

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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

## Yogi govt reshapes the future of marginalized communities

Lucknow

The Yogi government has redefined the landscape of tribal welfare in Uttar Pradesh, transforming long-neglected communities into partners in progress. Under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath leadership, development has truly moved from Antyodaya to Sarvodaya, ensuring that the most deprived are placed at the forefront of growth. Through the Dharti

Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan and Dharti Aaba Janbhagidari Abhiyan, saturation-based development has reached 517 tribal-dominated villages across 26 districts. These areas are now fully covered by welfare schemes such as Ayushman Bharat, Ujjwala, Jan Dhan, Kisan Samman Nidhi and PM Vishwakarma Yojana, enhancing connectivity, healthcare and livelihood opportunities. Extending its



protective shield to tribes such as Tharu, Buxsa and Bhotia, the government has empowered over 11 lakh people with housing, education, healthcare, electricity and drinking water through

initiatives like PM Janman and the Mukhyamantri Awas Yojana. In a landmark achievement, 815 Buxsa families in forest areas now have complete access to essential amenities. To sus-

tain cultural heritage and boost income, the government established the Tharu Handicraft Company in Lakhimpur Kheri, linking 371 self-help groups with national markets through revolving and community investment funds. A Tharu Museum has been inaugurated in Balrampur with similar projects underway in Mirzapur, Sonbhadra and Maharajganj. Eklavya Model Schools, Sarvodaya Hostels and

Ashram Vidyalayas are nurturing a new generation of confident tribal youth. Schools in Lakhimpur Kheri, Bahraich, Sonbhadra, and Lalitpur are providing holistic education to children from remote regions, the base for inclusive progress. Under the Pre-Examination Training Centre Scheme, over 700 Scheduled Tribe candidates have been selected for administrative roles, while 6,500 youth are being trained.

## Message to world': Amit Shah vows strictest punishment for Delhi blast culprits



**NEW DELHI:** Union home minister Amit Shah on Thursday said that those responsible for the recent Delhi bomb blast will be given the "strictest possible punishment". He added that the action will send a strong message to the world that no one should ever dare to attack India again. Inauguration of Shri Motibhai R Chaudhary Sainik School and Sagar Organic Plant at Boriyavi, Mehsana Speaking via video link at the inauguration of the Shri Motibhai R Chaudhary Sagar Sainik School and Sagar Organic Plant in Gujarat's Mehsana district, Shah said, "All those who committed this cowardly act and

those behind it will be brought before the law and punished. The Government of India and the Ministry of Home Affairs are fully committed to ensuring this." "Punishment given to the perpetrators of the Delhi terror attack will send a message to the world that no one should ever dare to even think of such an attack in our country," he added. He also expressed condolences to the families of the 13 victims of the November 10 Red Fort blast, which left over 25 injured. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resolve to ensure strict punishment for all those responsible for this terrorist act will definitely be fulfilled," he said.

## Footage from 50 CCTVs reconstruct Umar's movements till deadly Delhi blast

**NEW DELHI:** Fresh CCTV visuals have provided new insights into the movements of Dr Umar Nabi, the main accused in Monday's deadly explosion near Delhi's Red Fort that killed 13 people and injured several others. Delhi Red Fort blast: Follow live updates According to PTI, the footage shows Umar entering the national capital through the Badarpur toll plaza around 8.02 am on November 10, driving a white Hyundai i20 later identified as the vehicle that exploded near the Red Fort that evening. Investigators said Umar, wearing a mask, was seen handing cash to the toll operator while repeatedly glancing toward the CCTV camera. A large bag, believed to have contained explosives, was spotted on the car's back seat.



Another clip, reportedly from a lane near a mosque close to Ramlila Maidan, shows Umar walking along a narrow stretch before turning briefly — the moment his face is clearly visible on camera. Police believe he visited the mosque to offer prayers before driving toward the Red Fort. "His repeated glances toward the CCTV camera suggest that he knew agencies were looking for him, and he was consciously monitoring his surroundings," a senior police officer told PTI. A day-long trail

through Delhi Delhi Police have retrieved footage from over 50 cameras showing Umar's car traveling through several districts before the explosion. He was first captured on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway. Umar stopped for a meal at a roadside eatery and spent the night in his car before entering the capital the next morning. From there, his route covered multiple areas: from Southeast Delhi to the East and Central districts, then northward to Ashok Vihar in the Northwest

District, where he stopped to eat. The footage later shows him returning to central Delhi and visiting a mosque near Asaf Ali Road before heading towards the Red Fort parking lot at 3:19 pm. Another CCTV footage showed Umar at Mewat Toll, Haryana, on 10 November. Tracking terror car PTI reported that the white i20 was later seen in the Sunehri Masjid parking area, where it remained stationary for nearly three hours. Around 6:22 pm, the car exited the parking lot and was last seen moving toward the Red Fort Metro Station side. Barely half an hour later, at 6:52 pm, it exploded into a fireball amid evening traffic, shattering nearby windows and setting off panic in the area. Meticulous planning revealed by CCTV.



Freedom Fighter Museum bringing tribal culture and heritage alive through AI.

## Bhagwan Birsa Munda championed India independence: CM Yogi Adityanath

Lucknow

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that Dharti Aaba Birsa Munda was a staunch advocate of India independence. He led a movement against British rule and was imprisoned by the colonial government,



where he passed away at just 25 in Ranchi jail. He inspired the tribal com-

munity with the slogan, 'Our country, our rule. If the land is ours, governance should also be ours.' CM Yogi added that, inspired by Dharti Aaba legacy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared November 15 as Tribal Pride Day. The Chief Minister inaugurat-

ed the Janjati Bhagidari Utsav at the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan to the vibrant rhythm of drums and cymbals. He visited the exhibition, garlanded the statue of Birsa Munda and appreciated cultural performances by tribal artists from Uttar Pradesh.

## Ladakh airbase close to China border activated

**NEW DELHI:** In a major booster shot for military capabilities in eastern Ladakh, India on Wednesday operationalised its new Nyoma airbase close to the frontier with China, even as a large Army exercise called 'Poorvi Prachand Prahar' is now under way in Arunachal Pradesh on the eastern front. The developments at the opposite ends of the 3,488-km LAC underscore the high military readiness being maintained along the China frontier. "There is ongoing reset in bilateral diplomatic ties. Military CBMs are also being progressively strengthened but the trust deficit on the ground remains high," a sen-

ior officer told TOI. "With no de-escalation along LAC, troops will continue to be forward deployed for 6th successive winter since multiple Chinese incursions into eastern Ladakh in April-May 2020," he said. Nyoma airbase underwent Rs 230cr upgrade IAF chief Air Chief Marshal A P Singh himself flew a C-130J 'Super Hercules' aircraft from Hindon on the outskirts of Delhi to the Mudh airfield at Nyoma, among the world's highest at an altitude of 13,710 feet, to formally inaugurate the strategically located airbase. He was accompanied by Western Air Command chief Air Marshal Jeetendra Mishra.

## Not every Kashmiri is a terrorist': J&K CM reacts to Delhi car blast probe; condemns explosion

**NEW DELHI:** Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday said that "not every resident of Jammu and Kashmir is a terrorist," as the probe into the Red Fort car blast widened to Kashmir. "Not every resident of Jammu and Kashmir is a terrorist. It is only a handful of people who have always tried to disturb the peace and brotherhood in Kashmir," Abdullah told news agency ANI. DNA Confirms Red Fort Bomber Was J&K



Doctor; Turkey Handler 'Ukasa' Orchestrated Plot The Hyundai i20 car used in the blast near the Red Fort metro station parking was allegedly driven by Mohammad Umar, a Kashmiri doctor suspected to be behind the deadly explosion that killed 13 people and left several

others injured. A Kashmiri cleric who doubled as a paramedic at Srinagar's Government Medical College has been arrested for allegedly driving a "white-collar" terrorist module that targeted medical students and young doctors — some of whom are sus-

pects in the network busted in Faridabad hours before Monday's car blast in New Delhi. Moulvi Irfan Ahmad Wagay, also known as Imam Irfan, from Shopian in south Kashmir allegedly used his access at GMC and his prayer sessions in Srinagar's Nowgam to reach students, identify those seen as susceptible, and push them toward radicalisation, sources said Tuesday. While condemning the alleged terror attack in Delhi, CM Abdullah said.

Entry of Muslims into the Braj Bhoomi Yatra should be banned

**Mathura:** In light of the terrorist incident in Delhi, anger against Muslim is growing within the saint community. Today, they wrote a letter to the Chief Minister demanding that no Muslim be allowed to enter Braj Bhoomi during the upcoming Bageshwar Maharaj Yatra. Dinesh Falahari Maharaj, the main petitioner in the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple case, has even said that if any Muslim is found illegally entering Braj Bhoomi during Bageshwar Maharaj Padyatra, he will be blackened. Considerable anger has also been seen within the saint community regarding Muslims. Let us tell you, this is the same Dinesh Falahari.

## Pune road accident: Truck rams multiple vehicles; six dead

**NEW DELHI:** Six people were killed and at least eight others were injured in a road accident near Navale Bridge on the Pune-Bengaluru Highway on Thursday evening. According to officials, a container truck lost control and rammed into multiple vehicles. Two to three heavy vehicles caught fire following the collision. Videos from the scene showed a car crushed between two burning container



trucks. Pune Road Accident: At Least 6 Dead, Several Injured After Truck Rams Multiple Vehicles The injured have been taken to a nearby hospital. "We are probing how the accident happened. Currently, our priority is to ensure that

the injured people receive immediate treatment in the hospital," said DCP Sambhaji Kadam. Pune police, as quoted by news agency PTI. The fire department sent water tankers to the spot, and firefighters worked to bring the blaze under control.

