

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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

## Punjab Kings vs Delhi Capitals match called off in Dharamsala



### NEW DELHI:

The match between Punjab Kings (PBKS) and Delhi Capitals (DC) has been called off at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) in Dharamsala. The players and fans has been asked to evacuate the stadium. Earlier, Punjab Kings skipper Shreyas Iyer won the toss and elected to bat against Delhi Capitals in a rain-delayed match. The match was delayed by an hour but no overs have been lost. PBKS fielded an unchanged side, while DC made one change replacing Vipraj Nigam with Madhav Tiwari. Punjab Kings: Prabhsimran Singh, Priyansh Arya, Shreyas Iyer (c), Josh Inglis (wk), Shashank Singh, Nehal Wadhera, Marcus Stoinis, Marco Jansen, Azmatullah Omarzai, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh. Delhi Capitals: Faf du Plessis, Abishek Porel(w), KL Rahul, Sameer Rizvi, Axar Patel(c), Tristan Stubbs, Madhav Tiwari, Mitchell Starc, Dushmantha Chameera, Kuldeep Yadav, T Natarajan.

## India shoots down at least 2 Pakistan fighter jets: Report

**NEW DELHI:** India has shot down two fighter jets of Pakistan in a strong retaliatory action by air defence system on Thursday evening. Multiple sources also told ANI that a Pakistani Air Force jet has been shot down in the Pathankot sector by Indian air defence. However, official government confirmation is awaited. The Indian action came in response to coordinated attacks by Pakistan across multiple locations across states on India-Pakistan border. Earlier to this, Pakistan targeted multiple locations in India using drones, but Indian air defence systems successfully intercepted and shot down many of them with advanced anti-drone technology. India's strong response to Pakistan's drone attack came as a part of its ongoing counterterror action under 'Operation Sindoor.' The operation was launched to avenge Pahalgam terror attack which was backed by Pakistani forces, that claimed 26 lives. **1971 wasn't half as terrifying for shell-shocked Poonch** Poonch didn't sleep a wink past midnight. In the dis-



tance, the ominous thunder of relentless Pakistani bombardment from across the LoC seemed to portend a danger that even 1971 didn't pose. Around 2am Thursday, when the first of the fireballs coursing through the night sky hit home, district Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee president Narinder Singh's mind raced back to when he was eight. "The 1971 War wasn't remotely as terrifying as what we experienced for six-odd hours till Thursday morning. Back then, my family and thousands of others remained in Poonch through the war without fear of coming in the line of fire. This is different, which is why most residents have already fled to safer places," he said. At the first light of dawn, businessman Aijaz Kazmi, in his late 50s, picked up his car keys to leave for Jammu with his

family. "After a shell exploded in our neighbourhood, I prayed the entire night for our safety," he said. As Kazmi drove through Poonch, the place looked different from the town he had grown up in. Almost all 17 wards bore the scars of shelling, which intermittently continued till around 11am. "Shri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Geeta Bhavan and a madrasa housed within a mosque were damaged. Many shops and other commercial buildings were struck by mortar fire," he said. The 16 casualties in Pakistani shelling across sectors in J&K included Amarjeet Singh, who would play the tabla during kirtan at Shri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, and Amreek Singh, a ragi (kirtan singer) at another Sikh temple in Poonch. A maulvi, Maulana Mohammad Iqbal.

## Pakistan army using cheap rockets, behaving like Hamas: Defence sources

**NEW DELHI:** As Pakistan launched airstrikes in several Jammu regions on Thursday, its army used "cheap rockets" and was "behaving like Hamas terror group", PTI reported citing defence sources. Indian Armed Forces intercepted eight missiles from Pakistan directed at Satwari (Jammu Airport), Samba, RS Pura and Arnia. Incidentally, there were reports of a meeting between ISI and Hamas operatives in Pakistan-

occupied Kashmir. Operation Sindoor India foils Pakistan's attack on Jammu airport: What we know so far Visuals and footage from Jammu strongly resemble a Hamas-style attack on Israel that took place on October 8, using multiple cheap rockets. Additionally, Pakistani forces initiated unprovoked shelling along the Line of Control in Kupwara and Baramulla districts late Thursday evening, prompting a

strong response from the Indian military, officials reported. The shelling targeted the Boniyar sector in Baramulla and the Tangdhar sector in Kupwara, though no casualties have been reported so far. A complete blackout has been enforced in Akhnoor, Kishtwar, Samba and other Jammu regions. Blackout has also been imposed in Amritsar, Jalandhar. Jaisalmer, Gurdaspur in Punjab.

## Cardinal Robert steps out as new pope, succeeds Pope Francis

**NEW DELHI:** Cardinal Robert Prevost made his first public appearance as the new pope on Thursday evening, stepping onto the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica shortly after white smoke rose from the Sistine Chapel — the traditional signal that a new pope has been elected. He succeeds Pope Francis who passed away recently. Prevost, 69, took the name Leo XIV. The first American pope, brings both missionary roots and deep Vatican experience with

him. As Prevost emerged, tens of thousands of people gathered in St Peter's Square erupted into cheers. Many applauded and some wept as the new pontiff offered his first blessing. The emotional moment followed hours of anticipation, with people from around the world watching the Vatican chimney for the telltale smoke. As per tradition, the announcement was made when a senior cardinal steps onto the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica.

## BJP sweeps Gujarat local body polls

**GANDHINAGAR:** Matching its unparalleled victory in the 2022 Gujarat assembly elections, BJP Tuesday notched up yet another spectacular performance by sweeping local body polls for Junagadh Municipal Corporation (JMC), 68 municipalities, three taluka panchayats and by-polls to several vacant local body seats. Although Congress improved its tally from 1 to 11, BJP won the JMC election comfortably, winning 48 of the 60 seats.

## What are kamikaze drones? The 'suicide drones' changing modern warfare

**NEW DELHI:** In a sharp military escalation following Pakistan's attempted strikes on military targets, India launched kamikaze drones on early Thursday morning and neutralised an air defence system in Lahore, the defence ministry said. The counteroffensive came hours after Pakistan targeted 15 Indian locations across Jammu, Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Gujarat using missiles and drones.



India foils Pakistan's attack on Jammu airport: What we know so far The Air Defence, using S-400 missile systems, surface-to-air missiles, and integrated counter-UAS grids, successfully intercepted multiple threats. The defence

ministry confirmed that Indian armed forces responded by targeting air defence radars and missile systems in multiple locations across Pakistan. One such precision strike destroyed a Pakistani air defence in Lahore, using loitering munitions known as kamikaze drones. These drones, also called suicide drones, are designed to loiter in the air before striking targets with high precision.

## Operation Sindoor: Several airports in India closed - check full list

**NEW DELHI:** Even as several airports across India are closed for commercial flights over the next few days following India's missile strikes on terrorist camps in Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Kashmir, a fresh advisory has been issued. The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) has instructed all airlines and airports across the country to enhance security measures. "All passengers at all airports will undergo Secondary Ladder Point Check (SLPC). Visitor entry to terminal buildings has been banned. Air Marshal will be deployed accordingly," the BCAS has reportedly said. In view of the latest advisory, airlines have asked passengers to reach airports well ahead

of the scheduled departure of flights. Air India shared on X (formerly Twitter), "In view of an order by the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security on enhanced measures at airports, passengers across India are advised to arrive at their respective airports at least three hours prior to scheduled departure to ensure smooth check-in and boarding. Check-in closes 75 mins before departure." Spicejet shared on X, "In light of enhanced security measures across all airports, passengers are advised to arrive at the airport at least 3 hours prior to departure to ensure a smooth check-in and boarding process." AkasaAir also issued a travel advisory saying, "Due to enhanced security.

**NEW DELHI:** US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Thursday spoke to foreign minister S Jaishankar and Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif urging "immediate de-escalation" of tensions between the two nations. He also asked Pakistan to end "any support to terrorist groups".s "Secretary Marco Rubio spoke today with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar. The Secretary emphasised the need for immediate de-escalation. He expressed US support for direct dialogue between India and Pakistan and encouraged continued efforts to improve communications. The Secretary reiterated his condolences for the horrific terrorist attack in Pahalgam and



reaffirmed the United States' commitment to work with India in the fight against terrorism," an official press statement said. Jaishankar assured that the response from India's side has been "targeted and measured". "Spoke with US @SecRubio this evening. Deeply appreciate US commitment to

work with India in the fight against terrorism. Underlined India's targeted and measured response to cross-border terrorism. Will firmly counter any attempts at escalation," he said in a post on X. "He also emphasised upon the need for both Pakistan and India to work closely to de-escalate the situation,"

PTI reported citing state-run Radio Pakistan. This came as Pakistan launched air strikes in border areas of Jammu, including Jammu airport, prompting response from Indian Air Defence system. The latter intercepted 8 missiles at Satwari, Samba, RS Pura and Arnia sector, ANI reported citing defence officials. This came in retaliation to Operation Sindoor by Indian Armed Forces that targeted nine terrorist camps in Pakistan and PoK. A complete blackout has been enforced in Akhnoor, Kishtwar, Samba and other Jammu regions. Blackout has also been imposed in Amritsar, Jalandhar, Jaisalmer, Gurdaspur in Punjab along with Bikaner, Rajasthan.

## Right to reside in India only for citizens, Rohingya must go

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to stay the purported deportation of illegal Rohingyas Muslim migrants from Delhi, to stop which senior advocate Colin Gonsalves and counsel Prasahant Bhushan had rushed with pleas claiming Rohingyas face genocide in Myanmar and argued that as refugees they have a right to stay in India. A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Dipankar Datta and N Kotiswar Singh said the right to reside anywhere in India is available only to its citizens and non-Indians would be dealt with in accordance with the Foreigners Act. It posted the pleas for hearing on July 31. Solicitor general Tushar Mehta .

## 'I will return': Hasina accuses Yunus of 'unleashing terrorists'

**NEW DELHI:** Deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina blamed Bangladesh's interim government leader Muhammad Yunus for the country's "lawlessness" and vowed to return back to her country. During a one-on-one interaction on Zoom with widows of four policemen killed during last July's student uprising, Hasina claimed Yunus has "unleashed terrorists" on its citizens, PTI news agency reported. Hasina's 16-year Awami League administration ended following a student uprising on August 5, 2024, forcing her to seek refuge in India. Hasina said, "He (Yunus) dissolved all inquiry committees and unleashed terrorists to butcher people. They are destroying Bangladesh." The conversation, which surfaced on social media.

## Don't be surprised if the two NCP factions unite: Sharad Pawar

**PUNE:** NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar set political circles buzzing Thursday when he hinted at the possibility of two NCP factions reuniting in the future. After Pawar's statement, both camps of NCP sent out positive signals about possibility of a reunion. During an informal chat with the media, Pawar said a section of his party was in favour of joining hands with the Ajit Pawar-led NCP. As

far as a decision on reunion goes, the politician said he was not "actively involved in taking such decisions". Pawar said his daughter Supriya Sule, also NCP (SP)'s working president, would have to sit and discuss the matter with her cousin, Ajit Pawar. "If the reunion happens, it should not surprise others," Sharad Pawar said. Ever since NCP split on July 2, 2023, both factions were vocal against

each other. During last year's LS and assembly elections, both NCP factions not only fielded candidates against each other but also got engaged in the fiercest poll campaigns. A significant change was, however, noticed after assembly polls when the Ajit faction made substantial gains by winning 41 of 59 seats it contested. Deputy CM Ajit Pawar, who avoided sharing stage .



## Jai Shiv Sena to donate blood for Army

Prayagraj: Jai Shiv Sena Uttar Pradesh State President Abhishek Thakur held a meeting with Jai Shiv Sainiks in Meerapur office and said that due to the war going on



between India and Pakistan; it has been decided to donate blood towards the Indian soldiers serving Maa Bharati which will be dedicated to the soldiers of Indian Army. Rajesh Kesarwani, Monu Seth, Abhilash Kesarwani, Rajat Sonkar, Rajesh Srivastava, Shri Ram Chaurasia, Dinesh Kanauija, Akhilesh Srivastava and other workers were present in the meeting.

