

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

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

The Supreme Court refused to hear the petition related to the IndiGo

New Delhi

The Supreme Court has refused to hear the petition filed regarding the IndiGo crisis. A bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant told the petitioner that the matter is pending before the Delhi High Court and that he should present his arguments there. The Supreme



Court also directed the High Court to allow the petitioner to intervene

in the already pending case. The petition was filed by advocate

Narendra Mishra. During the hearing, when the petitioner stated that air travelers are facing difficulties every day, the court said that this is an important issue. The High Court is also a constitutional court; you can present your arguments there.

Delhi High CourtThe Delhi High

Court had taken cognizance of the IndiGo crisis on December 10. A bench headed by Chief Justice D.K. Upadhyay questioned IndiGo, stating that a sufficient number of pilots should have been appointed to ensure compliance with Flight Duty Limitations, but it appears that IndiGo did not appoint the neces-

sary number of pilots in time to ensure compliance with Flight Duty Limitations. The High Court directed the central government and IndiGo to file their responses. The High Court asked the central government if it was so helpless that it was hesitant to take action against the airline.

MNREGA will be replaced by VBG-Gramji



New Delhi

The central government is preparing to introduce a new law to replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). It is reported that the government has distributed copies of the bill to Lok Sabha MPs, aiming to repeal MGNREGA and introduce a new law for rural employment. According to reports, the bill will be named the 'Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Employment and Livelihood Mission (Rural) 2025'. It will be commonly known as 'VBGELM (Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Employment and Livelihood Mission Rural)'. The objective of this bill is believed to be the establishment of a rural development

framework. 125 Days of Employment GuaranteeThe new bill is said to provide a constitutional guarantee of 125 days of wage employment to every rural household in each financial year. It is expected to be discussed in the Lok Sabha soon. After this new bill becomes law, the employment guarantee will be available to those families where young members are willing to undertake unskilled manual labor. The bill also proposes that payment be made within one week or 15 days of the completion of work. There is also a provision for unemployment allowance if payment is not made within the stipulated time. Notably, the BJP has issued a whip to its MPs before the bill is tabled in the House.

Nadda and Shah "crowned" Nitin Naveen

New Delhi

Nitin Naveen, the new national working president of the Bharatiya Janata Party and a minister in the Bihar government, was formally installed at the BJP headquarters in Delhi. BJP National President Jagat Prakash Nadda and Union Home Minister Amit Shah presented Nitin Naveen with a sash and a bouquet to mark his installation. A stream of well-wishersFollowing this, numerous BJP leaders congratulated Nitin Naveen at the party office on assuming the post of the party's new national working president. Nitin Naveen was born on May 23, 1980. When he became the working president, he was 45 years old, the same age as the BJP itself. Grand welcome upon arrival in DelhiEarlier, Bihar Minister Nitin Naveen



The complete plan for appointing an acting president in the BJP

According to the BJP's constitution, a leader can serve as president for two terms of three years each. According to BJP leaders, the appointment of an acting president is an interim arrangement. Another reason is Kharmas, which Hindus consider inauspicious. Kharmas begins on Tuesday. This is why Nadda was appointed as the acting president. After Kharmas ends on January 14, Makar Sankranti, the process for electing a new party chief can begin.

received a grand welcome upon his first arrival at the party headquarters in Delhi after being appointed as the party's working president. Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva welcomed Nitin Naveen at the airport upon his arrival in

Delhi. In Bihar, Nitin Naveen has the image of a clean and efficient leader with a strong hold on the organization. The BJP has elected its youngest working president to date. If he becomes the national president, he will set a record for being the

Naveen follows in Nadda's footsteps

New Delhi

BJP's new working president, Nitin Naveen, is the second person in the party's history to hold this position. The first was the current party chief, Jagat Prakash Nadda. Interestingly, the BJP constitution does not have any provision for appointing a working president. However, since 2019, this position has become a stepping stone before assuming the role of BJP president. J.P. Nadda was appointed the BJP's working president in June 2019 after Amit Shah became the Union Home Minister.

youngest BJP president. Currently, this record is held by Amit Shah, who became president at the age of 49. Nitin Gadkari became the national president at the age of 52.



Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma offered prayers at the Shrinathji temple in Poonchri ka Lauth.

India will receive 3 Apache helicopters from the US

New Delhi

The Indian Air Force is soon to receive the remaining 3 Apache AH-64 attack helicopters from the US. Simultaneously, the Indian Navy is set to induct the MH-60R Seahawk helicopters into its squadron this week. The arrival of

these helicopters will significantly enhance the capabilities of the Indian Air Force and Navy. The Army and Air Force also expect to begin receiving 156 indigenously developed Light Combat Helicopters from 2028 onwards. 1000 New Helicopters to Join the ArmyOver the next 10-

15 years, the Indian Army requires more than 1000 helicopters of various types. These will replace the Cheetah and Chetak helicopters currently in service. This includes 484 light helicopters weighing up to 3.5 tons, and 419 helicopters weighing 10-15 tons, capable of per-

forming a variety of roles. According to a defense official, the 3 Apache gunships can destroy tanks from the air. They will be equipped with air-to-air missiles, air-to-ground missiles, as well as guns and rockets. This consignment of helicopters will arrive in India shortly.

The Supreme Court will hear the case regarding air pollution in Delhi-NCR on December 17

New Delhi

The issue of air pollution in Delhi-NCR was raised by lawyers in the Supreme Court on Monday. Amicus Curiae Aparajita Singh told the bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant that states do not take necessary steps on their own unless the court issues specific directions. Another lawyer said that schools are organizing sports events in defiance of the court's orders. The Chief

Justice then stated that the matter is listed before a three-judge bench on December 17. He added that the court would issue orders that are practically implementable. In view of the rising pollution levels, the Chief Justice suggested to the lawyers and those representing themselves in the case that they could participate in the hearing via video conferencing instead of appearing in person at the Supreme Court.

Children's health is being compromised in Karnataka

New Delhi

A major uproar has erupted in Koppal district of Karnataka after insects were found in the rice used for mid-day meals in government schools. On Tuesday, school staff and students at a government school in Bisaralli village of Koppal taluk discovered insects in the rice meant for preparing the mid-day meal, and the news quickly spread. A similar incident had previously occurred at a school in Muddenahalli village



of Kushtagi taluk. No action has been reported so far regarding this negligence. What did the authorities say? When the staff at the Bisaralli village school prepared to wash the rice, they found insects crawling in it. Students also

noticed this and complained before the food was cooked. Similarly, a few days ago, insects were found in the rice at Muddenahalli. Officials say that rice is supplied from several warehouses in the district, while pulses, oil, and spices come

from different agencies. Initial investigations suggest that poor quality rice and pulses supplied by private contractors may be involved. This raises the question of where the lapse is occurring in the supply chain and how substandard grains are reaching the children. Statistics indicate the extent of the risk. In Koppal district, more than 2.8 lakh school children depend on the mid-day meal scheme every day. This scheme is run to encourage children to attend school and provide

Relief on the inflation front, wholesale inflation rate falls to -0.32 percent

New Delhi

The common man has received slight relief on the inflation front. Wholesale price index (WPI) based wholesale inflation saw a rise in November. During this period, wholesale inflation decreased to (-) 0.32 percent, compared to (-) 1.21 percent in October. In November 2024, it was 2.16 percent. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry stated on Monday that



the main reasons for this were the decrease in prices of food items, mineral oils, crude petroleum and natural gas, basic metals, and electricity. According to the data, food inflation in November was 4.16 percent, while it was 8.31 percent in October.