## Delhi blast: Doctor-cop unmasks terror web of moulvi, medics, modules

**SRINAGAR:** It took a doctor-cop to catch a "white-collar" terrorist network of doctors. When Jaish-e-Mohammed posters appeared overnight on Oct 19 across Nowgam-Bunpora in Srinagar, warning security forces of "dire consequences", most residents brushed it off as a ghost from Kashmir's violent past. For Srinagar SSP Dr GV Sundeeep Chakravathy, the signs were too deliberate — and too dangerous — to ignore. By dawn, he had ordered a case under UAPA,



Explosive Substances Act, and Arms Act at Nowgam police station. CCTV footage combed frame by frame revealed three men. They were detained. Interrogation led to one name — Moulvi Irfan Ahmad of Shopian, who had led prayers at Nowgam mosque since 2020. Police

teams moved fast. Ahmad's Shopian home was searched. Another residence in Nowgam was examined. Digital footprints traced from his communications pointed to operatives beyond J&K — connections stretching into Haryana and UP. A team was dispatched. In

coordinated follow-up action, police took custody of Muzammil Ahmad Ganaie, a doctor from Pulwama working in a Faridabad medical college and allegedly linked to the Jaish network. What had begun as an inquiry into wall posters turned into the exposure of a sophisticated cross-state, "white-collar" module. Three Nowgam residents were also held. A senior officer called the effort "a thorough forward-and-backward investigation that mapped every link in the chain".

## "Vidya Bharati's 36th All India Hockey and Karate Competition Opens in Grand Style

The 36th All India Hockey and Karate Competition, organized by Vidya Bharati All India Education Institute, began with great pomp and enthusiasm on Thursday evening at the Shriji Baba Saraswati Vidya Mandir on Govardhan Marg. This four-day competition will run from November 13th to 16th, 2025 with approximately 700 participants from across the country. The program began with the lighting of lamps and offering of flowers before the statue of Goddess Saraswati. The lighting of the lamp was graced by the presence of the keynote speaker and Vidya Bharati All India Co-Organization Minister, Yatindra Sharma, the special guest and Vidya Bharati Braj Pradesh Organization Minister, Harishankar, the special guest and Director of Sports Department of Uttar Pradesh and Chief Selector of Hockey Olympics, Dr.



RP Singh, the school President, Mahant Ramakant Goswami, the administrator, Prof. (Dr.) Tejpal Singh and the Principal, Harendra Kumar Saraswat. The melodious sounds of the sacred Vedic chants and Saraswati Vandana filled the atmosphere with devotion and cultural grandeur. Cultural performances by the brothers and sisters further enhanced the ceremony. The enthusiasm of "Play India-Grow India" and the joy of patriotism resonated throughout the campus. The keynote speaker, Yatindra Sharma, stated that sports are an integral part of life, empowering the body, mind

and spirit. He stated that Vidya Bharati sports competitions are not merely a platform for showcasing talent, but also a means of fostering national consciousness and values. In his address, special guest Dr. RP Singh stated that Vidya Bharati educational institutions are not only producing outstanding students but also developing athletes who bring honor to the country at the national and international levels. He encouraged the athletes to reach greater heights through their hard work, dedication and team spirit. In his welcome address, Principal Harendra Kumar Saraswat wel-

comed all the guests, athletes and visitors, stating that this event is a matter of pride for the school family. He stated that sports not only foster physical fitness but also develop qualities such as discipline, restraint, and leadership. At the end of the program, School Administrator Prof. (Dr.) Tejpal Singh offered his vote of thanks, expressing his heartfelt gratitude to the Chief Guest, Special Guest, participants, judges, participants and all members of the organizing committee. He said that this All India competition of Vidya Bharati will further enrich the land of values through sports. On this occasion, the dignified presence of Vidya Bharati Regional Sports Coordinator Satyapal, School Vice President Virendra Bansal, Treasurer CA Sanjeev Agarwal, Vice Principal Premshankar and Neelam Maheshwari.

## DGGI Raids Tobacco Trader Establishment in Aliganj, Panic Grips Business Community



**Etha**

A central team of the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) carried out a major raid on Thursday at the premises of a well-known tobacco trader in the Aliganj area. The operation, which began around 10 a.m. at the trader establishment located on Hatsari Road, continued late into the night. According to sources the raid was conducted following information regarding alleged GST tax evasion and suspicious transactions linked to fake billing. During the operation, officials thoroughly examined documents, financial records and electronic data stored on computers and other devices. Several crucial documents, receipts and digital records were reportedly seized by the DGGI team, which will now be sent to the Lucknow head-

quarters for detailed forensic analysis. The officials also interrogated the trader and his employees to gather information related to their business dealings. Sources further revealed that the investigation team has collected details about other premises linked to the trader, which could come under scrutiny in the coming days. News of the raid spread rapidly across the Aliganj business community, causing a wave of concern among local traders. Many tobacco and general merchants reportedly shut down their establishments temporarily as a precautionary measure. The DGGI team action continued till late night and a comprehensive investigation into the seized documents and digital evidence will now be conducted under the supervision of senior officers at the DGGI Lucknow headquarters.

## LBSNAA Trainee IAS Officers Conduct Field Study in Etah, Inspect Key Institutions, Projects and Industrial Units



**Etah**

The trainee officers of the 100th Foundation Course from Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), Mussoorie continued their field study and research program in Etah district as part of their practical administrative training. On the fifth day of their visit, November 13, 2025 the officers inspected various institutions, developmental projects, and industrial establishments across the district. As part of the day itinerary, the trainee IAS officers visited Nagar Panchayat Jaithra, Shri Gandhi Public Inter College Jaithra, 2x660 MW Jawaharpur Thermal Power Project, Malawan and the 24 MLD Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) located at Etah-Manpur, among other key sites. At Nagar Panchayat Jaithra, District Programme Manager of Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), Surjeet Singh, delivered a detailed presentation (PPT) on the urban governance system of Uttar Pradesh, explaining the structure and functioning of local bodies, tax collection and civic facilities. He also highlighted ongoing development schemes such as the Tiranga Light Project, Street Lighting Network, Public Toilets, Water Tanker Services, Dustbin Management System and the "Swasth, Surakshit evam Sundar Nagar" campaign. The officers also visited Shri Gandhi Public Inter College, where the principal briefed them on the institution history, achievements and educational framework. The officers interacted with students, encouraging them to focus on their career goals and prepare for competitive examinations like the UPSC Civil Services. Subsequently, the team inspected slum areas under the Nagar Panchayat.

## Youth were made aware on the occasion of 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

**Delhi**

National Unity March to instill nationalism, a self-reliant India and a united nation among the youth on the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Union Minister of State for the Government of India, Harsh Malhotra while addressing a press conference at the BJP Shahdara District Office, said that the National Unity March is to strengthen the Government of India resolve for the "Self-reliant India Campaign" and to instill nationalism a self-reliant India and a united nation among the youth, especially on the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of the Iron Man of the country, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The main objective of the National Unity March is to instill national pride among the youth, increase responsibility towards society and strengthen the spirit of unity (SAR-



DAR@150 UNITY MARCH). Three large marches will be held in the East Delhi Lok Sabha constituency from Vikas Marg to Karkadi Chowk in the Laxmi Nagar Assembly constituency and from Chhachhi Building Hanuman Chowk and Mandawali in the Krishna Nagar Assembly constituency. Harsh Malhotra on this occasion recalled the contribution of Sardar Patel, his strong leadership and the historic role he played

in the unification of India and praised his integration of more than 560 princely states of India into India. "Sardar Patel was not only the Iron Man of India, but also a symbol of self-reliance, unity and determination. Today India, following his vision, is rapidly progressing towards self-reliance." Harsh Malhotra highlighted the world most renowned and illustrious Prime Minister Narendra Modi resolutions: "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha

Bharat," "Vocal for Local," "Atmanirbhar Bharat," and "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (The whole world is one family, we are all one). Today the world is prioritizing Narendra Modi global vision and decisions on various issues. This program is inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi vision of nation-building through public participation. In this, everyone from youth to senior citizens, remembers the country history and plays their role, participation and involvement in nation-building. Particular attention is being paid to the special role and contribution of today youth, the Amrit Generation. With the thought that the country gives us everything, we should also learn to give something we are all moving forward inspired by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel thoughts. "The dream of a self-reliant India will only be realized when we all unite and develop our local industries.

## The shooting of "Hamar Bahu Anmol" kicks off with a grand opening, creating an atmosphere of excitement in the village

**Bhadohi**

The shooting of the Bhojpuri feature film "Hamar Bahu Anmol," produced under the banner of Chaukas Media Private Limited, is in full swing in village Ugapur, Aurai police station Bhadohi district. The film is generating considerable excitement among the locals and it has become a major topic of discussion in the area. The film is produced by Lalit Goyal and co-produced by Anil Chanana, while director Akhilesh Pandey is directing. Vikas Pandey handles the camera operation. The film stars Rahul Kumar, Rupa Mishra,



Indersen, Seema Singh, Neelam Pandey, Dharmendra, Poonam and Vinod Sharma. Bhojpuri industry comedy king Rohit Singh "Matru" will also be seen entertaining audiences with his comic timing. The film unit includes makeup artist Dev, production manager Phool Kumar, still photographer Akhilesh Kumar

and costume designer Vivek. W serves as art director with his creative team. The film story, set against the backdrop of social and family dynamics, will provide both entertainment and a positive message. Local residents say that the film shooting in the village is a matter of pride and will enhance the region's identity.

## Senior officials of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal visited Shri Radha Rani



**Mathura:** Darshan of Shri Radha Rani, the beloved of Bhanu, was performed in Barsana. Bajrang Dal National Convenor Neeraj Dauneriya, State Organization Mantri of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Rajesh Vibhag, Organization Mantri (Mathura Department),

Umakant Vibhag, Organization Mantri (Mathura Department), Devendra Vibhag, Organization Mantri (Bandai), Tejpal, District Organization Mantri Ashok, and State Co-Convenor (Uttarakhand) Purn Joshi, along with several other key officials of the organiza-

tion, were present on the occasion. Prominent workers who visited included District Co-Mantri Gopal Rajput, District Co-Convenor Ram Tomar, Lokesh Bhardwaj, Ramu Katara, Ladli Pathak, Naval Singh, Netrapal, Dr. Mukesh, Vivek and Tarun.

