

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ Saturday, 22 November, 2025 UNIQUE GIFT OF KRIYAYOGA ASHRAM AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO GIVE IMPETUS TO WORLD BUILDING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

## UP: Sugarcane price payment begins at newly

**Lucknow** Following decisions taken in the interest of sugarcane farmers under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, payment of sugarcane prices at new rates has begun.For the current crushing season 2025-26, 114 sugar mills in the state have issued indents for sugarcane

purchase, and crushing operations have officially begun in 104 sugar mills.29 sugar mills have made payments of ₹513.96 crore29 sugar mills in the state have paid the sugarcane price of ₹513.96 crore for the current crushing season 2025-26 directly into the accounts of sugarcane farmers. Most



sugar mills are making weekly sugarcane price payments in the interest of farmers.Directives for

Immediate Resolution of Farmers' ProblemsThe Additional Chief Secretary has directed

all district sugarcane officers to immediately submit surprise inspections/investigation reports to headquarters regarding the establishment of sugarcane purchasing centers at 23 cooperative and 03 corporation sugar mills, the timely purchase and lifting of sugarcane, and the presence of weighing

clerks at the purchasing centers. They will also ensure the availability of standard weights, accuracy of weighing, and the supply of clean sugarcane at the weighing scales installed at cooperative and corporation sugar mills. He also directed that complaints received from farmers be resolved promptly.

## We will throw out every infiltrator one by one: Shah



**Bhuj** Union Home Minister Amit Shah arrived in Bhuj, Gujarat, on Friday to participate in the 61st Raising Day celebrations of the Border Security Force (BSF). Addressing BSF personnel, Shah praised their contribution to strengthening security. He also addressed the citizens regarding the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter lists in 12 states. He said that Indian citizens should fully support it, as this process is crucial for the security of the country and democracy. Through this, every single infiltrator will be removed from

the electoral rolls. Shah said in his address, "Today I want to make it clear that we will expel every single infiltrator from this country. This is our pledge. The SIR process is for the security of the country and democracy."Without naming parties in the opposition alliance, the Union Home Minister said that some political parties want to weaken this campaign to expel infiltrators. Citing the example of the Bihar elections, he said that the public has given the NDA a majority on this issue.Shah said, "It is unfortunate that some political parties are

## Jaish was plotting Hamas-like attacks

Faridabad/New Delhi

Security agencies have made a major revelation in the investigation of the Delhi blasts. According to sources, a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist module was attempting to use Kashmiri hospitals as weapons storage facilities. This tactic is similar to Hamas's strategy, which uses civilian areas and hospitals as weapons storage facilities. Indeed, Jaish terrorists have also chosen hospitals to evade the attention of security agencies.Former Jammu and Kashmir DGP SP Ved stated that terrorists used hospitals as weapons storage facilities in the 1990s, after which the army and police cleared them completely. Now, hospitals are being used as storage facilities again.Investigative agencies are now investigating how



many hospitals this module attempted to target and how far the weapons supply chain extended. Since the Delhi blasts, the Terrorists and local police have been working to dismantle this entire network. Sources close to the investigating agency stated that Dr. Muzammil, Dr. Shaheen Saeed, and Dr. Umar Nabi, the terrorist killed in the blast, were key links in the terror module.40 Bomb-Making Videos Sent From PakistanThe connection of the Pakistani terrorist organization Jaish-e-

Mohammed has been revealed in the Delhi blast case. According to sources, Jaish handler Hanzulla from Pakistan sent 40 bomb-making videos to Dr. Muzammil Shakeel Ganai, the accused in the Delhi blast.The two were introduced by Maulvi Irfan Ahmed, a resident of Shopian, Jammu. Subsequently, a white-collar terror module was formed, and several doctors were added to it. The Delhi blast was also part of this module. The investigation has also revealed that Hanzulla may be the

code name of a Jaish handler. On October 18, Jaish posters put up in Nowgam, Jammu and Kashmir, also featured the name of Commander Hanzulla Bhaiya, arousing the investigating agencies' suspicions. Dr. Muzammil, Dr. Shaheen Saeed, Dr. Adil Ahmed Rather, and Maulvi Irfan, all associated with Faridabad's Al Falah University, who were arrested in the Delhi blast case, have been taken into custody by the NIA. Earlier, the investigation team recovered a flour mill and some electronic equipment, including a metal melting machine, from the home of a taxi driver living in Dhauj village, Faridabad. Sources close to the investigating agency revealed that Dr. Muzammil used to grind urea in this flour mill.



President of India Draupadi Murmu visited and offered prayers at Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Tirumala, Andhra Pradesh.

## CM launches portal for fire safety certificate

**New Delhi** Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has made the fire safety certificate renewal system online. She launched the portal for online renewal of fire safety certificates at the Delhi Secretariat on Saturday. Delhi Government Home and Education Minister Ashish Sood and senior officials from the Delhi Fire Service (DFS) were also present at the special event. The portal, devel-



oped through a joint effort by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and the Delhi

Government, fundamentally restructures the fire safety renewal process in Delhi.

The Chief Minister stated that over the past eight months, the Delhi Government has implemented several landmark reforms that are directly benefiting businesses, citizens, and various institutions in the capital. She explained that the processes related to fire permits, licensing, and other mandatory approvals have been simplified, transparent, and transformed into a single-window system.

## CDS lashes out at defence companies: 'Show a bit of patriotism'

**NEW DELHI:** Flagging concerns that Indian arms companies were failing to deliver emergency procurements on time and that some of them were even inflating the extent of indigenous content in their products, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan has said the armed forces expect "a bit of nationalism and patriotism" in industry's "profit-driven endeavours". "Defence reforms are not a one-way street. (Domestic) industries will have to be truthful about their indigenous capabilities to us. You cannot leave us in the



lurch. When you sign a contract and don't deliver in that particular time frame, it is a capability that is being lost," CDS said at a USI seminar on Friday. CDS said Army had told him "most" of the Indian companies had "over-promised things" and failed to deliver in specified time-frames during 5th and 6th phases of the emergency procurements mechanism.

**New Delhi**

At least 33 bills in non-NDA-ruled states are still pending approval from the Governor or the President. This number is significant in light of the Supreme Court's opinion on the related presidential reference. Of the 33 bills awaiting approval from the Governor or the President, 19 are from Bengal, 10 from Karnataka, three from Telangana, and one from Kerala.What did the Assembly Speaker say?Reacting to the Supreme Court's decision, Bengal Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee said on Thursday that when a bill remains stuck without any explanation, its significance diminishes.He said, "A bill



is introduced for the benefit of the people. The government introduces it, it is debated, and dissent is expressed. After it is passed, it goes to the Governor. He can approve it, refuse it, or return it with a recommendation." If it is returned and

then passed again, they will have to approve it.10 Bills Pending in KarnatakaThe 10 bills passed by the Karnataka Assembly and pending include a bill providing four percent reservation to Muslims in civil contracts.

## Amrit Pharmacy will be established in every medical college and district hospital

**New Delhi** Union Health and Family Welfare Minister J.P. Nadda on Saturday announced the extensive expansion of the AMRUT network across the country, stating that the goal now is to provide AMRUT pharmacies in every medical college and every district hospital in the country, ensuring access to affordable medicines for every citizen. Nadda was addressing the gathering after inaugurating the 10th foundation day celebrations of AMRUT (Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for

## FIR against Amit Thackeray, 70 MNS workers

**NAVI MUMBAI:** Nerul police have filed an FIR against Amit Thackeray, the son of MNS chief Raj Thackeray and 70 MNS workers including office bearers for defying police prevention and forcibly unveiling the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in a canopy constructed by NMMC at a junction in sector -1, Nerul near Rajiv Gandhi flyover on Sunday afternoon.The accused have been booked under relevant sections of BNS for assault or criminal force



against a public servant, voluntarily causing hurt to a public servant in the discharge of their duty, unlawful assembly, rioting, joint liability and mischief causing loss or damage to property along with relevant sections of Maharashtra Police Act. The accused are Amit

Thackeray, chief of Maharashtra Vidyarthi Sena, Mumbai, Gajanan Kale, MNS President of Navi Mumbai City and Abhijit Desai, MNS Nerul unit chief among other MNS workers, informed Brahmanand Naikwadi, senior inspector of Nerul.Inspector Naikwadi said, "The accused had took out a morcha without permission and gathering unlawfully assaulted the on-duty Assistant police inspector Nilesh and also created obstruction.

## Hindu organizations roared in Sanjauli

Shimla

The controversy surrounding the disputed mosque in Sanjauli continues. On Friday, at the call of the Devbhoomi Sangharsh Samiti, Hindu organization officials raised slogans in Sanjauli. A meeting was held between the administration and the committee officials at 1:00 pm. The administration agreed to the committee's demands. The meeting also agreed to withdraw the FIRs filed against the protesters and cut off power to the disputed structure. The administration has now assured that a joint committee will be formed to address the matter. The next meeting is scheduled for November 29th.However, some Hindu



organization workers remained adamant on their demand to cut off electricity and water connections today. During the protest, there was intense sloganeering and a road blockade for about 10 minutes. The protesters declared that the protest would not end until orders were issued to cut off elec-

tricity and water to the disputed structure. Following this, the sloganeering continued for a long time, and people then left the protest site. In view of the protest, the police had tightened security arrangements, and a large number of police personnel were deployed at the protest site.Officials sat on a three-

day fast unto death.Meanwhile, the committee officials had been on a three-day fast to press their demands. Following assurances from the administration, the committee ended the fast on Friday afternoon but resumed a relay fast. The committee demanded that the electricity and water supply to the disputed structure, declared illegal by the Municipal Court and the District Court, be cut off and all activities, including prayers, be banned there. Furthermore, the committee demanded the withdrawal of the FIR filed last week for blocking the way of people going to the mosque to offer prayers.Devbhoomi Sangharsh Samiti Co-Convenor Vijay Sharma stat-



## Briefs

## VARANASI

Child Helps Police Promote Helmet Safety During Traffic Month 2025, a heartwarming scene unfolded at Police Line crossing. Additional Police Commissioner Shivahari Meena had a child put a helmet on her father after stopping their two-wheeler. The emotional gesture moved onlookers, with many pledging to wear helmets. The officer emphasized that helmets are a "life shield," not just a means to avoid fines, reinforcing the road safety message effectively.

## CHANDAULI

**Villagers Angry Over Fake Drain Construction**

Villagers in Dighwat are outraged over the alleged fake construction of a CC drain using District Panchayat funds. They accuse officials and the contractor of collusion, claiming fake worker attendance is being logged with no actual work or materials on site. Fearing a major scam in MGNREGA and Panchayat funds, they demand a genuine investigation and strict action against those responsible, as half the work remains unfinished despite full expenditure being shown.