Serving every needy person is the government's goal: Chief Minister Yogi

Lucknow

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath met with petitioners from various districts of the state on Monday as part of his "Janata Darshan" (public audience) program and listened to their problems. The Chief Minister took their applications and instructed officials to take strict and appropriate action to resolve their issues. A PAC (Provincial Armed



Constabulary) constable who had come to the Janata Darshan program narrated his problem to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The Chief Minister handed over the constable's applica-

tion to the concerned officer and instructed him to resolve the matter appropriately. A farmer from Shahjahanpur complained to the Chief Minister about the neg-

ligence at the paddy procurement center. The Chief Minister said that the government is continuously working for the prosperity of the farmers.

He instructed the officials of the administration to ensure that the farmers do not face any problems. The Chief Minister directed the District Magistrate of Shahjahanpur to conduct surprise inspections of the procurement centers.

The country's exports increased by 19.37 percent to \$38.13 billion in November

New Delhi

There is good news on the economic front. India's exports increased by 19.37 percent to US\$38.13 billion in November. During the same period, imports decreased by 1.88 percent to US\$62.66 billion. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in a statement released on Monday,

The BJP has also changed its leadership in Bihar

New Delhi

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday announced the name of the new president of the Bihar BJP. The party has entrusted the leadership of Bihar to Sanjay Sarawagi, the MLA from Darbhanga.

He will replace Dilip Jaiswal. Earlier on Sunday, the BJP had announced the name of its national working president. The party appointed Nitin Naveen, a minister in the Bihar



government, as the party's national working president. Following this, on Monday, the BJP made a major reshuffle in the Bihar BJP organization, handing over the reins of the state unit to Sanjay Sarawagi. It is

worth noting that Sanjay Sarawagi has been winning elections continuously from the Darbhanga urban constituency for five consecutive terms. He has previously served as a minister in the Bihar government. Who is Sanjay Sarawagi? Sanjay Sarawagi was born in 1969. He completed his MA from Mithila University. Sanjay's political career began with the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP).

Briefs

LUCKNOW

Ram Temple movement leader dies

Former Member of Parliament and senior Ram Janmabhoomi movement leader Dr Ramvilas Das Vedanti passed away on Monday after his health deteriorated suddenly during a religious discourse event in Rewa, Madhya Pradesh. He was taken to a hospital, where he died during treatment. He was 77. Dr Vedanti was among the key figures of the Ram temple movement in Ayodhya and played an important role during its peak phase in the 1990s.

LUCKNOW

Small dists lead in stamp duty evasion

Smaller districts in Uttar Pradesh are reporting far more cases of stamp duty evasion than the state's major urban centres, with Ayodhya topping the list among smaller districts and Prayagraj leading the metropolitan category. Larger cities such as Noida, Lucknow, Agra, Kanpur and Meerut lag far behind, indicating that land-related disputes and irregularities are now spreading deeper into smaller districts. Across the state, 53,816 stamp duty evasion cases have been recorded, and 51,922 of them remain unresolved.

CHANDIGARH

2 terrorists nabbed in Mumbai

Punjab police on Monday claimed to have arrested in coordination with Central agencies, two gangster-turned-terrorists linked with the banned terrorist organisation Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) upon their arrival in Mumbai. DGP, Punjab, Gaurav said that those arrested have been identified as Sajjan Masih, a resident of Gurdaspur and Sukhdev Kumar alias Munish Bedi, of Amritsar. Both accused have multiple cases of murder, attempt to murder, arms and explosives, and under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) registered against them.

CHANDIGARH

Jalandhar schools get bomb threat

Three days after multiple private schools in Amritsar received bomb threats, at least 11 schools in Jalandhar received similar threats on Monday. The threat sent to the schools' principal in their email, led to panic with the school authorities immediately informing the police – which started a bomb search operation at the schools which closed the schools and sent the children home informing the parents and guardians.

IN PARLIAMENT | Govt introduces 3 new bills in Lok Sabha

Cong protests 'excessive centralisation' of edu

NEW DELHI

The Opposition parties on Monday protested against "excessive centralisation" of education via the new Repealing and Amending Bill, 2025 and Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, which were introduced in Lok Sabha by Minister of Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal and Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan, respectively.

Meghwal introduced The Repealing and Amending Bill, 2025, which sought to repeal obsolete laws and amend others to simplify and modernize the legal framework, enhancing clarity and administrative efficiency. Pradhan, while introducing the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, which seeks to restructure how higher education is regulated, accredited and governed, said the Centre has sent the draft bill to the Joint Parliamentary Committee after which a final decision will be taken.

This Bill seeks to replace the existing fragmented regulatory architecture with a Commission comprising a chairperson, senior aca-



Congress MPs Shafi Parambil, Hibi Eden and other opposition MPs protest during the Winter session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Monday

demics, experts, representatives from the Union government and supported by a full-time Member Secretary. This panel will also be backed by three specialised councils to promote transparency, autonomy and global competitiveness in Indian higher education.

The panel would be supported by the Regulatory Council, which will act as the single regulator for higher education, responsible for compliance, institutional governance, financial transparency, grievance redressal and preventing commercialisation of education.

It would also be assisted by

the Accreditation Council that will oversee the accreditation ecosystem, empanel accrediting agencies and ensure public disclosure of accreditation outcomes.

Congress MP Manish Tiwari opposed the Bill saying it "results in excessive centralisation of higher education and violates the constitutional distribution of legislative competence; suffers from excessive delegation of legislative power; undermines the autonomy of statutory regulatory bodies; and also concerns Article 19(1G) of the constitution by subjecting educational institutions to pervasive executive control."

SHANTI opens nuclear sector to pvt players

NEW DELHI

A new bill seeks to overhaul laws governing India's civil nuclear sector, opening it up to private participation and putting in place a new liability regime, in a bid to address concerns voiced by the industry partners.

The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Bill, 2025, seen as a comprehensive legislation to harness India's full nuclear power potential, seeks to repeal the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010.

"The Bill seeks to provide for a pragmatic civil liability regime for nuclear damage and to confer statutory status to the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board," Minister of State in PMO Jitendra Singh said.

The Bill adds that the operator shall be liable for damages except those caused by "a grave natural disaster of an exceptional character, an act of armed conflict, hostility, civil war, and insurrection or terrorism".

But the operator won't be liable for damages in "under-construction nuclear installation itself and any other nuclear installation including a nuclear installation under construction, on the site where such installation is located, any property on the same site which is used or to be used in connection with any such installation."

"The maximum amount of liability in respect of each nuclear incident shall be the rupee equivalent of 300 million Special Drawing Rights or such higher amount as the central government may, by notification, specify," the legislation adds.

Modi in Jordan to boost ties

AMMAN

PM Narendra Modi on Monday said his visit to Jordan will boost bilateral relations between the two nations, as he arrived in Amman on the first leg of his three-nation trip aimed at further strengthening ties. In a special gesture, Jordan's PM Jafar Hassan received Modi at the airport and accorded a ceremonial welcome.

"Landed in Amman. Thankful to Jafar Hassan, PM of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, for the warm welcome at the airport," Modi said in an online post. "I am sure this visit will boost bilateral linkages between our nations."

"It is an honour to welcome PM @narendramodi of the Republic of India to Jordan



PM Narendra Modi being welcomed by members of the Indian community in Amman, Jordan, on Monday

today, as a valued guest, in a visit that reflects 75 years of close and enduring relations," the Jordanian leader said in a post. "We look forward to broader horizons of cooperation between our two countries, particularly in the economic, investment, and technological fields," he added.

Modi will also meet King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein for a one-on-one talk followed by a delegation-level meeting. On Tuesday, the PM and the King would address an India-Jordan business event, which will be attended by leading businessmen from both countries.

