the second and third days of the fair, everyone enjoyed the fair. To ensure that no chaos occurred, senior officials monitored the fair, while police were deployed at all key points. Volunteers were also deployed to maintain cleanliness during the Jalabhishek ceremony. The fair concluded peacefully on the third day of the fair. On this occasion, Mahant Akhilesh Giri of Pandeshwar Nath Dham and priest Vivek

Giri were presented with robes. On the same occasion, Vineet Bansal, Vijay Kumar Gautam, Village Head Jaitwardih Mahendra Giri Mandal President Bharatiya Janata Party presented robes to all of them as a mark of respect for the successful conclusion of the fair. Sushil Mishra, Prakash Shukla, Santosh Patel, Surendra, Brijesh Yadav, Vipin Yadav, Pramod Yadav, Rinku, Bhole Giri, Brijesh Tiwari etc. were all present.

District Judge flags off Nyay Rath to promote National Lok Adalat

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. The Legal Services Authority's Nyay Rath (Nyay Rath) was flagged off from the District Court premises on Saturday to widely publicize the National Lok Adalat, to be held in Prayagraj on March 14, 2026. The program was inaugurated by District Judge and Chairman of the District Legal Services Authority, Satya Prakash Tripathi. On this occasion, the Nyay Rath, received from the Uttar Pradesh State Legal Services Authority, was also dispatched to the district for an awareness campaign. The publicity vehicle will disseminate information about the Lok Adalat to the public throughout the city and surrounding areas. Managers from all banks and the District



Lead Manager of Bank of Baroda were also present at the event. With their support, special awareness was emphasized regarding the settlement of bank-related disputes.

During the campaign, paralegal volunteers toured the city, informing people about the benefits of the Lok Adalat. On this occasion, Additional District

Judge First Ram Pratap Singh Rana, Nodal Officer Lok Adalat/ADJ Ravikant, Additional District Judge Rahul Singh, Chief Judicial Magistrate Trisha Mishra and Secretary of District Legal Services Authority Shashi Kumar along with other judicial officers were present. Secretary of District Legal Services Authority Shashi

Kumar said that the target has been set to settle as many cases as possible in the National Lok Adalat to be held on 14 March 2026. He has appealed to the people of the district to identify their pending cases and appear in person or through their advocates and avail the benefit of settlement on the basis of reconciliation.

Annual Sports Meet 2026 Inaugurated with Great Enthusiasm and Spirit



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Ghazipur: The 22nd two-day Annual Sports Meet 2026 was inaugurated with great enthusiasm and dignity at the Government Shaheed Smarak Degree College in Mohammadabad Yusufpur of Ghazipur district. The college campus was filled with

excitement as students showcased remarkable energy, zeal, and competitive spirit. The playground reflected a vibrant atmosphere of discipline, sportsmanship, and determination. The event was graced by Circle Officer of Kasimabad, Abhinav Rajshree, as the Chief Guest, while Station House Officer Rajesh Tripathi attended as

the Guest of Honour. The dignitaries were welcomed in a traditional manner with bouquets, followed by the ceremonial lighting of the sports torch to formally declare the event open. The program was skillfully conducted by senior advocate Krishnanand Rai, and the ceremony was presided over by Vimal Kumar Rai, a member



of the college management committee. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Guest emphasized that sports play a vital role in shaping students' personalities by instilling discipline, confidence, and team spirit. He encouraged participants to compete with true sportsmanship and to accept both victory and defeat gracefully. The Guest of Honor

also motivated the students, highlighting that sports activities help build physical strength and mental resilience. On the first day, several athletic events such as races, long jump, shot put, and other track and field competitions were organized. Students participated wholeheartedly and delivered impressive performances,

earning loud applause from the audience. In his concluding remarks, the chairperson expressed gratitude to the guests, teachers, staff members, and students for making the first day of the event successful. A sense of excitement and celebration continues to prevail across the college campus as the two-day sports festival progresses.

Container truck collides with parked truck, conductor killed, driver absconding



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Utran. A horrific road accident occurred on Tuesday morning on the Utsapur National Highway in the Utsapur police station area of Prayagraj. The container conductor died tragically on the spot, while the driver fled the scene.

The impact was so severe that the front portion of the container was severely damaged. The deceased has been identified as Vikas (28), son of Harishankar, resident of Uttam Nagar, BK Mohan Garden, West Delhi.

The container was reportedly traveling from Delhi to Kolkata when it collided

from behind with an unidentified truck parked on the Utsapur National Highway. Upon receiving information about the accident, Utran police arrived at the scene and, after considerable effort, exhumed the body, took it into custody, and sent it for post-mortem. Preliminary investigations have revealed that the accident was caused by a truck parked on the highway. According to police, the driver fled the scene after the accident and is being searched for. Efforts are also being made to identify the unidentified truck. After the incident, the family members of the deceased have been informed.