## KANPUR

**10-Day Neighborhood Brotherhood Campaign**

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind launched a 10-day nation-wide campaign, 'Ideal Neighbour-Ideal Society,' starting Friday. The initiative aims to foster better relationships with neighbors and fellow citizens, promoting mutual brotherhood and a harmonious atmosphere, irrespective of religion. Committee members will engage with the public to encourage simple, kind behavior, emphasizing that a neighbor is the first to help in any problem. The campaign will run until November 30.

## LALITPUR

**Municipal Chairperson's Surprise Inspection**

Municipal Chairperson Mrs. Sonali Jain conducted a surprise inspection of the council office. She reviewed the workings of various departments, including birth-death registration, complaints, and accounts. Jain directed employees to ensure timely attendance and swift resolution of public grievances, warning of strict action for any negligence. Clerks in the registration and tax departments were specifically instructed to complete work within set deadlines.

## KUSHINAGAR

**Journalist Association Passes Five Resolutions**

The Recognised Journalist Committee held a meeting in Padrauna, passing five key resolutions unanimously. These include submitting a memorandum to the District Magistrate for land allocation and building construction for journalists, including an office-bearer in the standing committee, issuing identity cards, holding regular monthly meetings, and opening a bank account in the organization's name. Several journalists attended the meeting chaired by President NN Shukla.

**BLAST | Over ₹40 crore in suspicious transactions under scanner in blast**

# ATS–NIA expand probe across multiple UP districts

LUCKNOW

The investigation into the Delhi blast has intensified as the UP ATS and NIA expand their operations across several districts in Uttar Pradesh. Following the arrest of members of a suspected doctor-led module, agencies are tracing key contacts, financial routes and possible radical links. Multiple districts—Kanpur, Fatehpur, Mahoba and Hamirpur—have emerged as significant locations in the ongoing probe.

Officials reported that interrogation of the arrested doctors has led to new leads involving madrasa networks and frequent religious gatherings. Based on these findings, ATS has sought complete details of students, teachers, managers and financial accounts from madrasas in the identified districts. Records including phone numbers, staff lists and

**UP Madrasas Under Probe**

Following the November 10 Red Fort blast, agencies expanded probes across eight UP districts, seeking records of madrasa staff and students. While officials cite procedure, minority groups fear stereotyping. Only personal links to a few suspects are confirmed so far. Authorities are also examining vehicle logs and financial transactions.

funding logs have been formally requested.

During the review of CCTV footage from religious events held in Kanpur prior to the explosion, investigators identified vehicles belonging to Meerut, Bagpat and

Saharanpur. Footage reportedly shows one of the accused, Dr. Adil, present at a gathering attended by local individuals now under scrutiny for possible sleeper cell affiliations. Several attendees have already been questioned.

**Security agencies intensify investigation into suspected doctor-led module**

A major development involves the suspected funding trail of the module. Preliminary findings indicate that individuals from Kanpur provided financial support under the guise of donations. Banking records reveal that over ₹40 crore moved across accounts linked to accused doctors—Dr. Shaheen, Dr. Adil, Dr. Arif and Dr. Parvez—during the past seven years. The transactions were structured in small amounts, raising further suspicion. Multiple accounts have now been frozen as agencies examine the source and purpose of the funds. In Kanpur Cantonment, a special communication desk has been set up to coordinate

updates between district units, ATS headquarters and the operations wing. Investigators plan to seek remand of the accused to conduct questioning in three phases: individual interrogation, cross-questioning of two accused simultaneously, and final joint interrogation to map the entire network. Teams also visited Rawatpur in Kanpur, conducting door-to-door enquiries and collecting local intelligence. In Fatehpur, details of 152 madrasas—111 recognized and 41 unrecognized—have been demanded. The districts of Mahoba and Hamirpur have also been asked to provide complete records of students, teachers and management committees.

The investigation remains ongoing, with agencies focusing on preventing any future threat by analysing networks, funding chains and communication patterns linked to the suspected module.

## MLA Sudhakar Singh passes away after brief illness

LUCKNOW



**Sudhakar Singh had recently returned from Delhi before his health deteriorated, leading to his shift from Varanasi to Lucknow.**

Samajwadi Party MLA Sudhakar Singh passed away at a private hospital in Lucknow on Thursday at the age of 67. He had been representing the Ghosi Assembly constituency since 2023, when he won the bypoll by a large margin against former minister Dara Singh Chauhan. Singh had earlier served as the MLA from the same seat in 2012.

According to sources, Singh's health declined shortly after he returned from attending a family function in Delhi. He was initially admitted to a hospital in Varanasi and later shifted to Lucknow, where he breathed his last.

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav visited the hospital and expressed condolences, describing Singh's passing as deeply saddening. The party also referred to him as a "true socialist" in its official statement. The Chief Minister expressed grief over the MLA's death and offered condolences to the bereaved family.

Sudhakar Singh had been associated with the Samajwadi Party for over three decades. Despite being denied a ticket in the 2022 Assembly elections, he remained with the party and regained prominence after defeating Chauhan in the 2023 bypoll. His long political journey, marked by loyalty to the SP, made him a significant figure in Ghosi's local politics.

## Massive bill relief drive targets ₹45,980 crore dues

LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh currently has 1,45,58,428 electricity consumers with outstanding dues totalling 45,980 crore, including 24,775 crore in surcharge alone. Additionally, large penalties remain pending against those booked for electricity theft. To address these long-pending cases, the state will launch the Electricity Bill Relief Scheme 2025 from December 1.

The Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation has begun intensive preparations, with Corporation Chairman Dr. Ashish Kumar Goel reviewing progress on Thursday. He stated that the scheme is aimed at never-paid users, long-unpaid consumers, and those involved in theft cases.

**Never-paid and long-unpaid consumers to get surcharge waiver and instalment options**

For the first time, consumers will receive a 100% surcharge waiver and substantial relief on principal dues. Easy instalment options will also be available.

Officials have been directed to personally contact every

consumer, issue notices, distribute pamphlets, and ensure micro-level planning with field agencies. Consumers involved in electricity theft have been encouraged to register under the scheme to settle cases and avoid court procedures.

Special strategies will be deployed in high-default areas, including camps to facilitate registrations. Each eligible consumer will receive three documents: a notice, a detailed scheme pamphlet, and a statement of outstanding dues.

For consumers paying the entire amount at once, 25% relief on principal will be provided along with full surcharge waiver. The scheme applies to domestic users up to 2 kW and commercial users up to 1 kW. Monthly instalment facilities will support low-income groups.

## "Dhoop Chhaon ki Sargoshiyan" by Dr. Tariq launched

LUCKNOW



The eleventh poetry collection, "Dhoop Chhaon Ki Sargoshiyan," by renowned poet Dr. Tariq Qamar was formally launched in Dubai. The book, compiled in both Hindi and Urdu by Qasim Raj, was presented by the literary organization Andaz-e-Bayan at the Sheikh Rashid Auditorium. The event saw the presence of prominent figures like Tehzeeb Hafi, Shakeel Azmi, and Tahir Faraz.

## CM visits Patna for Kumar's historic swearing-In

LUCKNOW

The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh was among several National Democratic Alliance (NDA) chief ministers who attended the swearing-in ceremony of Nitish Kumar, who took oath as the Chief Minister of Bihar for the tenth time on Thursday. The event was held in Patna, drawing political leaders from across the country.

The presence of the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister at the ceremony is being seen by observers as a step towards reinforcing political and developmental coordination between the two neighboring states. The visit also highlights the ongoing collaboration among NDA constituents at the national level. In the lead-

**Visit follows active campaigning by several leaders in the recently concluded Bihar elections**

up to the recently concluded Bihar Assembly elections, the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister had addressed several cam-

paign rallies in the state. The administrative and economic relationship between Uttar Pradesh and Bihar has long been significant due to their shared border and cultural history. Such exchanges between the state leaderships are often viewed as opportunities to discuss and foster mutual development agendas and interstate projects.

## Dr. Syed Rafat Honors Seven Athletes with Black Belts

LUCKNOW



International Taekwondo Master Dr. Syed Rafat, Treasurer of the UP Olympic Association, honored seven Taekwondo athletes with Black Belt degrees at the Association's auditorium in Lucknow. The players, including Tauqeer Ali (Second Dan) and Sandhya Chaurasia (First Dan), received their certification from the World Taekwondo Headquarters, Kukkiwon, South Korea, after successfully passing all color belt and black belt examinations.

## Six states study UP's women led solar model



LUCKNOW

An inter-state knowledge-exchange programme on decentralised renewable energy and women's entrepreneurship was organised in Lucknow, bringing together representatives from Goa, Odisha, Assam, Punjab, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. The event aimed to strengthen women's participation in decentralised solar energy and promote sustainable livelihood opportunities through self-help groups.

**Knowledge-exchange event highlights women-led solar enterprises and sustainable livelihoods**

Held at a hotel in Gomtinagar, the programme took place in the presence of Mission Director of UPSRLM, Deepa Ranjan. She highlighted key livelihood initiatives being implemented for women associated with self-help groups and expressed gratitude to the visiting delegations.

## Block-Level Sports Event Concludes in Kanpur

KANPUR



A successful block-level sports competition was held at Composite School Mandhana Pratham in Kanpur. The event was inaugurated by Block Chief Anuradha Awasthi and Block Education Officer Dr. Anil Kumar Singh. In the individual categories, Sanjay (Bheesi Jarigaon) was crowned the boys' champion, and Julie (Sujanpurgarhi) won the girls' title, demonstrating exceptional performance across various primary and junior-level track and field events.

## Hardoi school gas scare: 16 children hospitalised

HARDOI

A gas-leak incident at Lions Public School in Sandila on Thursday morning created widespread panic after students began feeling unwell. According to district officials, around 16 children reported symptoms including coughing, dizziness, breathing difficulty, vomiting and brief fainting spells. The school administration alerted parents and shifted students to safety immediately.

Hardoi DM Anunaya Jha reached the spot and confirmed that the affected children were sent to two different hospitals for treatment. All students are currently stable and no severe complications have been reported. He added that the incident appears to be linked to gas exposure, and a detailed investigation will be conducted inside the school premises to ascertain the cause.

**District administration begins probe after students fall ill amid suspected chemical exposure**

As the gas smell intensified, children rushed out of classrooms, prompting teachers to evacuate the premises. Several students who collapsed were taken to the Sandila CHC, where doctors initiated prompt medical care.

## Over 160 entrepreneurs converge for 10-day khadi extravaganza

LUCKNOW

The ten-day Khadi Mahotsav 2025 commenced at the Central Sanskrit University in Gomti Nagar on November 21, aiming to provide a significant platform for rural industries and traditional artisans. The event, scheduled to run until November 30, was inaugurated by Rakesh Sachan, the Minister for MSME, Khadi and Village Industries. The festival features over 160 entrepreneurs from across Uttar Pradesh, showcasing a diverse range of indigenous products. The exhibition includes exquisite handcrafted furniture from Saharanpur, carpets from Bhadohi, gamchas and sadris from Amroha durries and towels from Sitapur, and the famed Banarasi silk saris.