Goyal takes oath as Chief Information Commissioner

President Droupadi Murmu administers the oath of office to Chief Information Commissioner Raj Kumar Goyal at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi

NEW DELHI

Former IAS officer Raj Kumar Goyal was on Monday sworn in as the Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) by President Droupadi Murmu.

The oath of office and secrecy was administered to Goyal at a ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The event was attended by Vice President CP Radhakrishnan and Union Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh, among others.

Goyal's appointment follows the recommendation of a three-member panel headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which

cleared his name last week. The post of Chief Information Commissioner had fallen vacant after Heeralal Samariya completed his term on September 13.

Goyal is a 1990-batch (retired) Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram-Union Territories (AGMUT) cadre. He superannuated on August 31 as Secretary in the Department of Justice under the Ministry of Law and Justice.

During his career, Goyal has held several key positions at the Centre and in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Panda is BJP in-charge of Assam polls

GUWAHATI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has decisively initiated its strategic planning for the 2026 A s s a m

Assembly elections, appointing national vice president Bajajant Panda as the Election In-Charge. Panda was also Assam in charge earlier. This high-profile, early move, ratified by Party National President JP Nadda, aims to secure a third consecutive government for the NDA in the critical Northeastern state.

Panda, a four-time former Member of Parliament with a strong background in corporate and national policy, will be supported by a geographically diverse team of Co-In-Charges Sunil Kumar Sharma, MLA and Leader of the Opposition in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly and Darshana Ben Jardosh, former Union Minister and MP from Gujarat.

Centre monitoring 'opportunistic' pricing after IndiGo crisis: Minister

NEW DELHI

Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu on Monday told the Parliament that the Centre was monitoring "opportunistic" pricing following the IndiGo crisis when other airlines had increased their ticket prices manifold to cash in on the distress of the passengers due to cancellations.

Speaking in the Rajya Sabha, the minister said the Centre had capped airfares to prevent ticket prices from spiralling in the wake of a large

number of cancellations of regular flights during the IndiGo disruption.

Responding to questions about the AirSewa web portal and app, the Minister said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation has released a document, which provides a comprehensive description of the rights of a passenger in various situations such as flight delays and loss or damage to luggage.

Noting that the Centre was working on spreading awareness among the passengers about their rights, the Minister

also noted that it was putting effective measures in place to regulate ticket pricing.

To a question on airfares going up around festivals, the minister acknowledged that the sector was unregulated and therefore when the demand exceeds supply, the fares go up. The situation worsens when the capacity and seats come down.

Therefore, the minister said the government has put a cap on the airfares and was observing the situation and engaging with the stakeholders.

Two more arrested over Messi mess, PILs filed

KOLKATA

After Shatadru Dutta, the main organiser of G.O.A.T. police on Monday had arrested two men and summoned officials from six companies in connection with the rampage incident during Messi's programme in Kolkata.

According to Bidhannagar Police Commissionerate, based on CCTV footages of Yuva Bharati Krirangan or Saltlake stadium, south Bidhannagar police had arrested Gaurav Basu and Shubhrapratim Dey from Nagerbazar area in Kolkata for the vandalism inside the stadium on December 13.

The police sources also confirmed that the manager of Shatadru Dutta was also summoned.

Notably, so far police have arrested five people in connection to the vandalism during Lionel Messi's programme.

Terming the incident as



'mismanagement and systemic failure', Governor CV Ananda Bose once again demanded a judicial probe into the incident.

Meanwhile, three separate PILs were filed in Calcutta High Court challenging state government's inquiry committee, which includes retired High Court judge Justice Asim Kumar Roy and also demanding CBI, Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) probe into the incident.

The PILs are filed by Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari and advocate and CPI (M) leader S a b y a s a c h i Chatterjee. The PILs are, however, scheduled to be heard later this week.

Nabin takes charge of BJP

NEW DELHI

Bihar minister and five-time MLA Nitin Nabin on Monday assumed charge as the Bharatiya Janata Party's national working president at the party headquarters in New Delhi, a day after his name was announced for the post. He took charge in the presence of BJP president J.P. Nadda, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, among others.

Earlier in the day, Nabin was received at the Delhi airport by Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, her Cabinet colleagues, BJP Members of Parliament from Delhi and a large number of party workers. He was then taken to the BJP headquarters at DDU Marg, where senior leaders welcomed him before the formal handing over of charge.

The 45-year-old leader's elevation surprised many within the party, as several senior leaders were believed to be in contention for the



post. For Nabin, a five-term MLA from Patna, the appointment is being seen as recognition of his perseverance and organisational work, particularly during the 2023 Chhattisgarh Assembly elections when he served as the party's state in-charge and the BJP returned to power by defeating the Bhupesh Baghel-led Congress government.

Nitin Nabin is the son of late BJP MLA Nabin Kishore Prasad Sinha and has been associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh since his early years.

Saraogi is new Bihar BJP prez

Patna: BJP on Monday appointed six-time MLA from Darbhanga, Sanjay Saraogi, as Bihar's new president of the party. A former cabinet minister Saraogi replaced the present incumbent Dilip Jaiswal, who took oath as state industries minister in chief minister Nitish Kumar-led NDA government last month.

—Dheeraj Kumar

Nitish removes hijab of doc, faces RJD flak

PATNA

Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar was once again in the thick of controversy for his public conduct on Monday when he removed the hijab of a woman doctor during a function in Patna.

A video showing Nitish removing the hijab of a woman doctor has also gone viral on social media. The incident took place while he was giving appointment letters to newly recruited 1283 AYUSH doctors. The doctors included 685 Ayurvedic, 393 Homeopathic, and 205 Unani practitioners.

During the event, Nitish handed an appointment letter to Dr Nusrat Parveen, who was wearing a hijab. After giving her the letter, he noticed the hijab and asked, "What is this?" When Dr Nusrat replied that it was a hijab, CM Nitish Kumar told her to remove it. He then removed the hijab himself. She was hastily pulled aside by an official present on



the occasion, while deputy chief minister Samrat Choudhary, who stood beside Nitish, was seen tugging at the latter's sleeve, in an apparent bid to restrain him. Meanwhile, RJD spokesperson Ejaz Ahmed alleged that Nitish insulted women by removing a Muslim woman's hijab while distributing appointment letters. "This clearly reveals the NDA government's mindset towards the Muslim community. Nitish has become engrossed in politics aimed at pleasing BJP and RSS," he claimed. "When a person holding position of CM commits such an act, it appears that the government in Bihar is now completely implementing the ideology of the RSS. Nitish should apologise for this act, as he has insulted the entire women's community," he added.

TIRUPPARANKUNDRAM ROW

New twist in TN case as lamp pillar linked to Jains

CHENNAI

In a new development to the ongoing row over lighting of a lamp at the famed Tirupparankundram hills in Madurai, the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department, which administers the Subramanya Swamy temple on Monday said the deepathoon (stone pillar) was once used by Jain Digambaras. The State has appealed against an order by

Justice GR Swaminathan to light the Karthigai Deepam lamp at the deepathoon which is located near a dargah on the hills.

The senior counsel representing the Department told Justices G Jayachandran and K K Ramakrishnan that the stone pillar in question was established by the Jains and did not belong to the Hindus. [Earlier, there was a claim that the pillar was only a survey stone and did not have religious significance.

CUTTACK

Former Odisha MLA and senior leader **Mohammed Moquim**, who was expelled from Congress over involvement in "anti-party activities", on Monday said that party national president Mallikarjun Kharge and Lok Sabha LoP Rahul Gandhi are "not able to deliver" and a change in leadership is necessary.

It is pertinent here to mention that Moquim, father of sitting Cuttack-Barabati MLA

expelled over letter**Cong rebel raises fresh stink**

Sofia Firdous, has recently stirred a debate in the party when he targeted the All India Congress Committee (AICC) President Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi and the Odisha PCC president, Bhakta Charan Das, in a letter written to Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) chairperson Sonia Gandhi.