## Wrestling is being organized from November 13th to 15th, 2025 at the Late Mohan Pehalwan Sports Stadium Ganeshra Mathura



**Mathura**

District Sports Officer Rakesh Kumar Yadav has informed that the Sports Directorate of Uttar Pradesh is organizing the event from November 13th to 15th, 2025 at the District Sports Office, Late Mohan Pehalwan Sports Stadium Ganeshra Mathura. Under the joint aegis of the State Government of

Lucknow and the UP Wrestling Association, the state-level coordinated Senior Men's Wrestling Competition is being organized from November 13th to 15th, 2025 at the District Sports Office, Late Mohan Pehalwan Sports Stadium, Ganeshra, Mathura. The said State-level Senior Women Wrestling Competition was

inaugurated by Dr. RP Singh, Director of the Sports Directorate Uttar Pradesh Sports Bhawan, Lucknow. The Director was welcomed by Suresh Upadhyay, General Secretary of the UP Wrestling Association, District President Wrestling Rajkumar Sharma and Rakesh Kumar Yadav, KID Officer, Mathura by presenting books, sashes, and turbans.

## Joint Director Shravan Kumar Inspects Agricultural Schemes, Issues Key Directives



**Etah**

Joint Director of Agriculture, Aligarh Division, Shravan Kumar conducted an extensive inspection of various agricultural institutions across the district on Thursday. During his visit to the Government Seed Storage Center, Nidhoul Kalan, he reviewed the arrangements and expressed satisfaction with the overall management. He was accompanied by Deputy Director (Plant Protection) Satish Malik and District Agriculture Officer Dr. Manveer Singh. Under the National Food Security Mission (NFSM), farmers were provided free barley seeds as part of the cluster demonstration program. Later, the Joint Director inspected the Rabi Farm School at the residence of farmer Archana Devi in Dhaulashwar, under the Sub Mission on Agriculture Extension (ATMA) scheme. On this occasion, he advised farmers to adopt Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and thinning techniques in mustard crops to enhance yield and reduce pest

impact. Following the field visits, Kumar chaired a review meeting with departmental officers at the office of the Deputy Director of Agriculture. He emphasized that all eligible farmers should receive timely benefits of government schemes and that complete transparency must be maintained in their implementation. He also laid special emphasis on expanding Farmer Registry enrollment across the district. The Joint Director also inspected the Government Seed Storage Center, Sheetalpur and directed the store in-charge to ensure timely availability of high-quality seeds to farmers. Additionally, he, along with the District Agriculture Officer, inspected several fertilizer and seed sale centers and instructed officials to guarantee fair and transparent distribution to all farmers. Among those present during the inspection were Chhote Lal Verma (AAI), Arun Pratap Singh (BTM), Suresh Babu (ATM), Rudrapal Singh, Kunwarpal, Archana Devi, Ramakant and several local farmers.

# The City Transport Services Board meeting concluded under the chairmanship of the Divisional Commissioner

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj.** A meeting of the City Transport Services Board was held on Thursday in the Gandhi Auditorium under the chairmanship of Divisional Commissioner Soumya Agarwal. Upon being informed of the identification of land by RM Roadways at two locations around Bamrauli, Phaphamau, and Andawa for charging points for electric buses and at one location for a bus depot, the



Commissioner directed the Board to take necessary action in this regard. He asked to take

necessary action to ensure operation of city buses on profitable routes and routes having more

passenger availability.

Along with this, the Divisional Commissioner has

given instructions to RM Roadways to ensure timely arrangement of additional buses for the smooth and convenience of the pilgrims coming to Magh Mela. On this occasion, District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma, Municipal Commissioner Sai Teja, Vice President of Prayagraj Development Authority Rishiraj, DCP City Manish Kumar Shandilya, Divisional Transport Officer and other officials were present.

## Emphasis on accelerating village development, ADO Panchayat issues directives at secretaries' review meeting



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Gazipur.** An important review meeting of secretaries was held today, Thursday, at the Muhammadabad Block Development Office premises. ADO (Panchayat) Ashok Kumar chaired the meeting. All village secretaries from the area were present. During the meeting, ADO (Panchayat) Ashok Kumar conducted a detailed review of various ongoing development works in the village panchayats. He inquired from the secretaries about the progress made in RRC center operations, cluster-wise operation of community toilets, form registration, PS honorarium, caretaker payments, MLC online applications, IGRS disposal, and member honorarium payments and charge exchanges.

He directed officers and employ-

ees to ensure the prompt completion of all pending work so that the benefits of the government's public welfare schemes can reach the public in a timely manner. He said that it is the responsibility of the secretaries to ensure information and accessibility of government schemes to the villagers, so that the benefits of the scheme reach every eligible beneficiary. ADO (Panchayat) also said that all the secretaries should work with transparency, accountability and team spirit in their respective Gram Panchayats, and submit progress reports of development works regularly.

At the end of the meeting, he gave necessary guidelines to all the secretaries present and called upon them to speed up the development works. All the secretaries and related departmental employees were present on this occasion.

## He lost his balance while crossing the cabin, resulting in a serious head injury



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Tharwai / On** Thursday, a 30-year-old man died from a serious head injury while crossing the railway cabin near Kodsar village, near Gomati River No. 40, in the Tharwai police station area. Mo. Hussain alias Nan Babu, son of Mo. Khalil, a resident of Harirampur village in Tharwai, had left home on Thursday morning to collect scrap as usual. While crossing the railway cabin near Kodsar village, he suddenly lost his balance and fell, resulting in severe head injuries. He died on the spot due to excessive bleeding. It

is being reported that he was disabled and bleeding occurred due to a gravel impact on his head. The deceased, Mo. Hussain, was the eldest of two brothers and three sisters. The incident was reported to the local Tharwai police station. Upon receiving the information, police arrived at the family's home, conducted an investigation, took the body into custody, and sent it for a postmortem. Tharwai Inspector Santosh Kumar Pandey stated that Mohammad Hussain was disabled. The body was taken into custody, investigated, and sent for a post-mortem.

## SDM inspects Karimuddinpur cowshedListens to villagers' problems at a Chaupal and provides information

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Ghazipur.** On Thursday, Sub-District Magistrate (SDM) Harshita Tiwari, as part of her inspection campaign, made a surprise visit to the cowshed in Karimuddinpur, located within the Karimuddinpur Circle of the district. During the inspection, she closely observed the cowshed's cleanliness, animal care, fodder availability, and cold protection. She directed that, keeping in mind the winter season, adequate bedding, water, fodder, and lighting be ensured in the cowshed to ensure the animals do not face any inconvenience. The



SDM also stated that regular checks on the cowshed's cleanliness and animal health must be mandatory. She directed the concerned staff to conduct periodic inspections and maintain the quality of the system. Following the inspection, Sub-District Magistrate Harshita Tiwari attended the winter village meeting held in the Karimuddinpur Gram Panchayat, where the

village head, ADO (Eastern Region), the guard, the Naib Tehsildar Mohammadabad, and a large number of villagers were present. She interacted with the villagers, listened to their problems, and issued necessary instructions to the concerned officials on the spot for resolving them. Through the meeting, she provided detailed information to

the villagers about various government welfare schemes, such as family registration, e-service centers, old-age pension, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, and the toilet scheme under the Swachh Bharat Mission. She appealed to the villagers to take maximum advantage of these schemes and follow the rules set by the government. Tiwari stated that the government's objective is to accelerate development in villages and promptly resolve public problems. Expecting active participation from the villagers, he said that the administration can work effectively only when the public cooperates.

## District Magistrate and Senior Superintendent of Police conducted a foot inspection

Mathura

In order to strengthen and strengthen security in Mathura district, District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh and Senior Superintendent of Police Shlok Kumar today conducted a foot patrol in the streets surrounding the Shri Banke Bihari Temple to review security arrangements. The officials conducted a detailed inspection of the temple complex,



streets, and crowded areas and provided necessary instructions to the police

and administrative officers deployed for security. They stated that the safety of

devotees from India and abroad visiting Vrindavan is a top priority and appropriate arrangements are being made. In view of the recent bomb blast in Delhi, security arrangements in the Vrindavan area have been further tightened. Officials also inspected the functionality of CCTV cameras, barricades, monitoring of entry points, and traffic control. In addition, security agencies have been instructed to remain vigilant regarding

the proposed arrival of Dharendra Shastri of Bageshwar Dham on foot at the Shri Banke Bihari Temple. During this period, all station heads in Mathura district have been instructed to strengthen security by patrolling their respective areas on foot and to ensure no negligence under any circumstances. The District Magistrate and Senior Superintendent of Police also appealed to the public to inform the police.

DPRO issued guidelines; secretaries from 13 development blocks were present

## A review meeting of the Swachh Bharat Mission and departmental schemes concluded

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj.** A review meeting of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural) and departmental schemes was held on Thursday at the District Panchayat Raj Office in Prayagraj, chaired by District Panchayat Raj Officer Ravi Shankar Dwivedi. Gram Panchayat secretaries from all 13 development blocks in the Gangapar region were



present. DPRO Ravi Shankar Dwivedi reviewed the progress of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural), the Pradhan Mantri Surya

Ghar Yojana, the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, and other schemes, including the IGRS. He instructed the secretaries to ensure



that all work files are accurate, well-organized, and error-free. Negligence in work will not be tolerated. He stated that it is mandatory

to install CCTV cameras at cow shelters, complete GST registration of Gram Panchayats, and upload all bills and vouchers to

the e-Gram Swaraj and SNA Sparsh portals. Emphasis was also placed on making RRC centers functional, ensuring regular attendance of Panchayat Assistants, and maintaining Gram Panchayat assets. The DPRO stated that effective implementation of the schemes will give a new direction to rural development and will make Prayagraj's Gram Panchayats clean and strong.