New Sanitation Drive Launched in Mohammadabad Yusufpur, Garbage Collection Vehicles Flagged Off



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Ghazipur: In a significant step toward making the town clean, beautiful, and well-organized, the local municipal body has launched a special sanitation drive in Mohammadabad under Ghazipur district. The campaign was jointly led by Executive Officer Ravindra Mohan and Municipal Council Chairman Rais Ahmad. During the program, the officials flagged off

garbage collection vehicles to mark the formal commencement of the campaign. Municipal staff, public representatives, and several prominent citizens were present on the occasion. Addressing the gathering, the officials emphasized that cleanliness is not merely the responsibility of the administration but a collective duty of every citizen. They informed that a special action plan has been prepared to strengthen the regular sanitation system in the

town. Under this plan, sanitation workers will collect garbage door-to-door twice daily — in the morning and evening. The garbage vehicles have been equipped with separate compartments for wet and dry waste to ensure scientific and environmentally friendly disposal. Appealing to residents, the officials urged them to hand over their waste to the collection vehicles at the designated time and refrain from

dumping garbage on roads or in drains. They also highlighted that a clean environment not only enhances the beauty of the town but also helps in controlling the spread of infectious diseases. At the conclusion of the event, both officials stressed that no cleanliness campaign can succeed without public participation. With collective cooperation and awareness, the vision of a clean, healthy, and model town can be achieved.

Two teenagers drowned while bathing in the Ganges; one's body recovered; search for the other continues

Akhand Bharat Sandesh Jhansi. A major accident occurred in the Jhansi area of Sangam city on Tuesday afternoon. Two of the four teenage friends who had gone to bathe in the Ganges near Bridge No. 4 in the Magh Mela area drowned in deep water. After an hours-long search operation, divers recovered the body of one teenager, while the other remains unaccounted for. The incident has caused chaos in both families. Police said Aditya Patel



(15), a resident of Pahsi village in Phulpur, was studying at his mater-

nal uncle's house in Katka Jhansi. Around 2 pm on Tuesday, he went to bathe in the Ganges with three friends, Kartik Tiwari (16), Shivam, and Satyam. While bathing, Aditya and Kartik were suddenly swept away by deep water and began drowning. Shivam and Satyam, who were present, tried to save them, but were unsuccessful due to the strong current. Locals gathered at the scene and their families were informed. Upon receiving the information, the

police administration and a team of divers arrived at the scene. After considerable effort, Aditya Patel's body was recovered near Pipa Bridge No. 3. Seeing the family's heart-breaking cries and at their request, the police handed over the body to them without a post-mortem. Meanwhile, no trace of Kartik Tiwari has been found. Kartik's father, Ajay, has already passed away. His mother, Renu, and his two sisters and one brother remained at the ghat, praying

for his well-being. It is reported that the four teenagers were close friends. Kartik, Aditya, and Shivam were students in Class 8, while Satyam was in high school. The group of friends who had come to the banks of the Ganges together, laughing and playing, has been shattered by the tragedy. Outpost-in-charge of New Jhansi, Harishankar Mishra, stated that a search operation for Kartik will continue on Wednesday with water police teams.

Editorial

Shashi Tharoor has always disliked 'statist Congress'

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



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

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

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

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

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

There has been a paradigm shift in US foreign policy

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Medical seat domicile rule of T'gana flawed: SC

Delhi : The

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



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

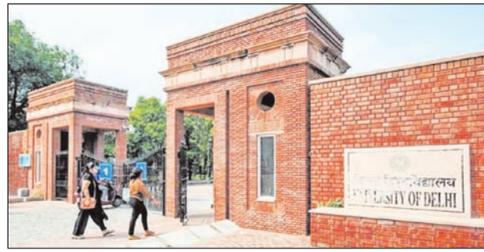
Children of a Kerala resident posted in Telangana for four years who complete Class 9-12 in Telangana are eligible for state quota medical seats. He said youngsters who study outside Telangana despite their parents being natural citizens cannot apply for state quota medical seats.

Hindu University establishes public policy institute

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

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

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



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

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

Assess UV technology in sewage treatment, NGT directs IIT Delhi

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

A tribunal

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

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

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

Delhi dominates India's top college list

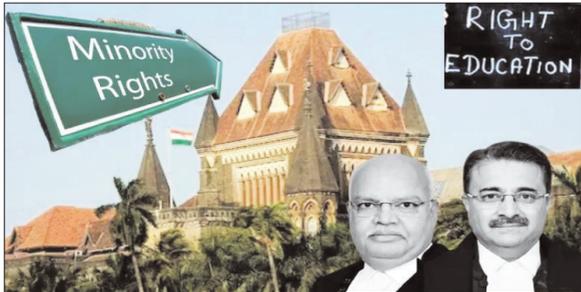
Delhi : Delhi University's Hindu College has topped the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025 list, followed by Miranda House, Hans Raj, Kirori Mal and St Stephen's, emerging as the top five colleges in the country. Delhi University (DU) also recorded its best-ever performance in the Universities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

CBSE and NCB to Raise Drug Abuse Awareness

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

SC: Why are minority institutions excluded from RTE?

