

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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

## The journey from a common family to the post of Vice President is the real strength of democracy: PM

New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday welcomed the newly elected Chairman and Vice President of the Rajya Sabha, C.P. Radhakrishnan, calling him a powerful example of Indian democracy. The Prime Minister said that



Radhakrishnan's rise to the position of Vice President after a long

struggle in political and social life, from a humble background, sym-

bolizes the true strength of the democratic system and its ability to provide equal opportunities. Speaking in the Rajya Sabha on the first day of the winter session, the Prime Minister said that C.P. Radhakrishnan's leadership as Chairman is a proud moment for all members. He said, "Under your guidance,

discussions on important issues, decisions, and your invaluable guidance to take the country on the path of progress are a huge opportunity for all of us. On behalf of the House and personally, I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to you." He expressed hope that all members of the House

will always uphold the dignity of the Upper House and the decorum of the office of Chairman. Referring to Radhakrishnan's social and political journey, Prime Minister Modi said that he came from a farmer's family and a very humble background. Social service has been the core of his life, and politics was

## Expansion of footwear business will help students become entrepreneurs: President



New Delhi

President Draupadi Murmu on Monday stated that expanding the footwear industry is essential to strengthen its presence in the global market, which will directly lead to entrepreneurship for students and create large-scale employment. Murmu made this statement at the convocation ceremony of the Footwear Design and Development Institute (FDDI) in New Delhi today. "Today, India is rapidly becoming self-reliant and is capable of further expanding its economic role on the global economic stage," she said. The President pointed out that the country ranks second in

the world in terms of footwear production and consumption. During the financial year 2024-25, India's footwear exports were a little over \$2.5 billion, while imports were approximately \$680 million. Thus, India's footwear exports are almost four times that of imports. She stated that India is a leading exporter of footwear globally, but there is a need to expand the footwear industry to further increase exports. The President expressed his delight at the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between FDDI and the University of Northampton, saying that this marks another

## Lok Sabha: Opposition creates ruckus over SIR

New Delhi

The winter session of Parliament began today, but proceedings in the Lok Sabha were disrupted by a powerful uproar from the opposition. Opposition MPs protested vehemently over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voter list, forcing two adjournments. Meanwhile, the Rajya Sabha is currently proceeding smoothly. At the beginning of the session, the Lok Sabha condoled the demise of five former members, including Colonel Sona Ram Chaudhary, Vijay Kumar Malhotra, Ravi Naik, Dharmendra, and Shriprakash Jaiswal. The House expressed condolences to their families and observed a two-minute silence to pay tribute to them. Following the condolence motion, as soon as regular proceedings



resumed, opposition MPs stormed the Speaker's Well, creating a ruckus over the SIR issue. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla stated that the House is a forum for discussion and dialogue and should be allowed to proceed peacefully, but his appeal fell on deaf ears, and opposition MPs continued to shout slogans. In view of the continued uproar, the Lok Sabha Speaker adjourned the House for an hour, until 12 noon, just 20 minutes after the start of proceedings. Proceedings resumed at 12 noon, but the opposition con-

tinued to protest. MPs continued to raise slogans and reiterate their opposition to the SIR. Due to the chaos, the Speaker was forced to adjourn the House once again, adjourning it until 2 pm. However, the Rajya Sabha proceedings continued. Leader of the Opposition Kharage and Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien cornered the government. There was considerable uproar in Parliament today over the Election Commission's SIR issued in 12 states. Amid the uproar, Chairman C.P.

### Three bills introduced in Lok Sabha

New Delhi

With the start of the winter session of Parliament, the central government today introduced three bills in the Lok Sabha. These include the Manipur Goods and Services Tax (Second Amendment) Bill, 2025, the Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025, and the Health Security National Security Cess Bill, 2025. However,

Radhakrishnan appealed for smooth proceedings. However, senior Congress MP and Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge criticized the government.



UP Chief Minister Yogi listened to the problems of the people in the Janta Darshan organized at his official residence 5- Kalidas Marg, Lucknow and directed the concerned officials to resolve the public problems on priority basis.

## Supreme Court's comment- We cannot sit idle

New Delhi

The Supreme Court took suo motu cognizance of the Delhi and NCR air pollution crisis and held a hearing. During the hearing, the Chief Justice said, "My friend says that the matter has improved just because it was listed... It is important that

we hear it regularly instead of listing it every three or four months." The Chief Justice further said, "We want long-term plans to be made public, and those plans need to be discussed and finalized." The matter will now be heard on December 10. What happened during the hear-

ing? ASG Aishwarya Bhati stated that the Center has filed an affidavit regarding short-term plans and that meetings have been held with all states and agencies. The court asked whether these plans have actually had any impact. The CJI said, "How much positive progress has the

action plan you prepared achieved? We need to know that. We don't even know what steps were taken. "Stubble burning incidents were also discussed. During the meeting, the ASG acknowledged that the states' goal was "zero stubble burning," but it hadn't been achieved.

## Gross GST revenue collection rises 0.7% to Rs 1.70 lakh crore in November

New Delhi

Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections in November rose marginally by 0.7 percent to ₹1.70 lakh crore. Last year, GST revenue collections were slightly over ₹1.69 lakh crore in November. The decline in domestic revenues has led to a decline in GST collections. The Directorate General of GST reported on Monday that the country's GST revenue collections in November stood at ₹1,70,276 crore, a 0.7 percent increase compared to November 2024. Net GST revenue collections rose 1.3 percent to ₹1.52 lakh

crore. Last month, in October, GST collections rose 4.6 percent year-on-year to 1.96 lakh crore compared to 1.87 lakh crore in the same period last year. The total GST revenue collection of Rs 1,70,276 crore in November includes CGST of Rs 34,843 crore, SGST of Rs 42,522 crore and IGST of Rs 92,910 crore. The net GST revenue collection of Rs 1.52 lakh crore includes CGST of Rs 32,664 crore, SGST of Rs 39,805 crore and IGST of Rs 79,611 crore. According to the Directorate General of GST, gross domestic revenue declined by 2.3 percent to over Rs 1.24 lakh crore.

## Parliament is a platform for nation building, not an arena for victory-defeat politics: PM

New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addressing the media in the Parliament complex on Monday, before the start of the Winter Session of Parliament, urged both the opposition and the ruling party to ensure that this session neither becomes a platform for the frustration of defeat nor a platform for the arrogance of victory. He said that the world is closely watching the strength of democracy and the



economy today, and therefore, every moment of Parliament should be utilized for nation-building, not wasted in political negativity. In his address, the Prime Minister stated that Parliament is an important medium for

giving the country new momentum to progress and charting its future course. He expressed confidence that the Winter Session of Parliament will also inject new energy into the country's development journey. He said

that India has lived democracy. The enthusiasm and zeal of democracy have been expressed time and again in ways that continue to strengthen faith in democracy. Referring to the recent Bihar Assembly elections, the Prime Minister said that the voter turnout there is a testament to democracy's greatest strength. He described the increasing participation of mothers and sisters, in particular, as a symbol of the country's changing mindset.

### People displaced due to ethnic violence in Manipur protest near Raj Bhavan

Imphal

Hundreds of people displaced from their homes due to ethnic violence in Manipur staged a massive protest near the Raj Bhavan in Imphal on Sunday. The protesters' main demand was to be allowed to return to their homes as soon as possible. Where did the protesters come from? The protesters were from Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, Imphal West, and Imphal East districts. All of them have been living in relief camps since ethnic violence broke out in Manipur in May 2023. The protesters chanted slogans.

## BJP demands action against Congress MP Renuka Chowdhary

New Delhi

On the first day of Parliament's winter session, Congress Rajya Sabha member Renuka Chowdhary arrived at Parliament House with her pet dog in her car. This sparked a new controversy. The BJP accused her of disrespecting Parliament and demanded action against her. Defending herself, MP Renuka Chowdhary told media that while on her way

to Parliament, she saw an injured puppy. Fearing it might be crushed, she picked it up and brought it in her car. She then sent it back home. She questioned how anyone could object to saving an animal's life. "Those who bite are sitting in Parliament and running the government. Isn't there a problem with that? If they care for an animal, it becomes a topic of discussion," Chowdhary said.

## Communication, sensitivity and positivity will make effective police officers: Chief Minister

Lucknow

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has given the mantra of "communication, sensitivity, and positivity" to trainee officers of the 2023 and 2024 batches of the Indian Police Service (IPS) to become successful, effective, and citizen-centric police officers. During a formal meeting with 23 trainee officers on Monday, he said that a vast state



like Uttar Pradesh presents numerous challenges for the police, so consider the trainee period a golden opportunity to learn, understand, and strengthen their policing model. The Chief Minister said

that during training in the districts, it is crucial to learn how to effectively and satisfactorily resolve real-life problems. He emphasized that the police are always the first responders. The victim's trust

depends on their promptness, language, and priority. He advised the trainees to thoroughly understand the nature of the police station, its administration, investigation, duty management, and local disputes during their training period. The Chief Minister said that the police station is the foundation of policing. Human intelligence is still a police officer's most powerful weapon.

## 38.51 percent voter turnout in Delhi MCD by-election

New Delhi

Only 38.51 percent voter turnout was recorded on Sunday in the by-elections for 12 MCD wards. Despite political parties' allegations and counter-allegations, local issues, and the candidates' active participation, voter apathy disappointed the candidates. The final outcome among the 51 candidates contesting the by-elections for these 12 wards will be



determined only after the counting of votes on Wednesday, December 3rd. Voter turnout in these wards was approximately 10.5 percent lower than in the 2022 general elections. According to the Delhi

State Election Commission, many polling stations were bustling with activity as soon as voting began in the morning, and voting continued until evening, but the voting pace remained slow.



## Briefs

NEW DELHI

## PM voices concern over Zia's health

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday voiced deep concern over the health of former Bangladesh prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia and offered all possible support. "Deeply concerned to learn about the health of Begum Khaleda Zia, who has contributed to Bangladesh's public life for many years," Modi said in a post on X. "Our sincere prayers and best wishes for her speedy recovery," the prime minister said.

LUCKNOW

## Record sales at Khadi Mahotsav

The 10-day Khadi Mahotsav 2025, held at the Central Sanskrit University in Gontinagar, has set a new benchmark in sales. The event recorded a business of ₹3.20 crore, a significant rise of about 42 per cent compared to last year's ₹2.25 crore. The final day saw heavy footfall, with buyers crowding stalls till late evening. Khadi apparel, herbal products, jute handicrafts and terracotta items were among the most preferred products this year.

—Biswajeet Banerjee

KOLKATA

## Smugglers with gold biscuits held

BSF arrested two smugglers with gold biscuits worth over Rs3 crore at India-Bangladesh border. "Acting on a tip-off, BSF troops of the South Bengal Frontier apprehended two Indian smugglers at the Ghojadanga checkpoint, a border outpost of the 102nd Battalion located on the India-Bangladesh international border in the North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, while they were attempting to cross the checkpoint by concealing 20 illegal gold biscuits in the cabin of a truck. The total weight of the seized gold biscuits is 2332.845 gram and the estimated value is Rs.3,02,10,343."

—Aritra Singha

CHANDIGARH

## 2 smugglers held with 7 pistols

Punjab police on Monday claimed to have dismantled a Pakistan-linked cross-border arms smuggling module with the arrest of its two operatives and recovered seven sophisticated pistols – three PX5 and four .30 bore pistols – in a Amritsar Cantonment area. Stating that the accused have been identified as Balwinder Singh (32), and Jugraj Singh alias Jagga, both residents of Amritsar district, DGP, Punjab, Gaurav Yadav said preliminary investigation has revealed that the accused were acting on the directions of Pak-based handlers.

