

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Title Code - UPENG04488

NATIONAL ENGLISH DAILY

MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

Tuesday, 23 December, 2025

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

Cold wave grips Delhi to Bihar, two die due to cold in Uttar Pradesh

New Delhi
The entire North India is currently in the grip of a severe cold wave. Temperatures are continuously dropping from the hilly regions to the plains. Continuous snowfall in the mountains has intensified the chill in the plains as well. Dense fog blanketed several states on Monday, including Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan, causing considerable inconvenience to people. Uttar Pradesh is also experiencing the brunt of the cold wave and biting cold. There are reports of a farmer and a young man dying due to the cold in Banda. Meanwhile, road, rail, and air traffic have been severely affected due to the fog. On Monday, fog covered more than 40 districts of the state, including Kanpur, Barabanki, Ayodhya, and Lucknow. Biting cold grips Delhi. The national capital Delhi experienced a sharp drop in temperature on Monday morning. People felt the biting cold. In many places, people were seen warming themselves around bonfires on the roadside. While dense fog was not visible on Monday, the temperature is continuously dropping due to the wind.

US calls India key ally in 'China vs world'

New Delhi: The US-China trade war took a sharper turn this week, with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent accusing Chinese President Xi Jinping's regime of making "provocative," economic moves after Beijing tightened export controls on rare earth minerals. Speaking to Fox Business on Monday, Bessent said the move was a direct challenge to the global economy. "This is China versus the rest of the world. They announced these export controls that are going to go into effect next month, and we have aggressively pushed back against them. We're not sure where this came from.

Will the Supreme Court hear the Aravalli case again?

The issue of protecting the Aravalli range has reached the Supreme Court

New Delhi

The case related to the alleged weakening of environmental protection measures safeguarding the Aravalli range has once again reached the Supreme Court, with environmental activist and lawyer Hitendra Gandhi writing to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant to review the "100-meter test" rule. No hill forests below 100 meters. Environmentalists are concerned about Aravalli protection. A recent Supreme Court judgment has sparked a debate among environmentalists and the general public regarding the Aravalli hills. This judgment, being called



the '100-meter judgment', clarifies that hills less than 100 meters in height in the Aravalli region cannot be automatically classified as 'forests'. Vijay Benjwal and Neeraj Srivastava, experts from the 'Save Aravalli Trust', have expressed serious concerns about this judgment. They state that only two

peaks in Haryana are above 100 meters – one in Tosham (Bhiwani district) and the other in Madhopura (Mahendragarh district). The rest of the area may now be outside the purview of protection. They said that this threatens the entire ecosystem. The Aravalli range prevents dust from the Thar

Aravalli: Why is its environmental balance important for Delhi?

During the British era, Delhi was made the capital because it was bordered by the Aravalli Range on one side and the Yamuna River on the other, which maintained a natural balance. This environmental advantage was the main reason for shifting the capital from Kolkata to Delhi.

Desert, recharges groundwater, and maintains biodiversity. If protection is weakened: Dust and pollution will increase (the problem is already severe in Delhi).

Nitish Kumar met with Modi and Shah



New Delhi

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah here on Monday. Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Lalan Singh and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary were also present during the meeting. After the meeting, Samrat Choudhary wrote on X that after the resounding mandate

for the National Democratic Alliance in Bihar, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi today. He said that under Prime Minister Modi's guidance and leadership, the country and Bihar are continuously progressing. Valuable guidance was also received on the goals of a developed Bihar. Earlier, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar also met with Union Home Minister Amit Shah here.

The increase in train fares has angered the opposition

New Delhi

The Ministry of Railways announced an increase in train ticket prices on Sunday, after which the opposition strongly criticized the central government. Congress National President Mallikarjun Kharge accused the Modi government of looting the common people.

On Monday, he said that the government has increased train fares for the second time in a year, and this increase has been made just before the Union Budget. In a post on the social media platform X, Kharge wrote that the condition of the railways has deteriorated during the Modi government's tenure. He also

emphasized that the abolition of the separate railway budget has led to a lack of accountability. The Ministry of Railways announced an increase in train ticket prices. According to the new rules, the fare has been increased by 1 paisa per kilometer for journeys exceeding 215 kilometers in the ordinary class.

National Herald: Notice to Sonia-Rahul on ED's plea

New Delhi

The Delhi High Court has issued notices to Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi on a petition filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the money laundering case related to the National Herald. The ED has challenged the trial court's order refusing to take cognizance of the charge sheet. The High Court has ordered the next hearing of the case on March 12, 2026. Earlier, on December 16, the Rouse Avenue Court had refused to take cognizance of the ED's charge sheet against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. The Rouse Avenue Court had stated that cognizance of the ED's charge sheet could not be taken based on a



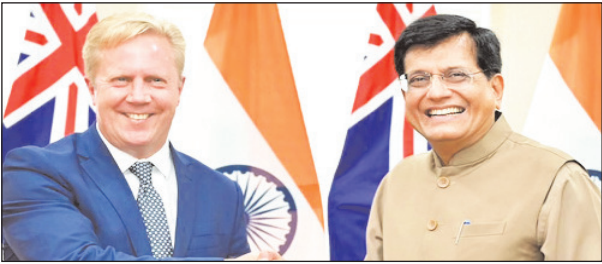
private complaint. The ED has challenged this order of the trial court in the High Court. Additional Solicitor General (ASG) SV Raju had opposed the Gandhi family's argument that they had no control over Associated Journals Limited (AJL). He said that AJL was originally the publisher of the National Herald. In this case, Rahul Gandhi's lawyer RS Cheema had said that the Congress did not try to

sell AJL, but wanted to save the institution because it was part of the freedom movement. Cheema had asked why the ED was not showing the Memorandum of Association of AJL. AJL was founded in 1937 by Jawaharlal Nehru, JB Kripalani, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, and other Congress leaders. Cheema had said that the Memorandum of Association of AJL states that all its policies.

The free trade deal between India-New Zealand will benefit farmers

New Delhi

India's trade diplomacy is currently moving at a rapid pace. On one hand, negotiations for a major trade deal with the United States are progressing quickly. On the other hand, India has successfully finalized a Free Trade Agreement with New Zealand. Union Minister of



Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal expressed strong confidence in the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement. He

said that this agreement will not be limited to trade figures alone, but will also have a positive impact on the lives of

ordinary people. Under this agreement, New Zealand has committed to investing approximately \$20 billion in India over the next 15 years. This investment will be made in manufacturing, infrastructure, service sectors, and innovation-related fields. Union Minister Piyush Goyal said at a press conference on

Monday that after the implementation of the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement, Indian exports will benefit from zero duty. This will directly benefit farmers, MSMEs, employees, artisans, women-led industries, and youth, as well as labor-intensive industries such as textiles, apparel, leather.

Retail inflation, GDP, and production figures will see changes next year

New Delhi

The central government has announced a change in the base year for key economic indicators. The government will release new series of retail inflation and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) data from February next year, and the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data from May. This information will also be shared with stakeholders. The Ministry of Statistics and



Programme announced on Monday that the new series of key macroeconomic data related to retail inflation, national accounts, and the Index of Industrial Production will be released next year with a revised base year. The ministry stated

that a consultative workshop on the change in the base year for Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Consumer Price Index (CPI), and Index of Industrial Production (IIP) will be held on December 23 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. A first workshop was held in Mumbai on November 26. This workshop will see the participation of eminent economists, experts from financial institutions and the banking sector.

Knowledge is the biggest weapon for a five trillion dollar economy: Gadkari

Pune

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari said on Monday at an event held at IIT Bombay that knowledge is the most powerful weapon to make India a \$5 trillion economy and the world's third-largest economic power. He emphasized that the future of any country depends on its future technologies. IITs are

There are two examples within the country, one sits in Delhi and the other in Lucknow: Yogi

Lucknow

On the second day of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly's winter session, while the opposition cornered the government over cough syrup containing codeine, CM Yogi Adityanath himself took charge to respond and explained what action was being taken in the matter. Without naming them, he targeted SP chief Akhilesh Yadav



and Rahul Gandhi. The SP chief also retaliated. The Chief Minister said that there are two examples in the country. One

sits in Delhi and the other in Lucknow. When there is any discussion in the country, they flee the country. I think the same

thing is happening with your "Babua" (a term often used to refer to Akhilesh Yadav). He too will go on a pleasure trip to England, and you people will keep shouting here. He said that when difficult times come in the country, those in Delhi and Patna go abroad. The same will happen with your "Babua." There are two examples in the country, one sits in Delhi and the other in Lucknow.

A campaign has been launched in Delhi to seal polluting units

New Delhi

Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa stated that a comprehensive campaign has been launched today to immediately seal units violating

GRAP-4 and causing pollution. Sirsa stated at a press conference at the Delhi Secretariat on Monday that all Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Deputy Commissioners, in collaboration with the

Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), have initiated the sealing process against unauthorized industries from today. Under this comprehensive campaign, all polluting units will be sealed. The

Delhi government is rapidly implementing a multi-pronged strategy to reduce air pollution in the capital. The positive effects of the stringent GRAP-4 provisions, which have been in effect for the past

four days, are now visible on the ground, with improvements in air quality being recorded. He stated that since the implementation of the "No PUC, No Fuel" rule, over 200,000 vehicles have been tested.

The Yogi government presented a supplementary budget of 24,496.98 crore

Lucknow

The Yogi Adityanath government of Uttar Pradesh presented a supplementary budget of ₹24,496.98 crore for

the financial year 2025-26 during the winter session of the Legislative Assembly on Monday. Presenting the budget, Finance Minister Suresh

Khanna said that this supplementary budget has been brought to maintain the continuity of development in the state, provide additional resources.

Former Union Minister was a symbol of struggle and socio-political integrity and awareness

Bharwari

Dharamveer, the doyen of Kaushambi district politics and a beloved leader, remains alive in the hearts of the people of Kaushambi. On the 41st death anniversary of former Union Minister Dharamveer, on December 22, 2025, at the statue of the late Dharamveer at Transport Nagar Chowk, Mundera, Prayagraj, hundreds of people offered floral tributes and paid their respects after a havan (fire ritual) and puja (worship). They remembered his contributions. A havan and puja were performed according to Vedic rituals on his death anniversary. This event served as an opportunity to remember his great struggles and social contributions. Leaders and supporters from various political parties participated in the tribute program. It is noteworthy that Dharamveer served as the former Home Minister of Uttar Pradesh and the Labour Minister in the central government, and made significant and remarkable contributions to the politics of the state and the country during the seventies and eighties. Hundreds of supporters offered floral



tributes at his statue at Transport Nagar Chowk. Family members and supporters paid their respects. Dharamveer was a symbol of the upliftment of the underprivileged classes, who fought for social equality. Such events are organized annually in his memory. Radheshyam Arya, a scholar of Arya Samaj, conducted the havan. The Dharamveer Social Foundation also distributed blankets to hundreds of poor and needy people. The program was attended by former MP Shailendra Kumar, Shishu Jaiswal, former MLA Satyaveer Munna, former Superintendent of Police L.P. Bhaskar, S.P. Singh, senior leader Moinuddin, Ram Bhajan Tripathi, SP leader Jonty Yadav, Praveen Kesharwani, Raju Saxena, journalist Thakur Ashok Singh, Man Singh Patel, Man Singh Yadav, Majid Bhai, Bhola Nath

Yadav, business leader Dinesh Kesharwani, Shankar Lal Kushwaha, Rajiv Paswan, Arshad Jani, Jansatta Dal leader Irfan Ahmed, Kaleem Khan, Raju Kasenda, Naseem Bhai, Neeraj Gupta, Shambhulal Kesharwani, Bhajiyaram Saroj, Shivsharan Kanojia, Anand Arya, Pramod Arya, Dinesh Arya, Anant Yadav, Buddha Lal Pasi, Shashwat Arya, Suryaveer Arya, Subhash Yadav from Sorav, Kisan Yadav, Deshraj Gautam, Sanu Warsi, Arvind Srivastava, Asif Abbasi, Sharad Gautam, Shivshankar Saroj, Advocate Pramod Saroj, Santosh Kanojia, Janardan Tripathi, Ramkhilawan Saroj, Avnish Prajapati, Rajkumar Vishwakarma, Annu Sahu, Dhakad Pasi, Om Prakash Pasi, Mahendra Behal, Manoj Hela, and other leaders and social workers from SP, BJP, Jansatta Dal.