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



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

The Pramati Educational

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

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

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

Supreme Court asks Centre, NCERT on transgender-inclusive

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

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



plaining about the lack of transgender-inclusive

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

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

Pradhan Mantri Kalyan Yojana relies on NCERT

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

He emphasized that



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

DU teachers raise issues of unoccupied reserved seats

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mrunal Thakur reveals she approached Aditya Dhar for work, recalls early struggles and says she created her own opportunities

Mrunal: I asked for work

Mrunal Thakur started her career with the television show, *Mujhse Kuchh Kehti Yeh Khamoshiyaan* (2012), but rose to fame with her performance in *Kumkum Bhagya*. Her first movie was a Marathi film titled *Hello Nandan* (2014), and she made her Hindi debut with the 2019 release *Super 30*.

Recently, during an interview with News18, Mrunal revealed that opportunities didn't come to her easily, and she had to approach filmmakers to get work. The actress revealed, "Opportunities didn't come to me easily. I had to create them. I had to chase them. I had to make sure that I flash my face in front of the directors, saying, 'Sir, main hoon! Kisi na kisi din cast kar lena please.' I don't shy away from doing these things."

Mrunal recollected that Dhurandhar director Aditya Dhar was the first filmmaker she approached and asked for work. She said, "In fact, Aditya Dhar was the first director I had approached and asked for work from. When I spoke to him after *Dhurandhar*, I told him that I'll always remember that day. I didn't know how to ask for work. I didn't know how to communicate."

The actress in the interview also revealed that after watching Sridevi starrer *MOM*, she had told filmmaker Ravi Udyawar that she wants to work with him. Ravi has directed Mrunal's upcoming film *Do Deewane Seher Mein*.

Do Deewane Seher Mein also stars Siddhant Chaturvedi in the lead role, and it is slated to hit the big screens on February 20, 2026. The film is produced by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, and the pre-release buzz about it is strictly average. So, the box office fate clearly depends on the reviews and word of mouth.

Also, the film is not getting a solo release. It will clash at the box office with *Assi*. The Taapsee Pannu starrer is already getting positive reviews from the critics.



Aditya Dhar

'Being King has never meant power, always responsibility'

Shah Rukh Khan opens up about the meaning of 'King', saying it stands for responsibility, humility and purpose

He's King Khan to his fans and the industry and his next film quite coincidentally is called *King* too. Shah Rukh Khan, however, brushes off the power the title bestows on him, saying it's less an identity and more "a reminder to live with heart, humility, and purpose".

"The word 'king' has never meant power to me. It has always been about responsibility -- to the people who believe in you and the stories you choose to tell..." Shah Rukh told PTI in an email interview.

The star, first seen in the TV show *Fauji* in 1989, has worn the 'Bollywood king' crown with ease over three decades. Maybe not any more.

"As time passes, you realise that what truly matters is not the title, but the intention behind your work," said Shah Rukh, who has lent his voice to fire-works show *The Lion King: Celebration in the Sky* aboard Disney Cruise Line's latest ship, Disney Adventure next month.

"At this stage of my life and career, the title *King* feels less like an identity and more like a reminder to live with heart, humility, and purpose. Whether it's narrating a story aboard the Disney Adventure or choosing my next film, what matters most to me is creating work that brings people together, makes them feel something, and leaves behind a little bit of joy," the 60-year-old said.



Photo: Instagram

Photo: Instagram @mrunalthakur

SNIPPETS

Rashmika, Vijay's Udaipur wedding with no-phone rule

Actors Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda are reportedly set to tie the knot in an intimate ceremony in Udaipur on February 26. Despite the growing buzz, neither Vijay nor Rashmika has officially confirmed the wedding. Over the years, the duo has remained tight-lipped about their relationship, choosing to focus on their professional commitments and neither confirming nor denying dating rumours. According to a report by India Today, the wedding will be an extremely private affair, with festivities commencing on February 24 and culminating in the ceremony on February 26. A source was quoted as saying, "It's a very small guest list. No phones will be allowed. Even the team capturing the wedding has signed NDAs (Non-disclosure agreement)."



Aamir denies playing mediator in Ranveer-Farhan Don 3 feud



Ranveer Singh and Farhan Akhtar's production house Excel Entertainment are reportedly at loggerheads following Singh's exit from *Don 3*, with reports claiming Excel is seeking Rs 40 crore in compensation to recover pre-production costs. With the feud intensifying, reports recently stated that actor Aamir Khan stepped in as a peacemaker to resolve the issue between Farhan and Ranveer. Amid the reports, Aamir denied playing a mediator in Ranveer and Farhan's *Don 3* feud, "flatly denying any hand in the Ranveer-Farhan Akhtar dispute," according to Bollywood Hungama. A few days ago, several prominent producers were spotted leaving Aamir's Mumbai residence on Thursday evening.