## Formation of Electro Homeopathy Board in UP discussed

Prayagraj: Under the banner of The Electrohomeopathic Medical Practitioner Association, a meeting was called at Kamala Nehru Electronopathic Medical Institute, Rambagh, in which the formation of Electro Homeopathy Board in Uttar Pradesh on the lines of Rajasthan was discussed, for which all the senior doctors present decided that the delegation of Electro Homeopathy under the leadership of the state's Cabinet Minister, Honorable Sanjay Nishad ji, will meet the Health Minister of Uttar Pradesh and Deputy Chief Minister, Brijesh Pathak ji, and submit a representation to him. Mainly Dr. Pramod Shukla, Dr. Shailendra Srivastava, Dr. Ashok Shukla, Dr. Shyam Dev, Dr. OP, Dr. OP Pal, Dr. Pramod Sharma, Dr. Hemant Prajapati and honorable doctor brothers from Prayagraj were present in it.

## Rosetta Hospitality reaches new heights, unwind in luxury

New Delhi: Q1. Can you share insights into Rosetta Hospitality's upcoming projects and your strategies for market expansion in the luxury hospitality sector? At Rosetta Hospitality, we aim at three key growth parameters. Firstly, we are focused on expanding in prime leisure destinations across South India. Secondly, each location is carefully selected to be within driving distance from major cities, making our resorts easily accessible. Finally, and most importantly, we are committed to bringing Rosetta's signature lifestyle experiences-such as our arrival, sleeping, and F&B experiences-to all our resorts, ensuring consistency and luxury across every property.

Our upcoming projects reflect this vision. We recently launched Elements by Rosetta - Varca, Goa, and are already working on Phase II of this property, which will add around 70 luxurious suites to the existing facility. In the near future, we are excited to introduce resorts in key locations such as Kalyapura (near Bengaluru), Kochi, Mahabalipuram, Munnar, and Udaipur, with each project offering a unique blend of luxury experiences tailored to their specific region. Our market expansion strategy also emphasizes an asset-light model, enabling us to lease properties rather than own them outright. For every owned property, we plan to add four leased properties, allowing us to scale faster and explore more destinations. The surge in luxury domestic tourism in India further fuels our optimism and expansion efforts.

In addition, we continue to invest in premium F&B experiences, with Ouzo by Fire in Indiranagar, Bangalore, serving as a prime example of how we integrate regional cuisine into our offerings. By offering Goan dishes, we are catering to the growing demand for regional, authentic dining experiences that align with our hospitality vision.

Q2. How does Rosetta Hospitality implement its "Farm to Fork" approach, and what other sustainable practices are you adopting to minimize your environmental impact? Thank you for pointing that out. Here's a revised version incorporating insights from both the document and the link you shared:

At Rosetta Hospitality, our "Farm to Fork" approach means we focus on sourcing fresh, local ingredients. We practice organic farming on our estates and work with local farmers to grow vegetables, fruits, and spices. For example, in Sakleshpur, we grow native produce like Brahmi chillies and jackfruit, and in Goa, we celebrate the local flavors of the region. This ensures every dish is responsibly sourced and connected to the local community.

In addition to "Farm to Fork," we are committed to other sustainable practices, such as water conservation, renewable energy usage, and waste management at all our resorts. We use solar panels for energy, rainwater harvesting systems, and even recycle wastewater for landscaping. These initiatives help us reduce our environmental impact and support our vision for sustainability.

Q3. What are your predictions for the hospitality industry over the next five years, and what growth opportunities do you see for Rosetta Hospitality?

Over the next few years, the hospitality industry in India is expected to experience robust growth. With the sector recovering from the pandemic, domestic tourism has become a significant driver of this expansion. The luxury hotel market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 10.06%, reaching USD 4.39 billion by 2029. The total Indian travel and tourism industry is projected to grow to USD 512 billion by 2028. For Rosetta Hospitality, this presents several exciting opportunities. The rising demand for luxury and unique experiences, particularly in the domestic leisure market, aligns perfectly with our plans to expand across key destinations.

# United University Organizes Symposium and Poetry Recital on Literature's Role in Society

## Dr. Mrityunjay Rao Parmar: Literature-The Guiding Force in Human Evolution

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: Lit for Life: A Literary Club, under the aegis of the Department of English, United University Prayagraj, successfully hosted a one-day symposium titled Reading of Literature Towards the Betterment of Society, accompanied by a poetry recital. The event brought together distinguished scholars, poets, and academicians to explore literature's profound impact on human values and societal advancement.

The symposium featured two eminent speakers: Dr. Shlesh Gautam, Assistant Professor at Allahabad Degree College and an internationally renowned poet, and Dr. Mrityunjay Rao Parmar, Assistant Professor in the Department of English & Modern European Languages at Allahabad University. Their thought-provoking deliberations underscored literature's pivotal role in shaping individuals and, in turn, society.

The proceedings commenced with a floral tribute to Maa Saraswati, followed by the ceremonial lighting

- ⇒ Dr. Shlesh Gautam's Poetic Brilliance Leaves Audience Spellbound
- ⇒ United University Hosts Literary Luminaries in Thought-Provoking Symposium
- ⇒ Lit for Life: A Literary Movement Advancing Creative and Intellectual Growth
- ⇒ Anthology "Chronicles of Life, Love and Beyond" Marks a New Era in Literary Creativity

of the lamp. Addressing the audience, Dr. Shlesh Gautam emphasized that literature is the essence of life, integral to every human experience. He captivated the gathering with his verses on patriotism, women's empowerment, the significance of daughters, and the cultural richness of Prayagraj, interwoven with humor and satire that resonated deeply with students.

In his keynote address, Dr. Mrityunjay Rao Parmar drew parallels between literature and divinity, arguing that, much like a deity creates human beings, great literature nurtures individuals with humanistic virtues. He elaborated on literature's evolving role across different life stages, asserting that while literature may not directly build societies, it molds indi-

viduals who, in turn, shape communities.

Dr. Roshni Srivastava, Assistant Academic Dean at United University, lauded the symposium, noting that the poetic renditions and scholarly discussions had ignited a deep appreciation for literature among students. Mr. Rajesh Pathak, Registrar of United University, reinforced this sentiment by presenting his own literary compositions.

The symposium was enriched by the presence of Dr. Geetika Pandey, Head of the Faculty of Science & Arts, who, along with symposium organizer Dr. Kunvar Shekhar Gupta, welcomed the esteemed guests with floral bouquets and ceremonial



shawls. In her welcome speech, Dr. Pandey reflected on the dual significance of science and literature, stating, "While science teaches logic, literature fosters human emotions."

A significant highlight of the event was the unveiling of the cover page of "Chronicles of Life, Love and Beyond", an anthology compiled under Lit for Life's initiative. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Kunvar Shekhar Gupta, Editor-in-Chief of the anthology and symposium organizer, shared insights into the collection, which features poetry and narratives penned

by scholars and professors from across India. The anthology will soon be available on leading platforms such as Amazon and Flipkart. Dr. Gupta extended gratitude to all dignitaries and assured that the Department of English at United University would continue to host literary events in the future.

Further adding to the intellectual engagement, a Literary Quiz Competition, directed by Dr. Prasoon Tripathi, concluded with certificates awarded to the victorious students.

The symposium concluded with a formal vote of

thanks delivered by Jolly Sengupta, while Ananya Mishra coordinated the event seamlessly. The proceedings were skillfully anchored by Baria Wakeel and Ekta Pathak.

Among the distinguished attendees were Dr. Anand Tripathi, Dr. Ramji Mishra, Dr. Shashikant Upadhyay, Dr. Abhijeet Prasad, Dr. Vikram Singh, Dr. Shitu Singh, Shubham Chaurasia, Dr. Amrita Raj, Dr. Satya Prakash Singh, Namita Srivastava, Pallavi Saxena, Meenal, and Prakhari Gangwar, President of Lit for Life Literary Club, alongside hundreds of enthusiastic students.

## Grand Blood Donation Camp on World Red Cross Day; District Magistrate Inaugurates and Donates Blood Himself

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Ghazipur: On the occasion of World Red Cross Day, the Indian Red Cross Society, Ghazipur, organized a grand blood donation camp today at the Blood Bank of Maharshi Vishwamitra Autonomous State Medical College, located at District Hospital, Gora Bazar. The objective of the program was to raise awareness about blood donation and ensure the availability of blood for those in need.

The camp was inaugurated by District Magistrate Avinash Kumar, who cut the ribbon to officially commence the event. Immediately after the inauguration, he donated blood himself, inspiring others present to

participate in this noble cause. In his address, the District Magistrate stated, "Blood donation is a noble service. Every healthy citizen



should donate blood regularly, as it can save countless lives."

During the camp, the District Magistrate also inspected the ICU and emer-

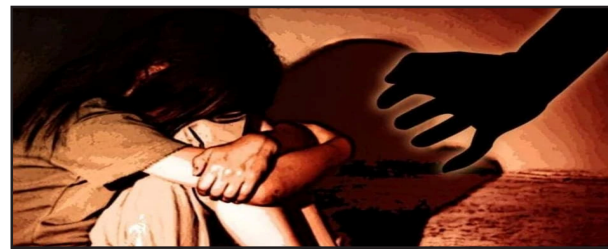
gency ward of the medical college, reviewing the quality of healthcare services. Emphasizing patient convenience as the top

Anand Mishra, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Sunil Pandey, Vice Principal Prof. Dr. Neeraj Pandey, Chief Medical Superintendent Dr. Rajesh Singh, Blood Bank In-charge Dr. K.K. Singh, IMS President Dr. Bawan Das, and other officials from the Red Cross Society. All dignitaries shared their views on the importance of blood donation and appealed to the public to come forward in large numbers to donate blood.

The camp witnessed active participation from youth, students, and the general public, making the event a grand success. The Red Cross Society honored all blood donors with certificates of appreciation.

## Missing minor girl: Police groping in dark, fail to trace whereabouts of accused

Prayagraj: A woman Shehzadi, resident of Ward No. 1 Chikan Tola, Shankargarh, Yamuna Nagar Prayagraj has alleged that her daughter Ashra went to sleep last night on 27 April 2025 after eating dinner at her home. She was on her cot till around 12 midnight, but when her mother



woke up at around 3 am, she was not on her cot. All of the family members searched everywhere but she could not be found anywhere. The missing minor girl's mother is seeking help in search of her daughter Ashra D/O Late Ajaz Ali whose date of birth is 01/01/2009, that is a 15 year old minor daughter. Her mother Sahajadi Wife of Late Ajaz Ali Address- Ward No. 01 Chikan Tola Shankargarh Bara Prayagraj has given complaint to Shankargarh police, who registered FIR under section 137(2) of BNS against unidentified accused. However, police is still groping in the dark and all their efforts have failed to yield any result. The case is still Whodunit for cops who have failed to trace whereabouts of accused so far.

## Titan World celebrates Mother's Day with bespoke perfume-making

Varanasi: Scent has a powerful way of evoking memory, and for many, the fragrance of a mother remains one of the most comforting and enduring. This Mother's Day, Titan World invites you to honour that cherished bond with a gift she'll always remember, a perfume as timeless as her love. Celebrate that enduring bond through a thoughtfully curated in-store experience. On the 10th and 11th of May, over 163 Titan World stores across India will host a bespoke perfume-making activity, designed to help customers create memorable moments with the most cherished women in their lives - their mothers.

Speaking on the activation, Mr. Rahul Shukla, Vice President and Chief Sales and Marketing Officer, Watches and Wearables, Titan Company Ltd. said, "At Titan, we've al-



ways believed in celebrating relationships that matter the most. With this unique perfume-making experience, we aim to offer something truly personal and heartfelt, a chance for our customers to create not just a gift, but a lasting memory with their mothers. This initiative beautifully captures the essence of what Titan stands for, that is, meaningful moments and timeless bonds." The activity invites guests to engage in the art of fragrance blending, allowing them to craft a personalized 50ml perfume using a curated selection of essential oils. Whether it's a collaborative effort between mother and child or a surprise gift lovingly created for her, this hands-on experience is meant to evoke joy, nostalgia, and a deep sense of connection all bottled in a custom fragrance. This in-store activation is aligned with Titan's ongoing commitment to create engaging, experiential retail moments that go beyond traditional shopping. It reflects the brand's evolving approach towards their customers to create shared experiences.

## Forging Tomorrow's Leaders: SJC Investiture Ceremony held

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader" - John Quincy Adams - The Investiture Ceremony at St. Joseph's College, held on 7th May 2025 in the College Auditorium, marked the formal appointment of new student leaders. This special event symbolizes the beginning of their journey to lead with confidence, integrity, and compassion.

Mrs. Madhulika D'Souza, the Mistress of Ceremonies, welcomed the Chief Guest, Most Rev. Bishop Louis Mascarenhas, along with the Principal, Rev. Fr. Walter D'Silva, Headmaster, Rev. Fr. Melvin Pais, Additional administrator Mr. A. McGowan, Middle School coordinator, Rev. Fr. Gladwin Fernandes, Senior Staff Coordinator, Mr. J. Dube and School Counsellor Mrs. A. Ranjan. The ceremony began with a prayer and the lighting of the lamp, followed by the presentation of badges and sashes to the new leaders.