Removing Gandhi's name from the MNREGA scheme won't turn laborers into Adani or Ambani: Congress

Kaushambi: The BJP has removed Mahatma Gandhi's name from the MNREGA scheme, which provides employment to laborers, causing outrage in the Congress party across the country. The question arises whether changing the name of the MNREGA scheme, which was named after Mahatma Gandhi, will provide more work to the laborers or turn them into Ambani or Adani. But the BJP did not think about this and removed Mahatma Gandhi's name from the MNREGA scheme. If changing names brings about change in the system, then the BJP should change the month of December to April so that the cold disappears and crores of people in the country get relief from the cold. On Monday, hundreds of Congress leaders marched from the office of District Vice President Mohammad Akram in Bharwari to protest against the change of name of MNREGA with photographs of Mahatma Gandhi. On this occasion, District President Gaurav Pandey said that this government only changes



names and distracts the attention of the country's people from the real issues. Today, inflation and unemployment are at their peak in the country, but the government has no answer for this! After this, State Secretary and District Convenor Rajesh Sahni said that Mahatma Gandhi is present in every particle of the country; changing the name of the scheme cannot tarnish Bapu's image! District Vice President Mohammad Akram said that the current government can only change names, but the country can never forget Bapu's sacrifice. Bapu made a valuable contribution to the country's independence. Subsequently, District Vice President Ram Surat Raidas said that changing the name of MNREGA will not make the country forget the contributions of Mahatma Gandhi.

Bapu was always revered and will always remain so. Those present at the program included District Vice Presidents Mohammad Akram, Alkama Usmani, Ram Surat Raidas, District General Secretaries Surendra Shukla, Raj Bahadur Chaudhary, Seva Dal District President Jamshed Ahmed, Block President Ramesh Yadav, Secretaries Indrapal, Ramdas Gautam, Chhote Lal, Mohammad Mizan, Tabrez Ahmed, Social Media District President Sachin Pandey, Mohammad Shariq, Ramesh Kumar, Dharendra Kumar, Karar Ahmed, Mohammad Aslam, Mohammad Anees, Irshad Ahmed, Kaushar Ali, Mohammad Siraj, Ward Presidents Wajid Zameer, Sufiyan Ahmed, Deepak Sharma, Raj Rahul Yadav, Sanjay Patel, and hundreds of other workers.

Minister Nandi presented the UP Ease of Doing Business (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2025 to the House

Lucknow

On Monday, the second day of the ongoing winter session of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly at the Vidhan Bhavan in Lucknow Industrial Development Minister Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi presented the Uttar Pradesh Ease of Doing Business (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2025 to the House. Minister Nandi stated that during the past eight years, under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the double-engine government words and actions have been consistent. Intentions and policies have been consistent. Decisions and execution have been consistent. Ease of doing business and an industry-friendly ecosystem have been our commitment since day one. We have achieved the desired results in this direction through concrete and effective decisions from time to time. Continuing this trend, the Uttar Pradesh Sugamya Vyapar (Act, 2025 is a historic step towards industrial development and investment promotion in the state. It is a relevant amendment that provides a new impetus to investor trust and confidence. The Government of India has initiated the decriminalization of offenses in 42 Central Acts under the Public Trust (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023. In this vein, various states (Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Tripura, Haryana, Odisha, Uttarakhand and Karnataka) have passed Public Trust Acts in their respective states, making the penal provisions logical and business-friendly. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, our government has made governance more just, practical and accessible for businesses and citizens in the state by eliminating criminal penalties for minor errors. This Act promotes ease of doing business as well as ease of living. This is an important step towards trust-based governance. The Uttar Pradesh Facilitative Trade.

Five accused arrested during a police encounter, solving robbery incidents under Pipri and Charwa police stations

Kaushambi: On December 16th, under the Charwa police station area, unknown persons on a two-wheeler robbed a man near Shivprayag Garden in the morning (taking Rs. 5000, a mobile phone, etc.). Also on December 16th, 2025, under the Pipri police station, two separate robbery incidents were committed by unknown persons on motorcycles. Teams were formed for the successful investigation of these incidents and the arrest of the accused. These teams collected evidence, including CCTV footage and surveillance data, and used informants to conduct raids on suspected individuals and those suspected of the robberies. Checkpoints were also set up at various sensitive locations. In this sequence, in the early hours of December 22nd, 2025, the in-charge of the Chayal outpost, who was conducting checking in Manouri town, informed the Pipri Station House Officer that five unknown persons on three motorcycles, who appeared suspicious, were speeding away from the



checkpoint towards Chayal town. Upon receiving the information, the Pipri Station House Officer and the SOG in-charge, along with their teams, proceeded towards Chayal town. The unknown persons on the three motorcycles, seeing the police, turned their motorcycles around and tried to escape. The police team pursued them, and the Chayal outpost in-charge, along with his force, also attempted to apprehend the motorcyclists from the opposite direction. Seeing themselves surrounded, they fled towards the road connecting Chayal to Charwa. The police team informed the Charwa

mobile patrol via wireless, and the Charwa Station House Officer, along with his team, also set up a cordon to apprehend the motorcyclists. Subsequently, near Guguwa Ka Bagh, the five unknown persons on the three motorcycles were surrounded by the police teams from both sides. One of the accused abandoned his motorcycle and fled, while the other four motorcyclists were apprehended by the police team. The fleeing accused was pursued by the Station House Officer of Pipri and the SOG in-charge along with their team. While fleeing, the accused fired at the police team with the intention of

killing them. The police team, while protecting themselves, asked the accused to surrender, but the accused again fired at the police team with the intention of killing them. In response, the police team fired in self-defense, and one bullet struck the leg of the fleeing criminal, causing him to fall to the ground injured. Upon questioning, the accused identified themselves as Sachin son of Ram Bahadur, resident of Ratgaha, Charwa police station; Sonu alias Abhishek Kumar son of Kamlesh Pasi, resident of Bhagalpur Mundera, Dhumanganj, Prayagraj; Sujal alias Shreyal Bhartiya son of Kamlesh Bhartiya, resident of Chakia, Prayagraj; Ankit Pasi son of Surendra Pasi, resident of Chakia, Prayagraj (injured in the encounter); and Babu Rider alias Omi Pasi son of Jhulur Pasi, resident of Chakia, Prayagraj. Three motorcycles, 11 mobile phones, Rs. 5200 in cash, two illegal pistols, two live cartridges, and two spent cartridges were recovered from the possession of the accused.

Lucknow

During the winter session of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, Urban Development and Energy Minister A.K Sharma today, while replying to the questions raised by Members in the Legislative Council, clearly placed the government position before the House. During this time, several Members expressed their gratitude to the Urban Development Department and Sharma for the completion of works in their respective areas. Replying to a question related to the deceased dependent quota



under the Directorate of Urban Local Bodies Sharma stated that, after receiving advice from the Personnel Department, through order number dated 22 July 2025 issued by the Executive Officer,

Nagar Panchayat Chauri Chaura, District Gorakhpur, Kumari Sneha Singh (daughter of Girjanand Singh) the elder unmarried sister of the late Kumari Ambika Singh, has been appointed.

The voice of the people will also not be safe: Sanjay Singh

Moradabad

On Monday, the second day of the Aam Aadmi Party "Save Vote, Save Constitution" march the struggle and public support seemed to strengthen. Led by senior Aam Aadmi Party leader Uttar Pradesh in-charge and MP Sanjay Singh the six-day march began Monday morning from J.R. Palace near Ambekar Park in front of the CRPF, Moradabad Road Rampur. As the march reached Dalpatpur in Moradabad the people of Moradabad gave Sanjay Singh a rousing welcome. Upon entering Moradabad the march received overwhelming public support wherever it passed. This march is a campaign to raise awareness among the public against the BJP attempt to steal votes



in Uttar Pradesh in the name of SIR deleting names from voter lists, depriving the poor, Dalits, backward classes and minorities of their right to vote and weakening the Constitution. During the march Sanjay Singh stated that preparations are underway to disrupt the democratic process by making large-scale irregularities in the voter lists before the elections in Uttar Pradesh. Sanjay Singh stated that voting is not just a right but the greatest power of the people and SIR is being used as a weapon to weaken this power. He clarified that the Aam

Aadmi Party will expose this conspiracy in every district, every village and every neighborhood. AAP MP Sanjay Singh stated that this fight is not against any one election or any one government, but to protect the democratic rights of future generations. He said that if the attack on the vote succeeds today the voice of the people will be suppressed forever tomorrow. Therefore the Aam Aadmi Party is empowering the public to lead this fight, ensuring that no government can tamper with the Constitution and the right to vote. Sanjay Singh stated that the country is currently engaged in a politics of distraction from serious issues. The politics of hatred and fear are being promoted by avoiding issues such as unemployment.

Trained and skilled Civil Defence volunteers will assist people selflessly in all situations

Prayagraj: Additional Police Commissioner (Headquarters) N. Kolanchi, Honorable Mayor Ganesh Prasad Keserwani, and Additional District Magistrate (City) Satyam Mishra concluded the seven-day Civil Defence training session by distributing training certificates. A total of 360 participant volunteers from Civil Defence Prayagraj participated in the training program. The guests of honor encouraged them by presenting training photographs, certificates, and training module bags. The first session was inaugurated by City Magistrate Vinod Kumar Singh by lighting the lamp. As is customary every day, the session began with the national songs "Iti Shakti Hamein Dena Data" and "Vande Mataram." Following this, the City Magistrate enlightened the volunteers on various social responsibilities on the topic of "The Path of Life" and conveyed a message of environmental and wildlife conservation through a short film. In the second session, the Mayor, in his address, highly praised the work of the Civil Defence volunteers and emphasized the importance of the training session, stating that they are the



guides of society and will provide full support during the upcoming Magh Mela, similar to the Mahakumbh. He added that this training is essential for their social upliftment and will make them efficient guides. Additional Police Commissioner and Inspector General of Police Headquarters N. Kolanchi, in his address during the training session, said that if each of the 360 trained members connects with 5 other people, the number will reach thousands. He emphasized that this training would be extremely important for intelligence gathering, crowd control, crowd management, and public cooperation. He then distributed training certificates to the senior members. Following this, Additional District Magistrate (City) Satyam Mishra, in his address, said that the seven-day Civil Defence training, from the first day to the concluding session, will certainly

contribute to their capacity building and character development, the direct benefit of which will be received by society. He then distributed training modules and training certificates to all the remaining participants after the examination and feedback session. The guests were welcomed with mementos and shawls by Chief Warden Anil Kumar, and the vote of thanks was given by Deputy Chief Warden Sanjeev Kumar Bajpai and Senior Assistant Deputy Controller Rakesh Kumar Tiwari. The program was conducted by Deputy Controller Neeraj Mishra and Raunak Gupta, Divisional Warden (City). At the conclusion of the training session, the Additional District Magistrate (City) presented mementos to the Deputy Controller, Senior Assistant Deputy Controller, and Chief Warden, and extended his best wishes for the successful conduct of the training session.