"I came to know that I have been expelled from the party. I had taken the right step after due deliberation. We are such a big party, but we are unable to connect with people in every state. We are unable to



win. Congress is minimising. So, as a true Congress worker, I thought that if the high command is not meeting us and we are unable to communicate with them...

Furthermore, the former Congress MLA, who had rep-

resented the Barabati-Cuttack Assembly constituency in Odisha, said that he expressed his thoughts on the need to bring a change in the leadership, leading to his expulsion from the party.

"I expressed my thoughts to Sonia ji through a letter. The truth and the need to reform the party - I just gave her a suggestion. Later, it came in the media and when they asked me, I told them the truth. Rahul ji himself says 'daro matul'...I told the truth to the party's high command but had to be expelled..." he added.

Over 25L voters untraced during SIR in Kerala: CEO

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Over 25 lakh voters have been found untraced by BLOs during the SIR of electoral rolls in Kerala, Chief Election Officer Rathan U Kelkar said on Monday. Kelkar said Booth Level Officers identified 6.44 lakh voters as deceased during the verification process.

He said 8.19 lakh voters were found to have permanently moved to other places, 1.31 lakh voters had multiple entries, and no details were available for around 7.12 lakh voters.

Another BLO dies in UP

Bareilly: Vinod Kumar Sharma, principal of Upper Primary Girls Composite School in Bisharatganj, died late Sunday night. He was serving as Booth Level Officer in Bithri Chainpur Assembly constituency.

—Biswajeet Banerjee

Kelkar said the untraced category included voters to whom BLOs could not hand over enumeration forms.

RPI State and District Presidents Congratulate Pankaj Chaudhary on His Unanimous Election as State President

They said - In Pankaj Chaudhary, the BJP state organization has gained strong and effective leadership, which will infuse new energy into the workers



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Meja. On the unanimous election of Pankaj Chaudhary as the state president in the BJP organizational elections, RPI State President Pawan Bhai Gupta and Prayagraj District President Sanjay Gautam extend-

ed their congratulations. Notably, reacting to this achievement of the newly appointed State President Pankaj Chaudhary, Republican Party of India (Athawale) State President Pawan Bhai Gupta said that in Pankaj Chaudhary, the BJP state organization has received strong and

effective leadership that will infuse new energy into the workers, and the upcoming 2027 elections will be fought with hard work and honesty, setting a new record. He further added that Pankaj Chaudhary, who was unanimously elected to the post of State President, started his



" In the same vein, RPI Prayagraj District President Sanjay Gautam said that under the leadership of the newly elected State President Pankaj Chaudhary, the organization will reach new heights, and there will be all-round development "

political career as a councilor and, after a long journey, served as a Member of Parliament from the Maharajganj Lok Sabha constituency seven times and is currently a minister in the central government. He has extensive experience in running the organization and has

risen from a common worker to the top of the state organization. He will serve as an example of strength for millions of BJP workers. In the same vein, RPI Prayagraj District President Sanjay Gautam said that under the leadership of the newly elected State President Pankaj

Chaudhary, the organization will reach new heights, and there will be all-round development of the entire state. RPI State President Pawan Bhai Gupta and Prayagraj District President Sanjay Gautam congratulated him and wished him a bright future.

Meja Police have placed me under house arrest, violating my constitutional rights: Nitesh Tiwari

He said - The mass movement of competitive exam aspirants is not a political issue but a question of their future; we fully support the students



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Meja. Nitesh Tiwari, the district president of the Samajwadi Party's youth wing in Yamunapur, who was supporting the mass movement of competitive exam aspirants in Prayagraj, was placed under house arrest by the Meja police at his private residence in Lakhapur on Monday morning. In this regard, the police said that the SP Yamunapur district president has been placed under house arrest as a legal measure to maintain peace and order for security reasons. Regarding the mass movement, SP leader Nitesh Tiwari said that they fully support the competitive exam aspirants. He said that this is not a political issue but a question of the future of the youth. Mr. Tiwari believes that the government is so frightened by the upcoming mass gathering in Prayagraj that it is now even afraid of the voices of ordinary students. He said that instead of assuring the competitive exam aspirants that the migration policy would be implemented, this government has resorted to police repression. He said that placing him under house arrest is a violation of his constitutional right to freedom of expression.

Serving the poor during the harsh winter is true social service and a noble deed - Sunil Kumar

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Meja. Considering the increasing intensity of the cold in Vijaura village of the Meja area, social worker Sunil Kumar Nishad distributed warm sweaters, jackets, and blankets to the needy through his personal arrangements. It is noteworthy that a large number of elderly people, disabled individuals, women, and other needy people received blankets at the social worker's call. Addressing the people



present at the blanket distribution program, social worker Sunil Kumar Nishad said that

serving the poor is true social service and a noble deed. During this time, he appealed to

the villagers, saying that drug use should be stopped in the village because today's youth

are becoming addicted to drugs, which is extremely important to prevent. He further said that they are continuously running campaigns in Vijaura village regarding education and unemployment, and will continue to work on a war footing for employment, first aid, children's education, and the maintenance of village roads and drains. A large number of villagers, intellectuals, and dignitaries were prominently present on this occasion.

Magh Mela 2026 Advisory Committee Meeting Concludes, Focusing on Making the Event Smooth and Safe

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: A meeting of the Magh Mela 2026 Advisory Committee was held at the ICCA auditorium located in the Mela Authority office, with the aim of making the Magh Mela 2026 smooth and safe. Venerable saints, mahatmas, and representatives from various organizations offered their suggestions. First, Additional Mela Officer, Magh Mela, Dayanand Prasad, and Superintendent of Police, Magh Mela, Neeraj Kumar Pandey, provided information about the arrangements made by the administration and police through a PowerPoint presentation. Thereafter, representatives from all the organizations



present shared their views one by one. In this sequence, Rambabu, representing the pilgrimage priests, appealed that devotees should have to walk as little as possible, that basic facilities should be available in all sectors, and that mobile connectivity should function smoothly during the Magh Mela. Pappu Lal, the representative of the boatmen's association, informed that considering the crowd during the Kumbh Mela, the local boat-

men have already arranged a large number of boats for the Magh Mela. Therefore, the registration of boats from outside and the operation of motorboats should be prohibited. Civil Defence Chief Warden Annu Gupta suggested that police personnel deployed at police booths should be given proper training before deployment so that they can provide maximum assistance to the arriving devotees.

Special Training Given to Supervisors Working Under the SIR Campaign, Chaired DM



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: A special training program for supervisors working under the SIR campaign was organized on Monday at the Allahabad Medical Association (AMA) auditorium, chaired by District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma. The training, held at the AMA auditorium, focused on addressing

logical discrepancies in the voter list during the special intensive revision under the SIR campaign. It covered voter mapping and the re-verification of booths where the number of ASD (Absent, Shifted, or Dead) voters identified by BLOs (Booth Level Officers) is either very high or very low. The aim was to eliminate all discrepancies in the voter

roll and ensure the accuracy of the voter list at the time of draft roll publication. Present at the training were Deputy District Election Officer Pooja Mishra, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Sadar Abhishek Singh, Additional Sub-Divisional Magistrate Sadar Ganesh Kanojia, all Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), and other concerned officials.