The programme began with a Bible reading and a special prayer by Mrs. S. Lyall, the students of the middle school delivered a captivating dance which

was performed with graceful movements. This was followed by the formal felicitation of the chief guest Most Rev. Bishop Louis Mascarenhas, by the Principal Rev. Father Walter D'Silva, honouring his presence. A melodious welcome

badges and the sashes, this was followed by the introduction and the calling of the Sports Cabinet on stage, The Sports Coordinator, Mr. Mohd Shabi along with the other sports teachers were invited for pinning the badges and



song rendered by the college choir was followed by the College Anthem. The College Cabinet was introduced and called on stage thereafter the Chief Guest, Most Rev. Bishop Louis Mascarenhas, Principal Rev. Father Walter D'Silva, Junior School Headmaster, Rev. Father Melvin Pais and Middle School Administrator, Rev. Father Gladwin Fernandes were invited for pinning of the badges and sashes.

The House office bearers were called on stage, the House Moderators were invited for pinning of the

sashes. After that, the various association office bearers were introduced and called on stage for pinning of the badges by the Association In-charges. The Principal administered the oath, and the Chief Guest inspired the students to lead by example and serve their community. A token of appreciation was presented to the chief guest.

The Chief Guest, Bishop Most Rev. Dr. Louis Mascarenhas then addressed the gathering with a motivating speech, emphasising leadership, integrity and service. He told

a true leader is a role model- someone who's words are reflected in the actions. Leadership is not about personal gain, but about uplifting others. It is a responsibility and a privilege, given not for self-promotion, but to empower and guide a community towards shared success. He focused on the core value of the college- "Love your neighbour as you love yourself" and said such love and respect at the individual level sows the seeds of harmony, ultimately nurturing peace across the entire nation.

The newly appointed College Captain of the academic session 2025-26, Arishh Abrahama Aalam, then delivered a confident and inspiring speech, expressing gratitude and outlining his vision for the year ahead. This was followed by the words of encouragement and blessings by the Principal, Rev. Fr. Walter D'Silva who praised the students and urged them to lead by example. The ceremony conclude with a heartfelt Vote of Thanks by the College Head Prefect, Om Tiwari, and the rendition of the National Anthem, bringing the memorable occasion to a dignified close.



## Op Sindoor still incomplete, finish off Pak completely: Ranjit Singh

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: Keeping in view the nefarious activities of Pakistan, senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party and state co-coordinator legal cell, Ranjeet Singh requested the Prime Minister of the country Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and Defense Minister Rajnath Singh that Pakistan has been continuously killing Indian soldiers and common citizens for the past 25-30 years, which after you became the Prime Minister, many attempts have been made to understand, but it is not ready to understand, a vivid example of which is that even after the Indian Army destroyed new terrorist hideouts yesterday, it is carrying out Chitrakoot incidents.

We all activists humbly request you that to teach

Pakistan a lesson through Operation Sindoor, not the terrorist hideouts but Pakistan, the mother of terror, should be destroyed.

This is the only permanent solution. The above statement was made while addressing a meeting of BJP workers at a hotel located in Civil Lines.

All the workers present praised the tone of Indian service and the instructions of the Prime Minister and said that the countrymen are feeling proud. In the said meeting, former councilor Pawan Srivastava, councilor Neeraj Gupta, BJP leader Anurag Sant Shubhendu Srivastava, Gaurish Ahuja, Sandeep Chauhan, Kushagra Srivastava, Amit Rai, Vinod Sonkar and many other workers were present.

## Peacock injured by storm, rescued & handed over to forest dept: Abhilash Kesarwani

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: A peacock got injured due to severe storm near Kishori Lal PG College in Naini. Local resident Rachna Pandey saw the peacock writhing in pain on the road and immediately informed Abhilash Kesarwani of Janhit Sangharsh Samiti. And he immediately reached the spot with his team members Avnish Pandey and Vibhuti

Singh and contacted the forest department officials. The peacock was handed over to Forest Department Inspector Piyush Dubey. During this, Renu Pandey, Abhilash Kesarwani, Rajesh Kesarwani, Avnish Pandey, Vibhuti Singh etc. were present. With this initiative of Janhit Sangharsh Samiti, treatment of the injured peacock will be possible.

## Colvin doctors remove 12-kg tumour from stomach

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: Nazira Begum, a resident of Rani Mandi Chowk area of Prayagraj, was suffering from stomach pain and swelling for the last 6-7 years. She had consulted



several doctors but did not get any relief. Today, a successful stomach operation was performed on her under the leadership of surgeon Dr Aryendra Singh of the local Motilal Nehru Divisional Hospital (Colvin). Along with Dr. Aryendra Singh, his team members included Dr. M.M. Tripathi, Dr. K.K. Pandey, Dr. Shailendra Mishra, and staff Gajendra and Asha Maurya. The team successfully removed a 12-kg tumor from the stomach through the operation. Nazira Begum is now completely healthy. Dr. S.K. Chaudhary, Chief Medical Superintendent of Calvin Hospital, congratulated all the team members.

## Footballers who took transfer to Youngster Club welcomed Annual meeting of Youngster Football Club concluded

Prayagraj: The annual meeting of the Youngster Football Club was held on Thursday at the residence of club president Narayanji Gopal in Shaharabagh. In the meeting, the president welcomed the footballers who came to the Youngster Football Club from various clubs after the inter-football club transfer organized by the District Football Association. Everyone was introduced to the former members and players of the club.

Club team coach and manager Shashi Mohan Mishra handed over the list of club players to the president for the upcoming Senior Division Football League season 2025-26. The names of the players who have trans-

ferred to the club are as follows.

Surendra Kumar (Captain), Mohd. Asif (Aiya), Amber Jaiswal, Shah Nawaz Ahmed, Ankit Gupta, Himanshu Gupta, Vikalp Jha (Vice Captain), Utkarsh Kant Srivastava, Nikhil Kushwaha, Akhand Pratap Singh, Vivek Singh, Abhinav Pratap Singh, Vyom Singh, Sagar Kumar Sharma, Ayan Ahmed Khan, Geetesh Kumar, Aditya Singh Rajput, Vaibhav, Sahil Thompson, Piyush Mishra, Abhishek Kumar, Anjali, Rohit Bhartiya, Vaibhav Jaiswal, Ayush Tiwari, Sumit Kumar Maurya. Shashi Mohan will be the coach and manager of the team and Ajay Kumar, Mohammad Asif and Tanveer Ahmed have been made assistant coaches.

# World Thalassaemia Day: Awareness prog organized in Paediatrics Dept of Motilal Nehru Medical College

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: An awareness program was organized on the occasion of World Thalassaemia Day in the Department of Pediatrics of Motilal Nehru Medical College. This program was conducted under the guidance of Prof. Anubha Srivastava, Head of the Department of Pediatrics. The chief guest of the program was Principal Prof. Vatsala Mishra, who praised the program and said, "It is the social responsibility of medical institutions to spread awareness about

serious genetic diseases like thalassaemia. This effort made by the Department of Pediatrics is highly commendable, which has provided important information to students and the general public."

Professor Kachnar Verma, Head of the Department of Pathology and Dr. Ravi Rani, Head of the Department of Transfusion Medicine also participated in the program. Dr. Ravi Rani gave a detailed lecture on complications caused by repeated blood transfu-



sions and alloimmunization. Professor Anubha

Shrivastava, Head of the Department of Pediatrics,

said, "Timely diagnosis, continuous treatment and a sympathetic attitude in society are very important for children suffering from diseases like thalassaemia. We all should work together to improve the lives of these children."

In the program, a poster competition on Thalassaemia awareness was organized by the junior resident doctors of the pediatrics department, in which Dr. Shraddha got the first place.

On this occasion,

Thalassaemia Unit's nodal officer and assistant professor Dr. S.K. Shukla, Pediatrics department faculty members Dr. Manisha Maurya, Dr. Rajesh Yadav, Dr. Nandita, Dr. Shahid, Dr. Neha along with many senior and junior residents, researchers and medical students were present. The aim of the programme was to understand the complexities of genetic blood disorders like thalassaemia, discuss innovative approaches for its treatment and sensitize the students.

## People showed enthusiasm in tricolor Gaurav Samman Yatra

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: The "Tiranga Gaurav Samman Yatra" was taken out from the whole of Gram Sabha Bhulai to Babuganj Bazar under the leadership of Congress Party Gangapar District President Ashfaq Ahmed, in which people took part in it. The journey ended at Babuganj market, shouting slogans like Balidani martyr, Pakistan Murdabad, Terrorism Murdabad, Pakistan Garibly, Bharat Mata Ki Jai, Bharatiya Army Zindabad, etc. In his address, Ahmed said that we pay tribute to the first one who attained Veeragati while fighting with our brave soldiers bravery and our brave might, and the country will always remember his contribution. The bravery of the army is saluted. This war is for the self-respect, honor



of the country, rising above a party, religion, sect. We all have the responsibility to unite and move forward by step by step for the honor and valor of the service of our country and move forward together and emit our

continue to move forward by step. Our nation is paramount, all of us will have to unite and work for the country, only then our pride and honor will increase in the program, the best Devraj Upadhyay, Dr. Jagat

Narayan Singh, Vinod Vishwakarma, Rakesh Paswan, Ram Abhilash Prajapati, Mohammad Yusuf, Mo. Shamim Pradhan, Sufia Bano, Om Prakash Saroj, Salim Tigers, Anwar Ali, Tausif Ansari, Mazhar Alam, Shiv Prasad Prajapati, Surendra Yadav, Anil Kumar Saroj, Urmila Devi, Shehana Begum, Sufia Bano, Shaira Bano, Rabia Bano, Farzana Begam, Shahjahan Begam, Sham, Shaman Bano, Shahjahan Begam, Begum, Zahida Begum, Zarina Begum, Ranno, Sarla Vishwakarma, Hemlata Devi, Kamala Devi, Shukharani Devi, Sanjana Devi, Shukharaji Devi, Neelam Bind, Tehzibul Hasan, Diwakar Bhartiya, Shahid Human, Brijesh Singh, Om Prakash Bind, Mo. Shafiq, Iqbal Ahmed, Ram Manorath Saroj, Sunil Pandey, Subhash Chandra Yadav, Mo. Vasim, Uma Kant Yadav, Radheshyam Gautam, Ram Pujan Yadav, Dayaram Yadav, Ved Prakash Bind, Ansar Ali Sonu, etc. were present.

## Lt. (Dr.) Reena Sachan spells out dos & donts of Black Out & Mock Drill

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: UP Medical Company NCC, Prayagraj, at Motilal Nehru Medical College, Prayagraj Campus, Lt. (Dr.) Reena Sachan, ANO and PI Staff gave information to NCC cadets about National Civil Defence, Black Out and Air Range Mock Drill and told the ways to protect themselves from it. In which information was given about public safety



and what precautions should be taken during war. Along with information about how to protect oneself and rescue people, first aid and CPR, information was also given about what to do during a blackout at night during an air raid.

When the air raid alarm is sounded, take shelter in a safe place peacefully. Avoid rumours and follow the instructions given by the administration. Cooperate with civil defence volunteers and local administration. Do not panic. Make children and the entire family aware. Listen to government alerts on mobile or radio. Get information about safe shelters and bunkers. Keep a strong windowless room ready in your house. Decide in advance the route to reach the shelter quickly. Keep essential items ready, such as drinking water for at least 03 days. If injured, provide first aid. Lieutenant (Dr.) Reena Sachan, ANO, 1 UP Medical Company NCC, Prayagraj.

## Fire brigade extinguishes inferno via AC engulfing flat in residential bldg

Prayagraj: "Through the control room, information was received about a fire in a flat in Sai Dham Apartment (Residential Group Housing) near Police Outpost Rajrupur under Police Station Dhoomanganj. On the



basis of the information, fire brigade reached the spot with 02 fire tenders. On reaching there, it was seen that the fire had broken out in the flat of Manoj Kumar Srivastava in C Block C-1, second floor. The flat was closed which was opened and it was seen that it was broken out due to a fire in the AC of the flat. Under my leadership, the fire unit completely controlled the fire within an hour. There was no loss of life due to the fire. Local police officers/employees and fire officers and employees were present on the spot," informed a fire brigade official.