The spirit of Vande Mataram has brought glory to India on the world stage: Minister Kapil

Lucknow

Participating in a special discussion organized in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly to mark the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram, Kapil Dev Aggarwal Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Vocational Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship said that the fact that the great national anthem of Vande Mataram is being discussed in detail for the first time in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly after Parliament is a historic and proud moment for the state. He said that Vande Mataram is not just a mere recitation of words, but a living symbol of the spirit of dedication, struggle and sacrifice for the country. Minister Aggarwal said that during the freedom struggle, even when the British tortured the revolutionaries, they never ceased to chant "Vande Mataram." They were whipped on the back, but this flame of patriotism kept them from bowing down. Minister Kapil Dev Aggarwal expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for giving special national importance to the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram, stating that it is not merely a remembrance but a pledge to promote the spirit of dedication and struggle for the country among the new generation, youth and girls. He said that when the Prime Minister travels abroad and Vande Mataram resonates before the entire world, India respect is further elevated globally. Minister Aggarwal stated that whether it is the G-20 presidency, historic decisions in Jammu and Kashmir, the construction of the Ram Temple after 500 years reforms related to women safety or the courage of the country armed forces against terrorism, the spirit of Vande Mataram is inherent in all these achievements. He said that this mantra binds the soul of India together from north to south, east to west from oceans to rivers from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

Jeweler shot by miscreants, bag full of jewelry snatched; incident occurred near police outpost

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: Chandan Soni, a resident of Majhua village in the Karchhana police station area, owns a jewelry shop on the Bhirpur highway. On Monday evening, after closing his shop, Chandan Soni was going home on his motorcycle when miscreants lying in wait near the Ghodedih canal bridge shot and injured him with a pistol. Chandan fell to the ground along with his motorcycle after being shot. Taking advantage of the situa-



tion, the motorcycle-borne miscreants



snatched the bag containing jewelry from Chandan Soni's vehicle and fled. According to the victim, the bag contained two kilograms of silver jewelry and some cash, which the miscreants stole.

Hearing the gunshot, a crowd of passersby gathered on the road, and the police were informed. The incident, which took place near the Bhirpur reporting outpost, left the police stunned. The police

arrived at the scene, set up roadblocks, and launched a search for the miscreants. The injured Chandan Soni has been admitted to the Karchhana Community Health Center for treatment.

Police Recover 17 Missing Mobile Phones, Hand Them Over to Owners



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Ghazipur. The Bahariyabad police team of the district recovered 17 missing mobile phones. Under the able guidance and supervision of the Superintendent of Police (City), Additional Superintendent of Police (City), and Circle Officer Saidpur, the Bahariyabad police and the CCTNS team recovered a total of 17 missing/lost mobile phones (estimated value approximately Rs. 2,61,000). It is noteworthy that the owners of the lost/missing mobile phones had previously filed applications on the CEIR portal on various dates regarding the loss of their mobile phones. Following these applications, the Bahariyabad police team, through continuous efforts, recovered 17 missing/lost mobile phones and handed them over to the owners today, December 22, 2025. The mobile phone owners expressed their happiness and praised the police. The police team involved in the recovery included the Station House Officer of Bahariyabad along with the CCTNS team.

16-Year-Old Girl Dies Due to Doctor's Negligence, Family Accuses Hospital Management



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Utraon. A 16-year-old girl allegedly died due to wrong treatment in the

Utraon police station area of ??Prayagraj district. The family has leveled serious allegations against the doctor of Jan Seva Hospital located in



Mohanganj Mугarsan. A complaint has been registered on the Chief Minister's portal in this regard. Anjali, daughter of Santlal alias Pattar Harijan, a resident of Purushottampur village, suddenly fell ill on December 19.

Her family took her to Jan Seva Hospital in Mohanganj Mугarsan, where the doctors admit-

ted her. The family alleges that after admitting her to the hospital, the doctors demanded money for the test reports.

After paying the money, when the reports came, the doctor started treatment based on the report of another patient named 'Khushboo' instead of Anjali's. Due to the wrong treatment, Anjali's condition sud-

denly worsened and became critical. After this, the doctor suggested referring her to another hospital. Santlal immediately rushed his daughter to the district hospital, where doctors declared her dead. Anjali's body has been buried at Leelapur Ghat. The deceased's father, Santlal, has registered a complaint on the Chief Minister's portal regarding this matter. The police are now investigating the case and questioning the hospital management. Anjali was the youngest of her parents' two daughters and four brothers.

Approval granted to the New Okhla Industrial Development Authority Rules 2025

Lucknow

The New Okhla Industrial Development Authority (Building Construction on Land Transferred through Exchange) Rules 2025 were approved on Monday at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Following the implementation of this new rule,

A Step Towards Making Gram Panchayats Self-Reliant: Two-Day Special Training Begins

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Ghazipur. A two-day special training program was launched in the auditorium of the Mohammadabad Block Development Complex in the district, with the objective of making Gram Panchayats economically strong and self-reliant. This training is being held from December 22 to 23, 2025, with special emphasis on increasing the Gram Panchayats' own sources of income. The training program was organized under the guidance of the Deputy Director (Panchayat), Varanasi Division, Varanasi. All Gram Panchayat Secretaries and Panchayat Assistants from the development block area participated in it. The program was jointly inaugurated by Block Head Awadhesh Rai, Block Development Officer Yashwant Kumar Rao, ADO Panchayat Ashok Kumar, and Senior Faculty Sunil Singh of DPRC Chandauli by lighting the lamp. Addressing the inaugural session, Block Head Awadhesh Rai said that better utilization of local resources is essential for the economic strengthening of



Gram Panchayats.

He suggested that buildings managed by the panchayat should be identified, repaired, and put to use to generate regular income. He also said that revenue can be increased by preparing and selling organic manure from the cow dung available in cowsheds. In addition, income can be increased by providing more services to citizens at the CSCs (Common Service

Centers) operating in the Panchayat Secretariats. Panchayats can develop new sources of income by systematically managing fairs, markets, and other local events. During the training session, trainers Shashi Kumar, Radheshyam, and Sunil Singh provided detailed information to the participants about the concept of OSR (Own Source Revenue), its necessity, and legal and administrative provisions.

In the theft case that occurred in Tharwai, a joint team of police and SOG was engaged in the investigation

Tharwai

The police took cognizance of the major theft case that occurred in Tharwai and were engaged in the investigation. On Monday, taking notice of the incident, DCP Ganganagar Kuldeep Singh Gunawat, ACP Tharwai Arun Parashar, and joint teams of the SOG arrived at the scene



and were involved in investigating the case from every angle.

Seven Candidates Arrested for Cheating Using Bluetooth Devices: Sent to Jail

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Tharwai: Seven candidates were arrested on Sunday during the first shift of the EMRS competitive examination for Hostel Warden and Staff Nurse positions for cheating using electronic devices. The arrests were made at Springer Public School near Chakiya Ghat in the Gangapur zone, under the jurisdiction of Tharwai police station. The seven arrested individuals include Manjeet Kumar son of Amrit Lal, Ranjit Kumar son of Jayaram, Sachin Kumar Maurya son of Vijay Bahadur Maurya, Satish Kumar son of Ramchandra, and three female candi-



dates. Seven Bluetooth devices, seven SIM devices, and seven SIM cards were recovered from their possession. They were brought to the police station. Tharwai Inspector Santosh Kumar Pandey stated that based on a complaint received from the principal of Springer Public School, Neeraj Kumar Mishra, a case was registered against

them, and they were sent to jail. The police team involved in the arrests included Sub-Inspector Jitendra Nath Singh, Woman Sub-Inspector Akanksha Dwivedi, and other police personnel. Assistant Commissioner of Police Tharwai, Arun Parashar, stated that necessary legal action has been taken against all seven candidates.

Ineligible Voters' Names Should Not Be Included in the Electoral Roll: District Magistrate

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: A meeting was held on Monday at the Sangam Auditorium, chaired by District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma, in the presence of representatives of recognized national and state political parties, regarding the special intensive revision program of the electoral rolls for the assembly constituencies. In the meeting, the District Magistrate provided detailed information to the representatives of the national and state political parties about the progress and activities of the re-verification and mapping of ASD (Absent, Shifted, or Deceased) voters under the special intensive revision. The District Magistrate said that the ASD list of voters prepared by the BLOs (Booth Level Officers) has been shared with all of you. If any person has been mistakenly included in the ASD list, their name can be removed until December 26th; otherwise, the name of the concerned voter will not be included in the draft publication list. Therefore, you are requested to ensure that your appointed BLAs work



with full dedication and cooperate with the BLOs so that no eligible voter is left out. The District Magistrate informed that the ASD list prepared by the BLOs, identifying deceased, completely shifted, duplicate/already enrolled, absent, and other voters, has been shared with the BLAs appointed by all political parties and has also been pasted at all polling booths. The list of ASD voters prepared in a polling station-wise searchable format has also been uploaded on the Prayagraj district website, where the general public can check their names in the ASD list. If a person's name has been wrongly marked in the ASD list by the BLO, they can contact the concerned BLO or ERO (Electoral Registration Officer) to get their name

removed. The District Magistrate stated in the meeting that special focus is currently being placed on finding and verifying ASD voters. He requested all voters to go to their respective polling booths and check their names in the ASD list. If their name has been mistakenly included in the ASD list, they should get it removed. He informed that the mapping work of a total of 30,31,144 (86.15 percent) voters, according to digitization, has been completed by 2:00 PM on December 22nd. In the meeting, the District Magistrate informed that the option to download the Hindi translated list of ASD category voters with complete details has been made available on the Election Commission of India's ECI Net portal.

Police arrest two wanted individuals in connection with a POCSO Act case



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Ghazipur. The Kasimabad police team of the district arrested two wanted accused in connection with case number 469/2025 under sections 123/78/351(3) BNS, 67 IT Act, and 7/8 POCSO Act. As part of the ongoing campaign against crime and criminals, on December 22, 2025, the Station House Officer of Kasimabad along with his team arrested the wanted accused 1. Mohd. Asif son of Abdul Majeed and 2. Aneesh Ahmed son of Nafeesh Ahmed, residents of Gangauli, Kasimabad police station, Ghazipur district, from Zahurabad Mod Mubarakpur Chatti. Further legal action is being taken against the arrested accused. The police team that made the arrest included the Station House Officer of Kasimabad police station and his team.