## DM Etah Urges Remaining Political Parties to Appoint Booth Level Agents

Etah

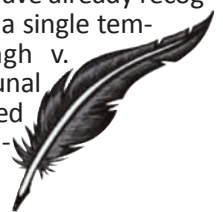
District Magistrate and District Election Officer Prem Ranjan Singh has urged representatives of all remaining recognized political parties in the district to promptly appoint their Booth Level Agents (BLAs) under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) Programme-2026, being conducted by the Election Commission of India to ensure a transparent and error-free revision of the electoral roll. The District Magistrate informed that, as per the Commission directives, the voter list is

being prepared through the SIR process with complete fairness and accuracy. A review of the appointment status of BLA across Etah four assembly constituencies—103 Aliganj, 104 Etah, 105 Marhara and 106 Jalesar (SC)—was recently conducted. According to the data, a total of 3054 Booth Level Agents have been appointed so far, including 1528 by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and 1526 by the Samajwadi Party (SP). However, no other recognized political party has yet appointed a single BLA in the district.

## Editorial

### Tax terror and India's same-sex couples

When a homemaker and a lawyer went to the Bombay High Court this month, they were not asking for the right to marry; they were asking for the right not to be taxed for giving gifts to each other. In their petition, they argued that Section 56(2)(x) of the Income Tax Act exempts gifts between spouses from tax, but does not extend that exemption to same-sex couples since the law does not recognise them as spouses. In their case, the absence of marriage recognition meant the presence of a tax bill. It is a reminder that even without entering the debate on marriage equality, the law is already punishing same-sex couples in small and large ways that are rarely discussed. This tax case is not an isolated problem. It is one of the many points in a web of laws where the word 'spouse' decides who is entitled and who is excluded. Inheritance laws under the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 or the Indian Succession Act, 1925 give priority to a legally recognised spouse, leaving partners as legal strangers. Many states also offer concessional stamp duty for property transfers between spouses, but same-sex couples pay the higher rate because they cannot produce a marriage certificate. In practice, it can mean paying significantly more for the same transaction. These gaps are not just about money; they appear in moments of crisis. Research on discrimination in Indian hospitals has shown that queer people are often denied recognition of their chosen partners as next of kin. In emergencies, this can mean being refused entry to an intensive care unit (ICU) or being blocked from giving consent for urgent treatment. The Surrogacy (Regulation) Act of 2021 and the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2021 go further, excluding same-sex couples from surrogacy and restricting adoption to single individuals or married heterosexual couples. In effect, the laws treat them as incapable of raising a child together, no matter their stability or commitment. Employment rules reinforce the same pattern. In government service, Leave Travel Concession (LTC), medical reimbursement, and family pension benefits are tied to a recognised spouse. Private companies may choose to extend coverage, but the default language in most HR manuals mirrors the government's. Studies of India's insurance sector show that traditional group health insurance schemes frequently exclude same-sex partners, and even where some progressive companies extend coverage, it is not guaranteed by law. The Employees' Provident Fund allows broader nominations, but pension rules under the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 limit eligibility to spouses or children. Even when a company accepts a same-sex partner as a nominee, it is a discretionary gesture, not a right protected by law. Immigration policy adds another layer of instability. A foreign national married to an Indian citizen can apply for a dependent visa or be registered as an Overseas Citizen of India, but same-sex partners cannot. They rely on tourist or business visas that require regular renewals, creating a constant risk of separation if paperwork lapses or rules change. These are invisible forms of insecurity that heterosexual couples rarely have to confront. The lack of recognition also weakens legal protections when relationships end. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, while covering women in domestic relationships, leaves uncertainty about its application to same-sex couples. Maintenance and alimony provisions in personal laws and the Criminal Procedure Code apply to spouses, shutting out partners who may have been financially dependent for years. Without these remedies, breakups can mean abrupt eviction, loss of shared assets, and no legal recourse. India's own courts have already recognised that families do not fit a single template. In the *Deepika Singh v. Central Administrative Tribunal* judgment, the court observed that such atypical manifestations of the family unit.



## Bihar is a state of opportunities, not challenges. Land record portal to water atlas

As the Minister of Revenue and Land Reforms in Bihar, I am honoured to lead a department that forms the bedrock of our state's socio-economic framework under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and the visionary guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Land is not merely an asset in Bihar; it is the foundation of livelihoods, heritage, and progress. Since assuming this role in February 2025, my team and I, in alignment with the state government's commitment to transformative governance, have prioritised reforms to modernise the land management system. These initiatives, rooted in digital innovation and citizen-centric policies, aim to eliminate inefficiencies, reduce disputes, and empower millions with secure property rights. They resonate with PM Modi's ambitious vision for a Viksit Bharat by 2047 and Nitish Kumar's relentless pursuit of a prosperous, inclusive Bihar. In this article, I highlight our key achievements, their impacts, and how they contribute to the shared vision of a developed India. PM Modi's Viksit Bharat 2047 vision, articulated in his historic 103-minute Independence Day speech on 15 August 2025 from the Red Fort, envisions India as a \$35 trillion economy by its centennial independence, leading globally in technology, defence, and inclusivity. He urged every institution and individual to work toward this goal, emphasising self-reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat), innovation, and citizen empowerment. In Bihar,



Nitish Kumar's government has embraced this vision, driving policies that blend technological advancement with grassroots development. His leadership has been instrumental in transforming Bihar from a state of challenges to one of opportunities, with land and water reforms serving as critical pillars. Our initiatives in the Revenue and Land Reforms Department align seamlessly with PM Modi's call for a developed India and Nitish Kumar's focus on equitable growth, ensuring Bihar contributes significantly to the Viksit Bharat mission. Under the state government's digital-first approach, championed by Nitish Kumar, we have accelerated the Bihar Bhumi portal, a flagship platform that reflects PM Modi's Digital India vision and Bihar's commitment to ease of living. This portal enables landowners to access, verify, and update records remotely, streamlining processes like mutation and ownership verification. In February 2025, we extended the self-declaration window for plot details until February 2026, allowing citizens to provide their ownership details, plot numbers and areas to update Khatian

(record of rights) and online land record. This has allowed the processing of thousands of applications while reducing corruption and backlog, mirroring the state government's focus on transparency and PM Modi's success with national schemes like Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). Bihar's pioneering Integrated Land Record Management System with Spatial Mutation portal, the first in India to automatically update land maps with property transactions, enhances transparency and reduces disputes, contributing to the Viksit Bharat goal of efficient governance. A statewide toll free helpline — 18003456215 — for land related issues has also been launched, facilitating information and complaint redressal and bringing government close to masses. The Rajaswa Maha Abhiyan, launched on 16 August and running until 20 September, is a testament to Nitish Kumar's emphasis on grassroots governance. This door-to-door campaign, which has seen the distribution of over 23 lakh Jamabandi (land register) copies and correction forms so far, leverages GIS mapping and drone surveys for precision. Panchayat-level camps

with laptops ensure real-time data entry, making services accessible in remote areas and embodying PM Modi's last-mile connectivity ethos and Bihar's inclusive development model. Integrated with the Bihar Bhumi portal, the campaign allows citizens to track applications, fostering trust and participation, which are the key tenets of both Viksit Bharat and Nitish Kumar's citizen-led governance. To amplify outreach, we engaged PR professionals to leverage social media platforms like X and Meta aligning with PM Modi's innovative communication strategies and Nitish Kumar's focus on public engagement. This has educated Biharis on land rights, driving transparency and participation, much like the state's successful awareness campaigns for schemes like Saat Nishchay. On 7 May this year, Bihar, under Nitish Kumar's visionary Jal-Jeevan-Hariyali Mission, became the first Indian state to launch the Gazetteer-cum-Atlas of Water Bodies, mapping over 550 rivers, 4,500 wetlands, and 1.06 lakh ponds with Unique Identification Numbers (UIDs). This initiative, inspired by water body depletion in Darbhanga, supports PM Modi's Jal Jeevan Mission and Viksit Bharat's sustainability goals, as well as Nitish Kumar's environmental agenda. Enriched with historical, socio-economic, and environmental data, the atlas aids anti-encroachment efforts, plans new ponds in water-scarce areas, and strengthens water conservation.

It aligns with PM Modi's praise for the Jal

Jeevan Mission's success in providing tap water to about 15.7 crore rural households and Nitish Kumar's focus on sustainable rural development, positioning Bihar as a model for water resource management. Beyond digitalisation, the state government has prioritised structural reforms to support PM Modi's vision of a streamlined, self-reliant governance framework and Nitish Kumar's goal of administrative efficiency. The Bihar Amin Cadre Rules, 2025, enforced in August, reorganise amins' cadres with seniority lists and performance-based promotions, ensuring a skilled workforce for land surveys. This supports the statewide survey, extended to December 2026, covering 661 villages with GPS and drone technology to update cadastral maps and resolve disputes. These efforts echo PM Modi's push for institutional reforms, as seen in his Task Force for Next-Generation Economic Reforms, and Nitish Kumar's focus on disciplined governance. Our district-wise ranking system, introduced in April 2025, evaluates performance on mutation efficiency and revenue collection, with Sheikhpura leading the state. This fosters competition and efficiency, aligning with PM Modi's call for accountability and Nitish Kumar's emphasis on performance-driven administration. We have also addressed disruptions like the recent survey workers' strike, reflecting the state government's resolve for uninterrupted progress, a principle shared with Viksit Bharat.