## Thunderstorms throw normal life out of gear

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: In Prayagraj strong thunderstorms and water affected life. Half of the trees of jackfruit, mango tree, berries etc. came near the house of Devraj Upadhyay Devnagri village of Phulpur tehsil area, half the storm trees collapsed at night, causing the road to jam. On the streets, where trees were destroyed, the same electricity made him cry fiercely. On Wednesday night, the entire city, rural areas lost power. In Rasulabad, the branches of trees fell at many places including electric wires. This affected power supply for hours. People faced problems with power cuts. Lightning of the entire city lost

on Wednesday night due to strong thunderstorms. In Rasulabad, the branches of trees fell at many places in-



cluding electric wires. This affected power supply for hours. People faced problems with power cuts. The branches of the tree fell on

the wires near Cantt, Atala, Tiranga intersection. This disrupted electricity supply to dozens of houses.

The tree fell on the Stanley Road car. Due to which dozens of houses had lost power for about half an hour. Similarly, in

Dhumanganj, electricity fell on many houses due to falling of trees on the power wire. Apart from this, electricity of dozens of houses was lost due to the breakdown of electric wires in Rasulabad. At the same time, lightning in Shivkuti broke down for hours. Apart from this, electricity was affected at Nurulla Road, Kala Danda, Sulemasarai, Balua Ghat, Meerapur, Harshvardhan Nagar, Sheeshamahar and other places. The branches of many small and big trees were broken in the parade ground. On Wednesday late evening, the black clouds in the sky suddenly lashed out with strong wind.

## Gitanjali gained immortality, and Tagore's heart settled in Prayag: Arindam Ghosh

Prayagraj: Kaviguru Rabindranath Tagore's work 'Gitanjali' published in 1910 from Indian Press, got immortality from the holy land of Sangam, Prayagraj Allahabad. Now he also developed a deep relationship. After that such a wave came that by 1923, 87 books of Tagore were published from Indian Press. That was the golden period when Tagore started coming to this city. What you know as Rajkaran Cinema Hall in Civil Lines was first a theatre built in which on 19 March 1936, a play 'Chandalika' written by Tagore was staged.

87 compositions of poet Guru Rabindranath Tagore were published from Indian Press: Friend Hari Keshav Ghosh had built a theatre bigger than the Palace for the play 'Chandalika'. The play was staged. Tagore himself acted in it. This theatre was built only because the director of Palace Cinema hall refused to stage the play 'Chandalika' at his theatre and gave it to Rabindranath Tagore. By the way Rabindra Tagore Nath's birth date is on 7th May as per English calendar but people of Bengali society celebrate it on 9th May every year as per Vaishakh. An interesting fact about Tagore is that he came to Allahabad six times in his life and mostly stayed in



Shantavas bungalow in Georgetown. It was there that he wrote some parts of Gitanjali on 25th. However, this bungalow is now in other hands. Indian Press director Arindam Ghosh tells that Tagore was friends with his Baba Harikeshav Ghosh. Another friend of his was Ramanand Chatterjee, the first principal of KP Inter College. Tagore's work was first printed in the Bengali magazine 'Pravasi' published by Indian Press and he was not even aware of it. Tagore was probing Babu Chintamani Ghosh, who founded this press, to know what his literary depth was. In 1908, both of them were able to understand each other and then the series of printing of Tagore's books started.

Tagore came here for the last time in 1936. He had to gather financial help for staging his play 'Chandalika'. It was decided that it would be staged in the Palace Cinema. Arindam Ghosh later tells that when the Palace's director came to know that tickets would be sold to watch Tagore's play, he refused to give his cinema for staging it. Tagore's friend Hari Keshav Ghosh did not like this. He built a theatre bigger than the Palace at Civil Lines crossing. Then he rented it out for running a cinema.

## Parivartan Sanstha prayed for protection of Army

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: On behalf of Prayagraj religious and social organization Parivartan Sanstha, for the protection of the three Indian Navy and Air Force soldiers, Baba Bholenath was prayed for at Mamleshwar Mahadev temple in Bahadur Ganj and wished for their long life and protection.

Monu Gupta, president of Parivartan Sanstha, said that the whole country stands with the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi. Today, India's name is ringing in the whole world.

The way the Honorable Prime Minister has named our Indian soldiers Sindoor Mission, the brave men of

India are taking India to a new height by constantly shelling Pakistan. We are praying to Mahadev today for the protection of their lives and for courage. Today, every child of India is sitting to follow the orders of the Honorable Prime Minister.

In the program, mainly President Monu Gupta, Media Incharge Rajesh Kesarwani, Ashok Gupta, Lalji Kesarwani, Vikas Jaiswal, Dabbu Kesarwani, Avinash Sharma, Dinesh Vaishya, Guddu, Chini Pankaj Srivastava, Mohan Vishwakarma, all the people prayed and prayed for the protection and victory of the Indian Army.



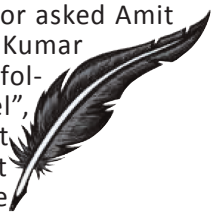
## Editorial

### Nitish Kumar make a somersault once again?

Will the Year 2025 witness political realignment in Bihar just before the state goes to assembly polls? Will Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar make a somersault once again? Will the seasoned and astute politician, teased as ‘palturam’ by his detractors, change sides again to garner the maximum political mileage before the Bihar Assembly Elections 2025? The rumour mill started churning when RJD supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav told a YouTuber, “The doors for Nitish Kumar are always open. He should also keep his doors open as he is the Chief Minister. Let him come, join us, and work together with us. We will forgive him, but he leaves us occasionally.” However, the Bihar CM gave a cryptic reply to reporters. He said, “Kya bolte hain, chhoriye na” The crisis deepened further when Lalu’s son and LoP in Bihar Assembly Tejaswi Yadav ruled out the return of Nitish Kumar. He said that the former Bihar CM had said this only to give an answer to a journalist and there are no plans to take Nitish Kumar back to the opposition alliance of Mahagathbandhan. He also said that he has been authorised to take the official line, though everyone has the right to have his own opinion. A day earlier what Lalu Prasad Yadav had said, Tejaswi Yadav said that the same seed cannot be sown in the same field for 30 years, it should be changed and a new crop should be cultivated in the field. Bihar JD(U) Spokesperson Neeraj Kumar said that it is Nitish Kumar who had ousted the RJD twice from the government and so the party was upset. He also declared that the NDA alliance would fight the Bihar Assembly Elections 2025 under the leadership of Nitish Kumar.

However, despite all posturing there are certain signs signaling everything is not right in the ruling alliance. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar came to Delhi to pay his last respect to former Prime Minister and veteran Congress leader Dr Manmohan Singh and returned to his home state without meeting anyone from the BJP. It was frowned upon by many political observers and leaders of the saffron party. Immediately after taking the oath, newly-appointed Bihar Governor Arif Muhammad Khan visited the ancestral village of the Chief Minister to pay homage to his mother on her death anniversary, indicating his closeness to Nitish Kumar and a possible political equation in the state. Arif Muhammad Khan paid a visit to former Bihar Chief Minister and RJD leader Rabri Devi to greet her on her birthday, a clear attempt to reach out to her. It is interesting to note that Lalu’s statement on doors being remaining open for Nitish Kumar came after Khan had met Rabri Devi. On the programme to celebrate the birth anniversary of Jai Prakash Narayan, BJP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sinha said publicly that the real homage to JP would be to establish a BJP government in Bihar.

Later, when he came under attack for this politically incorrect statement, he clarified that what he meant was “an NDA government in Bihar”. Secondly, some BJP leaders have indicated that Nitish Kumar may not be the CM face of the NDA in the Bihar Assembly Elections 2025. And it has come from one of the tallest leaders of the BJP. When a news channel anchor asked Amit Shah “will BJP keep Nitish Kumar in front in Bihar or will it follow the Maharashtra model”, his reply was not a straight forward affirmative one. It raised many questions. The Union Home Minister said, “The party’s policy decision.



## Implications And India’s Strategic Imperative

Lipi Singh

Bangladesh is on the brink of significant political upheaval. The escalating tension between Muhammad Yunus’s interim government and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) signals a turbulent period ahead. With stakes high for domestic power dynamics and regional stability, the developments in Bangladesh demand scrutiny, particularly from neighbouring India. At the heart of Bangladesh’s political discord lies the clash between the interim government, led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, and the BNP, the dominant political force in the country. Following the ousting of Sheikh Hasina in August 2024, Yunus assumed leadership of an interim government tasked with implementing electoral reforms and facilitating free and fair elections. However, his reluctance to outline a concrete timeline for elections has drawn sharp criticism from the BNP. The BNP, emboldened by its strong grassroots support and organisational strength, has been pressing for elections by the end of 2025 at the latest. Any delay, the BNP fears, could undermine its momentum and strengthen the newly emerging political entities being nurtured by Yunus and his allies. This includes the Anti-Discrimination Students’ Movement (ADSM), whose leaders are reportedly in the process of forming a political party with Yunus’s backing. Yunus’s proposal to delay elections until reforms are complete, potentially into 2026, has further fuelled suspicions.



BNP leaders view this as a calculated move to consolidate power and allow the nascent “king’s party” to establish itself. This manoeuvring has triggered accusations of bias and unethical behaviour, as the interim government’s primary mandate was to ensure a swift transition to democratic governance, not to reshape the political landscape. Compounding the tension is the involvement of Bangladesh’s Islamist factions. The Islamists, including the Jamaat-e-Islami, have thrown their support behind Yunus, seeking opportunities to further their agenda under his leadership.

In exchange, they have reportedly received tacit approval to intensify efforts to Islamise the country and target religious minorities. The BNP’s confrontational stance toward the Jamaat highlights the growing rift between the former allies. By invoking the Jamaat’s controversial role

during Bangladesh’s 1971 Liberation War, the BNP has sought to delegitimise the Islamist party. However, this strategy risks escalating street-level violence, as the Jamaat is known for mobilising its supporters in aggressive displays of force. With the interim government’s apparent alignment with the Islamists, the stage is set for widespread unrest. The current crisis draws parallels with the political turmoil of 2007-2009 when an army-backed caretaker government attempted to implement a ‘minus two’ formula—banning both the BNP and the Awami League from politics. Yunus’s government appears to be reviving elements of this approach, potentially sidelining the BNP and fostering the rise of alternative political entities. The BNP’s leadership, including acting chairman Tarique Rahman, has categorically rejected such moves. The party insists that only an elected government can undertake

major constitutional and institutional reforms. This principled stance underscores the BNP’s commitment to restoring democratic norms but it also sets the stage for a protracted power struggle. As the BNP ramps up its demands for immediate elections, the likelihood of mass protests looms large. Any attempt by Yunus to suppress dissent through state machinery could further erode his credibility and exacerbate public discontent. Simultaneously, the emergence of a new political party under the aegis of the ADSM risks fragmenting the opposition landscape, complicating the BNP’s path to power. The role of external actors, particularly Western powers, cannot be overlooked. While Yunus enjoys considerable international support, his inability to stabilise the political situation and hold timely elections.

could prompt a re-evaluation of this backing. Western stakeholders, wary of Bangladesh’s descent into chaos, may pressure Yunus to expedite the electoral process. For India, the unfolding crisis in Bangladesh presents both challenges and opportunities. The political landscape in Bangladesh is marked by heightened tensions, particularly between the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus, and Islamist factions. Historically, India’s relations with the BNP have been strained due to ideological differences and the BNP’s association with anti-India sentiments. However, recent diplomatic overtures

have paved the way for improved ties. The BNP’s assurances to safeguard India’s interests and curb anti-India forces signal a significant shift in the bilateral equation. In contrast, Yunus’s administration has been viewed with suspicion in New Delhi. The interim government’s alignment with Islamist factions raises concerns about the potential for increased radicalisation and instability along India’s eastern border. Furthermore, Yunus’s reluctance to engage meaningfully with India on key issues, coupled with his perceived bias against Indian interests, has strained relations further. This lack of cooperation has heightened India’s apprehensions about the broader implications for regional security and economic integration. India stands to benefit from a BNP-led government, which promises greater stability and cooperation on key bilateral issues, including border management, trade, and counterterrorism. Supporting the BNP’s call for timely elections aligns with India’s strategic goals of fostering a democratic and secular Bangladesh. Such a government could also strengthen India’s Act East Policy, by providing a stable and cooperative neighbour that supports regional connectivity and trade initiatives. However, overt interference in Bangladesh’s internal affairs risks backlash and could jeopardise India’s long-term relationship with other political stakeholders in the country. Maintaining a balanced and nuanced approach.