## Tarang' festival puts spotlight on child rights and caregivers

LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Women and Child Development Department concluded its two-day state-level program, 'Tarang,' at Bhagyodaya Bhavan in Gomti Nagar on November 20, coinciding with World Children's Day. The event was designed as a celebration of childhood and a platform to highlight the rights of children. The closing ceremony was attended by Cabinet Minister Baby Rani Maurya, Minister of State Pratibha Shukla, and senior officials including Additional Chief Secretary Leena Johri and



Director of Women's Welfare Sandeep Kaur. The program, held on November 19 and 20, saw participation from children selected from various government childcare institutions across the state. The first day featured a series of creative competitions at Literacy House, including dance, music, painting, storytelling, and sports.



## Murder case filed against manager and principal in student's death case, road blocked after post-mortem

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Akhand Bharat Sandesh Prayagraj. Following the death of a tenth-grade student at International Public School in Mundera, Dhoomanganj, under suspicious circumstances, the family filed an FIR against the school manager and principal, alleging murder. Following the student's post-mortem on Friday, the victim's family placed the body on the road in front of the school and blocked the road, demanding the arrest of the accused. Police officers, upon arriving at the scene, assured action against the accused, pacified the family, and then dispersed them. Shivam Yadav, the 14-year-old son of Amar Singh Yadav, a resident of Bhola Ka Purwa, Pritam Nagar, Dhoomanganj police station area, died under suspicious circumstances on Thursday on the school premises. Burn-like marks were found on the student's hands and feet. Based on this, the family accused the school management of murder. On Friday, a post-mortem examination of the student's body was conducted in the presence of the family. The family then took the body from the ambulance and arrived outside the student's International Public School in Mundera. Dozens of family members, already present there, removed the body from the ambulance and placed it on the road. They then began shouting slogans demanding the arrest of the school manager and principal. The road blockade resulted in long queues of vehicles stretching for several kilometers. Seeing the situation escalate, Dhoomanganj ACP Ajendra



Yadav arrived at the scene with police from several police stations and pacified the grieving family, assuring them of action against the accused. The family then took the student's body to their native village, Bara, in Kaushambi, for cremation. Only then did traffic resume smoothly. Father's allegations against the school management in the FIR According to the FIR, the victim's father, Amar Singh Yadav, stated that Shivam was a Class 10 student at International Public School, Mundera, and had gone to school as usual on November 20th. It is alleged that during school hours, the principal, due to a previous grudge, severely beat Shivam, resulting in his serious condition. The father says that when Shivam's condition worsened, the school management took him to a private hospital in the area without informing him, where doctors declared him dead. The family learned of the incident from others. Suspicious, the father took him to United Hospital and then Rani

Hospital, where doctors declared him dead. Amar Singh alleges that his son had been subjected to mental abuse by the principal for a long time. Despite repeated complaints, the school management took no action. Instead, the manager scolded and drove him away and threatened to expel him from school. The father claims that serious injuries are visible on his son's body, indicating murder. School manager said: "He came running and suddenly fell, became unconscious." Dhoomanganj in-charge Rajesh Upadhyay stated that during interrogation, the school manager stated that a sports competition was underway at the school. The student came running and suddenly fell, never getting up. The in-charge stated that based on the complaint filed by the victim's father, an FIR has been filed against the manager and principal on charges of murder. They have not yet received the post-mortem report. Further investigation will be conducted based on the report once it is received.

## The morale of the disabled is extremely strong: Mayor



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. The Honorable Mayor visited the exhibition stalls. He distributed hearing aids and uniforms to 50 disabled children. In his address, the Mayor stated that the morale of the disabled is extremely strong and powerful. In the lecture session of the workshop organized during this three-day exhibition, special guests Dr. Yogendra Pandey, Professor at BHU, Dr. Nihar Ranjan Mishra, Head of Department, Jagadguru Ram Bhadracharya University, Chitrakoot, and Dr. Sanjay Singh delivered lectures on entrepreneurship and skill development,

educational innovations for the disabled, etc. Cultural programs from various institutions were presented on the second day of the exhibition. On this occasion, Abhay Kumar Srivastava, Deputy Director, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Prayagraj Division, Prayagraj, Ashok Kumar Gautam, District Disability Empowerment Officer, Prayagraj, Dr. K.N. Mishra, Principal, Uttar Pradesh Deaf and Dumb School, Prayagraj, Dr. Prabhakar Tripathi, Lecturer, Sandesh Mishra, Curriculum Coordinator, Vikas Pandey, Integrated Education were present.

## ATS seeks list of students and clerics from 58 madrasas

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kaushambi. Following the November 10 bomb blast in Delhi, security agencies in Uttar Pradesh have been put on high alert. In response, the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) has increased surveillance on all madrasas in Kaushambi district and sought detailed information on students and staff. The ATS requested this information through the District Minority Welfare Officer. According to the instructions, madrasas have been asked to provide a complete list of the names, addresses, and mobile numbers of enrolled students, their parents, clerics, managers, and principals. Details of the total number of students and clerics have also been made mandatory. According to sources, this action is not limited to Kaushambi. Similar data is being collected from madrasas in Pratapgarh, Hamirpur, Banda, Chitrakoot, Mahoba, and Fatehpur districts. Following the Delhi bombings, the ATS units in Lucknow and Prayagraj have been actively involved, sending letters to all relevant districts, seeking information. District Minority Welfare Officer Shalini Ranjan stated that a total of 58 madrasas operate in Kaushambi, including 54 recognized and four unrecognized. Letters were issued to all madrasa principals and managers on November 19th, instructing them to submit detailed reports within three days.

## The accused of molesting a minor was sentenced to two years of rigorous imprisonment

Kaushambi. On 16 August 2020, in the Kokhraj police station area, a minor girl was molested and abused with casteist slurs by the accused Chhotu alias Mohammad Raees Afridi. FIR No. 544/20 under sections 354G/354G/504/506 of the Indian Penal Code and 7/8 of the POCSO Act and 3(2)5A/3(1)D of the SC/ST Act was registered at the police station, in which after investigation, the charge sheet was filed in the court, in which the accused Chhotu alias Mohammad Raees Afridi, son of Anees Ahmed, resident of Chikwan Ka Pura Majra Kasia Purbia, Police Station Kokhraj, was sentenced to 02 years rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 5000/- by the court of Special Judge POCSO Act, District Kaushambi on 21.11.2025.

## A new dimension of Mission Shakti was launched at Swami Vivekananda School, Georgetown

Every daughter will be aware: their safety is the Mission Shakti campaign.

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj

On Friday, the girls of Swami Vivekananda Georgetown, a renowned school in Prayagraj district, which plays a leading role in the field of education, are leading in every field, be it academics or sports. A grand awareness program was held at the school under Mission Shakti Phase 5.0, focusing on the safety and respect of daughters. The primary objective was to empower daughters and girls so that they can become self-reliant and face any problem fearlessly. Present at the event were Santosh Kumar Srivastava, Secretary of the Crime Prevention



Committee, Priyanka Parashar, In-charge of the Cell and Program Coordinator, Traffic Inspector Amit Kumar, Ajit Kumar Sinha, retired District School Inspector, and the

Mission Shakti team. All guests were given a grand welcome and honor by the school's Principal, Ajay Kumar Mishra. Traffic Inspector Amit Kumar said that as it is seen that the

month of November is considered to be the main month of traffic, in which he explained the traffic rules like driving at normal speed, two-wheelers wearing helmets and four-wheelers wearing seat belts, and following the given traffic rules. In the same sequence, Sub Inspector Komal from the Mission Shakti team of Georgetown Police Station, while giving information about the safety and respect of daughters, told how to get help if any miscreant harasses women on the road and told about the given Women Power Line 1090, Women Helpline 181, Child Helpline 1098, Chief Minister Helpline 1076. In such a situation, she told that in such a situation, women can immediately use the given

police emergency service dial 112. As soon as you dial, help will be received within a short time and necessary action will also be taken against that miscreant. At the same time, detailed information was given about the public welfare schemes for women being run by the government like Kanya Sumangala Yojana, Sukanya Samridhii Yojana, Nirashrit Mahila Pension Yojana, Mukhyamantri Mass Marriage Scheme. SI Divya Gupta present in the team also gave information about good touch and bad touch and gave information about cyber crime and while making people aware about social media, asked them to be cautious and not to open links without knowing and not to share any kind of OTP.

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kaushambi. Following the successful disclosure of the robbery of a bullion trader under the Sarai Akil police station on November 19th, the arrests, and the recovery of 100% of the stolen goods within 24 hours, officials of the Bullion Traders' Association honored Superintendent of Police Rajesh Kumar, Additional Superintendent of Police Rajesh Kumar Singh, Circle Officer Manjhanpur Shivank Singh, and Circle



Officer Chail Abhishek Singh at the police office with bouquets and garlands. The traders congratulated and expressed their gratitude for the disclosure of the incident within 24 hours. The traders commended the police for their prompt and effective

action, stating that it further strengthened the trust of traders and the public in the district. The Superintendent of Police assured the traders that the safety of traders in the district is a top priority and that similar effective action will continue in the future.

## A grand career fair was held at Government High School, Rala



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kokhraj. A career fair was organized at the Government High School, Rala, located in Rala village of Kaushambi Sirathu tehsil area. The chief guest, Dr. Bhupendra Tripathi, Medical Officer in-charge, inaugurated the career fair by lighting a lamp to Goddess Saraswati. Dr. Bhupendra Tripathi, Medical Officer in-charge, explained to the children about education and employment related to their lives. He said that education is such a wealth that it can never be exhausted. It is only

through education that our youth have the power to become army soldiers, district captains, district magistrates, teachers, scientists, and achieve everything. Dr. Bhupendra Tripathi, Medical Officer in-charge, said that in my life, I have been giving information about Dr. A.P.G. Abdul Kalam to the children and told them that he always used to say that dreams should always be big and no goal is big, only the thinking should be big. Dr. Kalam was the pride of the country. His every word is a source of inspiration for the youth of India. The height at which he has left our

country is unmatched. Principal Dr. Pratibha Rani Sharma, who was presiding over the career fair, presented the chief guest with a bouquet of flowers and a garland. Welcomed by covering them with a shawl, information was given about the bright future of the children through the fair. On the occasion, the career fair was held in the presence of senior teacher, Principal Mrs. Sujata Verma, Government High School Pansaur and teachers Mrs. Shobha Singh, Mrs. Vijay Kumari, Mrs. Archana, Principal Representative Mujahid etc. dignitaries.