—Rajesh Moudgil

IN PARLIAMENT | Sitharaman moves legislations in LS to levy excise on tobacco, cess on pan masala as GST ends

## FM introduces two bills to tax sin goods

NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday moved two new bills in the Lok Sabha that look to repurpose levies on 'sin goods' such as tobacco, pan masala and related products ahead of the scheduled phaseout of the GST compensation cess levied



on them.

The Central Excise (Amendment) Bill seeks to levy excise duty on tobacco and related products, while 'The Health Security se National Security Cess Bill, 2025' would be applicable on manufacturing of pan masala and other goods that the government may notify.

The bills, introduced amid din in the Lok Sabha as Opposition members protested demanding a discussion on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, may be taken up for discussion in the House on Tuesday.

TMC member Saugata Ray

opposed introduction of the two bills saying that tobacco is harmful but the Central Excise (Amendment) Bill does not mention that. With regard to the Health Security se National Security Cess Bill, 2025, Ray said that since cess proceeds are not shared with states, he opposes the bill.

While the revenues from levy of excise on tobacco would be part of the divisible pool of tax revenues, the collection from the health and national security cess would go towards funding public health initiatives and national security while maintaining high taxation on 'sin goods'.

The Central Excise (Amendment) Bill provides for a new central excise duty on tobacco products like cigarette, chewing tobacco, cigars, hookahs, zarda, and scented tobacco, replacing the existing compensation cess.

The bill seeks to levy excise duty on cigars / cheroots / cigarettes in the range of Rs 5,000-11,000 per 1,000 sticks depending on the length. Also, it proposes levy of 60-70 per cent on unmanufactured tobacco and 100 per cent on nicotine and inhalation products. This will be over and above the 40 per cent GST rate that would be applicable on sin goods. Currently, tobacco and pan masala attract 28 per cent GST, plus a compensation cess. "We are on track to complete the loan repayment and end the compensation cess within this fiscal," a government source said.

## HOUSE DISCUSSIONS

## Wireless Monitoring Organisation to track GPS spoofing at airports

The government on Monday said GPS spoofing and interference incidents have been reported at Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Amritsar, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai airports, and the Wireless Monitoring Organisation has been directed to identify the source of spoofing.

## Govt considering legislative amendments to push private investments in nuclear space

The government is considering amendments to Atomic Energy Act and Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act to push private investments into the nuclear space, Parliament was informed on Monday.

## V-P urges RS members to follow 'Lakshman Rekha' of parliamentary discourse

Vice President of India and Rajya Sabha

Chairman CP Radhakrishnan urged members to uphold the Constitution and follow parliamentary norms while adhering to the 'Lakshman Rekha' as envisaged under the rules of the Upper House.

## Govt says 15 airports under UDAN scheme are temporarily non-operational

A total of 15 airports under the regional air connectivity scheme UDAN are temporarily non-operational now due to various reasons, including low passenger loads in flights, according to the government.

## Parl panels get more time to submit reports on insolvency, Jan Vishwas provisions bills

Two select committees were on Monday granted more time by the Lok Sabha to submit their reports on the insolvency law and Jan Vishwas provisions amendment bills.

## Raising public issues not drama: Priyanka

NEW DELHI

Raising issues concerning the people is not drama but not allowing democratic discussion on them is, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said on Monday while hitting out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for accusing the opposition of indulging in drama in Parliament.

Responding to Modi's remarks ahead of the Winter session of Parliament, Priyanka Gandhi demanded a

debate on urgent issues such as air pollution and SIR and said these were huge public issues that needed to be discussed in Parliament.

"What is Parliament for? It's not drama. Speaking about issues and raising issues is not drama. Drama is not allowing discussion. Drama is not having a democratic discussion about issues that matter to the public," she said.

told reporters outside Parliament.

"We have spoken about air pollution, why are we not

raising it. Why are we not allowed to discuss these things," she asked.

She termed the air quality issue in Delhi shameful and said everyone must come together to take strong steps to tackle the problem and save the health of children, elderly and those already suffering from respiratory issues.

"I really feel that this situation is shameful. This is the capital city of our country. I feel that we should set aside parties and all should put all our forces together," she said.

## DELHI BLAST

## NIA raids Dr Shaheen's father's Lucknow house

LUCKNOW

The National Investigation Agency on Monday conducted a raid at the Khandari Bazaar residence of Dr Shaheen Shahid's father in connection with the Delhi blasts investigation.

A team of NIA officials searched the house while local police maintained security outside in Lucknow. The sudden action created a stir in the area as officials carried out the operation for several hours. The agency had earlier questioned Dr Shaheen's family regarding possible links to the case.

The raid was part of a larger crackdown across eight locations stretching from Kashmir to Uttar

Pradesh. The NIA also carried out searches at the Saharanpur home of Dr Adil Ahmed Rather, who was arrested in the first week of November.

According to officials, these operations are aimed at exposing a suspected "white-collar" terror module believed to be involved in raising funds for extremist activities through financial fraud, money laundering and other covert methods.

Investigators say dismantling such sophisticated networks poses a major challenge as they operate without drawing attention through conventional terror tactics. The NIA is continuing its probe to trace the full span of the network and its role in the Delhi blasts.

BENGALURU

Two days after the breakfast diplomacy between Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his Deputy DK Shivakumar, who are at loggerheads over the chief ministerial post, the two are set for one more round of similar diplomacy drama.

This time too, the drama is scripted by the party high command and the venue will be the residence of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar in Sadashivanagar.

Confirming the breakfast meeting, Shivakumar said that he and the Chief Minister were like brothers and they never had any differences. "It is you, the media, who write and show so many things to prove

## Another breakfast 'bonhomie' between Siddaramaiah, DKS



that all is not alright within the party. You try to create the Siddaramaiah faction and Shivakumar group. But, there's nothing like that in the party. Since you people are spreading rumours, the high command asked us to have a breakfast meeting. I have invited the Chief Minister for breakfast tomorrow and he has accepted the invitation," Shivakumar said.

Though the two leaders are trying to showcase a "united face", nothing seems to be going right within the party.

The factions continue to give contradicting media statements and the legislators, in private,

are more worried than the leaders and ministers. Those who openly supported DK Shivakumar during the last few months are now worried what if the leadership is not changed.

On Monday, MLA from Jewargi constituency, Kalburgi, Ajay Singh, issued a controversial statement, saying the two leaders have promised to abide by the high command decision.

However, a visibly upset Siddaramaiah exploded: "Who is Ajay Singh? Is he the Chief Minister of Karnataka? or is he Congress high command? He is nobody to tell anything."

## IMD warns of colder winter

NEW DELHI

Normal to below-normal temperatures are expected in central India and the adjoining northwest and peninsular regions during the three-month winter season, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Monday.

The western Himalayan region, the foothills of the Himalayas, the northeastern states, and parts of eastern and western India may experience above-normal maximum temperatures. IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said in an online press conference.

## Modi speaks to Lankan president

PM Narendra Modi on Monday spoke to Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disanayake and assured him of continued support in the rehabilitation efforts across all regions impacted by Cyclone Ditwah. Meanwhile, the last batch of 104 Indians stranded in Sri Lanka has been evacuated and brought back home onboard IAF aircraft on Monday.



NDRF team rescues stranded people in Sri Lanka, under Operation Sagar Bandhu in the wake of Cyclone Ditwah, in Puttalam on Monday

nected in many parts, including the Kathipara flyover in the city. The weather office forecast heavy to very heavy rain in Chennai and Tiruvallur districts till Tuesday morning due to the remnants of the cyclonic storm Ditwah that remained close to Tamil Nadu-Puducherry coasts.

## runaway bride

## Woman elopes with lover after 'varmala'

UNNAO (UP)

The 'baraat' was received at the door with band and 'baaja', the bride and groom exchanged garlands. All seemed well and on track to happily ever after. Until the time came for the 'pheras' and the families found to their utter shock - the bride had run away with her lover!

The drama, straight out of a film script centred on a feisty woman asserting herself, took place on Saturday night in a



village in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao district.

Recapping the developments of the extraordinary

evening when the young woman decided she was better off as the runaway bride exercising choice, police

officials said the wedding procession arrived at Ajaypur village right on schedule.

The two families completed the traditional 'dwarachar' and other rituals. The bride and groom then performed the 'varmala' ritual. Soon after, the bride went to her room while the groom's family got busy with other preparations.

Some time later, the family went to her room to escort her for the 'pheras', the seven rounds around a fire that would solemnise the wed-

ding. But the room was empty. The lady had fled.

The two families learnt a little later that she had eloped with a young man from the village.

The hapless father spoke to his daughter over the phone and she told him her wishlist for life – she wanted to marry her lover and live with him.

Shocked by the turn of events, the two families had a heated exchange.

Finally, the groom's side returned home. Without a bride.

## Those sitting inside bite: MP Renuka on row over bringing dog to Parl



A dog seen inside Congress MP Renuka Chaudhary's car outside the Parliament in New Delhi, on Monday

"Those sitting inside bite, dogs don't," Congress MP Renuka Chowdhury said on Monday after she arrived in Parliament with a rescued stray in her car, triggering a row and prompting some ruling party members to accuse her of indulging in drama.

Chowdhury said she had picked up the stray earlier in the day and was taking it to a veterinarian. She also claimed that the government does not like animals and questioned the objections raised by the ruling party MPs, saying there was no law against rescuing a stray dog. "This government

does not like animals. Animals don't have a voice. It (dog) was in the car, so what is their problem? It is so small, does it look like it will bite? Those sitting inside Parliament bite, not dogs," she told reporters when asked about the dog in her car.

"Which law says that I can't rescue a dog?" she added.

Chowdhury, a self-confessed dog lover, has a few pets at home. Sources said her driver was supposed to take the canine to a veterinarian after dropping her off at Parliament. However, BJP MP Jagdambika Pal accused Chowdhury of indulging in a "tamasha" (theatrics) and violating protocol by bringing a dog to Parliament.

## Veteran BJP leader Prem Kumar files papers for Speaker's post



Newly elected BJP MLA Maithili Thakur with other MLAs at Bihar legislative assembly after taking oath on Monday

PATNA

Former minister and senior BJP leader Prem Kumar, who has won the Gaya Town seat for the ninth consecutive term in recent Bihar polls, filed his nomination papers for the post of assembly speaker on Monday.

Kumar was officially proposed by the ruling NDA MLAs for the post of the speaker. He is likely to be appointed to the post of speaker unopposed as a formal announcement will be made about it on Tuesday.

He filed the nomination papers in presence of deputy chief ministers Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha, senior JD(U) leader and parliamentary affairs minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, state LJP (RM) MLA Raju Tiwari and RLM MLA Madhaw Anand (RLM).

Meanwhile, the first session of the 18th Bihar assembly commenced with

the newly-elected MLAs taking oath. Pro tem Speaker Narendra Narayan Yadav, appointed by governor Arif Mohammed Khan, conducted the oath-taking ceremony inside the House.

Several MLAs from the Mithilanchal region, including minister Arun Shankar Prasad, as well as singer and Alinagar MLA Maithili Thakur, who is the youngest in the House, took oath in Maithili, while some of the MLAs belonging to the minority community and Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM opted for Urdu.

Kathihar MLA and senior BJP leader Tarkishore Prasad, Sonbarsa JD(U) MLA Ratnesh Sada, and a few others took their oath in Sanskrit. LJP (RV) legislator Vishnu Deo Paswan took oath in English.

The MLAs appointed as ministers in the new Cabinet were the first to take oath, followed by RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav and others.