### The new Great Game: China, US and India

The original “Great Game” was fought in the mid-1800s between the Russian Empire and the combined might of the British, French and Ottoman Empires over control of Central Asia. The British feared an attack by the Imperial Russian Army through Afghanistan on their Indian colony. The Ottomans, though in decline, wanted to guard against Russian incursions into their Balkan possessions. As a report by Kallie Szczepanski (thought.com) described it: “Britain’s Lord Ellenborough started ‘The Great Game’ on January 12, 1830, with an edict establishing a new trade route from India to Bukhara, using Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan as a buffer against Russia to pre-

vent it from controlling any ports on the Persian Gulf. Meanwhile, Russia wanted to establish a neutral zone in Afghanistan allowing for their use of crucial trade routes.” “The Great Game officially ended with the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, which divided Persia (Iran) into a Russian-controlled northern zone, a nominally independent central zone, and a British-controlled southern zone. The Convention also specified a borderline between the two empires running from the eastern point of Persia to Afghanistan and declared Afghanistan an official protectorate of Britain.” Russia’s invasion of Ukraine nearly two centuries later has triggered a new Great

Game but with vastly different actors, motives and possible outcomes. In the mid-1800s the United States did not count. It was convulsed by a Civil War (1861-65) between northern unionist states and southern confederate states over slavery. China had been humiliated by Britain during the Opium Wars (1839-60). It lay in repose. India was a British colony, robbed of its wealth and morale. Today Russia lies weakened, its Soviet-era satellite states absorbed into NATO. They form a Western knife aimed at Moscow’s jugular. Ukraine remains a non-NATO buffer state. If it joins NATO in future, Russia would be completely encircled by the US-led West.

Shwetw Sharma

Our media and think tanks generally promote this thinking. Our business community, which is obviously much more linked to the West than to Russia, is not active enough in promoting stronger economic ties with Russia. The reality is that Russia is important to us bilaterally, regionally and internationally. It has stood by us since the mid-1950s when we were under great pressure by the West politically and economically, and indeed, strategically. It provided us with real defence muscle, participated in laying the foundations of our heavy industry, and engaged in space and nuclear cooperation with us. Russia has shared sensitive technologies with us, unlike the West which has imposed technology denial sanctions on us for decades. Russia has never sanctioned us, unlike the Western countries. Russia is the only country which is collaborating with us currently in setting up nuclear power plants. Expanding our nuclear power sector is becoming more pressing in light of climate change issues. Cooperation in the area of nuclear modular reactors could well be considered. Russia, even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, remains the world’s biggest country, with enormous natural resources, self-sufficient in hydrocarbons and food, a formidable nuclear power with

powerful delivery systems, a permanent member of the Security Council, with a great tradition of diplomacy, and so on. How many countries in the world have such assets? Should we distance ourselves from such a country? What is our gain in doing that? Russia may have been weakened after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but it still is a formidable international player. As part of broadening the base of our diplomacy to increase our global profile and influence, we are reaching out to a whole host of countries which individually do not play any significant international role, do not possess an array of resources, are not a source of technologies or major investments. What would be the logic then to draw away from Russia? It is wrong to describe our ties with Russia as “legacy” ties.

In reality, these ties continue to serve our interests in many important ways. Russia remains our biggest defence partner even as we diversify. (In fact, even in Soviet times, we procured major defence items from the West, excluding the US, and so diversity in defence supplies is not a new policy). With the end of the Cold War, geopolitical changes, a major reversal of US policies on India, the emergence of Israel as a defence partner, French readiness to engage us in sensitive defence cooperation,

many platforms or niche technologies that Russia cannot supply, diversification has been a pragmatic process. In any case, over-dependence in any context is not a good option. PM Modi’s Moscow visit will be an occasion to take stock of our existing and future defence cooperation in the context of Russia’s preoccupation with the proxy war in Ukraine. Lack of contiguity, inadequate connectivity, transportation handicaps, lack of knowledge of each other’s markets and even relative lack of interest, institutional handicaps, and the Westward orientation of Russian business until now explain why trade between the two countries has been limited. Today, with Russia under financial sanctions, and its trade ties with the West largely collapsing, including oil and gas trade, Russia has turned eastwards, towards China in a major way but also towards India. Russia has now become the biggest supplier of oil to India and its fertiliser exports to India have grown manifold. Indian exports to Russia have also registered some increase. These positive gains have to be consolidated. Payment issues have to be addressed because of the West’s financial sanctions. Connectivity has to be improved with a fuller operation of the International North-South Transport Corridor. These issues will obviously be on the agenda.

### Peace and Tranquillity Agreement signed to maintain the status

Suman Singh

Miles away in Kazan, a culturally, politically, and economically significant city in Russia’s Tatarstan, an Indian Prime Minister met a Chinese President for the first time in five years this week. Geopolitics is often unpredictable, yet this development was only partially surprising, as it was an anticipated move both countries knew would eventually occur. The last time the two leaders met was at an informal summit in Mamallapuram, in southern India, in 2019, just months before the countries clashed in the Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh in 2020. While the

world was grappling with the effects of a once-in-a-century pandemic, China launched a brutal assault on Indian soldiers in Galwan Valley, where 20 Indian troops lost their lives. This incident shattered the 1993 Peace and Tranquillity Agreement signed to maintain the status quo and peace at the border. It was also the first time in 45 years that blood had been shed in a China-India border conflict; the last such instance was in 1975, when four Indian soldiers were ambushed at Tulung La in Arunachal Pradesh. The Galwan Valley incident changed a significant reality that India had come to

take for granted—peace at the border with China had become a daily assumption. To be fair, there were frequent Chinese incursions—hundreds, in fact—but at least no lives were lost in resolving the resulting standoffs. Since 2020, relations between India and China had gone into a deep freeze. First came India’s diplomatic response with serious condemnation, followed by rallying support from its Indo-Pacific partners, and then a complete halt to economic cooperation, marked by a blanket ban on Chinese investments. In the post-Galwan period, India suspended over 30 dialogue processes

with China, including high-level discussions such as strategic dialogues between foreign ministers, the annual defence dialogue, meetings of special representatives on the territorial dispute, as well as youth exchanges, media, and think-tank dialogues. Relations reached their lowest point in this century, with the Indian side reiterating on various occasions that ties with China were far from normal. Fast forward to October 2024, and we see Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi holding a bilateral meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Russia.



## CM Stalin said the Centre is denying Tamil Nadu education funds for rejecting NEP

**Delhi:** CM MK Stalin of Tamil Nadu accused the BJP-led Union government of diverting cash earmarked for students in the state to other regions as a kind of political intimidation. He said that the action was a result of Tamil Nadu rejecting the national education policy (NEP) 2020 and the three-language formula. "No Indian government has been so ruthless as to strangle access to education for political revenge against a state," he stated. Reports say that Rs 2,152 crore for Tamil Nadu under the PM Shri initiative was sent to Gujarat and UP. Citing these findings, Stalin denounced Centre's conduct. The BJP government blackmailed Tamil Nadu by taking Rs 2,152 crore meant for students and giving it to other states for rejecting #NE and the three-language policy. This is nothing short of coercion, punishing our pupils for standing



up for their rights," the CM wrote on X. Stalin claimed BJP has "once again proven itself to be the face of injustice and hatred towards Tamil Nadu." DMK secretary RS Bharathi also condemned the BJP for Tamil Nadu's budget. Anna Arivalayam told reporters at the party HQ, "Tamil Nadu has given Rs 6.28 lakh crore, but the Union government has only given Rs 56,000 crore." Bharathi also criticized finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman. He added the Centre didn't fund disaster management or MGNREGS, and she claims to be from Tamil Nadu but has done nothing for it.

### Telangana govt resolute in raising reservation

**HYDERABAD:** Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao announced on Monday that the Congress government is determined to increase reservation for backward classes in education, employment, and political representation from 23% to 42%. In a post on the social media platform 'X,' he highlighted that the population of backward classes in the state stands at 56.36%, based on the recent caste survey conducted in Telangana.

## Most states, even non-BJP, give Hindi or Sanskrit as 3rd language

**Delhi:** As the Centre and Tamil Nadu argue over the controversial "three-language formula" in schools under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, most Hindi-speaking states, including those ruled by non-BJP parties, offer Sanskrit as a third language of study. Non-Hindi-speaking states usually offer Hindi. Private schools are offering foreign languages as third languages due to student demand. The method allows states

to choose Indian languages for government and private schools.

Most states have implemented the "three-language formula" up to Class 8, with some extending it to Class 10. Tamil Nadu, however, has a two-language policy. Hindi, Sanskrit, and other languages are taught as third languages in most states, along with the region's mother tongue and English, depending on the medium of teaching.

French, German, and Spanish are also in demand in Hindi- and non-Hindi-speaking countries. The Tamil Nadu government has refused to sign an MoU with the Centre to implement the PM Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) scheme, which aims to upgrade 14,500 schools and make them model schools that embody NEP 2020, citing concerns about the "three-language formula" and Hindi language imposition.

## NTA returns to pre-Covid NEET UG format

**Delhi:** To do well on the NEET UG 2025 exam, candidates must answer 180 questions in 180 minutes. The NTA has reverted to its pre-Covid exam design, which is expected to increase competition in the May 2025 exam. As per the modified pattern, section B which consisted of optional questions have been removed which has

decreased the exam time from 200 minutes to 180 minutes. The NTA declaration made candidates and experts anxious, as it may reduce the overall competition. Health Ministry officials say question paper difficulty will determine competition levels. The NTA cut the extra 20 minutes and optional questions to restore regularity in the exam schedule. Because the pandemic is finished, candidates must return to the original exam format. The adjustment isn't frightening as the syllabus is unchanged. Additionally, we need to enhance our time management abilities to complete the exam within 180 minutes.

, which is already challenging.

## Rajasthan's school mergers endanger first-gen students, especially girls.

**Delhi:** With three decrees in January, the Bhajan Lal Sharma-led BJP administration in Rajasthan set into motion the merging of 449 schools with larger, better-performing schools in their neighborhood. The government claimed low enrollment (fewer than 15 kids per the Rajasthan government policy), distinct schools on the same campus, and schools near to each other as explanations. The idea has generated protests statewide, with parents strongly opposing it, since it threatens to compel youngsters, primarily girls and those from impoverished families, to drop out. The merging of all-girls institutions into co-ed institutes is a critical issue, as seen in last week's rallies in Jodhpur and Bikaner. Many parents worry this shift could endanger their daughters' safety and education. Other issues are the rise in home-to-school distance for many pupils and changes in school medium and culture. Ex-CM Ashok Gehlot and parents have opposed the move. BJP MLA Jethanand Vyas of Bikaner West asked Education Minister Madan Dilawar for an exemption for his district's girls' school. Over 1,400 pupils will fit into 20 classes post-merger. The girls worry that if the merger happens, their parents would stop them from going to school, ruining their dreams. No other all-girls government school exists. I don't know if I can finish school. I just want to study and go to college. "How will we handle a shift?" "I don't know if I can keep studying," she remarked. District education officials know of the issues but said, "No schools are closing; they're merging with better-performing ones." "This move expands educational options for boys and girls, allowing for a broader range of streams." We'll keep girls in school. Modi claimed schools have been told to do this. Rajasthan has 70,233 state schools. 32,598 are primary schools. School consolidation isn't just in Rajasthan. In Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Odisha, smaller, low-enrollment institutions are merging with larger ones.

## Kerala Govt. cuts minority scholarships due to financial difficulties

**Delhi :** Kerala's government has cut minority community scholarships by 50%, putting thousands of students' education at risk, citing the financial crisis. Nine of the 11 minority welfare scholarship programs originally allotted Rs 13.6 crore are affected by the decision. The Government says the plan size reduction is a priority, but the disproportionate cut to minority student educational support raises questions about governmental priorities and social justice. Twitter shares The Prof Joseph Mundassery Scholarship, which received Rs 5.2 crore this year, suffered most. It has saved Muslim, Sikh, Jain, and Parsi high-achieving children by paying Rs 10,000 to those

who scored A-Plus in all SSLC subjects and Rs 15,000 to those who scored 80% in upper secondary or 75% in vocational higher secondary. It ensured that bright students from underprivileged backgrounds were not forced to drop out due to financial constraints by prioritizing BPL students and providing provisions to economically weaker APL students. The crucial APJ Abdul Kalam Scholarship for minority students has also been cut in half.