Oscar-winning filmmaker Frederick Wiseman dies

Oscar-Winning documentary filmmaker Frederick Wiseman has passed away. He was 96. He breathed his last on Monday. The news of his demise was announced by Ziporah Films, the distribution company he founded in 1971, as per The Hollywood Reporter.

"For nearly six decades, Frederick Wiseman created an unparalleled body of work, a sweeping cinematic record of contemporary social institutions and ordinary human experience primarily in the United States and France," a statement from the company read.

A law professor turned filmmaker, Wiseman pretty much made one documentary a year since his first one, the controversial *Titicut Follies* (1967), which exposed appalling brutalities at Bridgewater State Hospital for the Criminally Insane.

Richa welcomes indie filmmakers

Richa Chadha invites indie filmmakers to approach her directly, opens up about early career betrayal, and stresses choosing meaningful cinema



Photo: Instagram

Actor-producer Richa Chadha has urged independent filmmakers to approach her directly for collaborations, saying she is open to meaningful and story-driven projects. Speaking about her journey in the film industry, Richa said many independent creators assume actors like her are inaccessible, which is not true. She stressed that if a script is honest and the intention behind it is clear, she would be happy to be part of such conversations. The actress reiterated her commitment to supporting strong, content-led cinema.

Richa also spoke candidly about a difficult phase early in her career. Without taking any names, she revealed that someone she deeply trusted had worked against her interests at a crucial time. She said the experience made her realise that not everyone who appears supportive truly has good intentions. The actress shared that the episode was unsettling but also became an important learning moment. It taught her to be more careful, protect her voice and choices, and not remain naive in professional relationships.

Richa added that over the years, she has grown stronger and more aware, focusing on projects that align with her values rather than outside expectations.



Photos: Instagram @readyness

Delhi court seeks update on Celina Jaitly's brother

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday granted time to the Centre and the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi to pursue through diplomatic channels and seek cooperation of the UAE authorities in the matter of detention of Major Vikrant Jaitly (ret'd), brother of actor Celina Jaitly, in the Gulf country.

The Centre's counsel told Justice Purushendra Kumar Kaurav that the embassy requested consular access to Vikrant Jaitly on February 13, which was denied by the UAE authorities, and the next date for such a meeting was

awaited. The Centre's lawyer sought a reasonable time of 3-4 weeks be granted to enable the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Embassy to pursue the matter with the UAE authorities through diplomatic channels to seek necessary cooperation in the matter.

"The prayer seems to be reasonable. Accordingly, the hearing is deferred," the court said. "It is not the case of the ministry not doing anything? After 10-15 days, nothing is going to change. The ministry says grant us 3-4 weeks so that we can do something substantial," it said.

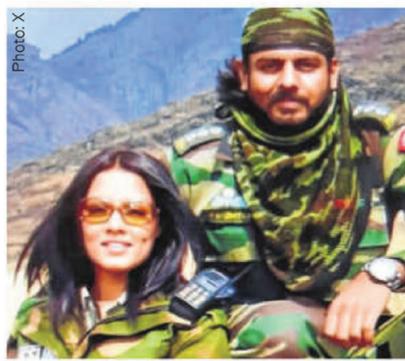


Photo: X

Kiran Rao down with chikungunya

Filmmaker Kiran Rao has shared that she is down with chikungunya and is currently recuperating at home, while urging people to take necessary precautions.

Kiran took to her Instagram stories section, where she shared a picture of herself lying down with her cat beside her.

Sharing a health update on social media, Rao wrote, "Ok folks, I now have chikungunya. And yes, Miri is an excellent paramedic, timely monitoring her mamma's fever."

She also shared a picture of a book, thermometer and a card kept next to her. Despite the illness, the filmmaker said she is trying to stay positive and take things slow. She also highlighted the severity of the symptoms.



Kiran wrote: "Taking it slow, admiring my friends' cards, and catching up on my reading - when I can hold up the book! 'I know you know this but the joint pain is so TAKE ALL PRECAUTIONS!'"

Briefs

WASHINGTON
Trump: Total mess if SC nixes tariffs



President Donald Trump has warned that it would "be a complete mess, and almost impossible for our Country to pay" back the money the US has collected from his sweeping tariffs if the Supreme Court rules he doesn't have the unilateral ability to impose many of them.

WASHINGTON
US terror tag on three West Asia outfits

The US has made good on its pledge to label three Middle Eastern branches of the Muslim Brotherhood terrorist organisations, imposing sanctions on them and their members in a decision that could have implications for America's ties with allies Qatar and Turkey.

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

Call to outside world: Iranians voice despair

DUBAI

Iranians on Tuesday made phone calls abroad for the first time in days after authorities severed communications during a crackdown on nationwide protests.

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

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

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



Toll 2,000: Iran official

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

Leave now: US advisory

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

Trump also has said Iran wants to negotiate with Washington.

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

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

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

Death for protester?

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

Final days, says Merz

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

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

Bill to annexe Greenland tabled in US

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

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

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

Vance to host Greenland meet

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

The vast Arctic island is a semi-autonomous territory of Denmark, a NATO ally of the US.