Discussion Held on Social Unity and Cultural Values

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Tharwai. On Monday, a Hindu conference was inaugurated at the premises of Pandeshwar Nath Dham Padila and Sheetlapur Tikri with the lighting of a lamp before the image of Goddess Bhagwati and the chanting of Vedic mantras. The program was organized to commemorate the completion of one hundred years of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). A large number of local people participated in the event. The chief guest, Ramesh Ji, a Pracharak (propagator) from Kashi province, said in his address that the Hindu society needs to remain united and that social harmony needs to be strengthened by eliminating social evils like untouchability. He said that India is the land of religion, culture, and liberation, where family, values, and mutual cooperation have been given the highest importance for centuries. The conference emphasized keeping the family at the center of society, regular practice for physical and mental strength, and the expansion of RSS branches. He said that a strong



mind is built only through a strong body. While discussing religious values, the importance of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, Tulsi, Ganges water, and the cow was highlighted. It was said that these are the pillars of Indian culture. Giving the example of the Mahakumbh, it was said that millions of people bathe together in the confluence without any caste or class distinction, which is a living proof of social unity.

The active participation of women was crucial to the successful organization of the Hindu conference. Finally, a call was made to move forward in society with love, harmony, and brotherhood. In

view of the program, DCP Ganganagar Kuldeep Singh Gunawat and the Tharwai police station in-charge, along with their team, were present at both locations where the program was being held. The organizers of the program at Padila included Vishal Giri, Akhilesh Giri, Gram Pradhan Jaitwardhi Mahendra Giri, and Dinesh Kumar Pandey, the principal of Swami Vivekananda Vidyashram School, Tharwai. Similarly, at Bhidiura Tikri, Swami Krishnanand Ji Maharaj, Vishal Ji, District Convenor Dr. Vivek Tiwari, Rahul, Sanjay Maurya, Pushpendra Sahu, Kamal Raj Sahu, and others were present.

Auto rickshaw overturns while trying to save a dog, mechanic dies

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Jhansi. A young man died in a road accident on the Prayagraj-Jaunpur road on Monday evening. The accident occurred near Isipur village in Jhansi when an auto rickshaw, full of passengers, overturned after the driver lost control while trying to avoid hitting a dog that suddenly appeared on the road. According to the police, an auto rickshaw was coming from Sahso towards Jhansi with passengers. Near Isipur village, a dog suddenly came onto the road, causing the auto rickshaw to overturn. As soon as the auto rickshaw overturned, there were screams and cries at the scene. People nearby righted the auto rickshaw and pulled out the trapped passengers. In this accident, Shyam Singh (30), son of Virendra Patel, a resident of Habibpur, was seriously injured. He was immediately taken to the hospital, but he died during treatment. Shyam Singh was a mechanic by profession, and his family includes his wife Pushpa and three daughters. The family is in mourning after his death. Jhansi police station in-charge Mahesh Mishra said that it has been confirmed that the auto rickshaw overturned while trying to save the dog. He also said that the other passengers in the auto rickshaw are safe.

Two accused in the codeine cough syrup case denied relief by the High Court

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. The Allahabad High Court has rejected the petition of two accused named in the codeine cough syrup case. This order was passed by a division bench of Justice Ajay Bhanot and Justice Garima Prasad on the petition of Akhilesh Prakash alias Sintu and Akash Maurya. The petitioners had sought the quashing of the FIR registered against them at Jaunpur Kotwali police station and a stay on their arrest. Both are accused in a case related to codeine cough syrup. The High Court refused to intervene, finding no merit in the petition.

Gambling in a Public Place Is a Cognizable Offence: High Court

Prayagraj. The Allahabad High Court has clarified that gambling in a public place is a cognizable offence, and in such cases, the police can make arrests without a warrant and also conduct investigations. This observation was made by a single-judge bench of Justice Vivek Kumar Singh while dismissing a petition filed by Kamran, a resident of Agra. The petitioner had filed a petition under Section 528 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Suraksha Sanhita to quash the criminal proceedings pending before the court of the Special Chief Judicial Magistrate, Agra. According to the brief facts of the case, in December 2019, the accused was arrested along with a co-accused while playing cards in a park in the Sikandra area of Agra. Rs. 750 was recovered from the spot. The police then filed a charge sheet under Section 13 of the Public Gambling Act, 1867. The High Court stated that Section 13 of the Public Gambling Act falls under the category of cognizable offences, in which the police have the right to arrest without a warrant.

Editorial

India must kill terrorists

Two bullets had been fired into his gut, and one between his eyes: The assassins authored the end of the book Henry Liu had been writing. From his modest home in the suburbs of San Francisco, the investigative journalist had relentlessly attacked the Kuomintang dictatorship in Taiwan. The hit men—members of the crime cartel United Bamboo Gang, recruited by Taiwan’s military intelligence chief Vice-Admiral Wang Hsi-ling—declined payment for the job, seeing themselves as patriots silencing a dangerous Communist agent. Later, his wife Helen Liu, offered a simple explanation for why her husband was murdered: “In Taiwan, people cannot speak freely. And he had a big mouth.” Earlier this week, police in Canada arrested three Indian nationals for the murder of Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, fuelling suspicions that India’s Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) has been targeting Khalistan operatives in the West. The men, alleged to be linked to the crime network of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, are being investigated for their ties to Indian intelligence officers that Canada has claimed were involved in Nijjar’s assassination. The government of India has angrily denied the allegations—but in recent weeks, senior political leaders have seemed to defend the country’s right to use covert means against its enemies overseas. “Terrorists will be killed in their homes,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in one recent rally, amid reports that R&AW was eliminating terrorists in Pakistan. For many Indians—enraged by seeing the perpetrators of terrorist attacks from 1993 bombings to 2008 Mumbai attacks sheltering in safe havens in Pakistan, or Khalistan supporters openly calling for violence from the West—the use of covert means seems a legitimate exercise of power. This is not new. Following the bombing of the Indian embassy in Kabul in 2008, then National Security Advisor MK Narayanan demanded the country pay Pakistan back “in the same coin.” Lawyers and political philosophers familiar with the complex history of assassinations by nation-states, though, would likely urge reflection on exactly when such force might be used—and what its consequences could be. “Although I may kill a man,” the Renaissance jurist Alberico Gentili counselled the kings and princes of his violent times, “I may not do so by treachery.” They listened, for good reasons. There is, no doubt, something profoundly spurious about the moral outrage that has surrounded India’s alleged assassination campaign: The UK attempted to kill Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, and murdered Irish terrorists at home and abroad and Israel has long staged targeted killings. The US, lawyer scholars Luis Chiesa and Alexander KA Greenawalt have persuasively argued, ignored international law to kill co-founder of Al-Qaeda Osama Bin Laden and Colombian drug cartel boss Pablo Escobar. For its part, Russia frequently—and crudely—kills regime opponents overseas. Like India, nation-states everywhere have struggled to deal with criminals and terrorists their adversaries choose not to act against. However, the absence of an ethical norm doesn’t mean that the many powerful arguments against covert action can be ignored. For most of history, international relations scholar Ward Thomas writes, assassination was used without scruple. Leaders of the ancient world regarded killing for public purposes as a moral project, and murder was seen as a legitimate foreign policy tool in the 17th century. The American political scientist Hans Morgenthau noted that “the Republic of Venice, from 1415 to 1525, planned or attempted about two hundred assassinations for purposes of its foreign policy”. These efforts were even recorded, along with payments made, in its State records. Yet, as the system of modern sovereign States began to emerge, leaders began.