Those admitted to government-approved colleges on merit, with priority for BPL families, receive the Rs 6,000 grant. Since it reserves 30% of funds for female students, the reduction could hurt young

women from poor families who already struggle to enter higher education. Another affected program is the Mother Teresa Scholarship, which helps Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, and Parsi students in government nursing and paramedical diploma programs. Many aspiring nurses and paramedics, whose families cannot afford professional training, may have to quit. The judgment also affected international scholarships, civil service coaching funding, and UGC coaching reimbursement. When education is the most potent vehicle for social mobility, cutting financial aid for historically marginalized students just increases the gap between privilege.

### Irish education minister invites Indians for education, research

**NEW DELHI:** James Lawless, Ireland's Education Minister, on Monday said his country is "very welcoming" for students and has a supportive post-study employment visa arrangement. "Ireland is a very welcoming country. We have a very cosmopolitan culture. We have many nationalities now in Ireland, and many people have made their home, including many, many Indians," the Irish minister said, when asked whether his government is considering any changes in post-study work or immigration policies to retain skilled talents.

## TN should appeal SC ruling on domicile quota

**Delhi:** A day after the Supreme Court banned domicile-based reservation in specialized and higher education including PG medical courses, MK Stalin's Tamil Nadu government declared it would file a review petition to vindicate its rights and uphold social justice. Health minister Ma Subramanian said the SC order would affect the state's 69% reservation and quotas for in-service applicants in government medical colleges and minorities in self-financing medical colleges. He



said that the order would violate state rights. The Union government receives 15% of undergraduate medical seats and 50% of postgraduate medical and super specialty seats through the state quota each year. "All super specialty seats were lost. "TN

gave government doctors a quota for super specialty courses after a court battle," he told reporters. He stated the Centre takes seats unfilled due to a lack of candidates. He said states invest fully in PG and super specialty medical education but share 50% of all-India quota seats. "Now, the judgment deprives us of all seats," Subramanian told reporters. According to him, the verdict will have a major impact on 2025-26 admissions but not 2024.

## India's servers will host DeepSeek's AI models for security

**Delhi :**The Indian government said it will host Chinese startup DeepSeek's AI models on its computers to monitor security and safety. The country increased its efforts to give computers to entrepreneurs and researchers to accelerate the development of localized AI 'foundational models' or tech solutions to offset US and Chinese AI developments. IT and electronics minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the government is buying 18,693 GPUs to provide "affordable compute" to large and growing IT enterprises and AI researchers. Foundation models are AI solutions educated on large datasets to fulfill several tasks. The models are adaptable and can be customized for special uses.

Vaishnaw noted that DeepSeek was constructed with 2,000 GPUs, therefore the Rs 10,372 crore IndiaAI mission's high-tech GPUs are enough to power India's AI quest. He dismissed concerns about India being late in its AI quest, saying it has US assistance as a valued partner. We are punctual. Computer access is most vital. This is now accessible. We are fit. Getting the computer facility was crucial to the goal." He added India is optimistic Nvidia will provide GPUs regularly despite US government limitations on some countries. "I'm reiterating that we are seen as a trusted country, we're seen as a country which respects IP rights, (and) we're seen as a country which understands the technological

development prospects and all the points related to that." DeepSeek's recent popularity hasn't concerned the government. The good news is that DeepSeek is open source and we will soon host it on Indian servers like we did Llama. Everything open source can be hosted on our servers to ensure data privacy. He said we'll do that soon. Vaishnaw claimed preparations have begun. "The team has worked out the details on how many servers are required, how much capacity is required." Ministry sources informed that numerous institutions, including CERT-In and the National Cyber Security Secretariat, will examine security issues.

## New UPSC PwBD guidelines avoid misconduct and fraudulent certifications

**Delhi:** The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)'s CSE 2025 requires online submission of certificates and documents at the preliminary stage of the exam, which includes submitting the necessary information and supporting documents for various claims, such as date of birth, category (SC/ST/OBC/EWS/PwBD/Ex-Servicemen), educational qualification, and Service preferences, with the Online A. Examination candidature will be canceled if the registration and online application form lack the relevant information/documents. "All of these changes should be explicitly stated in the notification, or the exam-conducting authority can create an educational video for specially abled candidates," he says. They appear puzzled and unable to complete the



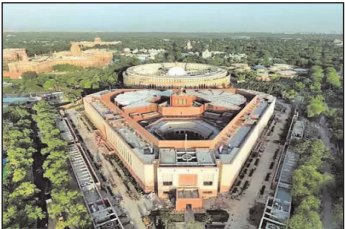
**"UPSC must examine claims and papers if aspirants submit fraudulent documents. Kottaram notes that mental illness is a grey area in the notification's five impairment categories, making it easy to misuse. After the Puja Khedkar controversy, aspirants who took the Personality Test/Interview this year rigorous medical test"**

Prelims application form (due February 11, 2025). Candidates must also write about their interests, hobbies, achievements, and NCC Scout in the Prelims, which were previously announced after the Mains. "The goal is to get the best candidate profile information before the Prelims," Kottaram explains (IRS) officers were recruited under PwBD reservation

advantages. UPSC must examine claims and papers if aspirants submit fraudulent documents. Kottaram notes that mental illness is a grey area in the notification's five impairment categories, making it easy to misuse. After the Puja Khedkar controversy, aspirants who took the Personality Test/Interview this year rigorous medical test.

## Govt scholarship not sufficient, review several schemes to ensure better transparency

**Delhi:** A parliamentary standing committee has observed that the current annual scholarship for education is inadequate to cover rising expenses and has recommended periodic reviews to adjust for inflation. In its latest report on the Demands for Grants for 2025-26, the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment urged the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to collaborate with the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders to reassess and adjust scholarship amounts. The panel, which tabled its report in Parliament on Monday, asked the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to review the annual scholarship amount granted to each student pursuing various courses along with the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders to achieve the envisaged objectives of the various scholarship schemes of the department. The committee is of the opinion that the annual scholarship granted to a student for pursuing education is not sufficient to meet the present-day expenditure required to get proper and quality education, the report said. "The committee would like to recommend that the quantum of scholarship granted to a student under each scheme should be periodically reviewed to contain the inflation so that the scheme is more fruitful," it said.





## Household savings should recover in H1 FY25 as debt eases

**Delhi:** Early evidence suggests that net household financial savings, which rose to 5.3% of GDP in FY24 from 5% in FY23, will rebound substantially in the first part of FY25. An increase in net household financial savings allows government and enterprises to employ local sources for investment funding, which boosts the economy. Net financial savings peaked at 51.7% of GDP during Covid but fell to 36.1% in FY22 and 28.5% in FY23. The country's financial savings come from households, private and public corporations, and the government. Dropping personal loan liabilities has helped household net financial savings. These divisions have grown slowly due to RBI's crackdown on unsecured personal loans, gold loans, and NBFC lending. In its December 2024 bulletin, RBI reported a small increase in FY24



household net financial savings to 5.3% of GDP, up from 5% in FY23 and 7.3% and 11.5% in FY22 and FY21. A Motilal Oswal Financial Services research forecasts that net household financial savings reached 7.3% of GDP in the first half of FY25, almost double FY24. This improvement was driven by a decline in liabilities to 4.7% of GDP from 6.9% in H1 FY24 and an increase in gross financial savings climbed to 11.6% of GDP in FY24, but higher liabilities neutralized the gains, raising net personal

financial savings to 5.3%. Household liabilities were 6.4% of GDP, a 17-year high, barely below FY07's 6.6%. Gross financial savings rose due to insurance savings, fewer currency holdings, and greater capital market investments. However, household debt rose to 41% of GDP in FY24 from 37.9% in FY23. The research estimates household debt grew to 43.5% of GDP in the first half of FY25 from 31-32%. Housing loans make up 30% of household debt, whereas non-housing debt rose to 32.3% of GDP in Q2 FY25.

## Government meets 13 India AI businesses for services

**Delhi:** The ministry of electronics and information technology (MeitY) technical panel met with thirteen companies who bid to deliver AI compute and cloud services under the IndiaAI Mission on Monday. IndiaAI COO Kavita Bhatia led the technical panel, which included MeitY, NIC, CDAC, and two IITs. Thirteen companies were chosen from 19 bidders. Jio Platforms, Tata Communications, CtrlS Datacenters Limited, E2E Networks, Yotta Data Services, CMS Computers, Hostin Services, I2k2 Networks, Orient Technologies, Vensysco



Technologies, CloudThat Technologies, Locuz Enterprise Solutions, and NxtGen Datacenter and Cloud Technologies Bidders had to either have operational AI services on cloud with at least 1,000 AI compute units installed or promise to do so within six months of signing an agreement with IndiaAI. The technical

panel asked organizations about their existing capacity, expected capacity in six months, and availability of compute units or GPUs for the IndiaAI Mission. Nvidia leads GPU manufacture internationally, followed by AMD and Intel, but the technical panel inquired if India will make data center servers and other equipment.

## Jio Finance is negotiating its first debt sale

**Delhi:** Jio Finance, a shadow lender controlled by Asia's wealthiest industrialist Mukesh Ambani, is negotiating with a number of lenders to enter the local currency debt market for the first time.

It is anticipated that the business will enter

the market as early as the January-March quarter, which is normally a busy time for credit expansion in India, either by issuing bonds or loans.

According to those who asked not to be named since the talks are secret, the funds will be

used to lend to industry. They said that the conditions and amount of the loan are still being worked out. The action was taken because the RBI's stricter regulations make it more difficult for shadow lenders to raise bank loans in local currency.

## Banks raise FD rates to increase deposits

**Delhi:** War for deposits continues. Top banks are modifying rates through special tenures, senior citizen privileges, and bulk deposit plans as the financial industry faces a liquidity constraint. IDBI Bank is the latest to raise super senior rates, while Bank of Baroda unveiled a liquid fixed deposit product. IDBI Bank announced the 'IDBI Chiranjeevi-Super Senior Citizen FD' for 80-year-olds. The initiative offers 65bps over the bank's ordinary fixed deposit rates and 15bps over senior citizen rates. An 8.05% interest rate is offered for 555 days, 7.9% for 375 days, 8% for 444 days, and 7.85% for 700 days. From January 13, 2025, the program will apply. Customers can withdraw Rs



1,000 after depositing Rs 5,000 in Bank of Baroda's liquid fixed deposits.

Deposits over Rs 5,000 must be multiples of Rs 1,000. Bulk deposits exceed Rs 3 crore, whereas retail deposits are below this threshold. The deposit tenure is 12-60 months, with

existing interest rates. Seniors and super seniors receive extra interest. Seniors get 0.5% for deposits up to three years and 0.6% for deposits beyond three and five years. Super seniors get 0.1% on deposits over one year.

## Direct tax collection increases 20% to 21L cr

**Delhi:** Non-corporate tax, comprising personal income tax, outpaced corporation tax in the fiscal year up to Jan 12 by about 20% to Rs 20.6 lakh crore. The latest Central Board of Direct Taxes data estimated that refunds rose 42% to Rs 3.7 lakh crore, raising net direct tax revenues 15.9% to Rs 16.9 lakh crore. Corporation tax mop-up jumped 16.5% to Rs 9.7 lakh crore, while non-corporate tax rose 21.7% to just under Rs 10.5 lakh crore. Non-corporate tax payers include people, HUFs, enterprises, and municipal governments.

## Annual, lifelong private automobile toll plans on cards

**Delhi:** Union road transport minister Nitin Gadkari said that the roads ministry is developing annual and 'life-time' passes for private cars to allow unlimited travel across the NH network for a single toll payment. Private cars account for 60% of NH traffic, but only 20-26% of toll income. Gadkari remarked during a 'Barrierless Tolling in India' workshop, "Private automobiles generate less money. The majority of toll revenue comes from commercial vehicles. To avoid problems, we're



exploring yearly passes. People will be relieved but we will not lose." They stated that the government is developing a plan to handle private toll operators who claim high pass user counts on certain stretches. Primus Partners and Think Infra's thinking paper, released by Gadkari,

claimed that GNSS-based tolling will enhance traffic flow by eliminating delays, lowering travel time by 20-30%, and saving 8-10 minutes each toll station. The environmental benefits include reducing carbon emissions by 50 lakh tonnes and saving Rs 12,000 crore in fuel costs.