Tension flares in Minnesota, protests swirl

MINNEAPOLIS

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

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

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

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

100k visas nixed in '25

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

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

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

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

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

Global central bank chiefs in 'full solidarity' with Powell

FRANKFURT

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

Department investigating and threatening criminal charges.

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

and Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey.

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

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

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

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

Inexplicable escalation: US

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

Crossword #1745 grid with numbers 1-55

- Across: 1 Feminine pronoun, 4 Ship pole, 8 Leading player, 12 Paar: 1954 Guru Dutt movie, 13 A girl or a maiden, especially in Scotland, 14 ___ duck: one who cannot cope without help?, 15 Dusk, 17 Way out, 18 Small film role, 19 Unnatural, 20 Be absent or deficient, 22 Wilt, 24 Reversed, 26 Genre you might hear at a nightclub, 27 Dead on arr., 30 Broke the promise of marriage, in a way?, 32 Taking food, 34 The French for 'island', 35 Scam, 37 Japanese-American, 38 Cooking herb, 40 Lhasa ___: a type of pet furry dog?, 41 Comic fantasy author ___ Pratchett, 44 Egyptian capital, 46 Verve, 47 Passed away, 50 Thanks ___! (1,3), 51 Understanding term? (1,3), 52 Gad's son?, 53 20th letter of the Hebrew alphabet, 54 Swelling on eyelid, 55 Father

YOUR DAY By Vinayak Vishwas Karandikar

- ARIES: A day for spiritual growth and deep reflection. Opportunities for meaningful spending on religious activities, travel, or investments are likely. Positive growth is seen for those in research, astrology, finance, and teaching. Constructive family discussions will strengthen bonds; approach conversations with patience. Take care of your legs and digestive health to maintain vitality. Lucky number: 7; Lucky colour: Yellow.
TAURUS: A day for introspection and heightened intuition. Opportunities to support others through loans, medical treatments, or charitable acts are likely. Success is seen for those in the occult sciences, finance, and consultancy. Harmonious interactions with family are possible when patience is practised. A gentle routine will support calmness and digestive wellness. Lucky number: 9; Lucky colour: Red.
GEMINI: An excellent day to connect with influential people and expand your network. Unexpected gains or beneficial investments may occur. Positive developments are seen for those in marketing, media, education, and business. Deep and meaningful conversations with your partner will strengthen the relationship. Mindful relaxation and stress management will help maintain energy. Lucky number: 5; Lucky colour: Green.
CANCER: A responsible and productive day. Investments in career growth, travel, or legal matters can be beneficial. Positive outcomes are seen for those in the medical field, law, and government jobs. Balancing work and family time will bring harmony. Gentle exercises will support back and digestive health. Lucky number: 8; Lucky colour: Blue.
LEO: A day for philosophical insights and spiritual understanding. Spending on education, travel, or charitable activities will bring fulfillment. Success is seen for those associated with teaching, religious activities, and publishing. Meaningful conversations with loved ones will deepen emotional connections. Stay hydrated and take care of your hips and mobility. Lucky number: 3; Lucky colour: Yellow.
VIRGO: A day of positive transformation and opportunities. Thoughtful spending will ensure financial stability. Growth is seen for professionals in psychology, research, and auditing. Family dynamics may evolve positively with understanding. Rest and mindfulness will support sleep and nerve health. Lucky number: 6; Lucky colour: White.

SUDOKU - 635

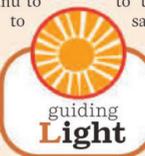
Sudoku grid with numbers 1-9

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

MAKARA SANKRANTI

Dr S Ainavolu

Sankranti means transition or the movement of the Sun from one rashi, or constellation, into the other. There are twelve rashis according to astrology, and hence twelve Sankrantis happen in the year. The occurrence of this is around the middle of the English calendar months. Thus, from the middle of January to December, we have twelve Sankranti festivals. However, given the importance of the Sun's transit from Dhanu to Makara (Sagittarius to Capricorn), the Makara Sankranti is celebrated as a major festival in the middle of every January. The completion of the crop cycle and fulfilment of the efforts of previous months makes this another occasion to celebrate. A good harvesting outcome facilitates the celebration. For those who follow the solar returning calendar, the month transit happens around Sankranti. For instance, the Dhanurmasam ends with Makara Sankranti. As Sun's transit is associated with the festival, the Sun assumes importance. Sun worship happens, and the flowers and fruits associated with the Sun occupy primary place. As the winter is at its peak, heat-producing food items are offered as prasad. Thus, sesame, or til, and jaggery, or gud, assume importance. People exchange sweets made of sesame and jaggery, wishing one speaks in sweeter tones. Makara Sankranti is a multi-day festival. The first day, or the purvadin, is the celebration of the arrival of new agricultural output. To remind us of the reality of the mixed bag called life, on the Bhogi day, a specific combinational vegetable curry is prepared, which is specific to this day. Also, sweets and savoury items made with new rice and other things are eaten on this day. The Sun is worshipped on the main day of Sankranti. Those who give gratitude-guided offerings to their ancestors do the "tarpana" on this day. The Sankranti festival's third day is again filled with gratitude. As agriculture was highly dependent on animals, farmers do animal puja. It is sort of a "Thanksgiving Day" aimed at these silent stakeholders of the agricultural process. The festivities end with the cleaning up of fields and preparing and planning for the next crop. And the sustainable cycle repeats. Dr. S. Ainavolu is a Mumbai-based teacher of Management and Tradition.