## SIR brings estranged wards back in touch with parents

BAREILLY (UP)

The ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly has reopened long shut doors, nudging several people, estranged after love marriages, to call home again after years for their old voter details.

Snehlata (40), a resident of Jogi Nawada, had severed ties with her parents 15 years ago, when she left with her partner

Omkar Chaudhary. During the ongoing SIR drive, officials asked her for her EPIC ID based on the 2003 voter list. Unable to recall the details, Snehlata finally dialled her parents after years of silence, seeking information from the old electoral roll.

A woman hailing from Bulandshahr, Sulekha, and now known as Rihana after embracing Islam post-marriage to Faridpur resident Nawab Hasan, had not spoken

to her parents for nearly a decade. When the SIR form required her father's EPIC ID and details from the 2003 voter list, she called her mother, leading to an emotional conversation after years of silence.

In Kheda village of Bithri Chainpur Assembly constituency, Ramvir Singh said his son Avdesh had eloped with a girl from a village 10 years ago.

"Suddenly, he called from Bhavnagar in Gujarat. He and his wife both spoke politely."



## In order to facilitate traffic during the Magh Mela 2026, a meeting regarding the traffic movement plan was held under the joint chairmanship of the Divisional Commissioner and the Police Commissioner

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj.** In order to facilitate traffic during the Magh Mela 2026, a meeting was held in the I-Triple C auditorium at the Mela Authority office, jointly chaired by Divisional Commissioner Saumya Agarwal and Police Commissioner Joginder Singh, with all the relevant officials from the police, transport, fair, and district administration. The Divisional Commissioner first spoke with Google officials and discussed the possibility of displaying all the major routes, bathing ghats, parking areas, other key locations, and diversion routes during the Magh Mela on Google Maps. Google officials informed them that Road Management Insights (RMI) could be used for this purpose, and the Google Maps team would soon connect with the Mela administration via video conferencing for further action. Road Management Insights (RMI), a service on the Google Maps platform, provides data on traffic speed, duration, and congestion for road and traffic management. The increased use of taxis and minibuses during the fair was also discussed to improve the district's traffic system. The



fair administration has already initiated work to engage companies like Ola, Uber, and Rapido through tenders. Inquiry was sought about the arrangements being made by the Water Police to prevent drowning incidents, and officials informed that this time, 40 divers and six substations are being set up. One team each from the SDRF and NDRF will also patrol and ensure security at all locations. To ensure that boatmen do not overcharge pilgrims, Public Works Department officials were instructed to require boatmen to compulsorily print the permissible rates and helpline numbers on their boats, and only after verifying them will they issue testing certificates. Strict action will be taken against any boatman found

operating without a certificate. The committee formed with a view to further improve the signage system was instructed to immediately start the work of marking the gaps and installing signage on the main roads connecting the city and other districts. Apart from this, instructions were also given to consider increasing the number of fire engines in various sectors with a view to prevent fire incidents in the fair area or to reduce the response time of extinguishing them in case of incidents. Additional Commissioner of Police Dr. Ajaypal, Fair Officer Rishiraj, Fair Superintendent of Police Neeraj Pandey, Additional Fair Officer Dayanand Prasad and other concerned departmental officers were also present in the meeting.

## DM Magistrate honored 19 BLOs who performed outstandingly under the SIR Revision Program with certificates

BLOs who performed well should motivate other BLOs to complete the mapping work 100% expeditiously - District Magistrate



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj.** District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma honored 19 BLOs who performed outstandingly under the Special Intensive Revision Program in the Sangam Auditorium on Monday with certificates and wall clocks. He told the BLOs who performed well that they are an

inspiration to others. He urged them to motivate other BLOs working with them to complete the mapping work with the 2003 voter list as per the Commission's instructions with 100% expeditiously. The District Magistrate commended the BLOs' work and encouraged them to continue their excellent work in the future. The BLOs to be honoured include

Pushpalata Srivastava, Chhaya Mishra, Rita Devi Yadav, Krishna Kumar of Assembly Constituency 254-Phaphamau, Alia Bano, Sunita Devi of 255-Soraon, Ram Sajeewan Yadav of 256-Phulpur, Geeta Devi, Vidya Devi Maurya of 257-Pratappur, Saurabh Singh of 258-Handiya, Ravi Shankar Yadav of 259-Meja, Shyam Babu of 260-

Karchana, Satya Prakash Kharwar, Zarina Khatoon, Amar Bahadur Singh of 261-Allahabad West, Suryaraj Singh, Santosh Kumar of 264-Bara and Arvind Kumar and Krishnakant of 265-Koraon. On this occasion, Deputy District Election Officer Mrs. Pooja Mishra along with other officers/employees related to the election were present.

## SIM Nursing College organized an awareness rally on World AIDS Day

The primary objective of this awareness campaign is to spread the message to the public - Director, Engineer L.B. Maurya

Akhand Bharat Sandesh Tharwai

An awareness rally was organized by SIM Nursing College, a renowned school in Tharwai, on World AIDS Day. It was explained that AIDS awareness means providing people with accurate information about HIV and AIDS so that they can protect themselves and others from this disease. The awareness rally dispels misconceptions prevalent in society and encourages



ages people to seek timely testing and treatment. HIV

is not spread through handshakes or hugs, sharing

food, water, utensils, toilets, schools, offices, or clothes.

It is spread through blood transfusions, unsafe sex, and the use of contaminated needles or syringes. Teachers from SIM Nursing College, Jyoti Gupta, Ankita, and Aaradhya, who attended the rally, explained that people with HIV/AIDS often face discrimination and lack of respect in society. They hide to get treatment. For which aware-

ness was created through a rally. In this rally, teachers and students of SIM Nursing College, Principal Deepa of SIM Public School, Additional Inspector Paras Nath under the direction of Inspector Tharwai Santosh Kumar Pandey, Women SI Deepti Mishra, Akanksha Dwivedi, Meena Kaushal etc. of Tharwai Police Station Mission Shakti team were present and they were also made aware.

## Five-Month-Old Infant Dies in Auraiya, Family Alleges Negligence Due to Father SIR Duty

Auraiya

A tragic incident has come to light from the Narayanpur locality of Auraiya, where a five-month-old infant died allegedly due to lack of timely medical treatment. The family has accused the administration of negligence, claiming that the child father was engaged in Special Intensive Revision (SIR) duty and was denied leave despite repeated requests. The deceased infant, identified as Shiva, was the son of Bhole Singh, a regular sanitation worker.

According to the grieving father, he had been deployed for the last five days on SIR duty in support of a Booth Level Officer along with his regular sanitation work. During this period, his five-month-old child was seriously ill, but due to the pressure of double duty, he could not take the child to the hospital for proper treatment. Bhole Singh stated that he repeatedly informed the concerned officials about his child's critical condition and sought leave, but his requests were allegedly ignored. As a result, he

remained trapped between official responsibilities and a family medical crisis, which ultimately proved fatal for the child. On Sunday morning, the infant health suddenly deteriorated. The family rushed to take him to the hospital, but by the time they reached, doctors declared the child dead. Following the incident, the family is in deep grief and mourning prevails in the area. Local residents have demanded a thorough investigation into the matter. They alleged that if timely medical care had been provided,

## Auraiya District Election Officer Inspects Revision Work, Orders Notices to Be Served at Homes of Defaulters



Auraiya

District Magistrate and District Election Officer Dr. Indramani Tripathi inspected the progress of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) programme and reviewed the ongoing voter list revision work in the district. During the inspection, he visited Khanpur Ward under the Municipal Council area, where he went door-to-door to verify the collection and submission of enumeration forms. Dr. Tripathi stressed the

importance of collective cooperation to ensure the timely and successful completion of the programme. He instructed officials to ensure that no eligible voter is left out of the electoral roll. Expressing concern over slow progress in certain wards, he directed the concerned staff to expedite the process without delay. The District Election Officer issued a strict warning that any negligence in duty would invite complaints and strict action. He directed the deployed

personnel and supervisors to conduct daily reviews of their work at their respective levels. He also instructed that notices be pasted on the houses of those who have failed to return the enumeration forms. During the inspection, Sadar Tehsildar In-charge Prakash Chaudhary, Executive Officer of the Municipal Council Ram Asrey Kamal, supervisors, Booth Level Officers (BLO), village heads and other concerned officials were present.

## A "Prem Dharam Padyatra" (a march of love and religion) was organized under the leadership of Raja Mahendra Pratap great-grandson to demand the Bharat Ratna for him

Vrindavan

On the auspicious occasion of the 139th birth anniversary of the late Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, a great freedom fighter, revolutionary and social reformer, a massive "Prem Dharam Padyatra" (a march of love and religion) was organized in Vrindavan on Monday. A large number of supporters participated in the march, which was organized in support of the demand for the Bharat Ratna, the country's highest civilian honor, for Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh. Pathyatra from KC Ghat to Samadhi Sthal This historic march was organized



ized under the leadership of Raja Saheb great-grandson, Kunwar Charat Pratap Singh. The march began at 10 a.m. from KC Ghat on the Parikrama Marg. Its primary objective was to highlight the incomparable contributions of national leader Raja Mahendra Pratap

Singh. The march concluded at the Samadhi Sthal, where dignitaries and followers paid tribute to Raja Saheb. **(Great-grandson recalls Raja Saheb contribution)** Recalling Raja Saheb's immense contribution on this occasion, Kunwar Charat Pratap Singh said that Raja

Mahendra Pratap Singh established the country's first polytechnic, Prem Mahavidyalaya, in Vrindavan in 1909. He also played a key role in the country's independence, establishing the Provisional Government of India in Kabul in 1915. He was a writer and social reformer and was also elected as a Member of Parliament from Mathura in 1957. Kunwar Charat Pratap appealed to citizens to join the march and strengthen the demand. Key associates like Lalit Chaudhary, Arvind Chaudhary and Dr. JS Jat played an active role in making the event a success.

## Clash Over Truck Driver Hiring in Bidhuna, Case Filed Against 12 Including Five Named

Bidhuna/Auraiya

Police have registered a case against 12 persons, including five named and seven unidentified individuals, in connection with a violent clash that erupted over a dispute related to the hiring of a truck driver in Bidhuna. Several people were injured in the incident and were referred to the Auraiya District Hospital for treatment. The incident

occurred around 9:15 pm on Friday night near the residence of Kanhaiyalal Tripathi in Bidhuna. The complaint was lodged at Bidhuna police station by Saksham, son of Ajay Kumar, a resident of the town. According to the complaint, Saksham brother Prashant Kumar had parked his truck loaded with morang (construction material). At that time, Dharmendra and Ovendra, residents of Adarsh Nagar and sons

of Uday Pratap, arrived at the spot and questioned Prashant as to why he had hired their truck driver. The altercation soon turned violent when Dharmendra and Ovendra allegedly attacked Prashant with hockey sticks and iron rods, leaving him seriously injured. On hearing Prashant's cries, his father Ajay Kumar, uncle Girish, nephew Surya and brother Amit rushed to his rescue. The accused then allegedly called Ishu and

Ayush, sons of Dharmendra Kumar, Rahul, son of Ovendra, along with seven unidentified persons. All 12 attackers reportedly assaulted the family members. It has been alleged that Dharmendra and Ishu attempted to strangle Prashant, while Rahul, Ovendra and Ayush struck Ajay Kumar on the head with hockey sticks and iron rods. Manju Devi also sustained injuries while trying to intervene.