## Spending on digital services, such as gaming, online education, and entertainment

**Delhi:** According to a Visa white paper on payments, spending on online gaming increased 16 times in smaller areas between 2019 and 2024. The pattern indicates that digital consumption is becoming more and more prevalent in India's non-metropolitan regions. Spending on digital services, such as gaming, online education, and entertainment, has increased ninefold and sixteen fold since 2019, respectively, among consumers in smaller towns. In smaller towns, the number of consumers spending more than Rs 2 lakh a year with a single card has increased by over four times, while in category A cities, the figure has increased by 1.4 times. This change has led to a 175% increase in total card expenditure in cat-



## NCLAT accepts Meta, Whatsapp appeals against CCI's Rs 213 crore dominance penalty

**NCLAT** accepted Meta Platforms and Whatsapp's appeals against CCI's Rs 213.14 crore market dominance penalty. After hearing Meta and CCI's initial submissions, a two-member bench of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) indicated the issue needs consideration. "The parties' submission requires attention.

egory C+ cities since 2019 and suggests that affluence is spreading outside of metropolitan areas. According to Niko

Partners' India Market Report, the country's video game market is predicted to develop at an annual rate of 11.1%.

## In FY25, gross direct tax collection increased by 20%

**Delhi:** According to official data released, net direct tax collection rose 15.88% year over year to approximately ₹16.90 lakh crore as of January 12 of this fiscal year. Since April 2024, the mop-up from net non-corporate taxes—which primarily consists of personal income tax—has exceeded 8.74 lakh crore.



Approximately 7.68 lakh crore was collected in net corporation

tax between April 1, 2024, and January 12 of current year. As of January 12 of this fiscal year, the net amount collected from securities transaction taxes was 44,538 crore. Approximately 3.74 lakh crore in refunds were given out during that time, a 42.49% rise over the same period last year. According to the

report, gross direct tax mop-up rose 20% to 20.64 lakh crore during that time. In the current fiscal year, the government has allocated 22.07 lakh crore from direct taxes, of which 10.20 lakh crore is collected from corporate taxes and 11.87 lakh crore from personal income tax and other taxes.

## Urban Co appoints Kotak, two others for 3,000-cr IPO

**Delhi:** Hyperlocal services company Urban Company may file draft papers for its INR 3,000 Cr IPO by March. According to insiders, the company would issue new and existing shares in its IPO. It said that the company will mostly raise primary capital. Kotak Mahindra Capital, Goldman Sachs, and Morgan Stanley will manage the process. As revealed last October, Prosus plans to double its investment in the company before its IPO. Prosus wants to fund \$30 Mn (approximately INR 252 Cr) into hyperlocal serv-



es company Urban Company in a secondary deal, providing Bessemer Venture Partners a partial exit. A secondary sale with Bengaluru-based Dharana Capital raised INR 400 Cr (\$50 Mn) for Urban Company last July. Urban

Company employees and shareholders sold their shares. Snapdeal cofounders Rohit Bansal and Kunal Bahl's VC firm Titan Capital left the startup after the investment raise. By October 2018, the company had partnered with

## Prior to its demerger, Aditya Birla Fashion will raise \$500 million.

**Delhi:** By combining qualified institutional placement with preferential issuing of equity shares, Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail (ABFRL) intends to raise \$500 million. ABFRL would give \$125 million in shares to American investor Fidelity Investments and \$150 million to promoter Pilani Investment and Industries Corporation. The planned vertical demerger of the business into two distinct listed firms is preceded by the capital raise. The fund-raise is contingent upon regulatory and shareholder approval.

SMASCO to launch a new home services platform in Saudi Arabia. Financially, the corporation cut losses by 70% in 2023-24. Urban Company lost INR 93 Cr before tax in FY24,

down 70% from INR 312 Cr a year earlier. In FY24, operations EBITDA fell to INR 116 Cr from INR 297 Cr. Urban Company earned INR 281 Cr in Q1 of FY25.



## Revised MFI ordinance moots 10-yr jail, 5L fine



**Bengaluru:** After multiple iterations, Karnataka govt has sent its ordinance to governor Thaaawar Chand Gehlot, proposing severe penalties for microfinance institutions (MFIs) found guilty of coercive loan recovery practices. Under the revised draft, it will be considered a criminal offence for MFIs to use violence, intimidation or any form of coercion against borrowers or their families. The ordinance also prohibits use of external agencies to threaten or pressure borrowers into repayment and bans the frequent visi-

tation of borrowers' homes or places of work. The Karnataka Micro-Finance (Prevention of Coercive Actions) Ordinance, 2025, which has already received the cabinet's approval, has suggested up to 10 years in prison and a fine of Rs 5 lakh for MFIs involved in harassment. "It was three years (in the initial draft), now we have increased it to 10 years. This is to ensure that the heat of the law is felt (by violators)," home minister G Parameshwara announced the revision Tuesday. The ordi-

nance, which has seen eight revisions in the past few weeks, is now awaiting the governor's assent. The decision to issue the ordinance comes in the wake of rising suicides and widespread complaints about predatory loan recovery practices used by MFIs. These firms have been accused of using coercive methods which have pushed borrowers, particularly farmers, women and self-help groups, to the brink of financial ruin. "The ordinance aims to protect and provide relief to economically vulnerable groups and individuals.

## China overtakes the US as India's trading partner with \$118.4 billion

**Delhi:** China overtook the US as India's largest trading partner after two years, according to Global Trade Research Initiative data. India's bilateral trade with China totaled \$118.4 billion in , with imports up 3.24% to \$101.7 billion and exports climbing 8.7% to \$16.67 billion. India-US trade fell somewhat. Indian exports fell 1.32% to \$77.5 billion and imports fell 20% to \$40.8 billion in FY24, totaling \$118.3 billion. India relies heavily on Chinese imports in telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, and advanced technology, therefore its economic relations with China are closely watched. According to GTRI, "India purchased \$4.2 billion in telecom and smartphone parts, 44% of overall imports in this category, demonstrating strong reliance on Chinese components. China supplied 77.7% of India's laptop and PC imports at \$3.8 billion." India uses production-linked incentive schemes (PLI), anti-dumping penalties, and quality control



## Apple's first iPad Pro redesign since 2022 uses an AI-focused

**Delhi:** Apple introduced an artificial intelligence-focused iPad Pro and a bigger iPad Air to revitalize its tablet lineup after two years. The firm launched the first redesigned iPad Pro since 2018 at "Let Loose" online. The new model boasts a smaller body, a sharper Ultra Retina XDR screen with OLED technology, and a quicker M4 CPU for AI. The new iPad Air looks

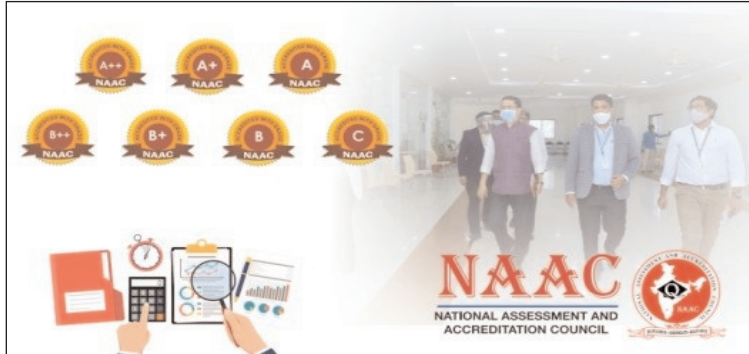
like the previous model but has a bigger screen and M2 CPU. Apple claims the 13-inch iPad Pro is the thinnest apple device ever at 5.1 millimeters. The larger model is a quarter-pound lighter than its predecessor, while the 11-inch weighs under one. It breaks Apple's longest iPad release gap since co-founder Steve Jobs debuted it in 2010.

directives to decrease reliance. India imported \$2.2 billion in lithium-ion batteries for electric

vehicles, 75% of which came from China, Trade with Saudi Arabia was more balanced, with

## NAAC looks to shift to new systems to grade colleges

**Bengaluru:** Under CBI scanner for alleged bribe-for-grades scam, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is looking to change the current accreditation system to binary system and maturity-based system with different metrics, while keeping at least 400 academicians away from campus visits in the past one year over fears of corruption. The binary system involves grading a college 'accredited or not', without A+, A++ grades. The maturity-based system is an evolving accreditation process which improves a college's rating over the previous level based on its improvement in performance. The current process – which is likely to be shelved -- involves a 70:30 metrics formula: 70% quantitative and 30% qualitative metrics. The latter consists



physical inspection of higher educational institutions by a peer-review team. The NAAC's plan to shift to the new twin systems follows recommendations from the Dr Radhakrishnan committee, which has suggested reforms in the accreditation process. Anil Sahasrabudhe, chairman of NAAC executive committee, said they will expedite the roll-out of reforms soon. "The com-

mittee has debarred offline, physical visits and will do everything online through validation of the documents. We plan to launch both binary system and multigrade system in March. Now that this (scam) has come to light, we will expedite the process, finalise recommendation of the committee, and then adopt them soon." The premier grading agency has come under the central

probe agency's lens for alleged corruption while assessing a college in Andhra Pradesh's Guntur. A NAAC source clarified, "There is no proof against these 400 teachers. We received feedback from trustworthy sources on their conduct. Since we have no evidence against them, we could not take any action. Instead, we prevented them from making any more physical visits." The peer team is randomly selected by the system. Sahasrabudhe said if there is no grading (like A+ or A++), institutions will not try to engage in unethical activities. "The committee is currently working on a maturity-based grading level," he added. The chairman said when they stopped accepting applications in the old format, they had to give colleges transition time.

## A warning against bogus syllabuses and sample question papers is released by CBSE

**Delhi:** The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) issued a warning alert informing parents and students to be wary of false information pertaining to the curriculum, study guides, and practice exams for the 2024–25 school year. The Board has issued a warning to pupils about the dangers of falling for online scams that spread false information. We've noticed that some websites and online portals are disseminating stale infor-

mation and unreliable updates about curriculum, sample question papers, CBSE resources, and activities. The alert said, "These links and news erroneously assert to offer up-to-date information for the session 2024–25. "In the interest of the public, we wish to emphasize that information from unauthorized sources can be misleading and may cause unnecessary confusion among schools, students, parents, and other stakeholders," it continued. Due to sig-

nificant discrepancies between theory and practical scores in a few courses, CBSE has recently instructed schools to assess practical exams appropriately.

In a notification, the CBSE said that, based on data from prior years' results, it had used sophisticated AI techniques to identify significant disparities between theory and practical grades in specific courses among 50% or more students in about 500 CBSE-affiliated schools.

## The National Critical Mineral Mission gets 16,300 crore from

**Delhi :**The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, launched the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) with a ₹16,300 crore expenditure and a projected ₹18,000 crore investment from PSUs and other businesses. "Several crucial decisions have created new scientific and technology prospects for our children, future generations, and the economy. Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told a Cabinet briefing that PM Modi approved the National Critical Minerals Mission today. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

announced NCMM's creation in the 2024-25 Union Budget on July 23, 2024. The Atmanirbhar Bharat mission seeks to assure India's crucial mineral sector self-reliance, recognizing its importance in high-tech industry, lean energy, and defence. The Mission will encompass exploration, mining, ssing, and end-of-life product recovery in the essential mineral value chain. It aims to speed up mining project approvals, incentivize exploration, and recover minerals from over-burdens and tailings. The mission encourages Indian PSUs and private enterprises to buy vital mineral assets

abroad and strengthen economic ties with resource-rich nations. The plan also calls for a national stockpile of essential minerals to secure supply. The Mission will promote mineral processing parks and crucial mineral recycling. A Centre of Excellence on Critical Minerals will encourage critical mineral technology research. India has 24 critical minerals: Beryl, admium, Cobalt, Gallium, Glauconite, Graphite, Indium, Lithium, Molybdenum, Nickel, Niobium, Phosphate (without uranium), Platinum group of elements, Potash, Rare earth minerals (excluding Uranium,

## New military dental care centre in Ahmednagar to benefit veterans

**Delhi**

This facility will provide advanced oral health care to the sizeable community of army personnel serving with the town's Armoured Corps and Mechanised Infantry schools and centres. In addition, individuals from the Marathwada region will have access to health care services offered at the centre. The dental centre is of significant historical importance as one of the oldest dental units in the Indian Army. In 1942, it moved from Multan (now in present-day Pakistan) to Ahmednagar. The centre's commanding officer, Colonel Vivek Saxena, said, "This premium oral health care establishment features contemporary dental care services, including implant-based treatments and a state-of-the-art cone beam

computed tomography (CBCT) machine for early oral cancer diagnosis." The upgraded centre will eliminate the need for patients to travel to Pune for treatment, thus saving valuable time and resources. A senior official from Maharashtra Sainik Welfare Department told , "Most patients come to Pune for advanced medical treatments. Thus, majority of them go to private hospitals. This dental facility is one of its kind and it will address all oral health complications." Subedar BS Shikare (retd) from Ahmednagar said, "People lack awareness about oral health. The authorities should focus on awareness and hold special camps in the rural pockets of the state. The new hospital is a positive thing for the entire Marathwada region."

itary veterans, serving armed forces personnel and their dependents will benefit from the newly inaugurated Military Dental Centre in Ahmednagar. This facility will provide advanced oral health care to the sizeable community of army personnel serving with the town's Armoured Corps and Mechanised Infantry schools and centres. In addition, individuals from the Marathwada region will have access to health care services offered at the centre. The dental centre is of significant historical importance as one of the oldest dental units in the Indian Army. In 1942, it moved from Multan (now in present-day Pakistan) to Ahmednagar. The centre's commanding officer, Colonel Vivek Saxena, said, "This premium oral health care establishment features dental

## Scrap mop-up allotment of PG med seats to ineligible: HC

**Bengaluru:** The Karnataka high court Tuesday ordered Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) to scrap the PG medicine seats allotted in the mop-up round to "ineligible" candidates and make them available in the next round of counselling. National Medical Commission (NMC) and Medical Counselling Committee (MCC) should permit the candidates who were allotted all-India quota seats in the MCC-conducted third round counselling to join the allotted seats till 5pm, Feb 9, a division bench comprising Justices Anu Sivaraman and Vijayakumar A Patil said in its order on a petition filed by Dr Akshay V Thuppad and others, who were aspirants in the mop-up round conducted by the KEA. The KEA was directed not to enforce the penalty clause against the students who were wrongly permitted to participate in the mop-up round in violation of the conditions stipulated in its

brochure. The KEA was told to ensure the original documents are returned to the candidates to enable them to join the all-India quota seats at the earliest.