TAROT MESSAGE FOR THE DAY MAGICIAN

A day to use your mindset and skills to change the situation you are facing. You will feel inspired; don't let your past hold you back. Do proper research and then go ahead. Avoid manipulation and stay on the right path. You will read or practice the law of attraction. You will counsel others.

Tip for the day: Focus on the image and visualize your dreams becoming a reality, and say, "With divine grace, so be it."



Lots of divine miracles your way, Sheetal Sapan Mhatre.

Briefs

NEW DELHI

Time for Dewald to show prowess



South Africa would expect big-hitting youngster Dewald Brevis to regain his form against a struggling United Arab Emirates in their inconsequential final Group D fixture of the T20 World Cup here on Wednesday. South Africa are already through to the Super Eights with three wins, including a double Super Over cliffhanger against Afghanistan and a comprehensive seven-wicket thumping of New Zealand. For UAE, it will be an opportunity to test their skills.

COLOMBO

Pakistan face must-win test at SSC



With their backs against the wall, former champions Pakistan will rely on their fragile batting to come good after the jolt against India and seal a Super 8s spot when they face struggling Namibia, in their final league fixture, here on Wednesday. In Group A, title favourites India have already sealed their Super 8s berth after their handsome 61-run win over Pakistan the other day. Led by Salman Ali Agha, Pakistan's equation is simple -- win against the winless Namibia and make the cut.

SAMASTIPUR

Sooryavanshi skips exam, marked absent



U-19 World Cup winner Vaibhav Sooryavanshi did not appear for his class 10 CBSE board exam at the Podar International School in Bihar on Tuesday and was marked absent. Speaking to ANI, principal of Podar International School, NK Sinha, said, "He is absent today. He has not come to the examination centre. We have marked him absent according to the policy of CBSE... If a student is absent, we have to mark him absent... We were expecting him to come and give the examination, but there are many other obligations. I think he will definitely take the next exam," Sinha said.

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PREVIEW | Ahmedabad awaits runs from star opener Abhishek Sharma's bat India look to up their spin play

AHMEDABAD

A peerless India will be hoping that Abhishek Sharma returns to his destructive ways and the other batters up their game against spin when the side takes the field for its final T20 World Cup league fixture against the Netherlands here on Wednesday.

Having established himself as one of the most dangerous batters in the game over the last 18 months, Abhishek is yet to go ballistic in the ICC event at home thus far.

After a nought in the opener, a stomach infection forced him out of the game against Namibia. He returned for the high stakes Pakistan contest but failed to get a run for the second time in as many matches.

But with Ishan Kishan showing imperious form at the other end, the lack of runs from Abhishek's bat have not impacted the team's cause.

To be fair to the 25-year-old, his high-risk play has resulted in multiple wins for India and perhaps it is only a matter of time before he makes the best of bowlers look ordinary again.

However, four ducks in his last six innings do suggest that he may need to review his plans in the powerplay.

Considering his intimidating credentials, it is clear that teams have spent extra time in preparation to tackle the India opener. By his own admission, Abhishek doesn't have the wide range of shots possessed by others in the line-up and he relies on the use of crease and his free flowing bat swing to scare the daylight out of the opposition.

He likes to target the deep cover boundary in powerplay and starting with the USA game, teams have been smart to deploy a fielder in that region. Pakistan also had set a



India's opening batter Abhishek Sharma plays a shot during the match against Pakistan on Sunday. PTI

Squads:

INDIA: Suryakumar Yadav (c), Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube, Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Varun Chakaravathy, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Rinku Singh.

similar field for him on Sunday that also included a deep mid-wicket, mindful that he doesn't attempt shots behind the wicket often.

With India already through to the next stage of the tournament, the Netherlands game presents an ideal opportunity for him to get back among the runs. India managed to make short work of Pakistan, thanks to a sublime effort from Kishan and the bowlers. However, for the second game in a row, the batters did not show the conviction displayed

by Kishan. After Namibia captain Gerhard Erasmus was able to trouble the Indian batters with his round arm and behind the stumps variations, another unorthodox spinner, Usman Tariq, was able to keep them quiet in the Pakistan clash. Even Saim Ayub was effective.

With due respect to the Netherlands attack, their quality of spinners are not in the same league even though Aryan Dutt and Roelof van der Merwe have been around for a while.