## Justice Samir Jain recuses himself from hearing SP leader Azam Khan's pending cases

He released not only this case, but also all other pending cases involving Azam Khan

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. The court of Justice Samir Jain of the Allahabad High Court has recused itself from hearing SP leader Azam Khan's petition in the infamous 2016 Yatimkhana eviction case. He released not only this case, but also all other pending cases involving Azam Khan from his court. However, the court also clarified that the stay on the trial court's final decision will remain in effect until the next date. The case concerns the Yatimkhana settlement in the Rampur city Kotwali area, which was forcibly evicted in 2016 during the



Samajwadi Party government. It is alleged that at Azam's behest, SP workers, along with police forces, evacuated the settlement. Victims alleged that during the proceedings, they entered homes, assaulted, molested, and looted money, jewelry, and buffaloes and goats. The Yatimkhana Eviction Case Twelve separate cases were filed in connection with this

incident. The accused include Azam Khan, retired Superintendent of Police (CO) Ale Hasan Khan, former SP district president Virendra Goyal, and Islam Thekedar. The trial is underway in the Rampur MP-MLA court. On May 30, the trial court rejected the accused's request to recall the main witness in the case, Waqf Board Chairman Zafar

Ahmed Farooqui, and to bring the videotaped footage of the alleged eviction on record. Azam appealed to the High Court, claiming that the videotape would prove his absence from the scene, and that this evidence was crucial for a fair trial. Azam was granted bail by the same court on September 10. Further hearings regarding the dismissal of the case and other reliefs were ongoing. On Friday, the court recused itself from all Azam Khan's cases and recommended that another bench be designated to hear the case. The case will now be listed before another bench after the Chief Justice's order.



## Editorial

### Why The Taliban Foreign Minister Is Really Visiting India

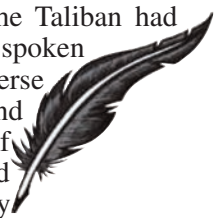
he Acting Foreign Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Amir Khan Muttaqi, will be traveling to New Delhi between October 9-16, after having received a waiver from the UNSC sanctions committee. His previous bid to secure the waiver back in September was not successful. During his visit, he is expected to meet the External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and will arrive in New Delhi after having participated in the Moscow Format Dialogue in Russia. The impending visit has raised - and might answer - important questions about how India's relationship with the Taliban-led regime has evolved in the past four years. While there is an acknowledgement of the inevitability of engaging with the Taliban because of strategic and security considerations, concerns about what form this engagement would take and whether India can secure its interests for real, persist.

#### India's Reaction In 2021

When the Taliban usurped power in August 2021 and anointed themselves at the helm in Afghanistan, India's response to the developments was simultaneously knee-jerk and gradual. As the fighting intensified, India did not take much time to shut down its consulates and close its embassy. It was also quick in revoking visas and arranging the evacuation of Indian citizens from the country. But there was still a degree of dilly-dallying on how it intended to engage with the regime. A few weeks after the group's return, the Indian ambassador in Qatar met the head of the political office of the Taliban in Doha in order to seek assurances about protecting India's security and interests in the country. Subsequently, after a visit by the then Joint Secretary of the Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran division in the Ministry of External Affairs to Kabul in June 2022, New Delhi operationalised a technical mission in the country to facilitate and monitor the delivery of aid. This ad hoc, reluctant engagement has now metastasised into a tacit acceptance of the inevitability of grappling with the reality of the Taliban.

#### The Dubai Meeting

At the beginning of this year, the Indian Foreign Secretary met Muttaqi in Dubai - the first high-level engagement between the two sides. The meeting saw a discussion over a broad spectrum of issues between the two countries - from humanitarian and development assistance to the importance of the Chabahar port for the purposes of trade and delivery of aid. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Taliban defined India as a key 'economic and regional player' in their statement. After the terrorist attack in Pahalgam in April, a delegation led by India's Joint Secretary in the PAI division also met Muttaqi. This was followed by a telephonic conversation between the Indian External Affairs Minister and Muttaqi, where India expressed gratitude for the Taliban's condemnation of the attacks in Pahalgam. The January meeting between Misri and Muttaqi came in the backdrop of Pakistan's air-strikes in Afghanistan the previous month and New Delhi's condemnation of the same, while the April meeting and the consequent call happened in the context of the Pahalgam terror attack and India's retaliatory strikes on Pakistan under Operation Sindoor. The Taliban had condemned the attack and spoken against how it had an adverse impact on regional peace and stability. The deterioration of ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan has consequently given India more space to engage with the Taliban.



# Analysis - Bihar 2025: The Poll That Could Turn On 6,300 Votes

The latest Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Bihar's electoral roll has concluded with a significant reduction of 51 lakh voters, amounting to a 6% drop from the rolls as of May 2025. In comparison, the previous SIR conducted between 2002 and 2003 led to a sharper 14% reduction in eligible voters. However, that exercise was spread over a longer period and occurred between two elections, not immediately before one. As a result, the revelation that more than one in ten voters were either ineligible or non-existent did not spark the kind of debate we're witnessing today. A detailed analysis of the electoral impact of both revisions offers a trove of insights into why this current exercise could significantly shape the upcoming election outcome.

#### Historical Benchmarks and Electoral Shifts

Working on an analysis that benchmarks all elections since the 2000 Bihar Assembly election tracks the reduction in voter numbers, turnout trends, and electoral outcomes. The first election after the 2002-03 revision was held in February 2005. The voter count had dropped



from approximately 6 crore to 5.26 crore. The result was a hung assembly, with the UPA led by Lalu Prasad Yadav struggling to retain power. By October 2005, the voter count further declined to 5.13 crore under the vigilant oversight of Election Commissioner KJ Rao. This election delivered a clear majority to the NDA, which won 143 of the 243 seats.

Interestingly, as long as the absolute number of voters remained below the pre-SIR benchmark of 2000, the NDA maintained its dominance. The 2010 election was a landslide for the NDA. While many contextual factors influenced these outcomes, the correlation with voter count benchmarks is hard to ignore. However, as voter numbers began inching

back toward the 2000 levels, the NDA's grip weakened. In 2015, they lost. In 2020, they scraped through with a razor-thin margin - just 0.03% of the vote. While factors like the LJP's role and Nitish Kumar's shifting alliances were critical, one unmistakable pattern emerged: lower voter counts tend to favour BJP-led alliances. This seems to be an implicit understanding shared by both the BJP and its rivals.

#### Why This SIR Matters More

If the current SIR reduced voters by 6%, that is less than the 14% reduction of the previous one, why does it feel more consequential?

A microscopic look at the 2020 results reveals the answer. The NDA won the state by a margin of just

11,150 votes, narrower than the margin in many individual assembly seats. Had just 12 seats swung the other way, Bihar would have had a different Chief Minister.

In fact, only 6,292 voters across those 12 seats needed to vote differently to change the outcome. That's what makes this SIR so pivotal. Even a few hundred ineligible or non-existent voters could tip the balance in multiple constituencies. The average margin across the state was 16,832 votes, or roughly 10%. Yet the distribution of support for both the ruling party and the opposition was so evenly spread that small shifts could have led to dramatically different results.

#### The Jan Suraj Factor and Caste Dynamics

Adding to the complexity is the emergence of Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraj Party, which is expected to cut across caste lines and appeal to a broad voter base.

This new entrant could disrupt traditional voting patterns and further fragment the vote. A parallel can be drawn with Maharashtra's 2024 Lok Sabha election, where the NDA and the Congress-led

alliance were separated by just 0.5% in vote share. Despite the narrow margin, the NDA suffered a decisive defeat. However, the NDA's women-centric welfare schemes, especially the Ladli Bahin initiative, helped them break caste barriers and reach deeper into the electorate than ever before. This experience has likely informed the NDA's strategy in Bihar, where they hope to replicate that success and appeal beyond traditional caste lines, much like Jan Suraj aims to do.

#### A New Political Landscape

A serious attempt to triangulate Bihar's politics, long after the CPI(ML) and Left Front ceased to be major players. The rise of younger leaders in RJD and Jan Suraj, while the BJP banks on a coalition of EBC (Extremely Backward Class) leaders, suggest pre-election outreach to women voters in Bihar's history. It's a heady mix-new players, shifting alliances, and a finely balanced electorate. Many years ago, a state tourism department used the tagline "Full of Surprises." Today, that phrase perfectly captures the mood of Bihar's 2025 election.

## Happy to see Indian girls coming up in golf,' says India's first ever female golfer

Among the longest hitters, at 25 years of age, this girl has been wowing golfing fans across the world. Her straight hits cover much ground, leaving onlookers agape. For world no. 41, Aditi Ashok, who has had a spectacular run in the 2023 LET, opens with a much-cherished win on European soil, winning the Ladies Open 2023 season-ending tournament at the Andalucia Costa Del Sol Open (Spain). It's total surrender to the game: she won her fourth Ladies European Tour title at the Kenya Ladies Open, came third in Morocco, and was runner-up in Saudi Arabia (2023).

Scratch the calm demeanour, and there is a girl with a plan who wants to hit straighter and longer. Golf consumes her. She recently

reconnected with her childhood coach, Gaurav Diwan, and is "working on my swing speed and distance". From those early years, she turned pro in 2016 and was also rookie of the year, and Ashok is the first Indian female golfer to enter the top 50 world ranking. On a journey that began at age five, she accompanied her father, Ashok Gudlamani, onto the Karnataka Golf Course in Bangalore. One swing and another, and soon she was hooked. Over the years, her resolve, passion, and stoic stance have seen her climb deftly along the ranks of ladies' golf. Putting, she believes, is her strength, and often birdie-ing to perfection, the ramrod straight serious girl with her lips pursed in concentration has beaten

men, trumped tournaments, and is eyeing 2024 as the greens promise victories ahoj. "Finishing in the top 5 in Spain has been heartening after the work I have put in. It has been completely different when compared to where I was in 2022. Then, I was ranked 99 at the LPG. So, the first win (in Kenya) got the ball rolling," smiles Aditi. A miss at the 2020 Olympics (she came fourth), a silver at the Asian Games 2023, she dug deep after an off-kilter season. Having crossed the finish line with wins, she feels failure teaches, victories not so much. "In August, I took a month or two off to prepare for the Asian Games. Even though it had no ranking points and had nothing to do with my LPGA.