Editorial

Stuck in an Orwellian world: Liberal Western media, illib- eral global agenda

Author Umesh Upadhyay in his book, *Western Media: Narratives on India from Gandhi to Modi*, recalls “the summer of 1982”, when he was in Canada. In July that year, Giani Zail Singh was elected the seventh President of India. But to his “utter surprise”, there was no mention of India having a new president in the Canadian newspapers. This despite the fact that Canada had by then “a sizable Punjabi population, so much so that some signage in certain areas was in Gurmukhi. If you happened to travel by Air Canada, there were announcements in Punjabi”. Yet, the appointment of the first Sikh President of India found no mention in Canadian newspapers. Incidentally, one day, Upadhyay found a news report about India in the local Canadian newspapers. It was regarding a bus accident in which some Hindu pilgrims were killed. “A bus accident in India finds a place in the international section of a Canadian newspaper, but the world’s largest democracy getting a new President — that too a Sikh — doesn’t. Why is that?” This question bothered Upadhyay for long, till he realised that “the Western media’s coverage of developing countries like India is that it solely focuses on disasters — man-made or natural. It creates a lopsided image of such countries as crisis-ridden nations”. One understands the Western media’s mindset from journalist Gerald Priestland’s article, ‘With Nehru Around India’, for the BBC in the 1950s. “There were times when I found myself writing: ‘This country (India) is doomed; if it does not starve to death or perish of the plague, it will surely explode in bloody revolution.’” Nothing of the sort happened. India not just evaded such nightmarish scenarios, but also became a power to reckon with, economically as well as geostrategically. To add to it, the country has decided, especially in the past 10 years, to consciously shun its Western colonial hangovers. New India is today far more confident about itself, its cultural/civilisational identity, and of course its space in the world order. This, however, is just half the story. The other half is far more disconcerting. And this second half has two altogether different facets. One, the mainstream media in the West traditionally acts as an extended arm of the government. The Western media coverage of the Ukraine war is a classic example. One can, therefore, see an adverse media reportage or human rights coverage in the American press just before the United States is supposed to seek some economic, commercial or diplomatic concessions from India. The two act in tandem to secure larger American interests. The second development is as disconcerting for India as it is for the United States. It’s the growing Qatari-Saudi-Chinese money in the American media, think tanks and academia. Millions of dollars have been poured into American institutions, especially in the past two decades, thus creating a class of people American in blood and colour, but Qatari in taste, Chinese in opinions, and Saudi in intellect. According to a 2022 study, between 2001 and 2021, US higher education institutions received \$13 billion in funding from foreign sources, of which Qatar alone contributed \$4.7 billion to dozens of American academic institutions, including Harvard. Similarly, a US Education Department record shows that Saudi Arabia contributed \$650 million to American universities between 2012 and 2018. Saudi money went to all sorts of American universities: From the elite Harvard and Yale, to public universities like Michigan and Berkeley. As for Chinese money, nearly 200 US colleges and universities held contracts with Chinese businesses, valued at \$2.32 billion, 2012 and 2024, according to a report published in The Wall Street Journal.



Pakistan: No end in sight to Army, Imran Khan confrontation

After December 16, 1971, no date is as traumatic for the Pakistan army as May 9, 2023. On the former day the pride of the men in khaki was humbled on the parade ground in Dhaka when Lt Gen AAK Niazi surrendered to Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Arora. On the latter, the supporters of former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Imran Khan rioted against the army in the streets and cantonments of the country. In the process they destroyed monuments dedicated to the army’s revered martyrs, pillaged corps commander Lahore’s house, which is named after the country’s founder, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, and also attacked other army installations. By showing such utter disrespect the rioters outraged the army’s image of itself as the final protector of the people and the country and its foundational principles. No wonder some army generals cried out in anguish that what the ‘external’ enemy (obviously, meaning India) had not been able to accomplish had been done by the country’s internal foes. The May 9 events set the army chief, Gen Asim Munir, squarely against Imran Khan. That their relations were fractured was one aspect of the issue. The other was the inroads that Khan had succeeded in making in the army by invoking



the ‘gairat’ (pride) of some officers and other ranks by projecting that he was standing firm against the attempts of foreign countries, especially the United States, at interfering in Pakistan’s internal affairs. The fact that some members of the armed forces had given their ear and more to Khan’s song was unacceptable to the majority of the force. This is because the ethos of the army demands that all officers and men must be loyal to the army chief and no one else. Munir and his supporting generals and officers simply could not afford to overlook Khan’s inroads into the army, for it would have impaired the force’s discipline and professionalism. And, they could not allow a political leader, howsoever popular, to create splits in the force. Hence, Munir acted decisively against many in its own ranks, including the corps commander, Lahore. He had

them court martialled and dismissed. He opened a second front against Khan through other political forces (the term ‘other political forces’ has been deliberately used for the Pakistan army is both a professional and a political force) and like-minded individuals in other institutions, including the judiciary, to ensure that Khan remained incarcerated and that the PTI was weakened. The aim was to get it defeated in the elections to the National Assembly and reduce Imran Khan’s challenge to a nullity. Munir succeeded in these objectives but not fully. As Pakistan marked the anniversary of May 9, it became clear that the army and its fellow political travelers have not succeeded in entirely rooting out the Imran Khan challenge. The events of the last few days and Munir’s long statement of May 9 demonstrates this fact. On May 7

Director-General of Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Major General Ahmed Sharif addressed an over two-hour long press conference. He vehemently, and again and again condemned those responsible for the mayhem of May 9 last year. This was a clear reference to Imran Khan and the PTI though Sharif carefully avoided naming them. During his fulminations he slipped in the ‘message’ that a dialogue with the PTI was only possible if they apologised “publicly” to the “nation” for their actions and pledging to abandon their anarchical approaches adopted constructive political positions. It is not surprising that the Pakistani media underlined Sharif’s ‘message’ for Khan and the PTI. Imran Khan’s response to this message was clear and direct. When asked by reporters, as he left a case hearing in a court on May 8, if he was willing to apologise for the May 9 events, Khan responded in the negative. According to media reports Khan stressed that he came to know of May 9, 2023 events only when he attended the court proceedings in the Pakistan Supreme Court on that day. He also emphasised that he had already condemned the violent incidents. PTI’s Omar Ayub Khan who is the current leader of the opposition in the

Pakistan National Assembly went further to call the events of May 9 as a conspiracy against Khan. On May 8 evening Pakistan president Asif Ali Zardari said “May 9, 2023 will always be remembered as a dark day in Pakistan’s history...”. Media reports stated that he stressed that the events of that day had “tarnished” Pakistan and had only “served the interests” of the country’s enemies. Prime minister Shehbaz Sharif told a special meeting of the cabinet on May 9 morning that the aim of the May 9, 2023 events was to end democracy in Pakistan, bury the constitution and establish an individual’s dictatorship. While these reactions of the current political leaders were significant the most noteworthy statement came from army chief Asim Munir. During a visit to the Lahore Garrison on May 9, Munir said that attempts were being made through digital platforms to create divisions between the army and the people. He characterised the riots of May 9, 2023 as “criminally orchestrated violence” and that its plotters were now trying to “twist the narrative”. However, he added, “there can be no compromise or deal with the planners and architects of this dark chapter in our history”. He then went on to say “the real leaders.

Macron’s attempts to woo Xi and Chinese ‘long game’

Emmanuel Macron, along with his wife Brigitte Macron, hosted Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan at the Pyrenees mountains, a place where the French President made regular trips to see his grandmother as a child, on Tuesday. A day before this, on Monday, the wife of the Chinese President, on invitation, visited the Orsay Museum with the first lady of France in Paris. The two-day visit of the Chinese President to France was a part of Xi’s Europe tour, which includes Serbia and Hungary as well, two countries that have maintained close ties with Russia despite the Ukraine war. Xi’s Europe tour will conclude on Friday. Xi’s France visit saw the rolling of the red carpet for the Chinese President as he attended

the state dinner organised for him by Macron at the Elysee Palace, as the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party started his first trip to Europe in five years. The streets of Paris, which were the Eden of modern liberal views—remember the French Revolution—were donned with Chinese and French flags, welcoming an ‘autocrat’ ruling a regime no less ‘Robespierrian’. Yet protesters wearing Tibetan flags on their shoulders took part in a demonstration in support of members of the Tibetan and Uighur communities, whose rights the West claims to vehemently advocate. The visit marked 60 years of diplomatic relations between Paris and Beijing, as France was the first Western country to formally recognise the People’s Republic of

China on January 27, 1964. To understand the reasons behind this hospitality, Macron’s recent interview to the Economist can be referred to, in which the French President called the war in Ukraine an existential threat to Europe. Otherwise as well, the President has been considered among the most ‘hawkish’ leaders when it comes to the security of the continent. Macron has been advocating a more ‘independent’ security policy for Europe moving out of the cross-Atlantic approach and favours being less reliant on the US, or NATO in terms of ensuring Europe’s security. “If Russia wins in Ukraine there will be no security in Europe... Who can pretend that Russia will stop there?” asked the French President.

Swapan Dasgupta’s essay on PM Modi that NYT asked for, but refused to publish

Author and columnist Swapan Dasgupta has revealed that ‘The New York Times’ approached him in March this year for a “thought-provoking essay on the appeal of the PM’s BJP movement”. Dasgupta sent his 1,500-word essay to the NYT and was first asked to incorporate “some of the criticisms of Modi”, which he was fine with. The essay, which was sympathetic to Modi and had elaborated on the shift in the Indian establishment, was sent on April 22, says Dasgupta. However, after two days, he was told “it looks as though we won’t move forward with this. Sorry for that.” Dogmatic consistency has been the defining characteristic of the overseas India-watchers’ perception of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Ten years ago, on April 10, 2014, in a feeble bid to influence voting in the general election, a clutch of notables including writer Salman Rushdie, Harvard professor Homi Bhabha, artist Anish Kapoor and others, published a joint letter in a British newspaper charging Modi with “failure of moral character and political ethics”. “Were he to be elected prime minister,” they argued, “it would bode ill for India’s future as a country that cherishes the ideals of inclusion and protection for all its peoples and communities.” Adding its voice to the panic, The Economist suggested “it would be wrong for a man who has thrived on division to become prime minister of a country as fissile as India.” The experience of 10 years at the helm and the very real possibility of voters granting him a third term doesn’t appear to have tempered the disquiet of the custodians of Indian Enlightenment. With opinion polls suggesting yet

another emphatic mandate for the Bharatiya Janata Party, the critics believe the one-sidedness of the contest is due to Modi “turning democracy into electoral authoritarianism”. A Chatham House this month report has drawn attention to charges of “authoritarianism by stealth through controlling key levers of power, including security services, tax authorities and the media”. If the June 4 results lead to the BJP decimating the Rahul Gandhi-led Congress yet again, it is likely that Modi’s overseas critics will team up with India’s Opposition to question the legitimacy of the triumph. Although such a challenge will lack credence if the turnout is good, the larger objective is to sow doubts in the minds of business leaders and political decision-makers about India’s success story. Modi is the real target and by tarring him with the brush of autocracy, his critics hope to envelop him in yet another murky controversy. Their hope is that the memories of an earlier saga when the United States rescinded his visa can be resurrected to damage his global standing. The twinning of the Western liberal establishment’s concerns over India’s “democratic backsliding” with the opposition Congress party’s fighting the polls on a similar platform is significant. Since Modi assumed charge in 2014, there has been a silent revolution that has resulted in the growing marginalisation and irrelevance of the old elite that inherited the country from the British in 1947.

What is often described as the Congress ecosystem loosely comprised Westernised and cosmopolitan individuals and was influenced by progressive.

China racing ahead in critical technologies

India needs to increase its pace considerably to keep up with China on the tech front. Illustration by Shutterstock There are multiple disruptions that are taking place currently. The Cold War did provide some kind of stability, though it witnessed multiple conflicts wherein warring sides were either supported by the US or by the Soviet Union or Russia. With the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, the US emerged as the sole superpower, and its fragile stability still continued. With China undertaking major strides in all domains, coupled with its new-found ambition of becoming the sole superpower of the world, the interna-

tional narrative of dynamic equilibrium is witnessing a major change. With Chinese incursions having entered their fifth year in eastern Ladakh, the Russia-Ukraine war continuing in the third year, and the Israel-Hamas conflict continuing in the eighth month, with no end in sight for any of these conflicts, global uncertainties continue. As this emerging geopolitical situation becomes more and more fragile with every passing day, new political alignments are emerging. Russia-China has already entered into a ‘no limit’ friendship, with a new alignment emerging in the form of Russia-China-North Korea-Iran. More

nations could join this alliance, including Pakistan. The balancing act expected from India on the geo-political front is an important challenge, but India has been walking a tight rope efficiently so far. India has also been managing the economic issues, including the challenges of the supply chain, reasonably well in the national interest. The biggest challenge that is most disruptive stems from technological disruption, which is more alarming as compared to geopolitical and geoeconomic disruptions. In fact, technological disruptions shape even geopolitical and geoeconomic disruptions. The Houthi attack in the

Red Sea using drones and missiles resulted in the US and some other NATO countries mobilising their resources to counter this threat. Technology to be effective need not result in high-end, sophisticated weapons, but low-end, cost-effective weapons using simple technology are also potent tools for the strategic impact that happened consequent to this attack by Houthis in the Red Sea. Another technological impact can be gauged from the fact that Ukraine, with a non-existent navy, has caused asymmetric damage to Russian vessels and has become a headache for the Russians in the Black Sea.