India’s rise has not gone well with certain vested interests

Saariq

The largest democratic process in the world, the Indian Lok Sabha elections 2024, has attracted the attention of one and all across the globe. This general election is a watershed moment for Bharat which will initiate the country towards its new self of ‘Viksit Bharat’ by 2047. Besides, it also holds the possibility of establishing India’s dynamic presence on the global stage. In academic discourses, it is often said that in the last ten years, under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India, today is in the final stage of decolonisation. Under the visionary captaincy of Modi, Bharat, which was called “sone ki chidiya” i.e. the golden bird, in ancient times, is re-emerging as an economic power, recovering from hundreds of years of ‘slavery’ post-colonisation. Besides, it has also forged a new identity on the global stage with its scientific, strategic and ‘soft’ power. However, the anti-India international forces are not able to digest Bharat’s new rise and are trying to hinder its advancement. The international media coverage, particularly news reports, articles, and editorials concerning Modi and the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, serves as one of the most reliable indicators of this negative



approach towards Bharat. In keeping with the idea that Bharat was called the golden bird once upon a time, the British economist Angus Maddison in his book The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective has shown that India was the richest country and the largest economy in the world till the 10th century, its GDP was more than one-third of the world’s economy, which remained very high till the 16th-17th century. But on account of the loot by external forces and inappropriate domestic policies post-independence, the GDP gradually slumped to 2.6 per cent in 2014. It is only with the efficient implementation framework created by the Narendra Modi government that India jumped from the 10th largest economy of the world in 2014 to the fifth largest economy today. By 2027, hopefully, we are going to be the third-largest economy.

Along with this, India’s influence has also increased on global platforms, strategically and scientifically. With the successful launch of Chandrayaan-3 to the Moon, the nation has registered its presence strongly in the field of science and technology. It has also emerged as a major exporter in space industry and defence equipment. Also, providing Covid vaccines to the entire world during the pandemic and showcasing its prowess in the G20 meeting and other international platforms has added to India’s prestige manifold in the world today. Unfortunately, India’s rise has not gone well with certain vested interests, inimical to Bharat, in Pakistan, China, the Arab world as well as Western countries. These forces feel envious of India’s remarkable progress under the leadership of Modi, marching towards Viksit Bharat @2047. That is why it

can be seen that these anti-India forces are trying to influence the Lok Sabha elections in an effort to stop Modi’s visionary drive towards progress that he has envisaged for the country. There seems to be a sinister conspiracy to influence the Indian voters by running a ‘well-planned campaign’ at the global level. Naseem Javed, a corporate political philosopher and currently the president of the Canadian think tank Expothon Worldwide, in his book titled Alpha Dreamers: The Five Billion Connected Alpha Dreamers Who Will Change the World in 2019 writes, the people in the world, today, are interconnected. Global public opinion is now an authentic voice. This global public opinion can be used by various forces to influence any country. It would be pertinent to note in this context the international media’s attitude vis-a-vis current elections in India. Whether it’s The New York Times of the US, England’s The Guardian, Qatar’s (Arabia’s) Al Jazeera, Pakistan’s The Dawn or China’s The People’s Daily Online, there is a common thread seen in all – the portrayal of Narendra Modi and the BJP as the villain, whereas no negative sentiment could be found against Rahul and his Congress or other Opposition parties.

However, a paradox can be seen in all these newspapers as, despite their strong criticism, all of them believe “aaega toh Modi hi” (only Modi will win again). The New York Times on April 20, 2024, wrote, “In this year’s elections, the scion of India’s most storied political family (Rahul Gandhi) is still trying to unseat Modi — and change the nation’s course...he’s modelling himself after Mahatma Gandhi. He doesn’t want to take any position of power”. Whereas, the publication on April 23, 2024, portrayed Modi as a villain, and commented that he abolished the semi-autonomy of the Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir; enacted a citizenship law (CAA) widely viewed as prejudiced against Muslims; and helped construct a grand Ram Mandir. These comments come at a time when it has been understood both at the national and international level that all these measures were taken to correct long-standing historical mistakes. It’s not without reason that the public opinion of the nation remained in favour of Modi all this time. Similarly, Al Jazeera on April 12, 2024, was critical of Modi being portrayed as Bhishma Pitamah, the famous character of the epic Mahabharata, using Artificial Intelligence (AI).

"Trade, not aid" - Rao's 1991 reforms speech that changed India's economic landscape

Abhinav

When I spoke to you last, I promised quick and bold measures to restore our sick economy to health. We have taken the first step to fulfil that promise. This is the beginning. A further set of far-reaching changes and reforms is on the way. For the last eighteen months, there has been paralysis on the economic front. The last two governments postponed taking vital decisions. The fiscal position was allowed to deteriorate. The balance-of-payment crisis became unmanageable. Nonresident Indians and foreign leaders became more and more reluctant to lend money to India. Consequently, India’s external reserves declined steeply, and we had no foreign

exchange to import even such essential commodities as diesel, kerosene, edible oil, and fertiliser. The net result was that when we came to power, we found the financial position of the country in a terrible mess. The Reserve Bank changed the exchange rate of rupee. This was done so that we can export more. More garments, more leather products, more gems and jewellery, more agricultural products made in India will be sold abroad. This will not only earn us Foreign Exchange but also create new employment at home. And why do we need to earn foreign exchange so badly? Not to import luxury items but to buy commodities like kerosene and diesel, fertilisers, edible oil, and steel. We produce

these commodities, but what we produce is not enough. We are stepping up our production, but for some time, we have to import. The adjustment in exchange rate will discourage the import of nonessential goods. And will therefore save foreign exchange for the imports of essential goods of consumption. It will also end uncertainty about the future of our currency and will encourage nonresident Indians to send more money to be deposited in their accounts in India. After changing the value of the rupee, we undertook a major overhaul of the trade policy. Our message was simple—you cannot import if you do not export. We cut down on the export licenses so that our exporters do not face hurdles.

Semiconductor Ecosystem: A Silent Revolution in India’s High-Tech Manufacturing

Suman

As our lives become increasingly reliant on technology, semiconductors have become the essential foundation of society. These tiny chips are the powerhouses behind our electronic devices, communication systems, and even the functioning of our agricultural implements, medical equipment and vehicles. India has recognised the enormous socio-economic potential and strategic importance of this silent revolution of technology and is taking the lead in building a robust semiconductor ecosystem and developing a talented workforce. India’s goal of becoming self-sufficient and a global leader in semiconductors is supported by the fact that the semiconductor industry is expected to generate over one million job opportunities for semiconductor design engineers, manufacturing engineers, R&D scientists, operators, technicians, and skilled workers in chip design and semiconductor fabrication, packaging, and sales facilities over the next five years. According to the National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom) and Zinnov’s latest report, “Around 30 per cent of the new global capability centres

established in India during the December quarter of last year were in the semiconductor space, indicating a growing interest in leveraging the local talent pool in areas such as front-end design, performance testing, and post-silicon validation.” The world’s leading chip design companies, including Intel, Texas Instruments, AMD, Nvidia, and Qualcomm, have design and R&D centres in India. AMD recently inaugurated its largest global design centre in Bengaluru. In March, an event – ‘India’s Techade: Chips for Viksit Bharat’, witnessed the foundation stone of three semiconductor projects worth Rs 1.25 lakh crore. Tata Electronics in partnership with Taiwan’s Power Chip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (PSMC), set up the country’s first semiconductor fab plant in Dholera (Gujarat) with an investment of Rs 91,000 crore and another plant in Morigaon (Assam) with an investment of Rs 27,000 crore, with the first chips to begin coming off the production line in 2026. US-based semiconductor manufacturer Micron India plant with an investment of Rs 22,500 crore in Sanand (Gujarat), is expected

to roll out the first “Made in India” memory chips by December. It is contributing its bit to the Chandrayaan-3 mission Semiconductor Corporation of India (SCL) proposed to update and expand its chip facility in the Mohali plant with an investment of Rs 20,000 crore, to enhance its contribution to ISRO and to other space research organisations globally. Despite the upward trajectory of India’s current semiconductor chip ecosystem, the country remains dependent on the US, Taiwan, China, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Korea, with over 95 per cent of semiconductors imported from these countries. To reduce this dependency on imports, India recognised the strategic importance of a robust domestic semiconductor industry. It unveiled the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) offering 50 per cent capital expenditure support to new entrants, production-linked incentive (PLI), and design-linked incentive (DLI) schemes with an outlay of Rs 76,000 crore, as well as state government incentive support, international partnerships, and a focus on talent development. The Electronic and IT Ministry plans.