## Ladakh Needs A Healing Hand, Not Divisive Politics - An IAF Officer's Plea

A most unwanted event occurred on the crown of India's map last month. This opinion piece is a cry to all, who mean well by India, to bury the hatchet that has brought turmoil to the most peace-loving but hardy group of people, and to one of the most serene real estate that India possesses - Leh, where one cannot move a step without being greeted by absolute strangers with their lyrical greeting - 'Juley'. One day in August 1978, I, a young Flying Officer, took 'lift' in an An-12 from Chandigarh to Leh for a month-long Chetak helicopter detachment. That began an association with that remote frontier through many flying detachments for the next four years, then in the mid-'90s for two-and-a-half years as a Commanding Officer, followed by many short visits in the next two decades. Leh grew on me, as it has on almost all Indian Army and Air Force personnel who have had the privilege of being stationed in the Ladakh sector. Can I apportion my feelings on many, if not most of the thousands of uniformed men and women who have been stationed there? I think I can, judging from the out-

pouring of bewilderment, grief and angst in social media by veterans after the violent happenings on September 24, when a protest turned violent and four Ladakhis were killed in police firing. The Ladakhis are simple folks who go about working in the limited summer months to stock up on money, food and livestock for the bitterly cold winters when temperatures drop to minus 30 degrees and below. The harsh and punishing environment has made them rugged and tough to endure hardships that are difficult for others to even imagine. They are literally the backbone of the security forces, too, up in those dizzy environs. Pick up the photo of May 24, 1948, when Air Cmde 'Baba' Mehar Singh landed his Dakota on the makeshift kutcha runway and opened up Leh for the Army to move in and throw back Pakistani raiders; what one would see are village folks who had constructed the runway, crowding around the Dakota aircraft. Or, pictures of the making of airfields at Chushul, Fukche and Thoise, which show the locals toiling on their haunches to level the ground with hands, shovels and hand-pulled rollers. In the

'70s and '80s, we would swoop low in our helicopter upon spotting an Army patrol moving on foot along the Shyok river valley to reach Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO) and Track Junction posts on the China border; on waving to the Ladakhis who manned these mule convoys - sometimes Yaks, too - they would cheerfully respond. It took us 90 minutes of flying to reach DBO from Leh - they, however, endured around two weeks of march. And the wars. There is not one conflict in independent India that has not seen the Ladakhis give their life for the nation. Take Colonel Chewang Rinchen (twice awarded Maha Vir Chakra.

) and Colonel Sonam Wangchuk, a Mahavir Vir Chakra awardee from 'Kargil'. Operation Meghdoot started on April 13, 1984, when the Indian Army moved up the Siachen Glacier. Since then, the work done by Ladakhis to provide logistics on the Glacier cannot be compensated enough. The combined warrior polity of Ladakh is personified in the Ladakh Scouts - an Army formation of local lads that embodies courage and physical endurance born of the harsh.

## Nitish Kumar Is Still The 'X' Factor In Bihar - And NDA Knows It

With poll dates announced in Bihar, election fever has gripped the state once again. As the political landscape heats up, one question dominates conversations across teashops and television debates alike: is Nitish Kumar still the X-factor that determines electoral outcomes in Bihar? The answer, it appears, is far more complex than a simple yes or no.

#### A Kingmaker's Legacy

Nitish Kumar's political career presents an impressive track record that few can match. Whichever party he has allied

with has tasted victory in Bihar - the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2005 and 2019, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) in 2015, and the BJP again in 2020. This remarkable streak has earned him the reputation of being Bihar's ultimate kingmaker, who has donned the hat of King for almost 20 years - a leader whose support can swing the entire electoral arithmetic in favour of his chosen partner. His political strength rests on a carefully cultivated vote bloc comprising Kurmi-Koeri communities (7%), Hindu Extremely

Backward Classes (EBCs, at 26%) Mahadalits, and Womenfolk. These constituencies have remained largely loyal to him through various political upheavals, drawn by his relatively clean image and development-focused governance.

#### Development Agenda

Nitish Kumar's governance model has been distinctly welfare-oriented, particularly focusing on women's empowerment and marginalised communities. His flagship schemes like Jeevika Didi, cycle distribution for school

girls, and the controversial prohibition policy have become defining features of his political legacy. He introduced 20% reservation for EBCs in local bodies and pushed women's representation in panchayats to 50% - moves that significantly expanded political participation among previously under-represented groups. In what is termed his last innings, Nitish has opened the budget purse wide, launching a slew of schemes targeting women, youth, senior citizens, farmers, and laborers.



## Kangra Valley Welfare Association Celebrates Its 21st Annual Function



**Chandigarh:** The Kangra Valley Welfare Association, Chandigarh celebrated its 21st annual function on Sunday at the IMA Complex in Sector 35. The event saw enthusiastic participation from residents of Chandigarh, Panchkula, Mohali, and people originally from different parts of Himachal Pradesh now settled in the Tricity. The program began with Stage Secretary Sunisha Sharma paying tribute to the Association's founders—S. Bhatnagar, Rajendra Gupta, and Pratap Chand Gupta. This

was followed by the ceremonial lamp lighting by Association President Rup Kamal Gupta, General Secretary Anuj Mahajan, and senior members, marking the formal beginning of the celebrations. General Secretary Pradeep Gupta presented the annual report, highlighting the Association's activities and accounts over the past year. Visitors were treated to a captivating showcase of the rich cultural heritage of Devbhoomi Himachal, including traditional attire, folk music, and theatre performances.

The audience thoroughly enjoyed the soulful folk singing and engaging dramatic presentations. A special highlight was the serving of the traditional Kangri Dham, prepared by expert chefs invited from Nagrota Bagwan in Himachal. Eleven authentic dishes were served, delighting everyone present and earning widespread appreciation for the Association's warm hospitality. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Anil Mahajan, expressing gratitude to all attendees and contributors.

## CDC witnesses 150 Young Cyclists participation

**Chandigarh:** To promote cycling among children and identify young talent at an early age, Cyclegarh successfully organised the Carrera De Ciclista (CDC) at Medicity, New Chandigarh. Held every November, this year's edition witnessed enthusiastic participation from around 150 children across the Under-15, Under-12, Under-10, Under-8 and Under-6 categories. Three-year-old Vaidehi Nautiyal was the youngest participant of the event. The winners included Vihaan Verma (U-15 Boys), Harsimrat Randhawa (U-15



Girls), Bhanu Sharma (U-12 Girls), Shaurya Veer Bhardwaj (U-10 Boys), Sanaya (U-10 Girls), Saatvik Sahu (U-8 Boys), Parisha Meena (U-8 Girls), Gurnoor Singh (U-6 Boys) and

Vaidehi Nautiyal (U-6 Girls). Organiser Misha Barar said that CDC aims not only to provide competitive exposure but also to offer a safe and inspiring platform for children.

## Demand for Anti-Conversion law

**Chandigarh:** Punjab Bachao Morcha has urged the Punjab government to introduce an Anti-Conversion Law, citing rising illegal religious conversions. At a Chandigarh press meet, president Tejasvi Minhas and Christian representatives alleged

that self-styled pastors mislead vulnerable people through fake miracles, superstition and financial exploitation. They said such groups distort true Christian teachings and threaten social harmony.

The Morcha claimed actual conver-

sions may be far higher than census data, with some allegedly hiding new identities to retain caste benefits. It demanded strict action, including a probe into funding, a ban on miracle ads, regulation of gatherings and permits for pastors.

## Punjab Bachao Morcha Demands Anti-Conversion Law Amid Rising Illegal Conversions

**Chandigarh:** Raising concern over the growing cases of illegal religious conversions in Punjab, the Punjab Bachao Morcha held a press conference at the Chandigarh Press Club, led by its president Tejasvi Minhas. Christian pastors and social representatives from across the state participated and expressed support for strict action. The Morcha alleged that certain self-styled Christian pastors are misleading vulnerable people through superstition, fake miracles, greed, and deceptive practices to induce religious conversions. Such activities, they said, violate constitutional values and threaten Punjab's social harmony. Recent incidents and media reports, they



added, show that the situation has become serious and requires urgent legislative intervention. Christian leaders present at the event clarified that these unauthorized groups do not represent true Christian teachings, which do not endorse instant miracles or magical healing. They said

such centres exploit sick and distressed individuals financially, damaging the credibility of the Christian faith. They called for firm legal and administrative action. Minhas said that despite the Christian population remaining at 1.26% between Census 2001 and 2011, independent

sources indicate that actual conversions may have increased from 65,000 to nearly 3.48 lakh. Ground assessments suggest over 4 lakh people may be involved in conversion-related activities, many of whom hide their new identity to retain caste-related benefits. The Morcha demanded the introduction of an Anti-Conversion Bill, investigation of funding and foreign influence of unauthorized religious centres, and a ban on advertisements of fake miracles. They also sought regulation of religious gatherings, restrictions on religious tourism, special permits for pastors, removal of unauthorized symbols, and steps to curb foreign religious pressure.

**Delhi:** With an inventive proposal to have them handled by evening courts starting, traffic challans—of which a backlog of more than two crore has accumulated in the district courts—may now be more easily resolved.

The courts will meet on all working days from 5-7 PM in all district courts under the name Evening Courts for Traffic Challans (ECTC). Beginning on December 20, 11 night-time courts in Saket, Rohini, Dwarka, Karkardooma, Tis

## 11 Spl Courts Will Handle 2,000 Cases Every Day



Hazari, and Patiala House will work to resolve 2,200 cases per day. With the exception of those marked as "contested challan," "sent to digital court challan," and "cognizance declined challan," all traffic challans displayed on the Delhi traffic police webpage that are pending on or before December will be handled. Direct downloads of the challan slips are available <https://traffic.delhipolice.gov.in/evecourtddc>.

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

**Delhi:** Nearly 72% of eligible students have opted to continue with the fourth year of Delhi University's Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) under NEP 2020, according to Vice Chancellor Yogesh Singh. Up to the start of the new academic session on August 1, the university has allowed students to choose not to complete the fourth year. Out of more than 72,000 pupils, 20,221 have chosen not to continue, leaving more than 50,000. The fact that students are willing to opt out of the third



year demonstrates their value, which is quite encouraging, Singh told the media. All institutions affiliated with Delhi University will begin the fourth year on August 1. As part of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the FYUP provides several ways out: a certificate after the first year, a diploma.

### MCD gets nod to invite agencies for Phase-III biomining at Delhi landfills

**Delhi:** The mayor of Delhi has given the MCD the green light to ask agencies to participate in the Phase-III bioremediation of trash at the Ghazipur, Bhalswa, and Okhla landfills. In order to finalize the rate and agency, a proposal will be presented to the standing committee. We anticipate that construction will begin shortly, and the method to grant anticipatory approval has been implemented.

## A 20-kilometer section of the Munak Canal will be maintained by the Delhi government

**Delhi:** Chief minister Rekha Gupta said that the maintenance of a 20-kilometer section of the Munak Canal, which runs from Bawana to Inderlok, will now be handled by the Delhi government instead of Haryana. This move is part of an effort to strengthen control over the canal, which is an important water lifeline for Delhi, and to address growing safety concerns. Two days prior to this decision, two boys, Aniket, nine years old, and Krishna, thirteen years old, drowned in the



canal. This tragedy renewed previous worries about safety along the waterway and sparked requests for more preventative

measures. Built between 2003 and 2012 as a section of the Western Yamuna Canal system, the 102-km Munak Canal provides

## MCD committees fail to show up for meetings, prompting BJP leader to submit an appeal

**Delhi:** There has been a request for improved participation to aid progress in Delhi's Municipal Corporation, as councillor attendance at newly constituted committees is minimal. After almost two years of political uncertainty, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has finally



formed many committees.