Briefs

BALLIA
43 ARP teachers selected, posting soon

Ballia has selected 43 candidates against 65 vacant posts for Assistant Research Teachers (ARP). The selection was based on written exams, micro-teaching, and interviews. The result is available on the NIC website. The block-wise posting of the selected candidates will be done at the District Basic Education Officer's office on December 23. All selected candidates must be present by 10 AM.

BALLIA
National Invention Quiz Held at BRC

A National Invention Quiz science competition for primary and upper primary students was held at the Rahi Block Resource Centre. Students from various schools participated, showcasing their scientific knowledge. Top performers Yuvaraj Satish Singh, Ankita Singh, and Ansh Patel from different schools qualified for the district-level competition. Winners were honored with mementos and science kits by the Block Education Officer.

LUCKNOW
Mass Wedding Ceremony Held for Five Brides

A collective 'Kanyadaan' ceremony was organized by the Shri Radha Sakhi Seva Parivar Samiti in Mans Mandir, Daliganj, Lucknow. The wedding of five brides was solemnized with Vedic rituals. The event featured a barat procession and cultural programs. The organizing committee's president stated that all newlyweds were gifted household items. Several dignitaries and social workers attended the function.

JAUNPUR
Protest Over Hindu Youth's Murder in Bangladesh

Hindu organizations held a strong protest at Naiganj intersection in Jaunpur against the brutal murder of Hindu youth Deepu Chandra Das in Bangladesh. Protesters burnt an effigy of the Bangladesh government, raised slogans, and condemned the incident. Speakers expressed concern over atrocities on minorities in Bangladesh and demanded diplomatic intervention from the Indian government to ensure their safety.

MORADABAD
Nursing Students' Induction Ceremony Held

A lamp lighting and oath-taking ceremony for nursing students was held at Vivekanand College of Nursing. The chief guest, Dr. Vishesh Kumar Gupta, inaugurated the event by paying homage to Swami Vivekanand and former trustees. Students took the pledge to serve the profession with dedication. College trustees highlighted the institute's two-decade legacy of producing skilled and ethical nursing professionals.

WINTER SESSION | War of words erupts over codeine cough case and 'Delhi-Lucknow' reference

'Two Models' comment triggers political storm

LUCKNOW

**SP stages protest, walks out as Speaker intervenes to restore order in the House**

The Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly witnessed sharp political exchanges on the second day of the winter session after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath made a remark referring to "two models" sitting in Delhi and Lucknow, triggering strong objections from the Samajwadi Party. The comment came during Question Hour while the House was discussing allegations linked to the codeine cough syrup case raised by the opposition.

Responding to SP allegations, the Chief Minister said the opposition should come prepared with facts, asserting that no deaths in Uttar Pradesh were linked to codeine cough syrup. He said licences for key wholesalers were issued during the previous SP govern-

ment and added that action under the NDPS Act was underway, with multiple arrests already made. He also stated that strict action, including bulldozer action where

warranted, would be taken at the appropriate time.

During his address, the Chief Minister made a veiled reference to "two models" in Delhi and Lucknow, suggest-

"BJP has forgotten decorum"

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav reacted on X, calling the Chief Minister's remark an "admission" of internal conflict. He urged those holding constitutional positions to maintain decorum and said the BJP should not bring its internal Delhi-Lucknow tussle into public political discourse



ing that when national debates arise, some leaders leave the country. Though no names were taken, the remark led to immediate protests from SP members, who interpreted it as a personal attack on their leadership.

Leader of Opposition Mata Prasad Pandey objected to the language used, saying such remarks lowered the dignity of the House. The Speaker, Satish Mahana, intervened, clarifying that no individual had been named and asked members not to attribute statements to themselves unnecessarily.

Despite repeated appeals, SP legislators moved into the Well of the House, raised slogans, and later staged a walkout.

The confrontation unfolded amid broader discussions on the codeine cough syrup investigation, supplementary budget presentation, and a special debate marking 150 years of 'Vande Mataram'. The government maintained that enforcement agencies were acting without discrimination, while the opposition accused the ruling party of politicising the issue.

SP chanting 'Vande Mataram', BJP's impact: Keshav Maurya

LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Monday took a swipe at the Samajwadi Party, claiming that its leaders have begun chanting 'Vande Mataram' and visiting temples, which he described as a political victory for the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Speaking to news agency ANI in Lucknow, Maurya said that 'Vande Mataram' has historically been associated with India's freedom movement and continues to hold relevance in the vision of a developed India and a developed Uttar Pradesh. He alleged that the ideological influence of the

Remarks made during discussion marking 150 years of 'Vande Mataram' in UP Assembly

BJP has compelled opposition leaders to adopt practices they earlier distanced themselves from. The Deputy Chief Minister stated that the country is progressing under the current leadership and alleged that sections of the opposition suffer from what he termed a "national mindset issue." According to him, recent actions and statements by Samajwadi Party members indicate a visible shift in their political approach.

SIR targets infiltrators, not citizens: Governor Anandiben

FATEHPUR

**Governor highlights strengthening of Anganwadi centres and HPV vaccination drive for girls**

Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel on Monday said that the Special Identification Revision (SIR) process should not be opposed, as it is aimed at identifying people who have entered the country illegally. She stated that the process is ongoing and it has become clear that governments are taking steps to identify and remove infiltrators from the country.

Addressing a programme at Saraswati Balika Vidya Mandir in Fatehpur, the Governor said that misinformation regarding SIR should be avoided. "Those who have entered the country illegally are being identified and action is being taken against them. There is no reason to oppose such a process,"

she said. During her visit, Governor Patel inaugurated a new building of the school, distributed kits to Anganwadi workers, provided nutrition

kits to women, and honoured beneficiaries of various government schemes.

Speaking on the Anganwadi system, the Governor said that centres catering to children aged zero to six years form the foundation of early development but were neglected for a long time. She noted that while large institutions received adequate facilities, Anganwadi centres lacked basic infrastructure, a gap now being addressed through focused efforts. She said that since assuming office in 2019, inspections revealed the need for significant improvement in Anganwadi centres and primary schools. With public cooperation, essential resources worth ₹22,000 to ₹25,000 have been provided to nearly 50,000 Anganwadi centres so far.

Grand silk exhibition opens at Safed Baradari

LUCKNOW



A grand silk exhibition by New Craft Silk India opened Monday at Lucknow's historic Safed Baradari. Inaugurated by model Divya and MTV star Monis Sevtar, the expo features authentic Banarasi, Kanchipuram, and Chanderi silks. Running until January 4, 2026, the event aims to support traditional weavers and heritage.

Fog of death: UP sees multiple fatal accidents in a single day

LUCKNOW

Dense fog continued to wreak havoc across Uttar Pradesh, leading to a series of fatal accidents in multiple districts on Monday. The most severe incident occurred on the Purvanchal Expressway in Sultanpur, where a car rammed into a stationary truck amid low visibility, killing three people including a father and his son, while five others were seriously injured.

The victims, residents of Azamgarh, were returning home from Lucknow when the accident occurred near milestone 142,900 in the Jayasinghpur police station area. Police, along with the Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) team,

**Bus-bike collision, tractor-trolley overturning and river drowning incidents reported amid poor visibility**

used cranes to rescue those trapped inside the mangled

vehicle. The injured were rushed to hospitals, with five later referred to higher medical centres. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath took cognisance of the Sultanpur accident and directed officials to ensure proper medical treatment for the injured and provide relief to the affected families.

14 polyclinics to start next year in Lucknow

LUCKNOW

**ENT, gynaecology, paediatrics and medicine specialists to be deployed under NHM plan**

The Uttar Pradesh health department is set to expand public healthcare services in Lucknow by opening 14 polyclinics across the city in 2026. The initiative aims to provide specialist medical consultation closer to residential areas, reducing the need for patients to travel to major hospitals for routine treatment.

Officials said that buildings for all proposed polyclinics have been identified and preparations are underway to make them operational by January. Each polyclinic will have two medical specialists available daily, covering disciplines such as ENT, paediatrics, gynaecology, general medicine and oncology, among others.

Currently, Lucknow has 108 Health and Wellness Centres operating on the model of mohalla clinics, where MBBS

doctors provide primary care. However, the absence of specialists often forces patients to seek referrals elsewhere. The new polyclinics are intended to bridge this gap by offering secondary-level care at the neighbourhood level.

Under the National Health Mission, a budget of around ₹10 lakh has been approved for setting up each polyclinic.

'Protecting Mafias': Samajwadi Party protests over Codeine case

LUCKNOW



Proceedings of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly were preceded by a protest from Samajwadi Party legislators over the alleged codeine cough syrup scam. Led by Leader of Opposition Mata Prasad Pandey, SP MLAs demonstrated in the Assembly premises near the statue of Chaudhary Charan Singh, accusing the state government of shielding those involved.

The protesting legislators held placards and raised slogans, claiming that the investigation initiated by the government lacked transparency and independence. SP leaders alleged collusion between senior officials and influential elements linked to the case, asserting that the truth had not yet emerged.

SP MLA Ravidas Malhotra demanded that the matter be probed by a sitting judge, calling it a serious issue affecting public health. He also criticised the state government for limiting the winter session to a few days, alleging it was done to avoid discussion on public concerns.

During the protest, party leaders reiterated demands for debates on health services, farmers' dues, power supply, law and order, and voter list revision.

No one died : CM
In the UP Assembly, CM Yogi Adityanath stated that no deaths occurred in the state due to codeine cough syrup. He confirmed 79 FIRs and 225 bookings against illegal distributors linked to the opposition. He warned of "bulldozer action" against those involved in the illegal diversion of these medicines

shakeup

Woman demands closure of liquor outlet

FARRUKHABAD



Dwivedi, the woman said government welfare schemes held little meaning for her when her husband spent his entire income at the village liquor outlet. "Sir, all your schemes may be good, but please do not explain them to us. Just close the liquor shop in our village. My husband drinks and wastes

all his earnings there. How will the household survive?" she said in front of officials and villagers. A video of the exchange has since gone viral on social media. ETV Bharat, however, has not independently verified the authenticity of the viral clip. Responding firmly, the District Magistrate ordered

DM directs police to act strictly, asks husband to pledge publicly to quit alcohol

immediate police intervention. He instructed the local police to bring the woman's husband, identified as Ram Bhajan, to the chaupal. The DM reportedly said the man should not be released until he publicly folded his hands before his wife and pledged to give up alcohol consumption. Senior officials, including

Superintendent of Police Arti Singh, Chief Development Officer Vinod Kumar Gaur, and other administrative staff, were present during the chaupal when the incident unfolded. The village where the event occurred is also the ancestral village of Kanpur MP Ramesh Awasthi, adding to the public and political attention around the episode.

The incident has reignited discussions around alcohol addiction, the social impact of liquor outlets in rural areas, and the role of district administrations in addressing such grassroots concerns.