## Editorial

### India's reliance on imported technology despite its strong indigenous

It delivered two Ming-class submarines to Bangladesh in 2017, gifted a P625 frigate to Sri Lanka in 2019, and committed to exporting Yuan-class submarines to Thailand. Although the Thai deal encountered difficulties when Germany refused to supply key propulsion components. Thailand decided to proceed with the acquisition, underscoring China's persistence in maintaining its naval export commitments. Additionally, Pakistan is set to acquire at least eight Hangor-class submarines and other naval equipment from Beijing, further enhancing China's presence in the region. India has increasingly aligned itself with Western naval powers to address maritime challenges through collaborative efforts. France was among its earliest Western partners, and the countries' cooperation has grown stronger over time. India also participates in joint maritime missions with European nations and European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) initiatives such as Operation Atlanta and Aspides. Furthermore, India contributes to significant maritime security dialogues such as the Coordinated Maritime Presence (CMP) and Enhancing Security Cooperation In And With Asia (ESIWA). India's 2023 inclusion in the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), led by the US Central Command, underscores its dedication to enhancing collaborative security in the western Indian Ocean. The IFC-IOR exemplifies India's commitment to collective security, even though it remains a preliminary step toward a more robust maritime security framework. Advancing to the next level will require India to engage in the technically complex task of real-time information sharing through secure legal frameworks beyond Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT). The Quad's Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) initiative highlights the challenges in achieving seamless data-sharing capabilities. To counter hybrid threats and protect critical infrastructure, India must prioritise sharing vital intelligence and deploying unmanned systems for coordinated surveillance. Strengthening such partnerships will bolster India's naval capabilities and contribute to broader maritime security across the Indian Ocean Region. The commissioning of new naval platforms marks a significant milestone for India but also highlights persistent challenges, particularly in achieving technological self-reliance in engine manufacturing. Although the INS Surat, INS Nilgiri, and INS Vagsheer were designed by India's Warship Design Bureau and built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, their engines were procured from foreign manufacturers, exposing a critical dependence on external sources. INS Surat, the fourth and final ship of the P15B Guided Missile Destroyer Project, employs a Combined Gas Turbine and Gas Turbine (COGAG) propulsion system. This system uses Me6E and DT-59 reversible engines sourced from Ukraine's Zorya Mashproekt, a key supplier for India's frontline warships. Despite the ongoing war in Ukraine, India has continued to rely on Zorya, underscoring the critical nature of this dependence. To secure the supply chain, Bharat Forge acquired a 51 per cent stake in Zorya's India arm in 2023. Similarly, INS Nilgiri, the first ship of the P17A Stealth Frigate Project, launched in 2019, uses a Combined Diesel and Gas (CODAG) propulsion system. This system incorporates LM2500 engines from General Electric in the US and MAN diesel engines from Germany, further emphasising India's reliance on imported technology despite its strong indigenous design capabilities. INS Vagsheer, the sixth and final submarine of the P75 Scorpene project developed in collaboration with France, also depends on



## Not too many tears would be shed for a squeeze on capex if the hit is primarily on infusing equity



With tax revenue growth slowing in the last few months, the possibility of an upside earlier expected on the revenue front may be receding rapidly. Revenue expenditure is also rising at a rate higher than the budgeted 6 per cent. If the fiscal deficit target of 4.9 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) has to be met for 2024-25, which the government must in view of the uncertainties and challenges emerging both domestically and globally, the finance ministry may see in the composition of the current year's capex a sliver of hope. The finance ministry should not spend ~0.83 trillion for equity infusion into BSNL. Instead, it should ask the telephone company to raise resources from the market. The ministry should also desist from spending the remaining ~0.6 trillion earmarked for capital allocation to new schemes. Saving about ~1.43 trillion (a little less than half a percent of GDP) will be a cushion against other expenditure slippages and revenue shortfall. Not too many tears would be shed for a squeeze on capex if the hit is primarily on infusing equity into a state-owned enterprise and on new schemes that are yet to be announced. Quite ironically, a slowdown in the government's capex may well turn out to be an opportunity.

capital expenditure (capex) continues to be a cause for concern. Of course, the extent of its decline has reduced somewhat — from 35 per cent at the end of the

first quarter of the current financial year to 15 per cent at the end of six months. But the latest number for the April-November 2024-25 period shows that the Union government's capex was still 12 per cent lower than what it was in the same period of 2023-24. Instead of aiming for the targeted 17 per cent growth to ~11.11 trillion in capex for 2024-25, the government will have to strive hard to at least cross the figure of ~9.48 trillion reached last year. What has led to this decline? A widely held view is that the seven-phase general elections, which began on April 19 and ended on June 1 last year, caused a slowdown in capex. But if that indeed is the reason, the decline in capex in the first quarter should have been reversed in the second quarter of 2024-25. And certainly, the first two months of the third quarter should have raised the trajectory of capex growth to a higher level. There has been some improvement, but a 12 per cent decline in the April-November 2024-25 period is no comfort. Look at the slightly different trajectory seen in the Union govern-

ment's revenue expenditure growth during the same period. The Budget for 2024-25 had projected a rise of over 6 per cent to ~37.1 trillion in revenue expenditure. At the end of June 2024, the growth was just about 2 per cent, but it has been rising since then, reaching 4.2 per cent by the end of the first six months of 2024-25 and climbing even higher to 7.8 per cent during April-November 2024-25. So, if revenue expenditure has gained momentum, why has capex failed to follow suit? A close analysis of the government's capex numbers presents an interesting picture. Over 90 per cent of the Centre's total capex during 2024-25 was accounted for by just six sectors — roads, railways, defence, telecom, transfer to states and new schemes. Their share in total capex in 2023-24 was a little less at 87 per cent. But the 12 per cent decline in the first eight months of 2024-25 is primarily the result of a marked slowdown in only two of these six areas — roads and defence, which accounted for over 40 per cent of the total capex outlay for 2024-25. Capex on the

construction of roads and highways fell by 16 per cent, while defence saw a decline of 15 per cent. This is serious and has worrying implications for both infrastructure and defence. The problem of slowing expenditure in these two areas should not have been difficult to fix. Either effective monitoring of spending is lacking, or there are serious problems with project execution, reflecting the poor expenditure-absorbing capacity of these two sectors. This is borne out by a relatively good performance of the Indian Railways, which accounts for over 22 per cent of this year's capex. At ~1.68 trillion, the Indian Railways' capex is just about 1 per cent lower than its spending during April-November 2023. With regard to the transfer of special assistance as loans to states for their capex and additional central assistance for their externally aided projects, the Union government's performance was slightly better. In the April-November 2024-25 period, these transfers rose by about 5 per cent, although much lower than the budgeted increase of 41 per cent.

In contrast, such transfers during the entire 2023-24 had risen sharply by about 24 per cent to ~1.15 trillion. It appears that these transfers will take a hit in the current year and for the first time since this initiative to help states boost their capex was undertaken a couple of years ago. Significantly, this has not yet adversely impacted the states in a big way. The capex of 25 states

(accounting for 95 per cent of all the states' and Union territories' total capex budget) has risen by just about 1 per cent in the April-November 2024-25 period, although states like Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Mizoram, Odisha, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal saw their capex fall by varying margins. Eventually, however, this will have an adverse impact on the states' capex programme and its growth-enhancing effect. There are two more sectors that account for another 13 per cent of the Centre's capital expenditure budget. But they bring out an intriguing aspect of why the government's capex has been slowing. They suffer from a peculiar problem, which has nothing to do with either the relevant sectors' expenditure-absorbing capacity or the absence of effective expenditure monitoring. The bulk of the capex under telecommunications was meant for infusing equity into state-owned Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd, or BSNL. Of the total capex of ~0.84 trillion, the proposed amount for BSNL's equity infusion accounted for as much as ~0.83 trillion.

But the total expenditure under this head in the first eight months of 2024-25 is only 6 per cent of what has been budgeted. In other words, a decision to transfer the equity amount promised to BSNL would increase the government's capex by a significant margin. Why this money has not been transferred is puzzling.

### Government is increasingly working towards enhancing the country's RE capacity

"Further, adoption of batteries to substitute use of diesel generators for back-up power should receive incentives and policy support given their role in reducing dependence on imports," he said. While the government is increasingly working towards enhancing the country's RE capacity, the distribution and transmission infrastructure for its evacuation still needs to be strengthened. With the peak demand for power growing at a rate of 8-9% annually, the industry is looking forward to strengthening of climate resilient infrastructure augmentation. "One can expect new allocations towards augmentation of power distribution infrastructure, especially in high density/ urban load centres, in view of the sharp rise in peak demand over the last few years," said Anujesh Dwivedi, Partner at Deloitte India. He noted that there may be some allocation towards sup-

porting the preparatory work especially on the listing of power utilities, or some incentive mechanism for promoting initiatives on private sector participation or listing of utilities at the state level because they are increasingly being seen as the much needed structural reforms the sector needs. The industry is optimistic of a wider coverage of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme by including smart metering in infrastructure definition.

"This would direct more financing for a sector which seeks to bring down India's transmission and distribution losses to 12% and improve recovery for state utilities," Goyal said. Goyal also noted that power transmission despite significant potential has not seen any notable monetisation events which could address the latent investor demand. "Government should announce.

### first capital market regulator was a banker in the late 1980s

Looking back at India's reform story of more than three decades, it is worthwhile to recall that economic liberalisation of the 1990s had a few implicit assumptions of how an economy should function and grow on a sustainable basis. One of those assumptions followed from the government decision to allow the private sector to operate in areas that were hitherto monopolised by state-owned enterprises. Under such liberalisation, it was assumed that while the government would continue to frame policies for areas opened up to the private sector, the regulation or enforcement of those policies would be undertaken by independent regulators through rules framed by them. A classic example of this thinking was India's telecommunications sector that was opened up to the private sector in the early 1990s. This was followed by the setting up of the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of India or Trai a few years later. Subsequently, the business of basic telephone services, run in large parts of the country by a government department, was hived off to a newly created state-owned enterprise. Something similar, in varying degrees, happened in other areas such as the insurance, airports, and power sectors. In addition, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) was set up to regulate and adjudicate upon issues of market dominance and practices that undermined competition in various sectors. The principle was clear: Let the government frame the policy (and not run a business), while independent regulatory bodies could enforce the policy by framing necessary rules. Another implicit assumption behind such a separation of responsibilities between the government and the regulators was about who should steer those regulatory bodies. To impart autonomy and independence to these institutions and insulate them from government interference, the pool of talent for

hiring key personnel was widened. Experts and private-sector professionals in related fields, along with even retired members of the judiciary (though under some pressure as was seen when the legislation for setting up the CCI was framed), were among those the government believed could be hired to head these regulatory institutions. Thus, the first chairperson of the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission was an economist. Trai was set up under the chairmanship of a retired judge and its next chairperson was a former banker. Even the first capital market regulator was a banker in the late 1980s, and the first chairperson of the insurance sector regulator was a former chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes. The first full-fledged chairperson of the CCI was a retired Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer. So, there was a mix of regulatory heads chosen from a pool of experts from both the government and the private sector. In spite of a few civil servants heading these institutions, the idea that continued to be pursued was to insulate regulation from the stranglehold or influence of the political executive. The third significant aspect of regulation in the early days of economic reforms was the framing of rules for appointing heads of regulatory bodies in a way that effectively ruled out conflicts of interest.

Thus, a regulator would usually not be considered for another job in the government system after the completion of his or her term. The idea was that the regulator should be able to act freely and fairly without any expectation of assignments from the government or the private sector. Indeed, one of the regulators under the law was, until recently, barred from accepting any government job after having served in that regulatory post. These were guardrails to preserve the integrity and independence of regulators.