“Malhar certification” will be in countering Halal

Rashi Singh

The Fisheries Minister of Maharashtra, Nitesh Rane, has launched a certification platform, MalharCertification.com, to ensure that the preparation and sale of meat is “according to Hindu religious traditions”. The platform encourages consumers to buy meat only from certified vendors, guaranteeing fresh and contamination-free meat sourced from vendors belonging to the Hindu Khatik community. The initiative appears to be a socio-political response to the ongoing “Halal Certification” movement, promoted by some ingenious traders to exploit

the religious sentiments of the Muslim community. Only time will tell how effective the “Malhar certification” will be in countering Halal certification. But the entire issue needs to be seen in a different light, and the Halal certification business must be examined more critically. The Maharashtra government should take the Halal certification issue—which is mandated by law and hence illegal—more seriously and approach the court to have the certification process scrutinised for its legality. A counter “Malhar” certification may not be the right answer in the long run.

As of now, Halal certification is issued by a private limited company, Halal India Pvt Ltd, and the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind Halal Trust. Producers of goods have to pay as much as Rs 60,000 for Halal certification per product. So, a multinational corporation with a dozen consumer products would have to pay over Rs 7 lakh just for a private Muslim trust’s certification, which is neither mandated by the government nor part of any official certification process like AGMARK, BIS, or the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). Established in 1919 by the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, the Halal

Trust India claims to be globally renowned as one of the “most influential, reliable, and popular organisations in India”. It purports to be a leading Halal certification body, with a “distinct and patented Halal logo” that’s widely recognised around the world. It boasts of providing Halal certification to Halal-compliant restaurants, hotels, hospitals, processed food manufacturing units, slaughterhouses, and so on. Not just this, it also issues certificates for products like lipstick, tulsi water, biscuits, and water bottles, to ensure that animal fat, bones, or any other prohibited components have not been used.

Briefs

GONDA

₹1.5 Cr Horse Gifted to Brijbhushan

Former BJP MP Brijbhushan Sharan Singh received a ₹1.5 crore prized horse on his birthday in Gonda, drawing crowds and social media buzz.

KANPUR

Prajapati Sabha Honors Students, Swears In Committee

The Kanpur Prajapati Sabha held its 24th general meeting, which included a ceremony to honor meritorious female students and the oath-taking of a new executive committee. Guests emphasized education, social awareness, and organizational unity. Merit certificates and mementos were presented to the students, and a progress report was presented by the General Secretary.

LALITPUR

Farmers Worried as Canal Water Falls Short

Rabi crops in Lalitpur are under threat as irrigation water from the Govind Sagar and Jamni dam canals is not reaching tail-end fields. Farmers from several villages have submitted a memorandum to the district administration, warning that wheat, gram, and lentil crops are drying up due to a lack of timely water. They have demanded the immediate release of canal water to save their crops.

LALITPUR

Farmers' School Teaches Advanced Agri-Techniques

A village-level 'Kisan Pathshala' (farmers' school) was organized to educate farmers on modern and scientific farming methods to enhance Rabi crop productivity. Experts from the agriculture department shared knowledge on crop management, pest control, soil health, and crop insurance. Representatives from banks and foundations also informed farmers about government schemes, banking facilities, and self-employment programs.

CHANDAULI

Energy Conservation Week Observed at Railway Division

As part of Energy Conservation Week 2025, the Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Railway Division organized an awareness program. The Division Railway Manager emphasized the wise use of energy as a precious resource and appealed for the adoption of green energy. Officers and railway staff took an energy conservation pledge, following an awareness rally participated in by scouts and employees.

SAHARANPUR

Railway Union Welcomes New Divisional Organising Secretary

Railway employees gave a grand welcome to Ajay Birla, the newly appointed Divisional Organising Secretary of the Northern Railway Mazdoor Union, upon his arrival in Saharanpur. In his address, Birla pledged to fulfill his responsibilities with dedication and work for the welfare of railway staff.

TRIBUTE | Sardar Patel's Role in National Integration Remembered at Lucknow Tribute Event

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru created the Kashmir crisis: CM Yogi

LUCKNOW

A tribute meeting was organised in Lucknow on the death anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, where the Chief Minister paid floral tributes to the statue of the national leader and spoke on his role in India's political integration after Independence. Senior ministers, public representatives, and members of various organisations attended the programme.

Addressing the gathering, the CM highlighted Patel's contribution as India's first Home Minister and his role in integrating 567 princely states into the Indian Union. He said Patel played a decisive role at a critical moment in history, ensuring political unity and administrative stability in the newly independent country. The CM described Patel as a central figure in shaping the framework of the Indian Republic. Referring to Patel's



early life, the CM noted that he was born in 1875 in Gujarat and rose through education and political engagement to play a leading role in the freedom movement. He recalled that Patel faced imprisonment during the struggle for Independence and remained actively involved until the formation of the Union government.

The CM also referred to the integration of Junagadh and Hyderabad, stating that both

CM calls Patel architect of modern India, made remarks on Kashmir and post-Independence decisions

were merged into India through administrative and political measures taken under Patel's leadership. He

said these steps prevented territorial fragmentation at a sensitive stage in India's early history. During his address, the CM made political remarks on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, stating that certain post-Independence decisions contributed to long-term disputes in the region. He said these issues later became a source of internal security challenges. He further stated that recent constitutional changes had

addressed longstanding administrative anomalies related to the region.

The CM also spoke about Patel's tenure as Home Minister, mentioning administrative reforms and the establishment of systems that later evolved into the present civil services structure. He said Patel was associated with resolving several internal challenges faced by the country during its formative years. The programme concluded with references to Patel's death on December 15, 1950, and his continued relevance in discussions on national unity and governance. The CM said Patel's role is regularly cited in debates on federal structure, administrative integration, and internal security.

Deputy CM, cabinet ministers, local representatives, members of the legislative council, and office-bearers of the organising committee were present at the event.

New identity system rolled out for railway staff



LUCKNOW

Indian Railways has decided to introduce a new QR code-based identity card system for its regular and contract employees in a move aimed at strengthening security and modernising employee identification. The decision has been taken by the Railway Board and will be implemented across all railway zones in the country.

According to Railway Board Principal Executive Director Renu Sharma, the new identity cards will carry a QR code that can be scanned to instantly access essential details related to an employee. This digital verification system is expected to make identity checks faster, more accurate and secure at railway offices and work sites.

Under the new arrangement, regular railway employees will be issued yellow

Different colour cards to distinguish regular and contract staff

low-coloured identity cards, while contractual staff will receive orange-coloured cards. The colour coding will help officials easily distinguish between different categories of workers, especially in sensitive and restricted areas.

Railway officials said the new system will also ensure better record management, as employee data will be stored securely on digital platforms. The initiative is being implemented from a security point of view and to bring uniformity in employee identification across zones. The Railway Board has directed all zonal railways to prioritise the roll-out of the new QR-based identity cards at the earliest.

A Celestial Milestone at Lucknow University

LUCKNOW

In a development symbolically rooted in India's ancient astrological wisdom, Lucknow University marked a significant academic milestone with the inauguration of the Acharya Varahamihira Auditorium at its Department of Jyotirvigyan. Named after the legendary astronomer-astrologer Acharya Varahamihira, the auditorium reflects a confluence of traditional cosmic knowledge and modern academic pursuit.