Wife and lover arrested in gruesome murder of husband

SAMBHAL

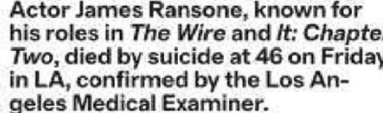
Police have solved a horrifying murder case in the Chandausi area of Sambhal, where a woman, Ruby, allegedly killed her husband, Rahul, with the help of her lover, Gaurav. The crime came to light after dismembered body parts were found in a polythene bag on December 15. A tattoo bearing the name "Rahul" on a recovered hand led to his identification.

Investigations revealed that Rahul had caught Ruby and Gaurav together and



threatened to inform his family. In retaliation, the duo murdered him at home, used a mechanical grinder to chop his body into pieces, and disposed of the remains in local drains and the Rajghat river.

Superintendent of Police K.K. Bishnoi confirmed the arrest of Ruby and two accomplices. Police recovered the grinder, a hammer, and other tools used in the crime.



Briefs

Indonesia bus crash kills 16

A passenger bus crash killed at least 16 people on Indonesia's main island of Java just after midnight Monday, officials said. The bus carrying 34 people lost control on a toll road and struck a concrete barrier before rolling onto its side, said Budiono, a search and rescue agency chief who goes by single name like many Indonesians. The bus was travelling from the capital Jakarta to the country's ancient royal city of Yogyakarta when it overturned while entering a curved exit ramp at the Krapyak toll way in Central Java's Semarang city, he said.

PIO new CTO of Starbucks

Starbucks has appointed Indian-origin technology executive Anand Varadarajan as its new executive vice president and chief technology officer (CTO), tapping a nearly 2-decade Amazon veteran to lead its global technology operations. Varadarajan will take charge on January 19, join the company's Executive Leadership Team, and report directly to Chief Executive Officer Brian Niccol, Starbucks said. He succeeds Deb Hall Lefevre, who retired in September. At Amazon, Varadarajan spent close to 19 years building large-scale, customer-focused technology platforms, most recently overseeing technology and supply chain for its Worldwide Grocery Stores business. Earlier, he worked as a software engineer at Oracle and with several startups.

PUTIN BRIEFED | Moscow investigates Kyiv's link to the attack

Russian general killed by bomb under his car

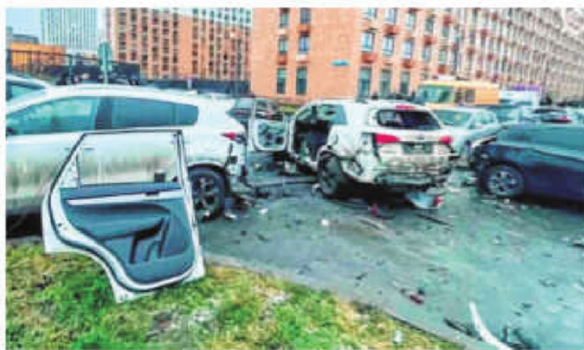
MOSCOW

A Russian general was killed on Monday morning after an explosive device detonated underneath his car in Moscow, and investigators said Ukraine could be behind the attack, the third such killing of a senior military officer in a year.

Lt Gen **Fanil Sarvarov**, head of the Operational Training Directorate of the Russian Armed Forces' General Staff, died from his injuries, said Svetlana Petrenko, the spokesperson for Russia's Investigative Committee, the nation's top criminal probe agency.

"Investigators are pursuing numerous lines of enquiry regarding the murder. One of these is that the crime was orchestrated by Ukrainian intelligence services," Petrenko said. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said President Vladimir Putin had been informed of the Sarvarov's killing. The defence ministry said Sarvarov had previously fought in Chechnya and taken part in Moscow's military campaign in Syria.

Just over a year ago, on Dec



17, 2024, Lt Gen Igor Kirillov, the chief of the military's nuclear, biological and chemical protection forces, was killed by a bomb hidden on an electric scooter outside his apartment building. Kirillov's assistant also died. Ukraine's security service claimed responsibility.

An Uzbek man was arrested and charged with killing Kirillov on behalf of the Ukrainian security service.

Putin described Kirillov's killing as a "major blunder" by Russia's security agencies, noting they should learn from it and improve their efficiency.

But in April, another senior Russian military officer, Lt Gen Yaroslav Moskalik, a deputy head of the main operational department in the General Staff, was killed by an explosive device placed in his car parked near to his apartment building just outside Moscow. A suspected perpetrator was arrested.

Moscow also has blamed Ukraine for several bombings and other attacks in Russia.

Space war: Kremlin may attack Elon Musk's Starlink

Two Nato-nation intelligence services suspect Russia is developing a new anti-satellite weapon to target Elon Musk's Starlink constellation with destructive orbiting clouds of shrapnel, to rein in Western space superiority that has helped Ukraine on the battlefield.

Intelligence findings say the so-called "zone-effect" weapon would seek to flood Starlink orbits with thousands of high-density pellets, potentially disabling multiple satellites at once but also risking catastrophic collateral damage to other orbiting systems.

Analysts say they doubt such a weapon could work without causing uncontrollable chaos in space for companies and countries, including Russia and its ally China, that rely on thousands of orbiting satellites for communications, defence and other vital needs.

DoJ restores Trump photo removed from Epstein files

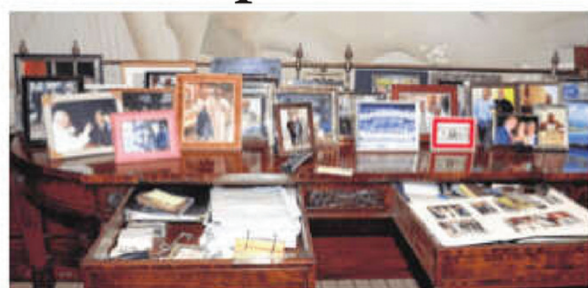
Washington: The US justice department said it had restored an image it had removed a day earlier from the public release of investigative files related to Jeffrey Epstein after concluding that the photograph, which included within it a photo of Trump, posed no risk of public exposure to victims of the late convicted sex offender, 'The Guardian' reported.

The department said the image had been flagged by federal prosecutors in New York for potentially exposing victims of Epstein.

"Out off an abundance of caution, Dept of Justice temporarily removed the image for further review," the dept said. "After the review, it was determined there is no evidence any Epstein victims are depicted in the photo, and it has been reposted without any alteration or redaction."

On Sunday, deputy US attorney general Todd Blanche said removing photos from Epstein files, including one of Trump, has "nothing to do" with the president - and maintained the images would likely go back up after it is determined whether they need redactions.

Blanche said the 16 removals came at the request of victim advocacy groups. "We don't have perfect informa-



A photo of Donald Trump and Jeffrey Epstein is on the right hand side

AMERICA PURSUES THIRD OIL TANKER NEAR VENEZUELA

Washington: The US on Sunday began pursuing what it described as a "dark fleet" vessel in international waters near Venezuela after the ship refused to stop and continued sailing, CNN reported. The vessel, Bella 1, was sailing toward Venezuela to load oil when US Coast Guard officials tried to board it. Instead of complying, the vessel continued sailing, prompting officials to launch an active pursuit.

Bella 1 is under American sanctions for links to Iranian oil and is viewed as part of a "shadow fleet" used to transport crude from sanctioned countries. A judicial warrant had already been issued for the vessel's seizure. In a scathing statement, the Venezuelan foreign ministry denounced the "theft and hijacking" of a private vessel that was transporting Venezuelan oil through international waters. Meanwhile, China condemned the US military's move to seize Venezuelan oil tankers in international waters, saying the "arbitrary action" constitutes a serious violation of international law.

tion," Blanche told NBC News' Meet the Press. "And so when, when we hear from victims-rights groups about this type of photograph, we pull it down and investigate."

Meanwhile, two US lawmakers have threatened legal action against US Attorney General Pam Bondi, after her deadline to release all government files was met in part.

Greenland row: Denmark says US must respect territorial integrity

Copenhagen: The Danish foreign minister said on Monday his country insists everyone, including the US, must respect "the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Denmark" after President Trump's announcement. The appointment of a special envoy to Greenland, Louisiana

Governor Jeff Landry, who said his goal would be to make the territory part of the US.

Greenland PM said the territory is happy to cooperate with countries, including US, but emphasised "we decide our own future". Denmark FM said he plans to summon the US ambassador. —AP

Hotel guest leaves room buried under garbage

A hotel staff in China were stunned after discovering the aftermath of a guest's 2-year stay at an esports-themed property. Esports hotels have become popular among gamers seeking immersive experiences, offering top-tier equipment and private gaming spaces. After the guest

checked out, the hotel staff was shocked to see the room buried under a mountain of rubbish, making the furniture and fixtures almost invisible.

The guest had checked into the hotel in Changchun, Jilin.

He spent 2 years inside, rarely venturing out, and staff admitted they never even saw his face, as per 'Express UK'.



When he checked out on Dec 12, the scene was shocking, a video shows heaps of

old containers, empty drink bottles, and dirty food wrappers covering every inch.

In the bedroom, the rubbish was piled 3 ft deep, swallowing 2 gaming chairs and a table.

The bathroom was in worse state. Sodden tissue paper was stacked higher than the toilet, while dirty, discarded items

clogged the washbasin. It took cleaning crews 3 days to clear the mess. The room now requires renovation.

Staff revealed the guest still owes over 10 days of unpaid fees, amounting to around CNY 2,700 (INR34,412). Financial troubles are suspected as the reason for his sudden departure.

Saudi Arabia has witnessed rare snowfall, including in the northern regions, where such an event has been reported for the first time in 30 years.

The white blanket of snow covered vast desert areas, from the Tuwaiq mountain

Rare snowfall in Saudi's Tabuk turns desert white

range in the west to regions near Riyadh. The rare event has sparked excitement and disbelief among residents.

Snowfall transformed the country into an unexpected

winter playground. Another video showed adults enjoying the snow by skiing, celebrating, and capturing a scene rarely seen in the kingdom.

Local TV channels have

described the snowfall as historic, while many residents have expressed concerns over the cold conditions and icy roads. National Meteorology Centre had earlier

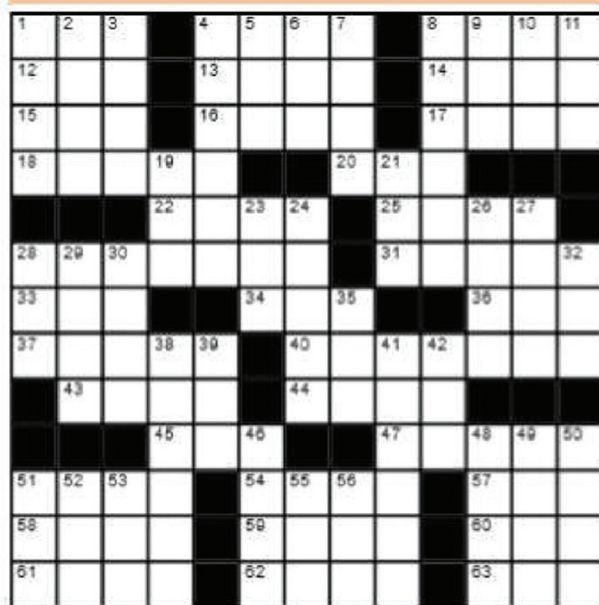
warned of a sharp drop in temperatures and urged the public to take safety precautions.

Additionally, the Trojena Highlands and Tabuk region

experienced unusually low temperatures due to snow last week. Jabal Al-Lawz in Tabuk reported heavy snowfall on Wednesday, accompanied by fog and strong winds.