## Kerala has become the first state in India to criminalize reheating used cooking oil

**Ranjita Singh Lucknow**

Kerala has become the first state in India to criminalize reheating used cooking oil. Now, regulations have been made for hotels, restaurants, street food vendors and other food businesses in the state, requiring them to reuse cooking oil no more than three times. Violating this rule could result in a fine of up to ₹1 lakh. The Food and Safety Commissionerate of Kerala has taken this strict action because repeatedly reusing oil is extremely

harmful to health. Reheating oil repeatedly creates toxic compounds that can cause cancer, heart disease, and other serious illnesses. Furthermore, rancid and reheated oil impairs both the taste and quality of food and negatively impacts people's health. Under this rule, anyone who uses cooking oil more than three times will be required to surrender it to authorized agencies, which will convert this oil into biodiesel and other environmentally friendly products instead of recycling

it. Experiments under this initiative have already begun in several locations in Kerala, where thousands of liters of used oil are being collected monthly. This rule is considered an important step towards ensuring food safety as well as environmental protection. The state government has directed all catering businesses to comply with this rule and regular inspections are being conducted to ensure clean and safe food for the public. This initiative in Kerala can serve as an

inspiration for other states in the country that want to take serious steps to improve public health and the environment. This rule will not only improve food quality but will also reduce the health hazards caused by the harmful effects of recycled oil. Thus, Kerala has once again demonstrated its commitment to public health and environmental protection by banning reheating of used oil, setting a unique example which is expected to be widely adopted in the country in the times to come.



## Briefs

AGRA

## Congress Protests Voter List Revision

Congress workers protested at a police station in Agra, demanding an FIR against the Chief Election Commissioner over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter lists. They allege the rushed process has caused immense pressure, leading to the suicides and deaths of 30-35 Booth Level Officers nationwide. Separately, in Ballia, cases were filed against 28 BLOs for alleged negligence in their SIR duties.

KANPUR

## Traders Meet DyCM Over KDA Notices

A delegation of traders from Kanpur met Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak regarding frequent KDA notices. These notices seek to declare residential properties on wide roads as commercial, causing distress. Traders stated even KDA officials lack clarity. They requested a halt on new notices until clear guidelines are issued and demanded a minimal fee for the conversion process.

AGRA

## Two MBBS Students Die in Accident

Two third-year MBBS students from SN Medical College, Agra, died after their speeding motorcycle hit a flyover divider. Tanishq Garg (22) and Siddh Agarwal (22) were thrown off the bike and suffered fatal head injuries. Police noted one victim's low-quality helmet shattered on impact. They lay injured for an hour before being helped. CCTV footage is being examined.

LALITPUR

## Traffic month Concludes with awareness drive

SSP Mohammad Mushtaq concluded Traffic Month in Lalitpur by distributing helmets and promoting road safety. Throughout November, traffic police conducted awareness programs in schools and public areas, focusing on helmet use, seat belts, and avoiding speeding. Strict enforcement led to 7,772 challans and a fine collection exceeding ₹1.18 crore during the month.

BALLIA

## JNC University Registrar's Father Passes Away

Hiralal Pal, father of Jananayak Chandrashekhar University Registrar Sant Lal Pal, passed away on November 30. His health deteriorated suddenly while being taken to the hospital. A resident of Prayagraj, his last rites were performed in his ancestral village. The university held a condolence meeting attended by the Vice-Chancellor and staff.

JAUNPUR

## Nagaland's foundation day celebrated

VBS Purvanchal University, celebrated Nagaland Foundation Day with dance, speech, quiz, and exhibitions. Students promoted national unity, highlighting Nagaland's rich heritage. VC Prof. Vandana Singh emphasized cultural understanding; faculty echoed preserving traditions. A documentary, Nagaland: Culture to Progress, was showcased.

## CYBER SECURITY | CM stresses immediate action against cybercrime and illegal drug networks

## “Casual approach not acceptable”, CM Yogi tells IPS trainees

LUCKNOW

In Lucknow, the Chief Minister emphasised the need for swift and decisive action against cybercrime and illegal drug networks while addressing trainee IPS officers from the 2023 and 2024 batches. During an interaction with 23 probationary officers, the CM urged them to adopt a policing model rooted in sensitivity, communication, and a citizen-centric approach.

He highlighted that Uttar Pradesh, being one of the largest states in the country, presents unique and complex policing challenges. Trainee officers were encouraged to utilize their probation period as a critical opportunity to learn ground realities, understand administrative structures, and strengthen their individual policing models.

The CM stressed that dis-



trict-level training must focus on developing the ability to deliver effective and satisfactory solutions to real-world problems. He stated that the police are always the first responders, and therefore the victim's trust depends heavily on the officer's promptness, conduct, and prioritisation of issues. Trainees were advised to study station-level management closely, including case investigation, administrative responsibilities, duty manage-

## CM pushes trainees for faster cybercrime crackdowns

ment, and local dispute patterns. The CM noted that police stations form the foundation of law enforcement, and human intelligence continues to be one of the strongest tools available to officers. Dialogue with local communities, physical pres-

ence in the field, and building trust remain essential components of effective policing.

He also underlined the need to understand the working of police stations, circles, and police lines, stating that coordination among these three layers ensures the strength of district security systems. Speaking about engagement with public representatives, he said such interactions must be respectful and balanced. Since public representatives embody

the voice of citizens, constructive coordination helps improve law-and-order effectiveness. Officers were warned that maintaining a casual approach in such matters is inappropriate.

A major portion of the briefing focused on women-related crimes, cyber threats, and illegal drug activity. The CM noted that crime patterns are evolving rapidly, requiring equally advanced and timely responses. He urged trainee officers to learn the use of digital forensics, cyber tools, and emerging technologies to counter modern crime networks.

He concluded by reminding officers that integrity, discipline, and a humane outlook form the core of policing. Their conduct, he said, will shape not only the future of law and order but also public confidence in the state's security framework.

## Maurya Warns BLOs on ‘Misinformation’

LUCKNOW

The SIR (Systematic Information Review) process in Uttar Pradesh is progressing rapidly, and the state government has extended the deadline by seven days to ease the pressure on field teams. The extension follows reports that several Booth Level Officers (BLOs) engaged in verification had died during work in different districts, prompting opposition parties to intensify criticism of the government.

Amid this political tension, the Deputy Chief Minister urged all BLOs to continue their duties with confidence and not be influenced by comments from national opposition leaders. He stated that misinformation and rumours were being circulated regarding the SIR exercise and emphasised that the verification process is temporary but crucial for maintaining accurate voter lists.

According to officials, the purpose of the exercise is to remove duplicate, deceased or ineligible entries from the voter rolls and ensure the inclusion of eligible new



## Opposition questions safety concerns after reports of BLO deaths during field duties

voters. The Deputy CM stated that SIR is essential for the integrity of the democratic system and clarified that the process should not be misconstrued as targeting any particular group.

Opposition parties, however, continue to demand a longer extension and blame the government for inadequate safeguards for field staff. The debate around SIR is expected to intensify as political temperatures rise.

## ₹1,984 Crore released to boost paddy procurement

LUCKNOW

The UP government has increased the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of paddy by ₹69 per quintal for the current procurement season. Officials informed during a review meeting that the MSP for common paddy is now ₹2,369 per quintal, while Grade-A stands at ₹2,389 per quintal. A total of 4,227 procurement centres are operational across the state, and the government has directed that this number be raised to 5,000 to ensure farmers can sell their produce closer to their villages and towns.

According to departmental data, 1,51,030 farmers have sold 9.02 lakh metric tonnes of paddy till 30 November. Payments amounting to more



## State government directs expansion of paddy procurement centres to 5,000 for easier farmer access

than ₹1,984 crore have been transferred directly to their bank accounts. Officials were instructed to ensure that no delay occurs at any stage of the payment process and that farmers face no difficulty at procurement centres.

The meeting also reviewed the supply of fortified rice to mid-day meal schemes and Anganwadi centres. Authorities reported that around 2,130 metric tonnes of FRK have passed quality checks. Instructions were issued to increase the number of vendors and resolve technical issues quickly to maintain uninterrupted supply.

The government also stressed the need to maintain adequate availability of fertilisers and seeds across districts. Officials were directed to regularly monitor stock levels and ensure that farmers do not encounter shortages. Additional manpower may be deployed at procurement centres to prevent long queues and avoid sending farmers back without selling their produce.

## Gindo Devi College observes world AIDS day



BADAUN

Gindo Devi Women's College, Badaun, observed World AIDS Day with a seminar, poster competition, and an awareness rally flagged off by the CMO. DRDA Project Director Akhilesh Chaubey led a signature campaign. Health officials stressed safe practices under the theme "Barriers Will Be Overcome." Principal Dr. Chakravarti encouraged students to promote awareness and avoid discrimination.

## ISRO's low cost satellite could change earthquake forecasting

LUCKNOW

A senior ISRO scientist has stated that India has developed an advanced deep-earth imaging satellite at a fraction of the cost spent by its American counterpart. According to Dr. Anil Kumar, Director of the Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network, NASA built a similar satellite for approximately 12,000 crore rupees, while ISRO accomplished the task for nearly 1,000 crore. He spoke during a convocation event at a university in Lucknow.

Dr. Kumar explained that the satellite, developed over 11 years since 2014, is capable of capturing subsurface images of Earth. The technology can help identify geological layers, mineral reserves, and under-



## ISRO develops earth imaging satellite at one-tenth NASA's cost

ground formations. Most importantly, it may assist in early assessment of potential natural disasters such as earthquakes, helping reduce loss of life and property.

He added that the project did not require India to install a separate 12-meter antenna,

unlike NASA. Though he did not disclose certain details related to national security, Dr. Kumar mentioned that ISRO systems played a significant role in Operation Sindoor.

The scientist also outlined India's upcoming space objectives. ISRO aims to establish an Indian space station by 2035, with astronauts expected to land on the Moon and return safely by 2040. Preparations for Gaganyaan continue, with uncrewed missions planned before the main human mission.

India's future projects include Chandrayaan-4, a new Mars mission, and the AXOM astronomy observatory. Chandrayaan-4, approved in 2024, will return lunar soil samples to Earth using multiple modules, landers, and propulsion stages.

## Only female officers can document testimonies of female victims: HC

LUCKNOW

Following strict observations from the High Court regarding procedural lapses in criminal investigations, the Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police (DGP) has issued a formal order requiring that statements of female victims be recorded exclusively by women police officers. The directive was communicated through an official letter sent to all field units.

According to the High Court's communication dated October 15, multiple cases had surfaced in which witness statements were taken improperly, including instances where signatures of witnesses were obtained despite legal guidelines advising against it. In several cases, statements of female victims



## DGP issues statewide instructions after High Court notes repeated procedural lapses

were reportedly recorded by male personnel, prompting judicial concern over procedural violations.

The DGP clarified that the provisions of the Indian Civil Security Code must be followed strictly during investigation. Any deviation, the order stated, weakens the case and indirectly benefits the accused while obstructing the victim's right to justice.

## Akhilesh, Masood intensify attack over voter list controversy

LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remark asking the Opposition "not to create drama" triggered reactions across several parties, with Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav questioning the government's handling of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter lists and the recent deaths of Booth Level Officers (BLOs). Speaking outside Parliament, he said the deaths cannot be dismissed and alleged that BLOs are under pressure during the ongoing revision work.

Akhilesh further claimed BLOs in several districts are facing difficulties in filling forms due to inadequate training. According to SP leaders, BLO workload has led to multiple deaths in Uttar



## Claims of voter deletion, pressure on BLOs dominate Winter Session discussions

Pradesh—eight so far, including three suicides and five cases attributed to heart attack or brain haemorrhage.