NETHERLANDS: Scott Edwards (c), Colin Ackermann, Noah Croes, Bas de Leede, Aryan Dutt, Fred Klaassen, Kyle Klein, Michael Levitt, Zach Lion-Cachet, Max O'Dowd, Logan van Beek, Timm van der Gugten, Roelof van der Merwe, Paul van Meekeren, Saqib Zulfiqar.

Don't think Bumrah will rest, says Kotak

India batting coach Sitanshu Kotak, on Tuesday, stated that pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah will not be rested against the Netherlands here despite the hosts having already qualified for the Super 8 stage of the tournament.

"Don't think Bumrah will rest. We will decide later," Kotak said during the pre-match press conference.

Speaking about opener Abhishek Sharma's fitness after a stomach bug forced

him to get hospitalised and also miss the game against Namibia, Kotak remained optimistic. Abhishek returned for the Pakistan clash but was dismissed for a duck.

"He wasn't well. Last game he got out in first over. We don't want to overanalyze. He has his plans sorted," Kotak said when asked if teams have decoded the flamboyant opener's game. He lauded opener Ishan Kishan's temperament, saying the keeper-batter was a "confident" person.

Zimbabwe and New Zealand qualify for Super Eights stage

Australia knocked out after Zim-Ire game washed out, Afghanistan ousted as Kiwis beat Canada by 8 wickets

PALLEKELE

Zimbabwe on Tuesday entered the Super 8 stage of the T20 World Cup after their crucial Group B match against Ireland was washed out due to rain, a result that also eliminated former champions Australia and Ireland from the tournament.

Both teams were awarded one point each. The shared points took Zimbabwe to five, enough to secure a Super 8 berth. They will face India in their opening Super 8 match on February 26 in Chennai.

Zimbabwe became the seventh team to get a ticket to the Super 8s, completing group G1 also comprising India, South Africa and West Indies. Zimbabwe will play their final group match against co-hosts Sri Lanka on February 19.

With table-toppers Sri Lanka (6) having already qualified for the Super 8s, the contest held significant importance for Zimbabwe and Ireland, who had come into the game with four and



New Zealand all-rounder Glenn Phillips plays a shot against Canada in Chennai on Tuesday. ANI

two points respectively.

Australia were also on two points following their defeats to Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka.

Phillips powers Kiwis

Glenn Phillips was back at his best blasting the fastest fifty for New Zealand in T20 World Cup history as he and Rachin Ravindra struck fluent half-centuries to power them to an eight-wicket win over Canada and seal their Super 8s berth from Group D, in Chennai on Tuesday.

In a must-win contest for both teams, Canada, opting to

bat, were powered by Yuvraj Samra's record-breaking 110 -- the youngest century-maker in T20 World Cup history -- but the 146-run unbroken Rachin-Phillips stand and an undisciplined bowling effort ultimately overshadowed the milestone knock.

Chasing 174, New Zealand rode on Rachin and Phillips' stand that came off just 73 balls, overhauling the target in 15.1 overs. Phillips remained unbeaten on 76 from 36 balls with six sixes and four fours, while Rachin was 59 not out from 39 balls (4x4, 3x6).

Airee propels Nepal to victory

Rohit Paudel-led side beat Scotland by seven wickets at the Wankhede

MUMBAI

Dipendra Singh Airee produced a masterful innings that powered Nepal to their first victory in their last game of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup against Scotland beating the latter by seven wickets, at the Wankhede Stadium here on Tuesday.

Chasing a competitive 171 for a win, Nepal were in a tricky position at 98/3 when they lost skipper Rohit Paudel but Airee completely took the game away from the Scots with a brilliant half-century (50 off 23 balls) that ensured Nepal gave their teeming fans something to cheer about at the Wankhede as they topped the Scotland total at 171/3 in 19.2 overs.

Nepal batters were resilient and gutsy with openers Kushal Bhurtel and Aasif Sheikh putting on a 74-run opening partnership but the required rate was always climbing. Bhurtel and Sheikh struck 43 and 33 respectively while skipper Rohit Paudel didn't last long either getting out for 16 with Nepal's chase looking tricky.

However, Airee was making all the difference with his belligerent innings that put

the pressure back on Scotland.

Earlier, Scotland were off to a flying start reaching 52/0 in six overs with Michael Jones going berserk getting to 34 with five fours and a six at a strike rate of 170.

Munsey provided able support with 15 off 16 balls scoring three fours.

Nepal bowlers were struggling with their line and length with Dipendra Singh Airee and Sompal Kami going at eight runs per over.

Skipper Rohit Paudel and Sandeep Lamichhane took over the proceedings for Nepal but Scotland's approach remained the same as Jones and Munsey kept going strong. Jones got his fifty in 31 balls with six fours and two sixes but Munsey fell off the last ball of the 10th over to Paudel as Scotland reached 80/1 after 10 overs.

Nandan Yadav and Kushal Bhurtel also tried to stop Scotland in their tracks but were unable to fetch any wickets as the Scots reached 118/1 in 14 overs and looked good for more.

Jones and McMullen were stitching together a partnership that was lending a fair amount of momentum to the Scotland innings.