### India-China ties — improvement signs are loud, problems sliding under the radar

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar recently warned journalists against linking present trends in India-China relations with India's more recent frustrations vis-à-vis the US. There is a strong degree of truth in this warning. Contrary to the prevailing analysis that Trump has induced India and China to improve and repair ties, the bilateral relationship has shown little to no sign of improvement and arguably has even deteriorated under the calmer surface. Let me explain. At present, the quantum of trends as well as indications of 'improved' ties in the bilateral relationship can be divided into four categories. First, a return to diplomatic and economic 'normalcy' such as the resumption of flights, religious pilgrimages and border trade. Second, increasing talk of economic convergence amid a gradual return of Chinese investments. Third, growing peace and tranquillity at the border. And finally, strategic/geopolitical convergences in the age of

Trump. Across all these four domains, 'improvement signs' are loud but misleading or chimeral, while 'deteriorating' trends are getting more entrenched under the radar. This entails signs such as resumption (or planned resumption) of direct flights, exchange of journalists, enhanced people-to-people ties, issuing of visas for businesspersons, resumption of border trade and the sharing of hydrological data. The drip-feed of small but persistent and incremental news pertaining to these developments shapes and reinforces the idea that ties are improving over time. However, this is based on a false causal theory. The two countries are aiming to reinstate exchanges and processes that were the norm until 2019. However, no one was ever of the view back in 2019 that relations were positive and improving because such exchanges existed. In other words, the resumption of these processes says very little about real improvement in ties.

### India must move Japan from 'old friend' trap to real partners

After months of diplomatic turbulence, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is finally embarking on a bilateral visit that matters. It's not Washington, not Moscow, not Beijing, but Tokyo. Japan has always been a natural partner for India. It's a relationship anchored in shared democratic values, economic complementarities, and maritime imperatives. Yet despite this "naturalness", India-Japan ties have rarely lived up to their potential. This visit, the first by an Indian Prime Minister in seven years, comes at a moment of strategic fluidity: after a heartbreak with the United States, a misconstrued reset with China, and an even more misconstrued rebound with Russia. Against this backdrop, turning to Japan is not only timely but necessary. The timing itself is deliberate. The visit precedes India's participation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a grouping increasingly dominated by China, backed by Russia, and including Pakistan, which is ever more entangled in Beijing's orbit. If India is to remain relevant in this shifting regional balance—and beyond—anchoring its partnership with Japan provides an indispensable

counterweight. The India-Japan story is often told with nostalgia. Conferences, policy papers, and panel discussions frequently dwell on the sentimental—the Azad Hind Fauj, the elephant gifted to Japan, or Rabindranath Tagore's exchanges with Japanese thinkers. Even in more contemporary discussions, Shinzo Abe's landmark "Confluence of the Two Seas" speech in 2007 often dominates, credited with inspiring the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific and, eventually, the Quad. These legacies are important, but excessive reliance on them has created a trap. When a partnership is framed primarily through the lens of "past goodness", it risks obscuring the urgency of present opportunities. Too much of India-Japan engagement has either been anchored in historical frameworks or subordinated to the Quad, leaving bilateral possibilities underexplored. For a relationship described as "natural", its underperformance in tangible outcomes is striking. India and Japan's partnership has underdelivered because New Delhi has played it too safe. For one, it has not kept pace with Tokyo's transformation into a more assertive security actor,

leaving defence technology cooperation underexploited and co-development opportunities on the table. Trade too has been disappointing—stuck around \$22 billion despite decades of Japanese investment. Japan's vast development footprint in South Asia through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has barely been woven into India's regional playbook. Most importantly, India still clings to a narrow view of security, ignoring Japan's sharper recognition that the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific are now inseparably linked. By staying cautious instead of ambitious, India has allowed a "natural partnership" to remain underwhelming, missing the chance to shape the regional order alongside one of its most reliable allies. To be sure, there are visible positives with the latest visit. Japan is expected to invest around \$68 billion in India's semiconductor and other tech sectors, part of its strategy to diversify away from China. For decades, Japan's overseas development assistance (ODA) was its primary foreign policy tool, compensating for constitutional restrictions on military engagement.

### GST reform is pointless if it doesn't simplify tax slabs

No single power—be it the United States, China, Russia, Iran, or India—can fundamentally change the reality of Balochistan or the lives of its inhabitants on either side of the border. Borders always divide; they are never as "organic" or as "natural" as we imagine them. Balochistan remains a complex geographical and ethnographic conundrum. In Interviews I have conducted with Baloch human rights activists, a stark reality often emerges: the people are not regarded as citizens, and their lives are not valued. This is not merely a humanitarian crisis—it is a strategic condition. For security analysts,

mastering the terrain is half the battle—after all, geopolitics is quite literally the politics of geography. The shared challenge facing India, China, Pakistan, and Iran is that, contrary to the neat abstractions of the nation-state, their borders stretch into regions better described as frontiers—zones of transition rather than lines of separation. These areas are dynamic, expansive, and marked by extreme poverty and shifting norms. The issue is not the rule of law, but the absence of it. This civilisational challenge defines Balochistan, as it does Kurdistan and, for decades, Afghanistan. How India engages with this liminal-

ity carries strategic consequences. Baloch militancy can be broadly divided into two ideological currents: First, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), a secular ethnonationalist insurgency opposing both Pakistan and China, echoes the outlook of the People's Defense Units (YPG) in Syria. Second, Jaysh al-Adl (Army of Justice), a Sunni-Jihadi group operating from the Iranian side of the border and a successor to Jundallah, resembles Al-Nusra Front in its tactics and ideology. Despite their ideological differences, both the BLA and Jaysh al-Adl groups engage in similar tactical operations.

Across Balochistan, irregular forces compete with Pakistani and Iranian security services for control over territory, populations, smuggling routes, and revenue. Control remains fluid. The US designation of the BLA as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) ostensibly responds to attack patterns. Yet, the focus on secular insurgents rather than jihadist actors creates a paradox—especially given the tactical symmetry across the border—emerging from overlapping identities, pulls and pressures. Baloch groups are held together by tribal, kinship, religious, and paramilitary networks.

## Dual Degrees Granted Prior to 2022 by UGC

**Delhi:** Students can breathe a sigh of relief as the University Grants Commission (UGC) has revised its provisions regarding dual degrees. Acquired degrees prior to 2022 will now be recognized as valid, as long as they were earned in accordance with UGC requirements. Starting from that day forward, students were able to pursue two degrees simultaneously according to a notification issued by the UGC. All degrees earned at the same time prior to April 13, 2022, were null and void. Those UGC guidelines state that a student cannot claim benefits based on two degrees earned concurrently before 13 April 2022, and they also state that these degrees will not be recognized. The UGC resolved to revise this previous regulation during its



meeting on April 3, 2025. Guidelines were subsequently updated and released on June 5, 2025. New regulations make it possible to recognise a student's dual degree completion provided both degrees were earned in accordance with UGC requirements. If you want to get two degrees at once, you have to meet the requirements set out by the UGC. Both classes should not have conflicting schedules. Both courses can be taken in physical mode, however the class times need to be different.

### No Kashmir, Palestine in DU psychology syllabus

**Delhi:** The Standing Committee on Academic Matters reportedly eliminated the Israel-Palestine conflict, Kashmir crisis, and dating app suicides from DU's psychology syllabus proposal. The study discussed Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita, and Israel-Palestine and Kashmir wars. He claimed "Kashmir is resolved" and "we don't need to teach Israel-Palestine". The committee head rejected another proposal to integrate dating app psychology.

## Indian medical students in Iran face uncertainty amid Iran-Israel rivalry

**Delhi:** The Indian government began Operation Sindhu to evacuate its residents, including over 6,000 students, from war-torn Iran amid rising tensions with Israel. New Delhi received 110 Indians, mostly students, on the inaugural flight from Yerevan, Armenia. Due to instability in Ukraine and Russia, most MBBS students chose Iran. However, the Iran-Israel war has placed their careers on hold indefinitely, worrying these youngsters. Hasan Zaidi from Agra, Uttar Pradesh, who studied



MBBS in Iran in 2024 at Arak University of Medical Sciences, Arak, told Education Times he only wants to return. He to India after his first year of study. We initially thought the war would finish shortly and we wouldn't need

to return. I chose Iran because the war in Russia and Ukraine made schooling dangerous. A similar issue has occurred in Iran unexpectedly. Safety is why I selected this country, adds Hasan. Tehran is dangerous. Iranians are moving to safer locations.

## DU'S 4th-yr plan raises concern over teaching load and staff gaps

**Delhi:** Teachers at Delhi University are raising concerns about increasing workload and lack of assistance as the university prepares to welcome its first group of undergraduates in their fourth year. According to 202 faculty members, the university is moving forward without doing a

realistic assessment of teaching capacity or infrastructure needs, since the seventh and eighth semesters are set to start in late July and early August under the Undergraduate Curriculum Framework (UGCF). The increasing disparity between sanctioned teaching hours

and the number of hours presently needed as a result of the extra academic year is a big worry, they claimed. "In some of our department meetings, we realised there's a huge shortfall," remarked a faculty member from the geography department.

## AR and VR have the potential to make cultural heritage more accessible to everybody



**Delhi:** India has to make use of technology to market and protect its history. Dr. Neeru Misra, a visiting professor at the BL Institute of Indology in Delhi and a former director of the ICCR, will discuss the challenges of digital preservation and how new technologies might help preserve cultural artifacts for future generations. When used to the preservation of artifacts and cultural history, digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI) will have a revolutionary impact. The process of digitization involves creating digital archives that are resistant to damage by using high-resolution imagery and 3D modeling to preserve artifacts. Scholarly investigation and popular appreciation will be made easier with this measure, which will safeguard physical degradation and guarantee accessibility on a worldwide scale. Predicting possible harm, analyzing environmental conditions that impact artefact deterioration, and enabling exact restoration are all ways in which artificial intelligence (AI) enhances preservation. As an added bonus, it uses historical data to restore damaged or lost works while maintaining their authenticity. In addition to these initiatives, VR and AR provide democratized access to cultural heritage by providing virtual experiences of historical sites and artifacts.