However, authorities are now reporting that they are facing a new challenge: an alarming number of councillors are failing to attend meetings. Parvesh Wahi, the head of the house, wrote to all of the municipal councillors on Monday, urging them to "ensure their presence on scheduled

times" and to "understand the importance of the meetings." Oversight of topics such as public health, education, sanitation, horticulture, licensing, and disciplinary proceedings are supervised by around twenty statutory, ad hoc, and special committees within the company.



# Neha Dhupia champions therapy

**T**he makers of *Perfect Family*, which marks actor Pankaj Tripathi's debut as a producer, unveiled the upcoming show's trailer on Thursday and its lead actress Neha Dhupia loves how it talks about therapy without making it heavy.

Neha said in a statement: "When I first heard the script of *Perfect Family*, I instantly connected with how honest, funny and relatable it was. Families can be messy, emotional, dramatic and that's exactly what makes them beautiful." "What I loved most is how the show talks about therapy without making it heavy; instead, it talks about normalising therapy. Working with this cast was an absolute joy, and I can't wait for audiences to meet this perfectly imperfect family," she added.

The trailer of *Perfect Family* offers viewers a first look into a quirky, chaotic, and utterly relatable Punjabi household. The eight-episode dramedy also stars Gulshan Devaiah, Manoj Pahwa, Seema Pahwa, and Girija Oak and Girija Oak Godbole in lead roles.

Speaking about the series, Gulshan shared: "*Perfect Family* is the kind of story that feels both entertaining and necessary. As Indians, we hardly ever talk openly about mental health, especially within the family. This show approaches that discomfort with a lot of heart and humour."

He added that playing a character who is trying to hold his family together while navigating therapy sessions was both "fun and deeply meaningful." "I think audiences will see a bit of themselves in every character and hopefully take away something genuine while enjoying a good laugh," Gulshan said. The series mixes heartfelt family moments with laugh-out-loud humour while addressing deeper themes surrounding mental health and therapy within Indian families.

Neha Dhupia praises *Perfect Family* for its honest, humorous take on therapy and family dynamics as the trailer of Pankaj Tripathi's debut production releases



## Huma Qureshi shuts noise

Actress says she shuts out external pressure, focusing on her own artistic vision and personal growth while promoting *Maharani 4*



A still from *Maharani 4*



**A**ctress Huma Qureshi, whose latest release is *Maharani 4*, has said that she has learnt to shut out the noise around her and focus on what really matters to her as an artiste.

Asked how she handles the pressure of external expectations versus her personal vision, Huma told IANS: "I don't. I don't take the pressure of other people's thoughts and ideas." "I think my job is to fulfill my own future, my own destiny and to work towards my own life and characters. I don't take the pressure of other people's expectations. That's really their problem," she added.

The actress had also spoken about her understanding of success, recognition, and failure, which she says has not dramatically transformed over the years but has steadily grown into something healthier and more grounded.

"It's not transformed. I think it's become better. I've connected with myself more as an artist and as a person, as a woman," Huma said.

She added: "I think I'm just able to function without any of the baggage. I'm just able to enjoy my work and have fun and really. I mean, I can't complain," added the actress.

Directed by Puneet Prakash, produced by Kangra Talkies Pvt. Ltd., and created by Subhash Kapoor, *Maharani 4*, stars Huma Qureshi, Shweta Basu Prasad, Vipin Sharma, Amit Sial, Vineet Kumar, Shardul Bhardwaj, Kani Kusruti, and Pramod Pathak.

## It's irritating, hurting: Keerthy

Keerthy Suresh flags AI misuse after morphed photos show her in suggestive outfits

**A**ctress Keerthy Suresh has voiced concern over the misuse of artificial intelligence (AI) after discovering morphed photos of herself circulating on social media. She said the incident left her upset and raised questions about digital safety for celebrities and ordinary users.

Speaking at a press conference in Chennai, Keerthy shared that she often comes across images where her face is edited onto suggestive outfits she has never worn. She explained that the edits look so real that, for a moment, even she doubts whether the picture is genuine.

Keerthy recalled a recent instance involving a photo from a film *puja*. The original outfit she wore was completely altered through AI, changing her appearance and posture.

"AI has become a huge issue. It has turned into a boon and a bane. Humans invented technology but we are losing control. On social media, I get stunned seeing my picture in a suggestive outfit and I wonder if I ever wore it as it is that

real. Recently, the outfit I wore for a movie *puja* was altered in a bad way, from a different angle," she said.

The actress added, "For a second, I was wondering, and then I realised that I didn't pose in such a way. It is definitely irritating. It is definitely hurting."

Keerthy said such incidents prove how AI, despite its benefits, is becoming a threat when used irresponsibly. She also urged for stronger measures to protect people from harmful digital alterations.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Keerthy was last seen in the Telugu film *Uppu Kapurambu*. Keerthy, currently promoting her upcoming film *Revolver Ritta*, has reflected on how her portrayal of Savitri in the 2018 drama *Mahanati* continues to shape her career.

At a recent press event, Keerthy addressed the ongoing comparisons between her performance in *Mahanati* and Bhagyashree Borse's work in *Kaantha*, saying she feels proud that her performance is still talked about after all these years. Reflecting on the aftermath of *Mahanati*, Keerthy described the challenges of moving on from such an intense role.

AI has become a huge issue. It has turned into a boon and a bane. Humans invented technology but we are losing control.  
Keerthy Suresh



## Nora Fatehi wows US audience

**G**lobal star Nora Fatehi made history as she took the stage on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, delivering a high-voltage performance of *What Do I Know (Just A Girl)* alongside powerhouse collaborator Shenseea. Their chemistry, sharp choreography, and Pop-Girl Era energy quickly became one of the night's stand-out moments. The appearance also marks Nora Fatehi's US television debut.

The episode featured global superstar Ed Sheeran, who headlined the night with his own performance, and the brilliant Cynthia Erivo, making for a powerhouse lineup. Nora held her own with clarity, confidence, and unmistakable star presence.

Performing with Shenseea, Nora brought the explosive momentum that helped their music video cross 30 million views in record time. Their Fallon set was vibrant, high-energy, and unapologetically bold, cementing the duo's impact as two of the most exciting performers in the international pop scene.

The performance was met with massive fan reactions online, praising Nora for breaking boundaries and representing India on one of America's most iconic late-night stages.

With her Pop-Girl Era taking flight, international festival appearances, and globally acclaimed collaborations, Nora Fatehi continues to establish herself as a true global performer, sharing stages with influential artists while standing out in her own lane.

## Dharmendra health update

**V**eteran actor Dharmendra is recovering steadily after being discharged from Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital last week. Reportedly, the 89-year-old star's condition is much better now.

He is responding well to treatment and improving with each passing day. On Wednesday, a report in NDTV stated that Dharmendra is "fine and doing better than earlier." The report has brought relief to fans worried about his health.

Dharmendra was admitted to the hospital a few days before October 31 after he reportedly complained of breathlessness. His condition had been serious, and he was placed on ventilator for a brief period. Doctors later stabilised him, and he was discharged a week ago with instructions to continue treatment at home. A senior

doctor who was treating the actor confirmed that his medical care would now take place under home supervision. Dharmendra's family also issued a statement at the time of his discharge. They also requested the media to avoid unnecessary speculation and allow him privacy during his recovery.



Pic: X



## Zomato's Q4 net profit falls 77% to Rs 39 crore

**Delhi :** Eternal Ltd. (previously Zomato) announced a 77% drop in overall net profit to Rs 39 crore in Q4 FY25 from Rs 175 crore the year before. Zomato, which owns Blinkit, lost 33% of its quarterly net profit to Rs 59 crore in October-December. Overall expenditures rose 67% to Rs 6,104 crore from Rs 3,636 crore. QoQ, costs rose over 10%. Food delivery company consolidated income from operations rose 64% to Rs 5,833 crore from Rs 3,562 crore in the January-March quarter of the previous financial year. Zomato earned Rs 6,201 crore in the quarter, up from Rs 3,797 the year before. Its expenses rose from Rs 3,636 crore to Rs 6,104 crore. Zomato shares finished at Rs 232.5 on the BSE, up 0.58 percent. According to its stock exchange filing, Blinkit opened 294 net new stores in Q4 and is on track to reach 2,000 by



December 25. Deepinder Goyal, Founder and CEO, Eternal, said, "We don't see any long-term structural reason for this slowdown, as the fundamentals – low penetration of restaurant food and increasing urbanisation and per capita income in India – remain unchanged." The company has several promising initiatives in the pipeline and hopes some will work and lead to higher growth without compromising profitability. The company began reporting NOV and GOV for its B2C activities (food delivery, rapid commerce, and going-out) in Q4 FY25.

### Wagah closure hurts Afghan dry fruit imports

**Delhi:** The closing of the Attari-Wagah border has hampered the movement of dry fruits from Afghanistan to India, which may raise domestic prices by 10 to 25%. Afghanistan is India's greatest dried fruit supplier despite war and civil upheaval. Anil Mehra, National President of the Federation of Grocery and Dry Fruit Commercial Association, when the Attari-Wagah border closed, no trucks transporting dry fruits from to Attari had come. "50 trucks are at the Pakistani Wagah border.

## Private sector capex may fall 25% to Rs 4.88 lakh cr in FY26: Govt survey

**Delhi:** A government survey research estimates private business capital spending will drop 25% to Rs 4.88 lakh crore in 2025-26 from Rs 6.56 lakh crore in FY25. The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation's Forward-Looking Survey on Private Sector CAPEX Investment Intentions between November 2024 and January 2025 found that private corporate capex was Rs 3.94 lakh crore in 2021-22, Rs 5.72 lakh crore in 2022-23, and Rs 4.22 lakh crore in 2023-24. To establish a fixed panel, 2,172 firms provided complete infor-



mation for all five years of the reference period. The government said the aggregated (unweighted) capex data from this panel of firms is credible for five-year capital expenditure trends. Over four years from 2021-22 to 2024-25, aggregate capex (unweighted) increased 66.3%. Of the

3,064 responding companies, 2,172 planned 2025-26 capex. The data suggests respondents are cautious when revealing capital spending plans. The research advised caution when interpreting 2025-26 Capex data due to the conservative stance and fear of responding firms.

## Possible goal of India-US trade deal: equal access to technology

**Delhi:** According to insiders, as part of the intended bilateral trade agreement (BTA), India is expected to request that the United States relax export controls and provide it with access to vital technologies on par with important American

allies such as Japan, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Furthermore, they mentioned that India might be interested in pursuing these kind of concessions in the following industries: semiconductors, biotechnology, artificial intelli-

gence (AI), pharmaceuticals, quantum computing, and telecom equipment. Textiles, gems and jewelry, leather goods, clothing, plastics, chemicals, shrimp, oil seeds, chemicals, grapes, and bananas are among the labor-intensive sectors.