Crossword #1723



Across
1 Drop bait lightly
4 Skin lotion plant
8 Eye part
12 Suffix with expert
13 Exchange for money
14 Exploding star
15 "Bad Behaviour" star Stephen
16 Tells an untruth
17 Exchange or barter
18 On edge
20 Music director Malik
22 Maintained or held?
25 Concludes
28 Not as expensive
31 Country of the Middle East
33 _____ better : would find it wiser to?
34 A set of clothing with accessories
36 Equal opportunity employer abbr
37 Heavenly being
40 Milliner or dress-maker
43 Not shallow
44 Ancient Greek covered walkway?
45 Regional Sales Manager, abbr.
47 2504 in Roman numerals
51 Roman eight
54 Jazz singer _____ Fitzgerald
57 Eco. Comm. of Europe
58 Object of worship
59 Roman 1052
60 Indonesia's earlier name
61 Suggestive
62 Forewarning
63 Designer's monogram

Down
1 Filth
2 Understanding term? (1,3)
3 Legume seed
4 In the land of Nod
5 Garland from Hawaii
6 Spanish cheer
7 Born free lioness
8 Not famous or acclaimed
9 Pledge
10 Actress Longoria
11 Arvind Kejriwal's party
19 Jamaican popular music
21 Maiden-name
23 For each
24 Cuts or lops
26 Colouring agents
27 A small stain
28 Tea
29 Clock pointer
30 Border
32 Golf item
35 Obtained
38 Spookily
39 Long playing records, in short
41 Field of activity
42 I think therefore ____? (1,2)
46 Short note
48 Contradict
49 Frozen treats
50 Fabric face covering
51 Comedian Das
52 Gilbert and Sullivan princess
53 Ind. Oil Corp.
55 Law professor's degree
56 Untruth

YOUR DAY By Vinayak Vishwas Karandikar



ARIES: Today is the day to study, enjoy, and entertain. Expect expenditure on entertainment, children, or education. People in education, sports, banking, government jobs, politics, and the medical field will get success. Harmony in family relationships is indicated. Some people may suffer from back pain or BP issues. Lucky no: 6; Lucky colour: Pink



TAURUS: Today is the day to travel with care and focus on studies. Expect expenditure on properties, vehicles, travel, education, or premium services. People working in the tourism sector, hospitals, politics, journalism, and the occult will benefit. A family dispute is indicated. Lucky no: 8; Lucky colour: Blue



GEMINI: Today is the day for travel and communication. Expect expenditure on essential things, travel, or communication. Doctors, politicians, hoteliers, and government employees will benefit. A family outing is indicated. Some people may suffer from eye issues or ear problems. Lucky no: 5; Lucky colour: Green



CANCER: Today is the day to earn and take care of your health. Expect expenditure on yourself, health, or family needs. People in the medical field, politics, government jobs, and the hotel business will benefit. A dispute with or ill health of family members is indicated. Some people may suffer from toothaches, eye problems, weakness, or fever. Lucky no: 6; Lucky colour: Pink



LEO: Today is the day to travel, spend, and enjoy. Expect expenditure on travel, medical bills, or entertainment. People in tourism, the medical field, politics, and sports will benefit. A long tour or ill health of a family member is indicated. Lucky no: 1; Lucky colour: Orange



VIRGO: Today is the day to travel, spend, and study. Expect expenditure on travel, medical needs, mother, or education. People in tourism, the medical field, sports, and politics will benefit. You may go on a long drive with your family. Some people may suffer from blood pressure, back pain, or eye problems. Lucky no: 5; Lucky colour: Green



LIBRA: Today, you may focus on your job, business, or career. Expect expenditure on businesses, jobs, communication, or travel. People in banking, hotel management, the medical field, journalism, and politics will benefit. A short journey with your family, or meeting with your siblings is indicated. Some people may suffer from knee pain. Lucky no: 5; Lucky colour: Green



SCORPIO: Today is the day to travel, earn, and study. Expect expenditure on studies, travel, communication, or business growth. People in politics, travel, the medical field, and banking will benefit. Some people may suffer from knee pain or eye problems. Lucky no: 2; Lucky colour: Silver



SAGITTARIUS: Today is the day to face problems and find their solutions. Expect expenditure on health, education, or premium services. People in the occult, the maintenance field, insurance, and the travel sector will benefit. A family dispute or ill health of a family member is indicated. Some people may suffer from indigestion, body ache, or injury. Lucky no: 1; Lucky colour: Orange



CAPRICORN: Today is the day to face problems or loss in your career and family life. Expenses related to spouses, medical treatment, or premium services are expected today. People in insurance, banking, finance, and the medical field will benefit. Your married life may get disturbed. Lucky no: 6; Lucky colour: Pink

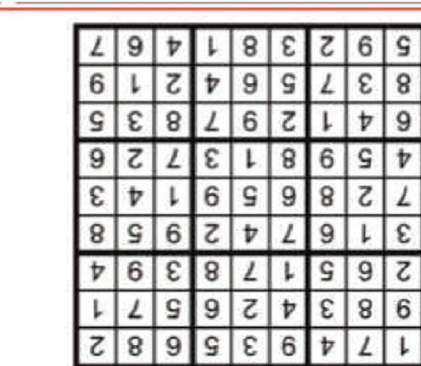


AQUARIUS: Today, you will be busy on all fronts, like job and family. Expect expenditure on businesses, spouses, or health. People in politics, government jobs, the medical field, and banking will benefit. Ill-health of a family member is indicated. Some people may suffer from stomach pain, eye problems, or BP issues. Lucky no: 6; Lucky colour: Pink



PISCES: Today is the day to enjoy and earn. Expect expenditure on children, jobs, or businesses. Politicians, bankers, artists, entertainers, sportsmen, and medical professionals will benefit. It is a day to solve problems in relationships. Some people may suffer from back pain, eye issues, or heart problems. Lucky no: 9; Lucky colour: Red

FPJ - SUDOKU - 613



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

Solution

Across: 1 Dth, 4 Aloe, 8 Uwea, 12 Isle, 13 Silt, 14 Nova, 15 Raze, 16 NEI, 61 Raze, 62 Omen, 63 YSL.
Down: 1 Dth, 2 Isle, 3 Bean, 4 Aaleep, 5 Lel, 6 Ole, 7 Eisa, 8 Unlung, 9 Now, 10 Eva, 11 AAF, 12 Raze, 13 Silt, 14 Nova, 15 Raze, 16 NEI, 61 Raze, 62 Omen, 63 YSL.
Across: 1 Dth, 4 Aloe, 8 Uwea, 12 Isle, 13 Silt, 14 Nova, 15 Raze, 16 NEI, 61 Raze, 62 Omen, 63 YSL.
Down: 1 Dth, 2 Isle, 3 Bean, 4 Aaleep, 5 Lel, 6 Ole, 7 Eisa, 8 Unlung, 9 Now, 10 Eva, 11 AAF, 12 Raze, 13 Silt, 14 Nova, 15 Raze, 16 NEI, 61 Raze, 62 Omen, 63 YSL.

A PICTURE FROM THE LIFE OF JESUS

Dada J. P. Vaswani

Jesus preached love and forgiveness. He often preached through the form of parables—disarmingly simple stories from nature, agriculture, and the life of the common people, which nevertheless carried profound and difficult teachings. It is said that his teachings left people baffled and tongue-tied, shaken out of their complacency and self-righteousness. He spoke of loving God above all other things, caring about all other people as much as we care about ourselves, the coming kingdom of God and eternal life.

Once Jesus stood in the marketplace. He was surrounded by a crowd of eager listeners. To them he spoke of deep truths of the Spirit in a language they could easily understand, for he spoke in stories and parables.

The Master spoke of a king whose son was being married. The marriage feast was kept open to all who would care to come. The rich and the poor, the old and the young, men and women, boys and girls—of all faiths and no faith—all, all were welcome at the marriage feast. There was but one condition to be fulfilled: who-

soever joined in the festival must put on a new robe. So many came dressed in their old garments: the king gave them new robes to wear. All who sat at the feast were clothed in new, shining robes.

"Put off the old, put on the new!" In these few, simple words, as it seems to me, is summed up the teaching of Jesus. We, so many of us, are clothed in old robes. They are the robes of selfishness and greed, of passion and pride, of anger and lust, of envy and hatred. So it is that we cannot enter the festival chamber of the King. We must renounce our old clothes: we must slay the old self of desire and craving that is at the root of all the misery there is in the world. We must put on the new robes of purity and peace, of humility and harmony, of compassion and love, to enter the Kingdom of God. These robes the Lord Himself giveth freely to all who ask for them. "Ask and ye shall receive!" said Jesus.

December 25 is the Sacred Christmas.

Dada J P Vaswani was a humanitarian, philosopher, educa-

LORD GANESH MESSAGE FOR THE DAY

A day to be kind, be mindful of your words and be vigilant.

There will be some disappointment; however, seek support from a trusted person and have a practical plan to overcome it.

Stay away from toxicity and drama. Avoid gossiping about others. I loved the hibiscus flowers.

Tip for the day: Offer 5 fruits to Sri Ganesha and say, "Bapa, heal me mentally."

Lots of divine miracles your way, Sheetal Sapan Mhatre.



Briefs

CHANDIGARH
Gill, Abhishek in Punjab's Hazare squad

Indian ODI skipper **Shubman Gill**, world's No. 1 T20 batter Abhishek Sharma and pacer Arshdeep Singh were on Monday named in the Punjab squad for the Vijay Hazare Trophy, in line with BCCI's diktat of mandatory participation in the National One-Day Championship. Gill, who was dropped from India's T20 World Cup squad and Arshdeep, who is a white-ball regular might just be available for two to three games with ODIs against New Zealand set to start on January 11. Punjab, clubbed in group C along with favourites Mumbai, will play their first two games against Maharashtra (December 24) and Chattisgarh (December 26). These are the games in which Gill and Arshdeep' availability is expected. Abhishek might be available for more games.

MUMBAI
Suryakumar, Dube to play two matches

India T20I captain **Suryakumar Yadav** and all-rounder Shivam Dube will play in Mumbai's last two matches in the group stage of the Vijay Hazare Trophy. Both Suryakumar and Dube, who played in the last T20I of the five-match series against South Africa which India won 3-1, will be available for clashes against Himachal Pradesh and Punjab on January 6 and 8 respectively at Jaipur, an MCA source confirmed to PTI. Mumbai are placed in Group C along with Punjab, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Goa. India opening batter Yashasvi Jaiswal is also believed to be available for some part of the tournament.

KARACHI
Pakistan colts get hefty cash reward

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif on Monday announced a special cash award of 10 million rupees for Pakistan's U19 Asia Cup-winning squad members. The Pakistan colts thumped

PREMIER LEAGUE | Arsenal go to Christmas as table toppers but they haven't been able to convert this into a title win on the previous four occasions

Gyokeres optimistic to win title

MUMBAI

Arsenal striker Viktor Gyokeres is optimistic about his team's chances to win English Premier League this season. Arsenal go to Christmas at the top of the standings and are playing some fantastic football, although they've yet to convert this into a title win on the previous four occasions.

"We are all optimistic. I believe the team has a strong spirit and a positive atmosphere at the training ground. It is important to maintain that energy, keep doing the things that are working well, and continue improving together every day. Right now, we are focusing on winning the upcoming games rather than thinking too much about the end goals," Arsenal player Viktor Gyokeres said while speaking to JioStar.

There were signs he was settling in a couple of months ago but a hamstring injury halted his momentum and Gyokeres has been quiet since returning to the side. Gyokeres scored Arsenal's only goal in the 1-0 win over Everton on Saturday to ensure a top finish for December 25 with Manchester City two points behind, followed closely by Aston Villa.