## DU's Decline to Publish Articles on Islam, Pakistan, and China Sets Off

**Delhi :** An alleged set of political science graduate papers focusing on Islam, Pakistan, and China were recently rejected by a tribunal at Delhi University. Many members were opposed to the plan. People felt strongly about it; some thought it was an example of ideological censorship, while others saw it as a way to make the curriculum more "India-centric and bias-free." The Standing Committee for Academic Matters at DU met and decided to eliminate four elective courses: Islam and International Relations, Pakistan and the



World, China's Role in the Contemporary World, and State and Society in Pakistan. When the group reconvenes on July 1, they will finally get down to reading and discussing paper number five: Religious Nationalism and Political Violence. Professor

Monami Sinha, who was on the committee, disagreed with the decision and claimed that the changes show an effort to water down content that is controversial but still relevant to academia. We contended that thorough research on China and Pakistan.

### 750 books in 22 languages to be added in curriculum

**Delhi:** Twenty-two Indian languages classified under phase I and phase II of the Bharatiya Bhasha initiative - have now been integrated into the academic framework of universities. Under the Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Scheme (BBPS) -headed by the University Grants Commission and the Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti over 1,000 authors have been mobilised to - produce foundational textbooks in these languages, with 23 universities as nodal agencies.

## University of Leeds, University of Delhi sign MoU

**Delhi:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Universities of Leeds (UoL) in the United Kingdom and Delhi (DU) in India, formally establishing a strategic academic relationship between the two institutions. The two institutions hope to strengthen their capacity-building efforts, exchange teachers and students more easily, and increase their collaborative research through this arrangement. The institution has released a state-



ment stating that the MoU lays the groundwork for a lasting academic partnership that will include collaborative research, academic events, co-teaching, and shared learning platforms. In order to facilitate international cooperation and the generation of new

information, the two schools intend to forge closer relationships with one another. The social science faculty at the University of Leeds spearheaded the development of the friendship that would eventually blossom into the cooperation.

## 3rd-gen IITs struggle with low enrollment and placements

**Delhi:** Five third-generation Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) founded between 2015 and 2016 are falling short of their intake targets, with fewer masters and PhD enrolments than available seats, declining placements, and faculty vacancies. The government announced six new IITs in Palakkad, Bhilai, Jammu, Dharwad, Tirupati, and Goa in 2015, with a "initial intake of 180 students in the first year from temporary campuses, increasing to 450 in the second year and to 928 (including 840 undergraduates) in the third year". In 2017, the Union Cabinet changed the intake



estimates. According to 2017 Cabinet-approved figures shared by IIT Tirupati, by 2023-24, IIT Tirupati and IIT Palakkad would have 2,550 students (900 undergraduates) and the remaining IITs 2,540 students (1,170 undergraduates) across all courses. Right to Information (RTI) Act data and open source data suggest that many of these institutes are still falling short of the predicted figure.

At present, IIT Tirupati has 1,700 students, which is expected to rise by 2021-22. IIT Tirupati director K.N. Satyanarayana said "The Cabinet approval for construction of a permanent campus for 1,200 students was given only in November 2017 as part of Phase A. COVID years delayed targets. The Cabinet recently approved Phase B construction to accommodate 1,300 more students (2500) by 2029.

## Class 10 CBSE final two board exam policy: first option mandatory, second optional

**Delhi:** The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) announced its final policy for two board exams for Class 10 students in 2026, making the first mandatory and the second optional. The Board produced a policy draft in February and solicited stakeholder input. CBSE Controller of Examinations Sanjay Bhardwaj reported that 65% of pupils supported twice-assigned tests. To ensure pupils take the first exam seriously, teachers and principals advised making it mandatory. The 2023 National Curriculum Framework, modified to reflect the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020,



" Exams are between February and May. The CBSE has ruled that students who are missing in three or more courses during the first board exam, which would be the major exam, cannot sit the second (optional) exam. According to the final policy, such students would be placed in the 'Essential Repeat' category "

allows students two attempts each year—one main exam and one optional improvement exam—to minimize the high-stakes character of board exams. Exams are between February and May. The CBSE has ruled that students who are missing in three or more courses during the

first board exam, which would be the major exam, cannot sit the second (optional) exam. According to the final policy, such students would be placed in the 'Essential Repeat' category and can only retake the major tests in February the following year.

## Iranian medical students from India face an uncertain future

**Delhi:** With tensions rising between Iran and Israel, the Indian government has initiated Operation Sindhu to remove its nationals, including more than 6,000 students, from Iran, which is currently experiencing the effects of a civil war. The inaugural aircraft touched down in New Delhi from Yerevan, Armenia, with 110 Indian nationals on board, the majority of them were students. Because of the unpredictability in Russia and Ukraine, the majority of these MBBS candidates choose to study medicine in Iran. The students' careers have been put on indefinite hold due to the ongoing Iran-Israel conflict, and they are worried about it. Hasan Zaidi, an MBBS student from Agra, Uttar Pradesh, who went to Iran in 2024 to attend the Arak University of Medical Sciences in Arak, is only considering going back. He felt compelled to go back to India after this, his first year of college. At first, we thought the war would be over soon and that we wouldn't have to come back. I opted for Iran since my schooling appeared safer than in Russia or Ukraine due to the ongoing conflict. Quite unexpectedly, a comparable scenario has just surfaced in Iran. Tehran is in a very precarious position. Iranians are fleeing to more secure regions. According to Hasan, the Indian embassy in Tehran is providing assistance to students who are attempting to evacuate through neighboring countries such as Turkmenistan and Armenia.





**DILWALE DULHANIA LE JAYENGE (1995)**  
Raj and Simran became more than characters—they became reference points of love for an entire generation.



**KUCH KUCH HOTA HAI (1998)**  
Their dynamic evolved into friendship, heartbreak, and rediscovery—proof that their chemistry was fluid, adaptable, and emotionally expansive.

## 32 YEARS OF BAAZIGAR

# Birth of a chemistry

Three decades on, the Kajol-Shah Rukh pairing born from this dark thriller continues to define Bollywood's timeless idea of romance

**O**n 12th November 1993, a thriller with no intention of being a love story quietly rewrote Bollywood history. *Baazigar*—dark, unpredictable, and morally audacious—introduced Kajol and Shah Rukh Khan in a pairing no one expected to matter beyond the film's runtime. Yet, in hindsight, it became the first chapter of a partnership that would come to define Hindi cinema's golden age of romance.

### A chemistry no one saw coming

**W**hat made *Baazigar* remarkable wasn't just its bold narrative choices—it was the organic electricity that unfolded between two actors still discovering their cinematic identities. Kajol, fiery and instinctive at 19, carried an untamed spontaneity. Shah Rukh Khan, intense and unafraid of risk, brought a brooding charm. Together, they generated an alchemy that wasn't written into the script. Their scenes didn't follow the grammar of traditional romance, yet something unmistakable clicked. It was an energy that felt raw, unrehearsed, and immediate—an early pulse of what would become iconic.



### The film that became a foundation

Filmmakers took notice. Audiences felt it before they could articulate it. *Baazigar* wasn't just a hit; it became the unexpected chemistry test that changed casting dreams overnight. And from that test, a new era emerged.

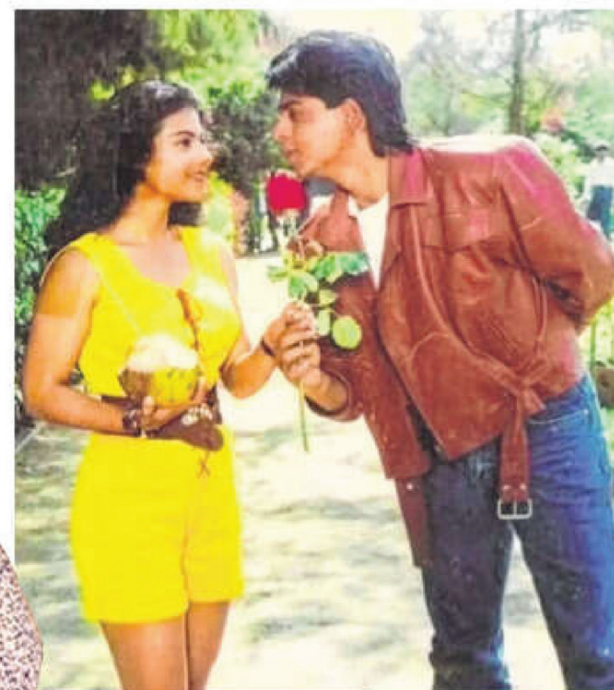
### MY NAME IS KHAN (2010)

Their pairing matured into a deeply moving, soul-stirring bond—marked by restraint, vulnerability, and performances that proved their chemistry could transcend the boundaries of romance and step into something profoundly human.



### KABHI KHUSHI KABHI GHAM... (2001)

By now, Kajol and SRK were a brand of emotion—trusted, beloved, and guaranteed to touch the heart.



### 32 years later

**T**oday, *Baazigar* stands as more than a thriller classic—it is the origin story of Bollywood's most beloved on-screen pairing. It proved that sometimes the greatest legacies emerge from the most unlikely beginnings. Kajol and Shah Rukh Khan went on to headline blockbusters, redefine romance, and shape audience expectations for decades. But it all traces back to that first spark—born on a set where no one was looking for chemistry, yet everyone found it. Three decades later, the Kajol-SRK phenomenon remains unmatched. And *Baazigar* remains the moment the magic first flickered.

### The rise of the Kajol-SRK cinematic universe

What followed in the next decade was nothing short of a cultural phenomenon:



### DILWALE (2015)

A reunion wrapped in nostalgia, the film brought back their unmistakable spark—reminding audiences that even after decades, their chemistry still lands with the same warmth, familiarity, and cinematic magnetism.