Congress MP Imran Masood also criticised the government, questioning how the ruling party continues to strengthen its position despite anti-incumbency. He alleged irregularities involving EVMS

and the Election Commission, demanding a detailed parliamentary discussion on the issue. Inside the Winter Session, Opposition parties repeatedly pressed for a debate on SIR, arguing that large-scale voter deletions have taken place in several constituencies. SP MPs claimed many valid voters were categorised incorrectly or removed without proper verification. BJP MPs countered these allegations, stating that SIR is being carried out under Election Commission supervision and accusing the Opposition of disrupting Parliamentary proceedings for political reasons.

The ongoing standoff between the Treasury and Opposition benches continued through the day, with frequent adjournments and coordinated protests.

## NIA raids house of Dr Shaheen

LUCKNOW

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) conducted a raid on the Lucknow residence of Dr Shaheen Saeed on Monday in connection with the ongoing investigation into the Delhi car blast case. Two NIA teams searched the house located in the Khandari Bazaar area, questioning her father and brother during the operation. The agency previously conducted raids in Faridabad and Gurugram linked to the same case.

Officials confirmed that the search lasted around six hours, during which certain documents and electronic devices were seized. The NIA teams did not respond to media questions about the material recovered. Sources indicated that the investigation is



## Search lasted nearly six hours, documents and electronic material recovered by the agency

focused on identifying individuals suspected of providing support, funding or logistical help to the alleged terror module involved in the Delhi blast.

The action on Monday was part of a wider coordinated operation. Raids were also carried out in Kulgam, Shopian, Pulwama and Sambura in Jammu & Kashmir.

## initiative

## India eyes Russian market for leather revival

KANPUR

India's leather industry is preparing to reopen major trade ties with Russia after a gap of nearly four decades. Exporters from Uttar Pradesh, particularly Kanpur, say the recent 50 percent tariff imposed by the United States on Indian goods has severely impacted their business. In 2024-25, the total exports from Uttar Pradesh stood at ₹1.86 lakh crore, of which 19 percent depended on the US market. The tariff disruption has pushed exporters to look for alternative destinations,



and Russia has now shown strong interest.

In response, a 22-member delegation from the Council for Leather Exports (CLE) will visit Russia between December 8 and 10. According to CLE's regional chairman Asad Iraqi, the visit will focus on launching

## CLE's 22-member delegation to visit Russia from December 8-10 for joint venture discussions

a joint venture programme with Russian partners. This initiative is expected to provide Indian manufacturers with an opportunity to operate directly in the Russian market.

Kanpur and other UP cities once supplied large volumes of leather to Russia. Although

shipments declined over the past several years, exporters believe that trade can now regain momentum. Meetings between Indian exporters and Russian buyers are also scheduled in Delhi ahead of the official visit, where market expansion and supply chains will be discussed. Officials from the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) noted that Kanpur manufactures over 30 quality products for export. Leather remains the city's flagship commodity, with strong demand previously recorded in countries such as the US, Brazil, Germany, Australia, Italy and

Poland. Kanpur's total export value is around ₹10,000 crore annually, with leather products accounting for ₹6,000-6,500 crore.

FIEO's assessment shows that bilateral trade between India and Russia reached 68.7 billion USD in 2024-25. Exporters expect that tapping into this market will help stabilise and expand the leather sector, which has faced significant setbacks in recent months. CLE Chairman R. K. Jalan stated that the roadmap with Russia is now clear, and leading exporters from across India will participate in the December visit.



## Janata Darshan

Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya addressed citizens at Janata Darshan in Lucknow. He listened to issues on land, revenue, healthcare, pensions, infrastructure, and urged swift, accountable solutions. "Government is committed no one returns disappointed".



# Japan princess' admiration sparks succession law debate

TOKYO

Debate over Japan's imperial succession has reignited as Princess Aiko marks her 24th birthday, with growing public admiration for the young royal fueling calls to reform the male-only monarchy law. Under the 1947 Imperial House Law, only males in the paternal line may inherit the Chrysanthemum Throne, barring Aiko—the only child

of Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako—from becoming monarch. With the royal family shrinking rapidly, many warn that without legal reform the world's oldest hereditary monarchy risks eventual extinction. Recent public appearances have intensified discussion. During a state visit to peace memorial locations linked to Nagasaki and Hiroshima, crowds repeatedly chanted

Aiko's name—often louder than cheers for her parents. Analysts say the enthusiasm reflects a generational shift, with many viewing her as a symbol of empathy, intelligence and modernity. Her six-day solo diplomatic mission to Laos, where she met national leaders, visited UNESCO sites and engaged with citizens, further strengthened public perception of her readiness for a larger role.



Support for reform is also emerging from unexpected quarters. Atomic bombing survivor Setsuko Matsuo praised Aiko's "reassuring smile," while prominent Manga artist Yoshinori Kobayashi has distributed pro-reform comics to lawmakers at the National Diet. Social media advocates like campaigner Ikuko Yamazaki argue that allowing Aiko to ascend would reshape Japan's gender norms and

strengthen women's status in society. Public sympathy also stems from the family's challenges. Soon after Aiko's birth, Empress Masako—a Harvard-educated former diplomat—developed stress-related illness, widely believed to stem from pressure to produce a male heir. Princess Aiko herself experienced childhood bullying and intense public scrutiny yet has continued her palace

duties, ceremonial responsibilities and work with the Japanese Red Cross. Japan now has only one male heir of the younger generation—Prince Hisahito, son of Crown Prince Akihshino—placing the monarchy's future on a single successor. Scholars such as Professor Hideya Kawanishi warn that any spouse of Hisahito could face overwhelming pressure to produce another male heir.

## RUS-UKRAINE PEACE PLAN| US says Kremlin engagement essential as Ukraine talks move to Moscow

# Russia must be part of the equation, says Rubio

FLORIDA

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio stressed Sunday that Russia must be "part of the equation" in securing peace in Ukraine, following high-level negotiations with a Ukrainian delegation in Florida. The statement came after talks centered on President Donald Trump's evolving peace roadmap aimed at ending the prolonged conflict.

The meeting, hosted at a diplomatic venue in Florida, included Ukraine's top security official Rustem Umerov leading the Kiev negotiation team. The discussions were also at-

tended by US peace envoy Steve Witkoff and senior adviser Mike Waltz. Rubio described the negotiations as having made progress, but underlined that key issues remain unresolved. "There are a lot of moving parts and another party involved," Rubio said, referring to Russia's essential role in the peace framework. He confirmed that the US has maintained back-channel communication with Moscow, giving Washington a "pretty good understanding" of Russia's stance.

Witkoff is set to continue the diplomatic process this week with a scheduled trip to Moscow, signaling direct US

engagement with the Kremlin. Rubio's remarks carry strategic importance, as critics in Ukraine and parts of the West have claimed Trump's proposals lean toward Russian interests. The US leadership insists, however, that consultations with both sides have shaped the plan, which was later refined during November diplomatic sessions.

Umerov termed the Florida dialogue "difficult yet productive," noting "tangible progress toward a just peace." While optimism has surfaced in official Ukrainian messaging, core disagreements persist. Ukraine has repeatedly declined several of Russia's con-

ditions, particularly troop withdrawal proposals and formal acknowledgment of territorial control changes in eastern conflict zones. The Donbass question and border recognition remain central sticking points.

Last week, Russian President Vladimir Putin pointed out that a ceasefire is unat-

tainable while Ukrainian forces occupy areas Moscow considers Russian territory. The Kremlin maintains that any halt to hostilities must factor in ground realities and territorial assertions. Putin's position highlights the widening trust gap and the complexity of negotiating a synchronized ceasefire timeline.



There are a lot of moving parts and another party involved  
**Marco Rubio**  
US Secretary of State

## NATO blocked — CNN

CNN reported that NATO members are considering a plan to bar Ukraine from joining the bloc without forcing a legal withdrawal of its ambition. Ukraine has rejected neutrality and refuses to amend its constitution where accession is enshrined. The revised proposal discussed in Florida allows Ukraine to keep NATO goals on paper, while the US and allied bloc members create bilateral or multilateral security understandings with Russia to prevent real entry. The source said Ukraine would not be legally pushed to drop the aspiration. Negotiators also reviewed troop pullback options from eastern conflict zones, calling the matter highly sensitive.

## Zelenskyy, Macron discuss peace terms

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met French President Emmanuel Macron at the Élysée Palace Monday, part of intense diplomacy for a possible ceasefire. The talks followed Ukraine-US meetings in Florida, labeled productive by Washington. Europe has criticized the US peace concept, claiming it favors Russia, though the plan is under revision. Macron urged Western partners to give Ukraine strong, lasting guarantees and supported deploying a reassurance force across land, sea and air to secure stability. Meanwhile, Vladimir Putin is set to meet US envoy later in Moscow, keeping the diplomatic window open despite disagreements.

## Ukraine want nukes

GrahamUS Senator Lindsey Graham rejected Ukraine's push for NATO entry or nuclear weapons after an op-ed by ex-army chief and UK envoy Valery Zaluzhny. Zaluzhny proposed NATO membership, nuclear deployment on Ukrainian soil and large allied military backing as security guarantees.

## Arms sales surge to record high globally, SIPRI

**Agencies**  
STOCKHOLM

Global arms sales reached a historic milestone as the world's top weapons manufacturers recorded a combined revenue of USD 679 billion in 2024, marking the highest figure ever documented by the Sweden-based think-tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

The spike an annual rise of nearly 6% was driven by major conflicts in eastern Europe and the Middle East, as well as heightened geopolitical tensions and increased defense spending.

India's defense industry

emerged among notable regional growth contributors.

The three Indian firms featured in the global ranking—Hindustan Aeronautics, Bharat Electronics, and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders—posted a collective revenue increase, supported largely by domestic military procurement.

The rise signals expanding production capacity and growing order books within the region.

The top five global arms companies—Lockheed Martin, RTX, UK-based BAE Systems, along with other US majors—each reported revenue growth for the first time in years.



FILE PIC

## Trump says will release MRI results

WASHINGTON DC

President Donald Trump said Sunday that he would release the results of his MRI test that he received in October.

"If you want to have it released, I'll release it," the president said during an exchange with reporters as he travelled back to Washington from Florida.

He said the results of the MRI were "perfect." The White House has so far declined to detail why Trump had an MRI during his physical last month, or on what part of his body he got the MRI.

The press secretary, Karoline Leavitt, has said that the president received "advanced imaging" at Walter Reed National Military Medical Centre "as part of his routine physical examination" and that the results showed Trump remains in "exceptional physical health." Trump added Sunday that he has "no idea" on what part of his body he got the MRI.

## Palestinian state must for peace, says Pope

BEIRUT

Pope Leo reaffirmed that a Palestinian state is the only sustainable solution to the long-running conflict between Israel and Palestine, reiterating the official position of the Vatican and the global Catholic Church.

Speaking to journalists aboard a papal flight from Turkey to Lebanon, Leo said persistent rejection of the plan by Israel cannot derail the push for peace. "We see it

as the only solution, with justice for everyone," he remarked in Italian.

The pope, who earlier visited Turkey on his first overseas trip since his election in May, said talks with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan covered both the Israel-Palestine and the Russia-Ukraine wars.

He praised Turkey for religious co-existence, noting communities of different faiths live peacefully, citing it as a model the world should emulate.

## Child abuse, exploitation in Pak madrasas

NAIROBI

Sexual abuse in Pakistan's madrasas forms part of a wider pattern of exploitation, with some institutions implicated in child trafficking -- recruiting boys under the guise of religious education and pushing them into forced labour, militancy, or domestic servitude, a report said on Monday.

It added that the absence of oversight enables these networks to operate with alarming ease, and dismissing them as actions of a few "bad apples" ignores the structural reality that such abuse is the inevitable outcome of leaving millions of children in unregulated and unaccountable institutions.