The petitioners – and similarly situated candidates who were eligible to participate in the mop-up round – should be permitted to participate in the stray vacancy round where the seats that fall vacant should be made available and seats should be allotted to them on the basis of merit, the bench said. The KEA was directed to take steps to ensure fees – paid by ineligible candidates who had joined the allotted colleges pursuant to the mop-up round – are refunded to them at the earliest. The MCC and KEA were told to inform the candidates who had been allotted seats in the third round of all-India quota counselling but were permitted to participate in the counselling of the KEA without eligibility that they have to join the all-India quota seats.



## NEET aspirant from Delhi found dead in bushes in Rajasthan

**Delhi:** A 23-year-old NEET aspirant from Delhi was found dead in bushes near the railway track in the Landmark City area under Kunhadi police station early Thursday morning.

The FSL squad, in its initial investigation, suspected it suicide by consuming some poisonous substance; however, no suicide note was recovered from his possession.

This incident marks the second case of suicide within 48 hours in the coaching city and the 12th since January this year. On Tuesday early morning, an 18-year-old boy from Chhapra in Bihar, also a NEET aspirant, had committed suicide by hanging himself from a ceiling fan in his hostel room in Kunhadi police station area, Kota. "Body of a 23-year-old youth, later identified as Roshan Sharma, a resident of Tughlakabad in Delhi, was recovered from bushes near the railway track in Landmark City on early Thursday



### Transport department fined 95L for tree felling

**Delhi:** The National Green Tribunal NGT order Delhi's transport department to pay 95.05 lakh for cutting 495 trees for bus depots in Burari without afforestation. The tribunal ruled that the forest department's license to transplant 168 trees and plant 4,950

saplings was violated, making the practice "illegal." A panel of judge and expert Dr. Afroz Ahmed computed environmental compensation using Uttarakhand

Pollution Control Board (UKPCB) rules and asked all states, including Delhi.

morning," stated Arvind Bhardwaj, circle inspector at Kunhadi police station. Bystanders spotted the youth near the railway track early morning and informed the police, who

rushed to the spot, he added. The FSL squad called to the spot, in its initial investigation, suspected it suicide by consuming some poisonous substance, but no suicide note was recovered, he added.

## Vehicles that do not have fuel stickers with color coding will be subject to penalties

**Delhi:** The Delhi Transport Department has issued a new warning, stating that offenders will face consequences if they continue to operate vehicles without the High Security Number Plates (HSRPs) and corresponding stickers. According to officials, vehicles that do not have stickers that show the fuel type will not be issued Pollution Under Control (PUC) certificates. In light of a recent ruling by the Supreme Court, the Transport Department has issued a public notice which states,



"The Supreme Court has directed that PUC certificates will not be issued to vehicles unless they comply with the Motor Vehicles (High Security Registration Plates) order, 2018, for displaying colour-coded stickers/third registration mark on the windshield of the vehicle." "The

provisions of Section 192(1) of the Motor Vehicle Act 1988... will also be applied in the event of non-compliance," the warning continued. Owners face fines or jail time for improper vehicle registration under Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, Section 192(1).

### Not yet banned: CNG cars and petrol bikes

**Delhi:** The Delhi cabinet withdrew its suggestion to phase out CNG auto rickshaws and fossil fuel-powered two-wheelers under its new e-vehicle policy on Tuesday. After a cabinet meeting, transport minister Pankaj Singh said CNG auto operators will not be required to switch to electric. Motorcycles would be unrestricted.

"All vehicles will continue to ply on the capital's roads," he stated. The next EV policy draft proposes replacing CNG-powered three-wheelers with e-auto rickshaws by August. From August 15, next year, the draft proposes banning petrol, diesel, and CNG two-wheeler registration. The current EV policy, which expired on Tuesday, was

extended by three months, according to government sources. The present EV policy offers a 25% purchase subsidy (up to Rs 5,500) for e-cycles, Rs 30,000 for e-rickshaws and e-carts, Rs 5,000 per kWh of battery capacity (limited at Rs 30,000) for two-wheelers, and Rs 30,000 for e-light commercial vehicles.

## Some worker relief: Min wages rise in capital

**Delhi:** The Delhi government has raised the minimum wage for all categories to help workers. The revised rates span several skill levels. Unskilled workers now receive Rs 18,456 per month, up from Rs 18,066. Up from Rs 19,929. Semi-skilled workers would receive Rs 20,371. Skilled workers, including non-matriculated ones, would earn Rs 22,411, up from Rs 21,917. Graduates will earn Rs 24,356 instead of Rs 23,836. The increased rates take effect on April 1, 2025, to help workers cope with inflation. The Delhi government said the minimum salary increase will protect their purchasing power amid growing costs. A senior government official said, "This salary boost helps workers cope with inflation and provides much-needed financial respite. The hike is meant to balance rising living costs, especially in Delhi, where many workers are struggling financially." Inflation affects numerous economic sectors, he added. The Delhi government is supporting workers, especially low-wage workers, with the rise."



## Policy tweak may raise cost of owning non-EVs

**Delhi:** The Delhi government has proposed a significant tweak to its existing electric vehicle (EV) policy, which may lead to an increase in the cost of petrol and CNG vehicles, people aware of the plan said. The policy tweak, the people said, will lead to the extending of an existing "green cess" — currently applicable only for diesel vehicles — to all internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, thereby increasing their cost. This, they said, is being proposed in order to disincentive the sale of petrol and CNG vehicles in the Capital. Another option that is being explored is hiking the cost of petrol and CNG in the city, they said. Delhi's EV Policy 2020 — which charges a cess of 1%



### CBI raids AAP's Gujarat poll in-charge Durgesh Pathak's house in FCRA violation case

**Delhi:** The CBI on Thursday launched searches at the premises of former AAP MLA Durgesh Pathak and 2027 Gujarat assembly poll in-charge in connection with a case registered under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), news agency ANI reported. Last month, the Aam Aadmi Party had appointed senior leaders Durgesh Pathak and Gopal Rai as in-charges for the 2027 Gujarat assembly elections, signaling its intent to expand its footprint in the BJP stronghold.

### MPs Get 24% Salary, Pension Increase; New Allowances

**Delhi:** MPs' wages would rise 24%, along with pensions and allowances for former MPs, according to the Indian government. The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs notified these adjustments, matching them with the 1961 Income Tax Act Cost Inflation Index. This national revision follows the Karnataka government's large wage boost for the Chief Minister, ministers, and MLAs.. The monthly remuneration of the Chief Minister has quadrupled from 75,000 to 1.5 lakh.

## Card changes could restrict free bus rides for women to residents only

**Delhi:** According to transport department authorities, eight NCR lines are operated by the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC), which connects Delhi to other satellite cities, including Gurugram, Noida, Ghaziabad, and Greater Noida. Women residing in these locations may not be eligible for the smart card program if it needs verification of Delhi residency. The "lifetime smart cards" that the Delhi government is planning to introduce in place of the pink tickets that



women use for free bus rides may only be available to women who live in the Capital, according to sources acquainted with the matter. This is because, upon registration, the government may ask for proof of address. The transport department

in Delhi has started planning the logistics of the new smart card scheme, only days after chief minister Rekha Gupta announced them in her budget speech. We anticipate that the cards will be distributed following April 25.

## Delhi government has authorized GPS in water tankers

**Delhi:** In an effort to control the "tanker mafia" and close the demand-supply imbalance, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) will run 1,111 GPS-enabled water tankers this summer, according to chief minister Rekha Gupta. At a ceremony to welcome the tankers to Burari, Chief Minister Gupta



announced that the technology will aid in the prevention of leaks and allow for the tracking of tanker locations on an IT dashboard at the headquarters of the DJB. Rapping the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government for alleged failures in the tanker system, she said: "In the previous government, there was a leakage in the entire system in the name of tanker mafias. Corruption occurred. The ordinary people

### Govt allocates 12,952 crore for public transport system

The BJP government, led by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, presented its maiden budget on Tuesday, March 25. Gupta presented 1 lakh crore budget for 2025-26, a 31.56% increase from last year. In the budget for the financial year 2025-26, the government has allocated 12,952 crore to improve Delhi's public transport system. It has allocated 1,000 crore to improve the connectivity of Delhi with the NCR region.

## BJP will also have the Delhi mayor after the CM

**Delhi:** The new Delhi mayor will be elected on April 25. There are no party candidates for mayor. The Aam Aadmi Party will not run for mayor. Aam Aadmi Party will stand aside in the Mayor race. This party decision was revealed in a news conference by former Chief Minister Atishi and Saurabh Bhardwaj. Saurabh Bhardwaj stated the BJP is harassing, threatening, and wooing Aam Aadmi Party councilors. We will not run for mayor, he stated. Saurabh Bhardwaj said the BJP should make its Mayor notwithstanding and run the four-engine



administration without justification to show Delhi's people. This move by Aam Aadmi Party ensures the unchallenged election of BJP Delhi Mayor candidate. The MCD mayor will be BJP after Delhi's government creation. The BJP won the Delhi Assembly elections a

few months before. Delhi's BJP government was led by Rekha Gupta. BJP's return to MCD is now possible. MCD elections saw Aam Aadmi Party win the most seats. After winning the assembly elections, BJP today leads the numerical game.

### EWS certificate controversy: AAP and Congress criticize the government

**Delhi:** The Aam Aadmi Party and Congress vehemently criticized the BJP-led Delhi government for suspending the issuance of economically weaker section (EWS) certificates, alleging it is a calculated effort to "deprive the impoverished of education, healthcare, and employment opportunities" under the pretext of preventing malpractices. The

opposition's critique arose on the day it was announced that the Delhi government's revenue department had instructed all sub-divisional magistrates to cease the issuance of EWS certificates until further notice. Saurabh Bharadwaj, the chairman of AAP's Delhi branch, accused the government of penalizing the general populace for administrative failures.

## Man stabbed to death, 2 injured in clash after dispute over bidi

**Delhi:** A 21-year-old man was fatally stabbed, while his brother and a friend sustained serious injuries following a violent altercation in South East Delhi's Pul Prahladpur on Monday night. The incident reportedly stemmed from a dispute over a bidi. According to police,

the conflict began in a nearby park when Sohaib, the deceased, was approached by two men—Munna and Sunny—who asked him for a bidi. When he refused, they allegedly slapped him. Sohaib returned home and informed his mother about the incident.

His mother, Sabukta (55), accompanied by Sohaib and his brother Mohsin, went to confront the attackers at their residence. During the confrontation, the situation escalated. Firoz, along with Sunny and Imtiyaz, allegedly attacked the trio with knives. Sohaib suffered multiple stab

wounds and collapsed on the road. Mohsin and their friend Akram were also injured. Sohaib's other brother, Sahajad, called the police. By the time a team arrived at the scene near the public toilet in Pul Prahladpur, the injured were already taken to ESI Hospital in Okhla.