### FICCI Young Leaders Summit 2025

## 'Therapy helped me find myself again'

**A**ctor Arjun Kapoor spoke candidly about his mental health journey, struggles with obesity, and the emotional toll of sudden fame during his session at the FICCI Young Leaders Summit in Mumbai. In a deeply personal address, the Bollywood star emphasised the need to normalise therapy and recognise vulnerability as a form of strength, not weakness.

Reflecting on his lowest phases, Kapoor said the turning point came during the pandemic. "COVID gave me a moment of realisation. I started therapy because I realised I hadn't taken care of myself for ten years," he shared. "You think the sorted person doesn't need help. But even the strongest ones are sometimes messed up in their heads."

The actor admitted he used work as an escape after losing his mother, Mona Shourie Kapoor, in 2012, just before the release of his debut film *Ishaqzaade*. "My mother passed away in March 2012, and my film released 45 days later. I was mourning and celebrating at the same time. I became a star overnight, but I was only running away from my pain," he said.

### On obesity, resilience and family support

**R**evisiting his early struggles with obesity, Kapoor revealed that the battle was not just physical but deeply mental. "Losing 50 kilos took me four years. I was lucky to have my mother's support. But most people don't have that kind of emotional or financial backing," he said. The actor added that his confidence stemmed from resilience built during these years. "When you lose your backbone at 25, what can the world do to you? I've faced enough to know I can take on anything," he said, recalling how his sister, Anshula Kapoor, helped him recognise his own need for emotional healing.



### 'Vulnerability is not weakness'

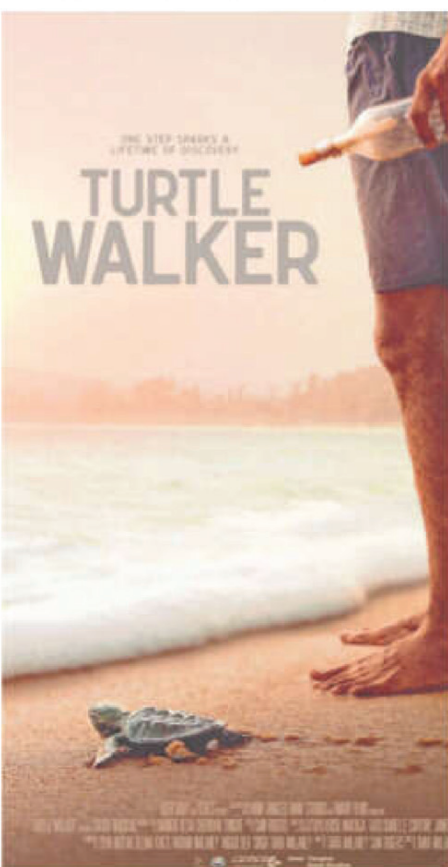
**K**apoor urged young people to prioritise mental health and seek therapy without stigma. "There's nothing wrong with being vulnerable. The strongest people are those who can acknowledge their emotions," he said. "When you talk openly, you realise how smart and sensible you are. You just need an outlet—and therapy gives you that." Calling himself an advocate for mental wellness, Kapoor said conversations around mental health must become part of everyday life. "I want people to feel safe talking about it. There's a lot of toxicity and energy-draining situations around us. But you have to own who you are. Don't let the world make you feel weak for feeling."

### A message for the next generation

**C**losing his session, Kapoor urged the audience to "wear their emotions with pride" and embrace vulnerability as a badge of courage. "It's not about being detached or distant," he said. "You can be emotional and still be powerful. You can heal, rebuild, and grow—as long as you give yourself that one hour to talk, to feel, and to just be."

Arjun Kapoor opens up on mental health, grief and resilience at FICCI Young Leaders Summit in Mumbai

## Turtle Walker opens ALTEFF 2025



**Z**oya Akhtar, Reema Kagti, and Taira Malaney's collaboration, the Oscar-winning HHMI Tangled Bank Studios-backed documentary *Turtle Walker*, has completed a successful festival journey worldwide, receiving acclaim from audiences across the globe.

The highly anticipated environmental documentary is set to open the All Living Things Environmental Film Festival (ALTEFF), taking place from December 4 to 14, 2025. ALTEFF is India's leading decentralized, impact-driven environmental film celebration, uniting diverse voices and storytelling to raise climate awareness and inspire action.

Since its world premiere at DOC NYC in 2024, *Turtle Walker* has screened at major festivals, including the Raindance Film Festival (UK premiere), Hamptons International Film Festival, and a special showcase at the United Nations Ocean Conference. The film has won multiple awards, including Best Film at the AFO International Competition, the Conservation Award at the International Ocean

Film Festival, and both the Conservation and Grand Teton Awards at the Jackson Wild Media Awards.

Directed by Taira Malaney in her debut, *Turtle Walker* chronicles the life of Satish Bhaskar, an Indian pioneer in sea turtle conservation. In the late 1970s, Bhaskar embarked on an epic journey along India's coastline, living alongside endangered turtles to study and protect them. Through stunning visuals and compelling personal narratives, the film highlights the urgent threats facing marine wildlife.



Taira Malaney



Zoya Akhtar

## SURANGA RETURNS

**A**fter receiving widespread acclaim during its original run, *Suranga*, a gripping investigative drama starring Isha Koppikar, has made a strong comeback, this time on Prime Video. Originally released in 2022 on the Atrangi App, the series explores the intricate world of a high-stakes bank heist inspired by true events. The plot follows a meticulously planned robbery that unravels into chaos, leaving the investigating officer perplexed as the mystery deepens with each twist and turn.

Isha Koppikar plays Dakshayani, a deputy bank man-



ager from Delhi, whose layered personality and moral complexity anchor the narrative. Her portrayal balances vulnerability with intensity, adding emotional depth to the thriller's suspenseful tone. Speaking about the re-release, Isha said, "I am excited for *Suranga* now available for streaming on Prime Video. Back when

Isha Koppikar's investigative thriller *Suranga*, originally released in 2022, returns on Prime Video, promising edge-of-the-seat suspense for viewers

it released, it was termed an 'edge-of-the-seat' drama. Content and viewership are ever-changing and ever-evolving, and I am eagerly awaiting what the current set of viewers have to say about it."

Alongside Isha, *Suranga* features an ensemble cast including Rakesh Bedi, Piyush Ranade, Freddy Daruwala, Sachin Verma, Sanjeev Tyagi, Rahul Jaitley, and Ashok Kalra. With its layered storytelling, compelling performances, and renewed availability on Amazon Prime Video, the series promises to keep audiences glued to their screens once again.



## Flipkart Under Investigation for GST Billing Loophole

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



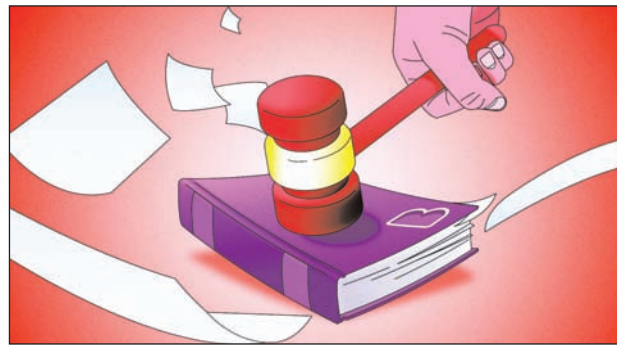
Federation of International Trade Investor Gunodaya Association raised the issue in a press statement on August 23, the article said. The Supreme Court of India monopolistic heat hit the company earlier this year. The apex court said the e-commerce giant created market monopolies and worried about smaller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

### PM to inaugurate SEMICON India 2025

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

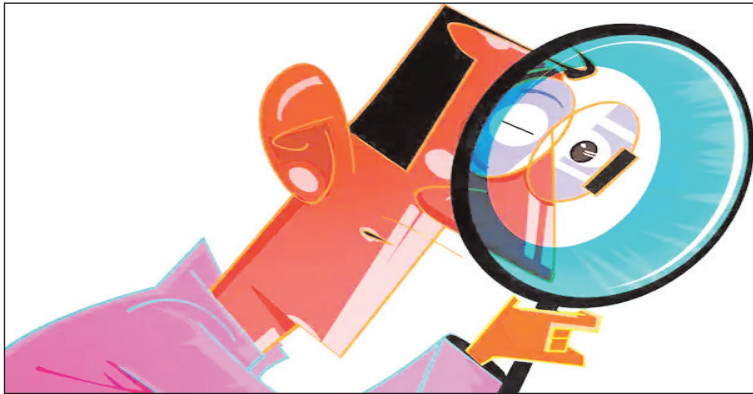
acquisition of up to 100% of Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL) shares by Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL), Adani Infrastructure and Developers Pvt Ltd (AIDPL), or another entity within the Adani Group.

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

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

## CAG report criticizes income tax department's arrears

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

## Three Bangladesh-India border land ports to close

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



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

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

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

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

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

## Briefs

KOLKATA

## Maharaj feels real hunger to beat India



South Africa have not won a Test match in India for 15 years but there's a "real hunger and desire" to put an end to it in the upcoming series, said spinner **Keshav Maharaj** while describing it as one of their toughest tours. India and South Africa will lock horns in a two-match Test series from November 14, with Kolkata and Guwahati playing hosts. Acknowledging the magnitude of the challenge ahead of South Africa, Maharaj said during an online interaction, "There's a real hunger and desire within the camp to beat India in India. It's probably one of the toughest tours, if not the toughest in the Proteas calendar, for the various generations that have come (here). "We feel like it's one of our biggest tests. And it will be a wonderful opportunity to grade ourselves."

CHANDIGARH

## Haryana CM felicitates Shafali Verma



Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Wednesday felicitated India's Women's World Cup-winning team member **Shafali Verma** at his official residence here. Saini honoured her with a shawl and a cheque of Rs 1.50 crore and a 'Grade A' sports gradation certificate. According to an official statement, Shafali was appointed as the brand ambassador by the Haryana State Women's Commission. "Today, met Shafali Verma, the beloved daughter of Haryana and a member of the team that made India world champions with their historic performance in the Women's Cricket World Cup, at Sant Kabir Kutir and extended heartfelt congratulations and best wishes.