## Meta releases standalone AI app to challenge ChatGPT

**Delhi:** competing with ChatGPT creator OpenAI with a standalone AI app. Meta said that its new AI assistant will use Llama AI. The Discover stream shows how others are using the tool and provides prompts. The AI arms race pits Meta's new software against ChatGPT and other AI platforms. Claude, Grok, and Gemini from Anthropic, xAI, and Google are also leading contenders. In September 2023, Meta debuted an AI chatbot as a generative AI-powered digital assistant that can respond to user questions and produce graphics in its apps. Meta AI became prominent in April when it replaced Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Messenger's search feature with a chatbot. Zuckerberg claimed in January that 2025 "is going to be the year when a highly intelligent and personalized AI assistant reaches more than 1 billion people, and I expect Meta AI to be that leading AI assistant." Meta finance head Susan Li said Meta AI has 700 million monthly active users in January. It rose from 600 million in December. Meta launched a standalone AI app after Google and Elon Musk's xAI. Both firms released Gemini and Grok applications recently.



## ATM withdrawals cost more: All about the new fees

**Delhi :** ATM users in India will incur revised transaction rates starting May 1, 2025, under the RBI's amended fee regime. The revisions aim to simplify ATM usage charges and promote digital banking for both financial and non-financial activities. Under the new guidelines, metro consumers will get three free ATM transactions each month and non-metro customers five. Free transactions include cash withdrawals and balance checks.

After this limit, banks can charge Rs 23 per transaction, excluding taxes. This applies to ATM and CRM transactions, although CRM



cash deposits are free. Many big banks have revised their client policies: HDFC said, "With effect from 1st May 2025, the ATM transaction charge rate beyond free limits will be revised from Rs 21 + taxes to Rs 23 + taxes."

Bank emphasized that only cash withdrawals at HDFC Bank ATMs exceeding the free limit will be charged, while non-financial transactions are free. Other banks' ATMs count both sorts of transactions toward the free limit.

### Amazon Launches Project Kuiper Satellite Internet Service

**Delhi:** A United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket launched the payload into Low Earth Orbit from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station.

Amazon claimed it had contacted all 27 satellites by morning and was activating them "nominally." Amazon launched two test satellites in 2023, but this is its first full-scale deployment. The corporation expects to launch over 3,200 satellites using ULA's Atlas V and Vulcan rockets, Blue Origin, and others. Amazon thinks it needs 580 operating satellites to supply internet connectivity.

## Promoters of Prudential, HCL to form health insurer

**Delhi:** Prudential and HCL Group promoters announced a separate health insurance joint venture. Prudential Group Holdings, Prudential's UK affiliate, would own 70% of the joint venture, while HCL Group promoter Vama Sundari Investments will own 30%. HCL founder Shiv Nadar gave his daughter Roshni Nadar Malhotra large shares in Vama Sundari Investments, giving her power. Prudential had its first branch in Kolkata in



1923, making India a critical market, according to CEO Anil Wadhvani. "Today, we have a significant presence with life insurance and asset management businesses providing a comprehensive offering of insurance and wealth products," Wadhvani. ICICI Bank has partnered with Prudential, a FTSE 100

company, for over two decades in life insurance and asset management. The Prudential cooperation intends to provide quality health insurance in India, according to Vama executive director Shikhar Malhotra. "Through this collaboration, we aim to advance our common mission to enhance access to quality health insurance and drive greater penetration across the country," stated. If approved by regulators, Amar Joshi will lead the joint venture.

## The government raises sugarcane FRP by 4.41% to Rs 355 per quintal for 2025-26

**Delhi:** The government raised the fair and remunerative price (FRP) of sugarcane by 4.41 percent to Rs 355 per quintal for the 2025-26 season in October.

An official statement said the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi made this decision in the interest of sugarcane farmers. Sugarcane FRP is Rs 340 per quintal for 2024-25.

Sugar mills must pay sugarcane growers FRP, the minimum price set by the Indian government. I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told the media after the meeting that the FRP of Rs 355 per quintal for a 10.25%



basic recovery rate was approved. "The FRP for sugar season 2025-26 is 4.41 per cent higher than current sugar season 2024-25," says the report. Farmers will receive Rs 3.46 per quintal for each 0.1% sugar recovery increment above 10.25%. FRP decreases by Rs 3.46 per quintal for every 0.1% recovery rate decline. The government also agreed

not to deduct sugar mills with recovery below 9.5%.

These farmers will receive Rs 329.05 per cent for sugarcane in 2025-26. The statement states that sugarcane production costs Rs 173 per quintal in 2025-26. The 2025-26 FRP of Rs 355 per quintal at 10.25% recovery is 105.25% higher than manufacturing cost.

## For 2025-26, I-T Department notifies ITR forms 1, 4

**Delhi:** Individuals and companies with income up to Rs 50 lakh must file ITR forms 1 and 4 for assessment year (AY) 2025-26 with the income tax department. Anyone with long-term capital gains up to Rs 1.25 lakh in a fiscal year can submit ITR-1. Previously, they had to file ITR-



2. With the notification, individuals, HUFs, corporations with income up to Rs 50 lakh, and

those with business and professional incomes in 2024-25 (April-March) can file I-T returns. ITR Form 1 (Sahaj) and ITR Form 4 (Sugam) are easier forms for many small and medium taxpayers. Sahaj can be filed by a resident with an annual income of up to Rs 50 lakh from

salary, one residential property, other sources (interest), and agricultural income up to Rs 5,000. Individuals, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), and firms (other than LLPs) with yearly income up to Rs 50 lakh and business and profession revenue can file sugam.

## Q4 Adani Enterprises net profit jumps 7.5x to Rs 3,845 crore, incubating enterprises thrive

**Delhi :** Adani Enterprises Ltd. (AEL), the flagship firm of the Adani Group, reported strong financial results, with net profit rising 7.5 times to Rs 3,845 crore in Q4 FY25 from Rs 449 crore in FY24. Adani Wilmar Ltd.'s 13.5% stake sale in Q4 gave AEL an outstanding gain of Rs 3,946 crore. Revenue rose 2% to Rs 1,00,365 crore and consolidated PBT rose 16% to Rs 6,533 crore in FY25. Incubating firms' solid operational performance drove EBITDA up



26% to Rs 16,722 crore last fiscal, the company said. Gautam Adani, Chairman of Adani Group, said Adani Enterprises is establishing firms that will shape India's infrastructure and energy sector. Our scale, speed, and sustainability drove our strong FY25 success. The billionaire industri-

alist said disciplined execution, future-focused investments, operational excellence, innovation, and sustainability drove impressive development across our incubation businesses. Adani New Industries Limited (ANIL) began expanding solar cell and module operations

### WB: Oil prices might drop 17% and commodity prices 12%

**Delhi:** Commodity prices, according to the World Bank, could drop 12% this year, with the oil index possibly falling 17%, as a result of slowing economic development. "If realised, these declines will end a period of ele-

vated inflation-adjusted commodity prices in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine," recent commodities Markets Outlook. Reports indicate that supplies might be higher this year.

for 6 GW in Q4 FY25 with financial close. Improved realization and operational efficiency drove solar module sales up 59% to 4,263 MW and greater

EBITDA margins. The company reported that ANIL wind business expanded capacity to 2.25 GW in Q4 FY25 with 5.2 MW, 3.3 MW, and 3.0 MW WTG.



## Briefs

SYDNEY

## Ayush Shetty, Lakshya Sen in quarters



Young shuttler **Ayush Shetty** and former world championships bronze medalist **Lakshya Sen** advanced in the Australian Open in contrasting fashion to set up an all-Indian quarterfinal clash, while senior pros HS Prannoy and Kidambi Srikanth made early exits here on Thursday. The top-seeded Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty too made it to the last-eight with an easy 21-18, 21-11 victory against Chinese-Taipei's Su Ching Heng and Wu Guan Xun in 37 minutes. The Satwik-Chirag pair will take on the fifth-seeded Indonesian pair of Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Shohibul Fikri in the quarterfinals. Shetty, winner of the Yonex US Open Super 300 tournament earlier this year, defeated Kodai Naraoka 21-17, 21-16.

BENGALURU

## Possible to do balancing act: Hazlewood



With cricket becoming a year-round pursuit, playing all formats might be taking a toll on players but experienced Australian pacer **Josh Hazlewood** feels it is possible to do the balancing act with meticulous planning and strategising. Hazlewood, one of the most feared Australian fast bowlers, who has consistently played all formats along with Pat Cummins, recently missed the last three T20Is against England to play a Sheffield Shield game for New South Wales against Victoria to prepare for the Ashes. The 34-year-old said picking and choosing games is the right way to maintain the career balance and remain refreshed.

NEW DELHI

## India drops six places to 142 in FIFA rankings



The embarrassing 0-1 defeat to Bangladesh in the 2027 Asian Cup qualifiers saw the Indian men's football team drop six places down to 142nd in the

## IND-SA SERIES | Indian batting coach, Sitanshu Kotak, fumes over 'everyone blaming head coach only' after loss against South Africa in the first Test

GUWAHATI

India's batting coach Sitanshu Kotak is livid with the criticism that has been directed towards head coach Gautam Gambhir after India's defeat to South Africa in the opening Test and he feels some of it is by people with vested interests. The 30-run defeat in Kolkata was India's fourth Test loss at home in the last one year under Gambhir's stewardship.

"Gautam Gambhir, Gautam Gambhir" (criticism) is being done. I am saying this because I am a staff and I feel bad. That's not the way," Kotak said on Thursday ahead of the second Test starting on Saturday.

He said the criticism is sometimes agenda-driven.

"Maybe some people individually have agendas. Good luck to them, but it is very bad," the former Saurashtra left hander said.

Gambhir has drawn flak for defending the pitch used for the opening Test in Kolkata where India lost despite being in pursuit of a rather modest 124. The head coach had criticised his batters for not being able to adapt.

The rank turner, on which spinners did the most damage, ensured that the game ended inside three days and Gambhir went on to insist that the surface was exactly what the team management had asked for. The statement was in complete contrast to skipper Shubman Gill's assertion a few weeks ago that his team was looking towards playing on more sporting surfaces at home.

## "What about players?"

What surprised Kotak was

India's head coach Gautam Gambhir during a practice session ahead of the second Test against South Africa in Guwahati on Thursday. PTI

## AGENDA AGAINST GAMBHIR?

people not questioning anyone other than Gambhir.

"No one is saying that this batsman did this, this bowler did that, or we can do something different in batting," Kotak said referring to the batting collapse that led to the rather embarrassing loss.

Kotak lauded Gambhir for admitting upfront that he wanted such a wicket and the curator did his best to ensure that team's requests were accommodated.