"The recent arrests of madrasa teachers in Haripur and Muzaffargarh — accused of

sexually assaulting children as young as five — are not isolated horrors. They reflect a deeper, systemic crisis Pakistan has long refused to confront: the intersection of poverty, clerical authority, and institutional silence that allows child abuse in madrasas to thrive in the shadows," a report in Kenyan news outlet 'Capital News' detailed.

"For millions of improv-

erished families, madrasas are the only accessible form of education.

They promise free learning, food, and religious grounding — a lifeline for parents with few alternatives. But this dependency has created one of the most unregulated child-serving sectors in the country. Where oversight collapses, abuse finds fertile ground," it added.

## RUSSIA-SAUDI SIGN VISA-FREE PACT

**Agencies**  
RIYADH

Riyadh hosted a key diplomatic breakthrough Monday as officials from Moscow and the Saudi Kingdom signed an agreement enabling visa-free travel for citizens of both nations.

The pact, co-led by Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Novak, allows stays of up to 90 days per year, excluding employment, long-term study, and permanent residence, which will still require separate permits. The Hajj pilgrimage and religious travel are also not covered under the waiver.

## Netanyahu appears in court

TEL AVIV

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appeared in court on Monday for the first time since asking the country's president for a pardon in his long-running corruption trial, a move backed by close ally U.S. President Donald Trump.

## Rage bait crowned Word of the Year by OUP

LONDON

Online outrage culture has entered mainstream language as rage bait was named the 2025 Word of the Year by the prestigious Oxford University Press. The announcement was made by its global language division, Oxford Languages, which oversees word trends for the iconic Oxford English Dictionary. According to OUP, rage bait refers to online posts or media intentionally crafted to provoke anger, frustration, or moral outrage—typically to drive clicks, comments, and

social traffic.

The publisher's internal language tracking found the term surged sharply in the past year, rising threefold in digital usage.

Linguist and OUP executive Casper Grathwohl linked the trend to evolving emotional manipulation online, noting the internet has shifted from sparking curiosity to actively hijacking emotions for engagement.

Grathwohl compared the 2025 pick to last year's viral word 'brain rot', published by OUP's experts in their 2024 language review, which captured the mental exhaustion

of endless scrolling.

He warned the two trends now form a cycle where outrage drives engagement, algorithms amplify negativity, and constant exposure drains

digital wellbeing.

The final decision followed a global voting campaign run on OUP's official platforms for three days, receiving thousands of public responses.



Experts said 2025's unstable news cycle, rising social unrest, digital regulation debates, and concerns about emotional and mental wellbeing online made the term a defining cultural marker.

Historically, click-driven provocation was described by the term clickbait, formally documented by Merriam-Webster in earlier digital language definitions.

However, OUP stated that rage bait is more specific, targeting polarisation, discord, and emotional shock value—especially anger.

The compound pairs "rage," meaning an intense



## Shahid Kapoor on why he played a drug addict



Shahid in Udta Punjab

**B**ollywood actor Shahid Kapoor played one of the most defining roles of his career as the chaotic and controversial drug-addict musician Tommy Singh, known for his energetic songs with lyrics glorifying violence and drug use. Shahid revealed that his first question to director Abhishek Chaubey was, "Why are you coming to me?"

Talking in a session at IFFI, Shahid shared, "I don't drink. I've never been high. I don't know how to do this. So this is as far away from my reality as it can get, and he said, but I think you're a good actor, and if you're a good actor, you should be able to do something which you have not done in your life."

He stated that, in the beginning, the only way he could get into the role was when Abhishek shared a lot of footage with him. He felt the makers wanted to explore addiction and the rockstar persona of Tommy, living that nocturnal, no-

holds-barred lifestyle for 40 days.

"I think most of the film was at night, and I was eating very little food, surviving a lot on black coffee. He was one of the most experimental characters that I've played, and it's unreal," Kapoor added.

Apart from Shahid, Udta Punjab also starred Alia Bhatt, Kareena Kapoor Khan, and Diljit Dosanjh.

The film had also sparked controversy when the CBFC asked the makers to drop the word 'Punjab' from the title. The tussle between co-producer Anurag Kashyap and CBFC chief Pahlaj Nihalani further intensified the buzz, with the censor board even demanding 89 cuts.

Shahid Kapoor played the role of drug-addict musician Tommy Singh in Udta Punjab. He revealed his first question to director Abhishek Chaubey was, "Why are you coming to me?"

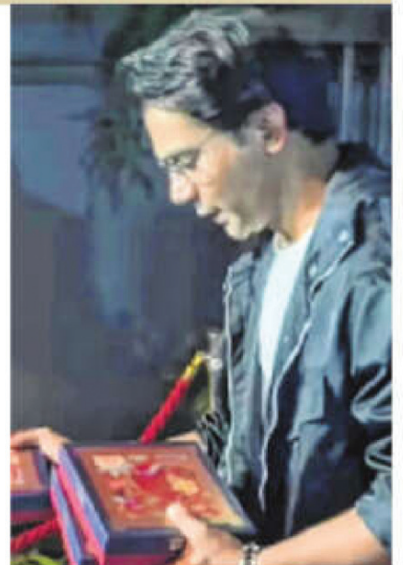


Actor Rajkummar Rao and his wife, Patralekhaa, welcomed their first child, a baby girl, on November 15, their fourth wedding anniversary

## New dad Rajkummar Rao distributes sweets to paps

**B**ollywood actor Rajkummar Rao welcomed his first child, a baby girl, with his wife, Patralekhaa, on November 15, which also marked their fourth wedding anniversary. The couple had earlier shared the happy news with their fans and followers on Instagram.

On Sunday evening, Rajkummar attended the We The Women event in Mumbai, where he sweetly handed out boxes of sweets to the paparazzi at the venue to celebrate his daughter's birth. Dressed casually in a white round-neck T-shirt and a black jacket, the actor smiled as the paps congratulated him, to which he responded simply, "Thank you." Later, the paps also asked whether the couple had chosen a name for their baby girl. He replied, "Abhi nahi (Not yet)."



## 'Rumours are free PR', Mrunal Thakur



**I**n a witty and chucklesome Instagram story, actress Mrunal Thakur has indicated to shut down all the rumours of her secret dating life, which is being linked with popular cricketer Shreyas Iyer as well as actor and filmmaker Dhanush. The actress has been the talk of the town since she was seen commenting on Dhanush's social media posts and vice versa. While her alleged secret dating with Shreyas Iyer remains a conspiracy theory.

Son Of Sardar 2 actress posted a video on her Instagram story featuring her mom. In the

In a witty and chucklesome Instagram story, actress Mrunal Thakur has indicated to shut down all the rumours of her secret dating life, which is being linked with Shreyas Iyer as well as Dhanush

clip, Mrunal and her mother can be seen laughing while looking at the camera, and her mother is giving her a head massage. Mrunal wrote in her story, "They talk, we laugh. (With laughing tears emojis)." Further, she also wrote, "P.S. Rumours are free PR, and I love free stuff."

However, Mrunal has not specifically called off the dating ru-

mours, and it remains a question which exact rumour she is hinting at. But, netizens are claiming that the viral post seems to be hinting at the speculations of the actress dating or being involved with either Dhanush or Shreyas Iyer.

The rumours of Mrunal dating Dhanush spread recently when the actor attended her star-studded birthday celebration on

August 1, and a viral video of them sharing a warm hug at the 'Son of Sardar 2' premiere.

For weeks, there have been rumours on social media that Mrunal and Shreyas Iyer had been secretly dating. The speculation emerged on Reddit before receiving popularity across platforms.

Mrunal was last seen in Son of Sardar 2 starring against Ajay Devgn. She is now reportedly filming for Do Deewane Seher Mein, a Sanjay Leela Bhansali-backed movie, directed by Ravi Udyawar, starring Mrunal and Siddhant Chaturvedi as lead actors. The film is scheduled to release in February 2026.

## Smriti Mandhana's fiancé Palash Muchhal makes first public appearance

Palash Muchhal made his first public appearance on Monday amid cheating allegations following his postponed wedding to cricketer Smriti Mandhana



**M**usic composer Palash Muchhal's wedding to Indian women's cricket team vice-captain Smriti Mandhana has been making headlines recently, especially following cheating allegations against him. Their wedding was postponed after Smriti's father suffered heart attack-like symptoms on the day of the ceremony and was rushed to a hospital in Sangli, her hometown. A day later, Palash was also admitted to the hospital after his condition worsened due to a viral infection and increased acidity.

Amid the cheating scandal, Palash made his first public appearance on Monday, December 1, accompanied by his family. He was spotted exiting the airport terminal in an all-black outfit. When approached by paparazzi, he nodded in acknowledgment.

After the wedding was postponed, Smriti removed all pictures and videos from her engagement and pre-wedding festivities from her Instagram account. However, Palash still has all his posts featuring Smriti on his account.

Amid cheating allegations, earlier, Palash's cousin Neeti Tak defended him, and wrote on her Instagram story, "Palash is going through a critical condition today, you all should not judge Palash as wrong without knowing the truth."

After Palash and Smriti's wedding got cancelled, screenshots shared on Reddit allegedly showed him flirting with a woman named Mary D'Costa. The chats show him inviting her for a swim, a spa outing and an early morning walk on Versova beach. The chats also mention him allegedly saying that his long-distance relationship 'sucks'.

Earlier, rumours were suggesting that Palash allegedly cheated with a dance choreographer, with names like Nandika Dwivedi and Gulnaaz circulating online. Both choreographers have publicly denied any involvement, asserting that the allegations are baseless.

As of now, neither Smriti nor Palash has reacted to the cheating allegations.

## Meezaan says he auditioned for Diljit's role in Amar Singh Chamkila

**J**aved Jaaferi's son, Meezaan Jafri, who recently won hearts with his performance in De De Pyaar De 2, revealed that he has auditioned for Imtiaz Ali several times. He also shared that he auditioned for Amar Singh Chamkila for Diljit Dosanjh's role but was eventually not selected.

Appearing on Varinder Chawla's podcast, Meezaan said, "I have auditioned for Imtiaz (Ali) sir so many times. I auditioned for Chamkila. I did the full stache, wore the pagdi, and I even learnt one of Amar Singh Chamkila's songs in Punjabi. A suitable actor had been taken up for the right role. No matter, I went for it dil se."

He added that he will continue auditioning for other roles, as it is his job as an actor, and something he truly loves.

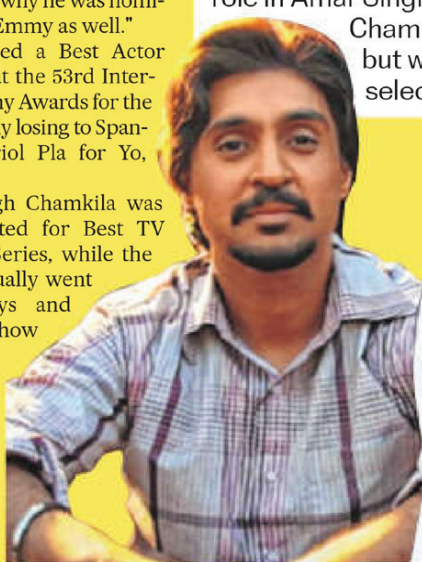
Talking about Diljit playing the lead, Meezaan added, "Imtiaz sir made a great choice. He (Diljit) knows the language, he knows the flavour; it's the world he comes from. And Diljit sir has absolutely smashed it in the film, which is why he was nominated for an Emmy as well."

Diljit earned a Best Actor nomination at the 53rd International Emmy Awards for the film, ultimately losing to Spanish actor Oriol Pla for Yo, Adioto.