KUMAMOTO (JAPAN)

## Lakshya Sen advances in Japan Masters

India's **Lakshya Sen** stormed into the second round of the men's singles event at the Kumamoto Masters Japan badminton tournament after registering a straight game win over Koki Watanabe here on Wednesday. Sen, seeded seventh here, took just 39 minutes to breeze past his world no.26 Japanese opponent 21-12 21-16. The world no 15 sen will next be up against the winner of the match

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## SA SERIES | Former captain gung-ho about visitors playing at Eden Gardens

MUMBAI

SA20 league commissioner and former South Africa skipper Graeme Smith felt the 1-1 series draw in Pakistan would hold the visitors in good stead when they take on India in the two-match Test series starting at the Eden Gardens on Friday.

Smith was speaking on the sidelines of the SA20's India Day event in Mumbai.

"Playing cricket is always very important and for a lot of the players having played the Test series in the sub-continent is important. Your game needs to adapt, your thinking needs to adapt. I'm hoping the first Test in Kolkata is quite a good place to bat. You get good value for runs and it is a good stadium especially if it is full and can make the South Africans feel motivated to give their best," he added.

The South Africa great also felt that its crucial that the visitors start well.

"I think its crucial for these type of tours that you start well because if you get behind the game in the sub-continent then its very difficult to find your way back. So, I think it's important that they start well and I think the batters you know have to really step up. I think South Africa arrive here with a decent bowling attack especially in the spin department with Maharaj and Harmer. They can definitely do damage, they can control the game and have the ability to turn the ball. So, we have wicket-taking options with spin and then Rabada and the likes can get some reverse swing. We saw Dale Steyn during my time handle reverse swing extremely well," he added.

When asked what what IPL and SA20 can learn from each other, Smith was forthright.

"It's difficult to say what IPL can do better when you've built a league and a platform like when you're one of the biggest sporting leagues in the world. I think for us what we

## PAK SERIES WILL HELP SA: SMITH



SA20 league commissioner Graeme Smith during the 'India Day' event ahead of Season 4 of SA20.

## Countering Bumrah the key

**S**outh Africa will have to find a way to deal with the lethal opening spells of India's lead pacer Jasprit Bumrah before the spinners come into play in the two-Test series beginning on Friday, said Graeme Smith on Wednesday. Smith said

neither team would want to lose wickets to pacers before spin comes into play. "I think it's never at the forefront of people's conversation when you play cricket in the subcontinent but I think the South African team will definitely be preparing

for how they're going to handle spin," SA20 league commissioner Smith told the media here. "But getting off to a solid start, having a top three that can lay a platform for you, there's nothing worse than if you go two or three down and then the

spinners come on and you're against the game already.

"So countering Bumrah up front is going to be a big thing, and Rabada as well for India. They're world-class bowlers with world-class Test records," he said.

time we'll see how we can grow as IPL."

The former SA opener also stated that SA20 is still a young and growing league.

"India has so much talent that it can put out 2-3 national teams while South Africa still needs to get more players to be competitive. Develop more

all-rounders, so that our national team can compete more consistently," he added.

Talking about the biggest learnings from three seasons, Smith revealed there will be a massive infrastructure push in South Africa given the 2027 ODI World Cup is just two years away now.

## Doeschate hopes India have learnt lessons from NZ loss

Armed with a potent spin attack, taking on South Africa seems like competing against a subcontinent team heading into the first Test

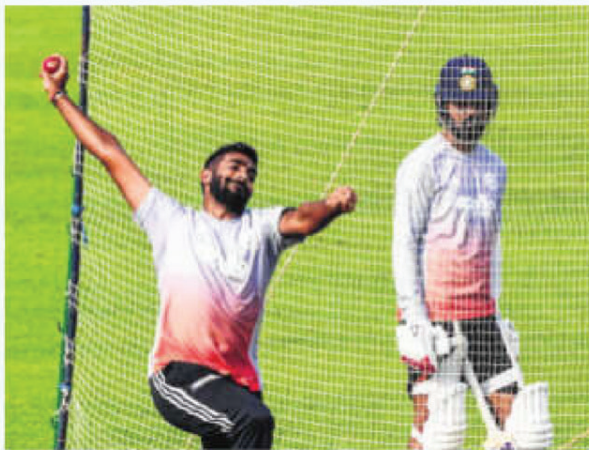
KOLKATA

India's assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate is hoping that his batters have learnt lessons from the rare series-defeat at home against New Zealand last year as the hosts get ready to take on spin-heavy Proteas in the two-Test rubber, starting Friday.

Armed with a potent spin attack, taking on South Africa seems like competing against a "subcontinent team", Ten Doeschate said, admitting that they need to get better at negotiating the challenge posed by tweekers.

South Africa's recent Test series in Pakistan saw their spin quartet of Keshav Maharaj, Simon Harmer, Senuran Muthusamy and Parnell Subrayen take 35 wickets to draw the two-match series 1-1.

"They have got four (three specialist) spinners at their disposal. Most likely they will play three and it is a little bit like playing against a sub-



India's Jasprit Bumrah bowls a delivery during a practice session at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata. PTI

continent team," Ten Doeschate said during a media interaction ahead of the opening Test.

The Proteas arrive with a balanced attack in both pace and spin.

If Kagiso Rabada and Marco Jansen spearhead the pace department, they have three specialist spinners in Maharaj, Simon and Muthusamy.

Harmer (13), Muthusamy (11), and Maharaj (9) shared 33 wickets among them in two Tests. Muthusamy also scored 106 runs and was named Player of the Series.

"You normally worry about the pace attack first and I am pretty sure they will go with two seamers and three if not four spinners. But that is also the challenge when you are playing in the subcontinent.

"Something as a team that we need to get better at. We addressed it early on. We have come up short a few times. So it is a great challenge." The concern seems valid as India had endured an unprecedented 0-3 home defeat to New Zealand exactly a year back. The collapse came largely against spin, as Ajaz Patel (15), Mitchell Santner (13) and Glenn Phillips (8) shared 36 wickets between them.

"Hopefully we have learned from the New Zealand series. We have put some plans into place against how to play the spin. It is going to be so important over these two games. Particularly how well they did in Pakistan about four weeks ago."

He further hailed South Africa's overall development and the quality of their attack, and said the visitors deserve credit for how they have rebuilt into a formidable side in all conditions. "They deserve a lot of credit for how they have gone about their work in the last 9-10 months."

## In-form keeper-batter Jurel to play in place of Nitish Reddy

Pant back after recovering from a foot fracture

KOLKATA

In-form wicketkeeper-batter **Dhruv Jurel** will play the opening Test against South Africa here and all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy is set to be the one who makes way for him in the line-up, India's assistant coach Ryan Ten Doeschate said on Wednesday.

The 24-year-old Jurel, who has played seven Tests so far, has struck four centuries in his last five first-class matches, including twin hundreds against South Africa 'A' in Bengaluru last week.

With first-choice wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant back after recovering from a foot fracture he suffered during the fourth Test against England in Manchester in July, there were questions over whether the management would find room for Jurel.

But Ten Doeschate said they were "clear" about their combination ahead of the opening Test at the Eden Gardens beginning Friday.

"I think we've got a pretty



"I think we've got a pretty good idea of the combination, and I don't think you can leave them (Jurel and Pant) out for this Test  
**Ryan ten Doeschate**  
India assistant coach

good idea of the combination, and I don't think you can leave them (Jurel and Pant) out for this Test -- that's the short answer," Ten Doeschate told reporters at a media interaction here.

"I would be very surprised

if you don't see Dhruv and Rishabh playing in this Test this week," he added.

Now a year and a half into his international career, Jurel has shown poise and maturity beyond his experience.

Since mid-September 2025, his first-class form has been remarkable with scores of 140, 56, 125, 44, 132 not out and 127 not out across five matches (including Ranji, Test and 'A' games). His first-class average has surged from 47.34 to 58.00, making it impossible to overlook him. "Given the way Dhruv (Jurel) has gone in the last six months, and scoring two hundreds in Bangalore last week, he is certain to play this week," Ten Doeschate added.

## Proteas coach quietly confident of making history

KOLKATA

South Africa's head coach **Shukri Conrad** is backing his spin troika of Keshav Maharaj, Senuran Muthusamy and Simon Harmer to match their seasoned counterparts from India and "make history of our own" in the upcoming Test series, which he likened to their WTC final against Australia.

After the series-opener at Eden Gardens from Friday,

Guwahati will host its first-ever Test from November 22, and the South African spinners will look to carry their good form they displayed in Pakistan recently, to India.

"Having good spinners in your team, does that add spice to the overall contest? Yes, I think it gives us a lot of confidence," Conrad said during a press conference on Wednesday.

"Not saying that we didn't have good spinners in the past, but we certainly think

we've got a better pack of spinners now in Keshav, Simon and Sen.

"It gives us a lot of confidence that if the conditions are (conductive) we feel that we've got the armoury to obviously challenge India in that respect as well," he added.

"We're quietly confident that we can make history of our own here in Eden Gardens and in India." Conrad compared the contest against India to their World Test Championship

(WTC) final against Australia in which they emerged triumphant for a rare glory in an ICC event.

"Yes, we had the final against Australia that we won which was massive. I compare this series, and this match, to that final." Conrad understands the magnitude of playing a formidable opposition like India in their own backyard.

"Look India, tough challenge anyway in the world and when you come to an iconic venue like Eden

Gardens, it just makes it even tougher.

"I don't think you can compare the quality of the sides we played against (Pakistan) to India and this will be our biggest challenge. Certainly in my 20th match, I don't think there's been a bigger challenge (than this)."

The experience of playing in the IPL could also come in handy for the optimistic visitors. "I think previously you came to India as a newbie and not having experienced India before."