"See, in the last match wicket, Gautam said that he took all the blame on himself. He said that he took the blame because he felt that he should not put the blame on the curators," he said.

## Approach and technique

While admitting that South Africa were a better side on the same track that was available for both teams, Kotak also pointed out the aspects in which the hosts came second best.

"When a batsman is going into batting, if we tell him to play aggressive, if we tell him to run fast, that won't be right. So, we talk to the players that you make a plan, take your little time," he explained.

"It's not like if you go around with the first ball, you will get hit. That is also visible.

When a person plays aggressive, that is also visible. But, you take your own time.

"Every player has a certain time. He starts feeling comfortable. I feel on such wickets, you rather play busy cricket than defensive cricket with the correct footwork," Kotak, who was a good player of spinners in the domestic circuit, said.

## How T20s changed Test match technique

Kotak feels a shift in mindset and technique has happened in the last 15 years with more T 2 0 s being

played.

The fundamental difference in playing spin in Tests and T20Is is for traditional format you need strong footwork and for T20Is, one requires solid hands.

"Now, we have a lot of players in the world, who adapt all three formats well. But the technique of playing all three formats is different.

"In Test match, you rely a lot on footwork. In T20s, and in power hitting, you focus a lot on creating an early base. So, there will be no footwork in creating an early base."

Gautam Gambhir' (criticism) is being done. I am saying this because I am a staff and I feel bad. That's not the way

Sitanshu Kotak  
Indian batting coach

## 'Playing in all formats for India is a luxury'

GUWAHATI

India left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav has acknowledged that playing all three formats "is a luxury" but an attacking mindset has kept him relevant in the face of stiff competition.

Kuldeep returned home from Australia mid-way through a five-match T20I series to prepare for the South Africa Tests and made a decent impact in Kolkata, taking four wickets despite the hosts losing by 30 runs.

With 342 wickets across formats, Kuldeep's utility cannot be understated and he wants to continue focusing on match fitness in order to remain relevant in the longest format of the game, if not all.

"Obviously, you want to play in all formats, but if you get a chance to play Test cricket, you enjoy it. Playing in all formats for India is a luxury," Kuldeep said on JioStar's 'Follow The Blues'.

"Everyone loves Test cricket. It's a format that everyone enjoys, but it's also very challenging. The next 4-5 years are very important for me in Test cricket, so I will focus on maintaining my fitness and keep performing like this," he added.

Kuldeep added that he has clarity about his role and the support of the team management.

## Gill set to undergo fitness test today

Skipper is however unlikely to play second Test against South Africa

GUWAHATI

India captain **Shubman Gill**, who has not trained due to a neck spasm sustained during the first Test against South Africa, will undergo a fitness test on Friday in a last-ditch attempt to be available for the second game, batting coach Sitanshu Kotak has indicated.

Gill developed the spasm on the second day of the opening Test in Kolkata that India lost by 30 runs and hasn't returned to the nets ever since.

While his chances remain slim, the BCCI sports science team is waiting as long as possible before taking a final call. The second and final Test begins on Saturday.

"See, he is definitely recovering really well, because I also met him yesterday," Kotak said ahead of a practice session that Gill skipped.

"Now, the decision will be taken tomorrow evening, because the physios and doctors have to decide whether, even if he is fully recovered, there's a chance of the spasm recurring during the match. That is very important."

"If there is a doubt, then I am sure he will rest for one more game because it won't help the team otherwise. A player like Shubman, and he's the captain so any team would miss him," Kotak added. While acknowledging the impact of Gill's absence, K o t a k expressed confidence in the b e n c h strength.

"But if he is missing out because of injury, we have batters and plenty of good players. They are professionals; they should come and perform for the team," Kotak said.

"We all wish he plays, but if he doesn't, we will definitely have a good replacement and maybe the guy coming in will score a hundred."

In the first Test in Kolkata, Dhruv Jurel batted at No. 4 in the second innings, and Kotak did not rule out that option again, though he stressed that combinations would only be discussed after Gill's fitness test.

"Jurel batted at No. 4, so he is one option. But until we know about Shubman, there is no point discussing who will play," he said.

"Once we know, and once we see the wicket tomorrow, we will think about the best combination."

## 'Monitoring Rabada'

South Africa's bowling coach Piet Botha has not ruled out K a g i s o Rabada's participation in the second Test against India.



## England desperate to end Ashes drought in Australia

PERTH

The build-up to the Ashes series starting Friday began at the end of July 2023 following one or the more acrimonious Test cricket series between England and Australia.

Ben Stokes and his England lineup won that Test at The Oval in South London but it wasn't enough to reclaim the Ashes from the Aussies, who won the first two tests and drew the fourth in a five-match series to retain the old urn. Cue to Perth Stadium, Day 1 of a possible 25 spanning seven weeks and five cities.

There are some big questions in play.

Can an aging, under-strength Australia continue its unbeaten run in Ashes tests on home soil that dates to the 2010-11 series?

Can Stokes inspire an end to that long drought for England?

Can Joe Root, the world's No. 1-ranked test batter, finally post an Ashes century in Australia? Can Stokes and Root win a test on Australian soil for the first time?

Australia captain Pat Cummins and fellow pace-man Josh Hazlewood will be missing the first test because



Australian captain Steve Smith (L) and England captain Ben Stokes pose with the Waterford Crystal Ashes Trophy in Perth on Thursday. AP

of injuries, leaving Australia's attack without half of its front-line bowlers.

The remaining half - left-arm fast bowler Mitchell Starc and offspinner Nathan Lyon - are confident that the team can win on what is expected to be a fast, bouncy pitch in Perth. Brendan Doggett is set to make his test debut alongside fellow fast bowler Scott Boland, making it the first time an Australian men's test XI will contain two players with Indigenous heritage.

"Good to see the depth in the squad," Starc said. "We know what Scotty Boland can do, ... (and) Doggie's coming off a hot streak."

## Squads:

**Australia:** Jack Weatherald, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Steve Smith (captain), Travis Head, Cameron Green, Alex Carey, Mitchell Starc, Nathan Lyon, Brendan Doggett, Scott Boland.  
**England (from):** Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ben Stokes (captain), Jamie Smith, Brydon Carse, Gus Atkinson, Jofra Archer, Mark Wood, Shoaib Bashir.

## 'ISPL is trusted brand now'

Jatin Paranjape states it gives aspiring cricketers a second chance

MUMBAI

The Indian Street Premier League (ISPL) will be into its third season come January and **Jatin Paranjape**, the head of the selection committee alongside Praveen Amre, feels the best part of the league is the second chance it gives aspirational cricketers.

With several budding cricketers either giving up on their dreams or losing their way due to external factors such as financial constraints or professional challenges, ISPL has been a huge platform in that regard and Paranjape vouched for that.

"I think a lot of these cricketers will make the transition to leather ball also, I feel. And if you look at the profile of a tennis ball cricketer, at some stage they have played proper leather ball cricket, you know. They have played for a club or they have played for a company or they are still playing for a company.

They might have played state level under 19 also. Then somebody had an ACL tear and then they could never come back into the game.

Maybe an injury happened or it was some financial diffi-

I think a lot of these cricketers will make the transition to leather ball also, I feel.

Jatin Paranjape  
Head, Selection comm



culties. So, they were leather ball cricketers to start off with as well. And now, because they want to keep their passion for the sport alive, they are now playing tennis ball cricket. And that is why I love this concept so much that it is giving players a second chance at a shot of fame, basically. That is what I love about this concept," he added.

With 101 cities covered this time around and over 44 lakh registrations, the ISPL is growing exponentially and Paranjape feels the talent pool is burgeoning with each passing season.

So, I have been involved with the league from day one and I have seen all the talent pools from day one.

And in the second season, I

was telling people that talent is better than the first season. In the third season, I am telling everybody that the talent is much better than the second season. So, I think I am super, super impressed, honestly. The ISPL has introduced a first-of-its-kind Speed and Endurance Test (SET) Score this time around and the former India cricketer felt it will give them a fair assessment of the physical ability of the players.

Yeah, we wanted to also cast an eye towards the physicality of the players and the preparedness from a physical perspective. Because this is a fast game and the ISPL over 25 days will be a fast-paced, intensive kind of tournament. So, you know, the bodies

have to hold up, basically. So, hence we are throwing a set score into the mix as well. Because then we can profile the players a little more accurately and deeply.

ISPL in the last two seasons has been a platform that has produced some fine cricketers like Abhishek Dalhor and Irfan Umair who have succeeded in top flight cricket and Paranjape felt more would come from the stable.

"I don't want to name anybody because it puts kind of unnecessary pressure on the players. But I have seen so many fast bowlers who can definitely make the transition to leather ball cricket. To answer your question, the number of instances of players going and playing top flight red ball cricket will keep increasing year on year," he added. Paranjape revealed the most satisfying aspect of unearthing young talent and go on to excel at higher levels is seeing their evolution and the happiness of the families in their success.

"Just watching the hopefuls, you know, practice and play. I get very emotional about this because these are all players who want to make a name for themselves," he added.

## WC Qualifiers

## Curacao smallest nation by population to make the cut

KINGSTON

The tiny Caribbean island country Curaçao will go to the 2026 World Cup as the smallest nation by population ever to qualify for the marquee event in men's soccer.

Curaçao, an autonomous territory of about 156,000 people within the Netherlands kingdom, takes the record of Iceland, with a population of just over 350,000, which was the pre-

vious smallest country to reach the World Cup when it qualified for Russia 2018.

A team relying heavily on players born and raised in the Netherlands rode its luck on Tuesday to take a 0-0 draw in Jamaica and finish top of a four-team group. Its other opponents were Trinidad and Tobago and last-place Bermuda.

Curaçao has actively recruited from its diaspora, getting permission from FIFA within world soccer's rules to change the national-

team eligibility of players who once represented the Netherlands at youth or Under-21 level, including five since August.

Defender Joshua Brenet even played a World Cup qualifying game for the Netherlands in 2016.

Tahith Chong, a former Manchester United youth player, is one of the few squad members born in Curaçao.

It was called the Netherlands Antilles until getting its autonomy 15 years

ago.

A storied Dutch coach has led Curaçao on to the elite stage for the first expanded 48-team World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Dick Advocaat, at age 78, is set to lead his third team at a World Cup, and his second in the U.S.

He took his native Netherlands to the quarterfinals at the 1994 edition.

Haiti's troubles fade briefly

Haiti held its breath for nearly two hours as its troubles seemed to fade with the promise of its first World Cup qualification since 1974.

Forgotten ever so briefly was the violence, hunger and homelessness after Louieus Deedson scored nine minutes into Tuesday's game against Nicaragua, and Ruben Providence followed up with a header just before halftime in a 2-0 win to send Haiti to the World Cup for just the second time in the country's history.



Curaçao's Roshon Van Eijma (C) fights for the ball with Jamaican players in Kingston on Tuesday. AP