He converted a penalty for his first goal since the start of November, breaking his five-match goalless streak. That took Gyokeres to five Premier League goals for the season, with the 27-year-old Swedish striker yet to regularly produce his best form for the Gunners.

But his tireless running throughout the play has single-handedly reshaped how opponents approach Arsenal's attack. Previously, it was about the teams doubling up on Bukayo Saka but he has



Arsenal striker Viktor Gyokeres in a file pic. AP

now have added a different mix and by breaking goal drought he has made a statement.

"I believe it's easier to observe these things from the outside. For me, it's about doing the right things on the pitch to help the team and to get the best out of myself and my teammates. So far, we have performed very well this season. I think it's important to continue doing those things and to keep improving," Gyokeres said.

He described a good relationship with Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta who according to him brings the best out of

the players.

"I think he is an excellent manager, especially in terms of our style of play. Equally important is his ability to understand the different personalities within the team and tailor his approach to each player. He excels at that. His determination and strong will to succeed inspire everyone. His energy is clearly felt not only during regular training sessions but also before matches. That is something everyone can truly sense."

Catch all the action from the Premier League, LIVE & Exclusive on Star Sports Network and JioHotstar.

BRUNO FERNANDES OUT DUE TO INJURY

Man United captain didn't come to play in 2nd half against Aston Villa

BIRMINGHAM

Manchester United captain Bruno Fernandes could be out for "a while" after pulling up with an injury against Aston Villa on Sunday.

United coach Ruben Amorim said Fernandes had sustained a soft tissue injury in the first half of the Premier League game at Villa Park. Villa won 2-1.

"I think it's soft tissues, so it's going to take a while. We'll see," Amorim told Sky Sports.

Fernandes appeared to hurt his hamstring when pulling up. He played on until the break but was replaced by Lisandro Martinez for the start of the second half. He was then seen walking uncomfortably along the sideline as he made his way to the bench for the second half.

"I think he is going to lose some games, but I don't know for sure," Amorim said in his post-match news conference.

"I don't want to talk about the matter, it is a guy who is

always fit and he has shown he can always recover."

United is already without Bryan Mbeumo, Amad Diallo and Noussair Mazraoui, who are playing in the Africa Cup of Nations. Amorim's options were further depleted on Sunday, with midfielder Kobbie Mainoo ruled out with a calf injury picked up in training.

"During this year, especially in this time, we have so many problems, but we have to cope with that," Amorim said.

Mainoo would have been the obvious replacement for Fernandes. Even before Fernandes' injury, Amorim said Mainoo's absence was bad timing.

"He is going to be fine in a few weeks, I think, I don't know," Amorim said. "Let's focus on the players that we have and are ready to play."

Meanwhile, Morgan Rogers scored two brilliant solo goals to down Manchester United 2-1 and keep Aston Villa in the hunt for the Premier League title.



Manchester United's skipper Bruno Fernandes (2nd R) attempts a shot against Aston Villa on Sunday. AP

Raphinha, Yamal score as Barcelona beats Villarreal

MADRID

Raphinha and Lamine Yamal celebrated each other's goals with a raised arm and hands linked as Barcelona won 2-0 at 10-man Villarreal on Sunday to stay four points clear of Real Madrid at the top of La Liga.

Raphinha won a penalty after being fouled when cutting inside. He took a slow run-up and sent goalkeeper Luiz Junior the wrong way in the 12th minute for his seventh league goal of the season and Barca's 50th.

Yamal also grabbed his seventh this season, striking from close range in the 63rd after being set up by midfielder Frenkie de Jong following a goalmouth scramble.

It was a seventh straight win in all competitions for coach Hansi Flick's side.

Barcelona was without central defender Andreas Christensen, who tore the ACL in his left knee in training on Saturday.

Villarreal defender Renato Veiga was shown a straight red card late in the first half for a heavy tackle from behind on Yamal, who briefly had treatment on the ground.

Atletico beat Girona

Villarreal's defeat allowed Atletico Madrid to move into third place with a 3-0 win at Girona. Atletico has played two more games than Villarreal.

Midfielder Koke put Atletico ahead in the 13th minute with a fine half-volley from just outside the penalty area and into the top right corner.

Atletico goalkeeper Jan Oblak made a stunning save to keep out Axel Witsel's close-range shot midway through the half, clawing it off the line one-handed near the left post.



Barcelona's Raphinha (R) celebrates a goal with teammate Lamine Yamal against Villarreal on Sunday. AP

Atletico doubled its lead in the 38th when midfielder Conor Gallagher's strike from 20 meters (yards) deflected off a defender and wrong-footed goalie Paulo Gazzaniga.

Atletico's traveling fans gave midfielder Thomas Lemar a warm welcome when he came on for Girona in the second half. The former France midfielder is on loan this season at Girona from Atletico, having played nearly 200 games for "Los Colchoneros" (The Mattress Makers) over seven seasons.

Gallagher was substituted in the 77th, having come on in the 28th for Nico Gonzalez.

Clinical Griezmann

Veteran forward Antoine Griezmann sealed Atletico's win with a clinical goal in stoppage time.

The former France star swapped quick passes on the edge of the box with fellow substitute Giacomo Raspadori, expertly controlled the ball with the outside of his right foot and guided a low shot into the opposite corner with his left.

New Zealand wins Test by 323 runs

Jacob Duffy takes 5-42 as hosts bowl out the West Indies for 138

MOUNT MAUNGANUI (NEW ZEALAND)

Jacob Duffy took 5-42 as New Zealand bowled out the West Indies for 138 on a deteriorating fifth-day pitch to win the third test by 323 runs Monday and take the three-match series 2-0.

Duffy surpassed Richard Hadlee's New Zealand record of 80 wickets in a calendar year and finished the series with 23 wickets at an average of 15.4 including three five-wicket hauls. He bowled more than 154 overs as the workhorse of the New Zealand attack in the three tests.

"I saw that list at lunchtime and there were some cool names on there, so to be up there on any sort of list with those sort of names was special," Duffy, who was voted Player of the Series, said of his bowling record.

Runs aplenty

New Zealand's win ended a series in which both teams had to cope with significantly depleted pace attacks and in which a slew of batting rec-



ords fell. The West Indies were without Shamar Joseph and Alzarri Joseph. Duffy became New Zealand's pace spearhead after injuries sidelined Matt Henry, Will O'Rourke, Ben Sears, Kyle Jamieson, Nathan Smith and Blair Ticker.

The third test was a feast for statisticians. Devon Conway made 227 and Tom Latham 137 in a 323-run opening stand in New Zealand's first innings of 575-8 declared. Conway then made 100 and Latham 101 in a partnership of 192 in the second innings before New Zealand declared at 306-2, leaving West Indies a target of 462 to win after being bowled out for 420 in the first innings.

Fielding in focus as India look to double lead

Harmanpreet feels that the team would be getting into the groove very soon against Lanka

VISAKHAPATNAM

The Indian women's cricket team will look to raise its fielding standards by a few notches and build on a comprehensive opening win when it squares off against Sri Lanka in the second WT20I here on Tuesday.

Playing its first international game after a historic World Cup triumph last month, Harmanpreet Kaur's side didn't need to break much sweat in the batting and bowling departments during an eight-wicket win over the island nation.

However, the team's fielding, especially catching, left a lot to be desired despite the bowlers managing to restrict the Lankans to a paltry 121 for 6.

"We are working on our fielding. Don't know why we keep dropping catches. It is wet out here, but it is not an excuse. That is something we really need to think about. In the next match, we will come about with better approach," skipper Harmanpreet Kaur had said after the match.

Squads:

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana (VC), Deepti Sharma, Sneha Rana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Harleen Deol, Amanjot Kaur, Arundhati Reddy, Kranti Gaud, Renuka Singh Thakur, Richa Ghosh (WK), G Kamalini (WK), Sree Charani, Vaishnavi Sharma. **Sri Lanka:** Chamari Athapaththu (c), Hasini Perera, Vishmi Gunaratne, Harshitha Samarawickrama, Nilakshika De Silva, Kavisha Dilhari, Iresha Dulani, Kaushini Nuthyanga, Malsha Shehani, Inoka Ranaweera, Shashini Gimhani, Nimesha Madushani, Kawya Kavindi, Rashmika Sewwandi, Malki Madara.

Match starts at 7.00 P.M
Live on Star sports

Huge pay hike

The BCCI has more than doubled the match fees of women cricketers and officials in



India's Vaishnavi Sharma bowls during the first Women's T20I match against Sri Lanka. PTI

domestic cricket, a move triggered by India's maiden ODI World Cup triumph and aimed at creating a more equitable pay structure across the circuit.

No disappointment over being wicketless: Vaishnavi

VISAKHAPATNAM

Young Indian left-arm spinner Vaishnavi Sharma said she was delighted to have executed her plans despite going wicketless on her women's T20I debut, revealing that listening to the national anthem helped her settle her nerves.

The 20-year-old made an impressive international debut in the series opener against Sri Lanka, returning economical figures of 0/16 from four overs as India cruised to an eight-wicket win. Vaishnavi built sustained pressure through her spell, offering little room to the Lankan batters as India restricted the tourists to 121/6 before overhauling the target with 32 balls to spare.

Despite finishing wicketless, the youngster said she was satisfied with her outing. "No disappointment (on being wicketless), I am very happy that I was able to execute my plan, rest there

I am happy with performance, says the debutant

are four matches still remaining," Vaishnavi said on Sunday.

Like most debutants, nerves were inevitable and Vaishnavi revealed listening to the national anthem played helped her regain composure. "Yes, I was nervous before the National Anthem. After the National Anthem, I calmed down."

Vaishnavi also spoke warmly about the backing she received from the team management and senior players, particularly skipper Harmanpreet Kaur who encouraged her to trust her strengths.

"She was telling me that I have done a good job in the past. 'You have done a great job. You have given incredible performances.' She was giving me her blessing."

Contemplated retirement after 2023 WC final defeat

NEW DELHI

In a stunning revelation, former India captain Rohit Sharma on Sunday said he contemplated retirement after the heartbreaking loss to Australia in the 2023 ODI World Cup final as he "felt that the sport had taken everything out of me."

Under the captaincy of Rohit, the Indian team enjoyed a dream run in that tournament at home and marched into the final with

nine consecutive wins. However, Australia dashed their hopes in the game that mattered the most, with Travis Head scoring a match-winning hundred.

"After 2023 World Cup final, I was completely distraught and felt like I didn't want to play this sport anymore because it had taken everything out of me and I felt I had nothing left," Rohit said during a Masters Union event.

"It took some time and I kept reminding myself that

this is something I truly love, that it was right in front of me, and I couldn't let it go so easy. Slowly, I found my way back, regaining the energy and getting myself moving again on the field.

"Everybody was extremely disappointed, and we just couldn't believe what had happened. It was a very tough time for me personally because I had put everything into that World Cup not just two or three months before it, but ever since I took over the captaincy in 2022."

Rohit, who has retired from T20Is and Tests and was removed from ODI captaincy earlier this year, continues to play the 50-over format and would like to end his career with one final attempt at the 2027 WC.

"My only goal was to win the World Cup, whether it was the T20 World Cup or the 2023 World Cup. So when it didn't happen, I was completely devastated. There was no energy left in my body. It took me a couple of months to recover and bring

myself back," said Rohit.

Less than a year after that loss to Australia in Ahmedabad, Rohit led the Indian team to the T20 World Cup title in the Americas, but overcoming the pain of the defeat in November 2023 was extremely difficult.

"I guess when you invest so much into something and don't achieve the result, it's a very natural reaction. That's exactly what happened with me. But I also knew that life doesn't end there."



Rohit Sharma (R) as the chief guest at Masters' Union convocation ceremony in Gurugram on Sunday. PTI