Amar Singh Chamkila was also nominated for Best TV Movie/Mini-Series, while the award eventually went to Lost Boys and Fairies, a show about a gay couple from Cardiff embarking on an adoption journey.

Meezaan Jafri revealed that he has auditioned for Imtiaz Ali several times and even tried for Diljit Dosanjh's role in Amar Singh

Chamkila but wasn't selected





## Briefs

NEW DELHI

## Women's hockey chief coach resigns



Indian women's hockey team chief coach **Harendra Singh** on Monday resigned from the post with immediate effect citing "personal reasons". According to sources, Harendra sent an e-mail to Hockey India informing the apex body that he is resigning with immediate effect. Dutch tactician Sjoerd Marijne, who was head coach of the side that finished fourth at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, could return as the chief coach, according to sources. Marijne had resigned as head coach of the women's hockey team in August 2021. Harendra, who previously coached the United States men's hockey team, had assumed the post of chief coach in April 2024. Prior to that, he had coached India's junior men's team which won the World Cup in 2016 in Lucknow.

DOHA

## Verstappen clinches Qatar GP



One week after losing all their points from the Las Vegas Grand Prix, McLaren threw away a bunch more in an increasingly tense Formula 1 title race by botching a strategy call at the Qatar GP. Red Bull's **Max Verstappen** took full advantage of the unexpected gift to clinch a seventh win this season on Sunday - his 70th overall - as he closed the gap on championship leader Lando Norris from 24 points at the start of the weekend to 12 points, heading into next Sunday's title decider in Abu Dhabi. McLaren still has two drivers in contention, with Oscar Piastri four points behind Verstappen in third, but must stop the slide.

MALAGA (SPAIN)

## Avani, Aditi Ashok finish tied 11th



Indian golfers Avani Prashanth and **Aditi Ashok** carded 1-under 71 each to finish tied 11th at the season-ending Andalucia Costa del Sol Open de

**GOING STRONG** | Despite retiring from T20Is and Tests, Virat Kohli has shown that his ODI game remains unimpacted

# Steyn lavishes praise on Kohli's hunger for runs

RANCHI

Most sportsmen past their prime are happy to stay at home with their family and dog, but Virat Kohli at 37 still behaves like a spring chicken on the field, diving and running, like he "wants to be there," South African pacer Dale Steyn says.

Despite retiring from T20s and Tests, Kohli has shown that his ODI game remains unimpacted. The superstar, who turned 37 recently, scored his 52nd hundred in the first one-day against South Africa on Sunday.

"When you speak to most 37 or 38-year-olds, they say they hate leaving home, their dog, their kids. But he (Virat) is in a place mentally where he's eager to be out there playing for India. You can see it when he's running between the wickets, fielding and diving. He's mentally young, fresh, and wants to be here," Steyn told JioStar on Sunday.

"He's played over 300 ODIs in 15-16 years, so the experience is inside him. It's in his body and mind. Even if he arrived here after three days of rain, it wouldn't have affected his preparation. He's mentally strong, visualises well, and can see the ball onto the bat. That's what the best in the world do.

"They back themselves because they've been out there so many times. A key thing he said is that he's excited about playing," Steyn added.

Following his 83rd international hundred, Kohli had spoken about his mindset and preparation at this stage of his career.



India's Virat Kohli raises his bat as he celebrates his century during the first ODI. ANI

"I have never been a believer of a lot of preparation. All my cricket has been mental. I work physically very hard, as long as my fitness levels are up and I am feeling well, it's good," said Kohli.

"I've played 300-odd ODI games and so much cricket, if you're in touch with the game and are able to hit balls in the practice, if you bat for an hour or two in the nets, you know you're good," he said.



When you speak to most 37 or 38-year-olds, they say they hate leaving home, their dog, their kids. But he (Virat) is in a place mentally where he's eager to be out there playing for India.

Dale Steyn, former South Africa pacer

## Gill's fitness assessment to start at Centre of Excellence

Hardik Pandya cleared to play SMAT vs Punjab

NEW DELHI

India's T20I vice-captain Shubman Gill will be reporting at Bengaluru's Centre of Excellence on Monday for his mandatory fitness assessment protocols, which will determine his return to action for the upcoming five-match series against South Africa starting December 9.

Gill had sustained a neck injury while batting during the second day of the opening Test against South Africa in Kolkata and since then has missed the second Test and the ongoing ODI series.

Since the Indian T20I squad wouldn't have any surprises -- not even minor -- unless there are any injury issues, the selection committee headed by Ajit Agarkar will be waiting for Gill's fitness report from the Sports Science team at the COE. "Gill was administered an injection and advised 21 days of rest and rehabilitation, which included specific exercises to strengthen the muscles of the injured area. Obviously, the sports science team would go through all his



Gill was administered an injection and advised 21 days of rest and rehabilitation, which included specific exercises to strengthen the muscles of the injured area. Obviously, the sports science team would go through all his mandatory fitness tests before he starts the skills training. **BCCI source**

mandatory fitness tests before he starts the skills training.

"Nothing can be said unless the sports science team assesses his movements during skills training and whether he is having zero discomfort while batting," a

BCCI source privy to the developments told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

As of now, the chances of Gill's return for SA T20Is seems to be 50-50. Hardik Pandya will be back in action against Punjab on Tuesday.

## Once world-class players get going, difficult to stop them, says Jansen

Reflecting on Kohli's match-winning century in the first ODI, Jansen said the only realistic window for a bowler is in the first few deliveries

RANCHI

South Africa all-rounder Marco Jansen says stopping world-class batters like Virat Kohli becomes almost impossible once they settle in, admitting that the Indian star's ability to extend his innings makes him one of the toughest opponents to bowl to.

Reflecting on Kohli's match-winning century in the first ODI, Jansen said the only realistic window for a bowler is in the first few deliveries.

"When you bowl to world-class players, it's quite difficult to get them out. I always try to get a batter in his first 10 or 15 balls. That's when they're still getting used to the wicket," Jansen said.

"But once they're in, and they get on a roll, it's very difficult to stop them. Everyone here knows how to play - that's why you go to plan B or C."

Kohli hit his 52nd ODI hundred on Sunday to shape India's 17-run win that gave the hosts a 1-0 lead in the

## Kohli's future not a question, says Kotak

In the build-up to the three-match series, a few 'ifs and buts' emerged in the context of the 2027 ODI WC

RANCHI

India batting coach **Sitanshu Kotak** feels speculations surrounding Virat Kohli's impending ODI future "should not exist" given fitness, form and impact that the stalwart continues to make in 50-over cricket.

In the build-up to the three-match series, a few 'ifs and buts' emerged in the context of the 2027 ODI World Cup in Africa since both Kohli and Rohit Sharma play single format, raising questions whether the two mega stars are in head coach Gautam Gambhir's scheme of things.

Leading with a note of exasperation, Kotak said he simply could not understand why Kohli's place or longevity was being debated at all.

"I really don't know why actually we need to look at all this," Kotak said after India's close 17-run win in the first ODI against South Africa here on Sunday.

"He's batting so well. Why do we need to talk about his future? The way he's performing, the way his fitness is - there are no questions about anything," Kotak said clarity around roles, real-time learning and the experience shared by senior players matter far more at this stage than long-range projections. And in that context, he insisted, Kohli remains indispensable.

"He's just brilliant, man. As long as he keeps batting like this, there is no point talking about anything else."

The batting coach stressed that neither the players nor the team management are



I really don't know why actually we need to look at all this  
**Sitanshu Kotak**, India batting coach

thinking as far ahead as the 2027 World Cup, let alone framing discussions around senior players in those terms.

"I feel these things shouldn't happen. They (Ro-Ko) are brilliant, they are performing, and they are contributing to the team. For us, once the team comes and practice starts, we just enjoy. I don't even think we are talking anything about the 2027 World Cup."

Kotak said Kohli's century on Sunday - the 52nd of his ODI career - was not just a reminder of his pedigree but also an example of how seamlessly he continues to shoulder responsibility in a format he now prioritises.

"It was an outstanding knock. He batted really well, took responsibility and showed again why he is such an exceptional player," Kotak said.

Asked about Kohli's minor back discomfort during the innings, he added: "As much as I know, he's fine." Kotak also highlighted the significance of having both Rohit Sharma and Kohli back in the XI following the Test series defeat, saying their presence naturally lifts the group.

"They are such experienced players. The way they bat, the partnerships they build - like today (Sunday) - it makes a huge difference. They share their experience with the younger players, and that itself is a big advantage."

Reflecting on the match, Kotak said scoring runs became considerably easier for South Africa due to the heavy dew that set in during the second innings. "With so much dew, the bowler can't keep the ball in his hand. It skids and comes straight to the bat. If SA had batted second on the same surface, then 350 would be enough."



South Africa's Marco Jansen plays a shot during the first ODI. PTI

three-match series.

Jansen, who first bowled to Kohli as a 17-year-old net bowler during India's 2017-18 tour of South Africa, said the challenge of bowling to one of the modern greats remains both frustrating and enjoyable.

"It's nice to watch him play.

Growing up watching him on TV to actually bowling to him now. it's annoying but it's fun at the same time," he said. "He drives well, he pulls well, cuts well, plays with his pads well. I don't think much has changed - he's just batting longer and longer." On his own batting form in the series, the tall

When you bowl to world-class players, it's quite difficult to get them out. I always try to get a batter in his first 10 or 15 balls. That's when they're still getting used to the wicket

**Marco Jansen**  
SA all-rounder

left-hander said the presence of a settled top order has allowed him to play with freedom, even as he continues to make rapid strides as a lower-order batter in the ongoing white-ball series against India.

"It's always nice to walk in when the top five are on a roll. I'm just watching the ball and playing it as it comes. At the moment it's working for me." Jansen said the Proteas were not too disheartened.

### all-round

## Jansen's rise puts him among the most valuable assets

RANCHI

Marco Jansen's rapid evolution as a genuine fast-bowling all-rounder has given South Africa a rare two-in-one asset at a time when world cricket is short on pacers who can influence matches with both bat and ball.

The 25-year-old left-armer, once viewed primarily as a new-ball prospect, has grown into a player capable of shaping sessions with the

ball and altering momentum with his batting, making him central to South Africa's long-term plans across formats.

Jansen's bowling remains his biggest currency - steep bounce, natural angle across right-handers and the ability to extract movement even on slowing surfaces have already earned him several match-shaping spells.

His fuller length and improved control have added layers to his threat, pushing him into the leadership

bracket of South Africa's attack. Yet it is his batting progress that has elevated his overall value and offered balance the side has long missed.

No longer a hit-or-miss tailender, Jansen now walks in with a clearer method, often rescuing South Africa from difficult positions or extending competitive totals into winning ones.

"It's always nice to walk in when the top five are on a roll. I'm just watching the ball and playing it as it

comes. At the moment it's working for me," Jansen said. His most compelling statement with the bat came in the recent Guwahati Test against India in November 2025, when he smashed a 91-ball 93 at No. 9 to pull South Africa out of trouble.

Walking in at 334 for seven, he counter-attacked a tiring Indian attack with six fours and seven sixes, nearly becoming the first visiting No. 9 to score a Test hundred in India in more than six decades. His assault lifted South

Africa to a formidable 489 - a total that shifted the course of the match and allowed their bowlers to control proceedings. The significance of the knock was amplified by the match situation and the fluency with which he scored on a slowing surface.

This was not an isolated burst. Jansen had earlier produced a gritty 59 at Wellington to lift South Africa from a precarious position and steer them to a competitive first-innings total.



South Africa's Marco Jansen bowls a delivery during the first ODI. PTI