'Bigger than FIFA WC' for Dutch to play India in India

They are psyched about playing at the world's largest cricket stadium

AHMEDABAD

A red-hot India is expected to steamroll the Netherlands in their final T20 World Cup league fixture on Wednesday but the Dutch are not intimidated by that prospect.

They are instead psyched about playing at the world's largest cricket stadium, with a capacity of 1.32 lakh, which even at half full would have more people in attendance than the Dutch fans who show up to support their more popular and infinitely more successful football team.

"Playing India in India at the world's largest stadium, it is massive for us. More people would be attending tomorrow's game than the Dutch fans who turn up for their team in a FIFA World Cup," John van Vliet, who handles media and marketing for the Netherlands team, told PTI.

"The sponsors back home should see the value in that but so far they have not," Vliet said on the eve of the game.

The stadium's seats are orange, the colour of Netherlands' sports teams which are popularly called 'Oranje'.

The story of Netherlands



Playing India in India at the world's largest stadium, it is massive for us.

John van Vliet
media manager, Netherlands

mirrors majority of the semi-professional associate teams taking part in the 20-nation T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka. It was three days before their tournament-opener that the Netherlands were able to rope in a sponsor.

Expectedly it was an Indian sponsor that came to their rescue, just like it was the case in the 2023 ODI World Cup, which was also staged in the biggest cricketing nation.

Financial service firm Globe came on board just three days before the tournament began but Vliet is hoping their association lasts longer than the duration of the tournament.

The Netherlands have been a regular in ICC events but the sport still remains on the margins in a football-mad nation.

ANI



Nepal's Sompal Kami (L) with teammate celebrates after the wicket of Scotland's Michael Jones at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Tuesday. PTI



Nepal's Sompal Kami (L) with teammate celebrates after the wicket of Scotland's Michael Jones at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Tuesday. PTI

Scoreboard

Scotland: G Munsey c Jora b Paudel 27, M Jones b Kami 71, B McMullen c&b Kami 25, R Berrington c Jora b Bhurtel 10, T Bruce b Kami 5, M Croes b Yadav 4, M Leask c Aasif Sheikh b Yadav 4, M Watt (not out) 10, O Davidson (not out) 1 **Extras:** (B-4, LB-6, W-3) 13 **Total:** 170-7 (In 20 overs) **FoW:** 1-80, 2-132, 3-133, 4-145, 5-150, 6-156, 7-162

Bowling: Dipendra Singh Airee 3-0-23-0, Sompal Kami 4-0-25-3, Nandan Yadav 4-0-34-2, Sandeep

Lamichhane 3-0-29-0, Rohit Paudel 2-0-12-1, Kushal Bhurtel 4-0-37-1.

Nepal: K Bhurtel c Bruce b Leask 43, Aasif Sheikh c Wheel b Leask 33, R Paudel c Jones b Leask 16, D Airee (not out) 50, G Jha (not out) 24

Bowling: Brandon McMullen 1-0-5-0, Brad Currie 4-0-33-0, Mark Watt 3-0-35-0, Brad Wheel 3.2-0-34-0, Oliver Davidson 4-0-31-0, Michael Leask 4-0-30-3.

appeal

Gavaskar, Kapil seek fair treatment for jailed Imran

NEW DELHI

Indian great Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev have joined 12 other former captains to express "deep concern" about jailed cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan's deteriorating health, urging the Pakistan government to provide him adequate medical attention and dignified conditions in line with international standards. There have been reports that the 1992 World

Cup-winning skipper Imran has lost approximately 85 per cent of vision in his right eye due to medical neglect while in custody at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail.

As many as 14 former captains wrote a letter titled "Appeal by former International Cricket Captains" to the Pakistan government asking for fair treatment for Khan.

The appeal also found support of another former India captain Sourav Ganguly, who wasn't a signatory but voiced

his concern while speaking to media in Kolkata.

"We, the undersigned former captains of our national cricket teams, write with deep concern regarding the reported treatment and incarceration conditions of Imran Khan, the distinguished former Captain of Pakistan and a legendary figure in world cricket," the letter said.

"Recent reports concerning his health - particularly the alarming deterioration of his vision while in custody -

and the conditions of his imprisonment over the past two and a half years have caused us profound concern.

"As fellow cricketers who understand the values of fair play, honour, and respect that transcend the boundary rope, we believe that a person of Imran Khan's stature deserves to be treated with the dignity and basic human consideration befitting a former national leader and a global sporting icon."

The letter has also been signed by Michael Atherton,

Allan Border, Michael Brearley, Greg Chappell, Ian Chappell, Belinda Clark, David Gower, Kim Hughes, Nasser Hussain, Clive Lloyd, Steve Waugh and John Wright. In 2023, Khan, the former Pakistan Prime Minister, was sentenced to 14 years in prison in a corruption case.

In the letter, the group of former captains asked for proper medical attention, transparent legal procedures and dignified treatment for the 73-year-old Khan.