The Vice Chancellor Professor Manuka Khanna, while inaugurating the auditorium, announced the institution of the 'Shri Chandramani Singh Gold Medal', to be awarded annually to the department topper. Notably,

**Stars Align at Lucknow University: Varahamihira Auditorium Opens, Gold Medal Announced**

this initiative has been introduced by the university's self-financed department, highlighting a rare alignment of limited resources with a larger vision of academic excellence. The Vice-

Chancellor appreciated the efforts of the department and its coordinator for setting a benchmark in student motivation and merit recognition.

Speaking on the occasion, department coordinator Dr. Shyamlesh Tiwari said the auditorium and the gold medal symbolize an auspicious beginning for students, encouraging disciplined study, research orientation, and adherence to classical Indian knowledge systems.

Anshika qualifies for Indian shooting team trials



AYODHYA

Anshika has achieved a national milestone by qualifying for the 10-meter Air Pistol Indian Team Selection Trials at the 68th National Shooting Championship in Delhi. At just 13 years old, she is already an ISSF shooter. A Class 7 student at Seth M.R. Jaipuria School, Lucknow, Anshika practices four hours daily.

CM flags voter Gap, Akhilesh questions into election math

LUCKNOW

A fresh political confrontation has erupted in Uttar Pradesh over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath claimed that nearly four crore voters were missing from the draft voter list. Addressing party workers, the Chief Minister said the state's population is around 26 crore and, by standard estimates, about 16 crore people should be eligible voters. However, he pointed out that the draft list reportedly contains only around 12 crore names.

The Chief Minister urged workers to verify booth-level data, match draft lists with previous records, and ensure that no eligible voter is left out while ineligible names are excluded.

**Samajwadi Party chief says BJP's own arithmetic shows setback before Assembly polls**

He said the process must be completed within the stipulated timeline, stressing that elections are ultimately won at the booth level. Reacting sharply, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said the Chief Minister's own statement exposed the ruling party's vulnerability. In a post on social



media, he argued that if the government believes a large share of the missing voters were supporters of the BJP, it reflects the impact of vigilance during the SIR process. Akhilesh claimed that the figures indicate a potential electoral disadvantage for the ruling party across constituencies and said opposition workers would closely monitor the revision exercise to prevent irregularities. The SIR exercise has thus become a major political flashpoint, with both sides interpreting the numbers to suit their electoral narratives ahead of upcoming polls.

11 UP Players Shortlisted for IPL 2026 Mini-Auction

LUCKNOW

Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 mini-auction is set to take place in Abu Dhabi on December 16, with preparations entering the final stage. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has released the final auction list after registering 1,390 players, of which 350 have been shortlisted. The list includes 240 Indian and 110 overseas players. Across 10 franchises, a total of 77 slots are available, including 31 for foreign players.

Uttar Pradesh has made a notable presence in the final list, with 11 players from the state earning a place. The most prominent name is fast bowler Shivam Mavi, whose base price has been fixed at ₹75 lakh, the highest among UP players. Mavi has prior IPL experience and is expected to draw interest from multiple franchises.

**Auction to be held in Abu Dhabi on December 16, 350 players shortlisted by BCCI**

Other players from the state include Prashant Veer, Naman Tiwari, Kartik Tyagi, Vijay Kumar, Adarsh Singh, Sunil Kumar, Vishal Nishad, Siddharth Yadav, Akshu Bajwa, and Shiva Singh, all with a base price of ₹30 lakh. Most of them are uncapped players who have performed consistently in domestic tournaments.

ED flags sudden wealth in cough syrup syndicate

LUCKNOW

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), probing the illicit cough syrup syndicate, has uncovered fresh leads pointing towards money laundering and possible gifting of a luxury Land Cruiser to a Purvanchal-based mafia figure. Investigators have traced a transfer of ₹2 crore from a firm linked to a close relative of prime accused Shubham Jaiswal to a construction company based in Ayodhya. The agency suspects that this amount was used to purchase a high-end SUV, allegedly given as a gift to a mafia-linked relative.

According to officials, the transaction has raised red flags as the Ayodhya-based company was incorporated barely three years ago and had limited financial activity prior to receiving

**₹2 crore transferred from Shubham's relative-linked firm to Ayodhya construction company under scanner**

the large sum. ED is now examining the business relationship between the firm linked to Shubham's family and the construction company to establish the source and purpose of funds. The money trail is being analysed to determine whether shell entities were used to conceal proceeds from the illegal

trade of codeine-based cough syrup.

Investigators have also expanded scrutiny to luxury vehicles bearing distinctive number series such as 9777, 1111 and now 1777. Vehicles with these numbers are reportedly being used by relatives of the company operator, including one individual preparing to contest assembly elections. ED officials note that until a few years ago, those under the scanner reportedly led modest lifestyles, making the sudden accumulation of wealth and frequent foreign travel a key focus of the ongoing probe

Stroke treatment to reach district level

UP State Bureau

LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Health Department has taken a significant step to strengthen emergency healthcare services by introducing brain stroke treatment facilities at district hospitals across the state. Under this initiative, district hospitals will be connected with 12 major medical institutions to ensure timely diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients.

The programme was initially launched by linking seven district hospitals with Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences. After positive outcomes, the state government has decided to expand the facility across Uttar Pradesh. Health Director General Dr Ratan Pal Singh Suman said that doctors, nursing staff and paramedical personnel at district hospitals are being trained for stroke

**District hospitals to be linked with 12 medical colleges under hub-and-spoke model**

management. The facility is expected to be operational in all districts by February 2026.

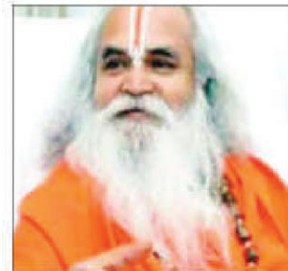
Under the model, district hospitals linked with Lohia Institute include Ayodhya, Barabanki, Sitapur, Unnao, Hardoi, Basti and Gonda. The treatment system will function on a hub-and-spoke basis, similar to the STEMI care network already in place for heart attack patients.

Ram temple movement veteran Dr. Ramvilas pass away

AYODHYA

Dr. Ramvilas Das Vedanti, a prominent saint and key figure in the Ram Mandir movement, and a former Member of Parliament, passed away on Monday morning at the age of 67. He breathed his last in Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, after his health deteriorated during a spiritual festival.

Dr. Vedanti was an influential leader in the temple movement during the 1990s, alongside figures like Swami Parmahansa and CM Yogi Adityanath's Guru, Avaidyanath. He also served



twice as an MP in 1996 and 1998. His mortal remains are expected to arrive in Ayodhya by late evening, with the final procession scheduled for Tuesday morning at 10:00 AM. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is expected to attend the final rites.

From traditional to tech-driven: How farming

LUCKNOW

Agriculture in Uttar Pradesh is steadily moving away from traditional practices toward a more modern, technology-driven, and commercially viable model. The adoption of crop diversification, tissue culture, and cooperative-based farming is gaining ground across the state. With institutional support and policy initiatives from the UP government, farmers are reporting improved productivity, reduced risk, and better access to markets.



Progressive farmers are increasingly treating agriculture as an organised enterprise rather than a subsistence activity. Techniques such as balanced crop rotation and the use of disease-free planting material through tissue culture

are helping farmers stabilise yields and manage input costs. As a result, agricultural produce from several districts is now reaching wider domestic markets.

Farmers practising advanced methods highlight

Diversification, tissue culture, and modern technology reshape farming across the state

the role of cooperative and sharecropping models in expanding cultivation opportunities for small and marginal landholders. These arrangements allow resource sharing, reduce individual financial burden, and enable cultivation on a larger scale. Agricultural experts note that such models are contributing to employ-

ment generation and strengthening the rural economy.

According to farmers, scientific planning and diversification reduce dependency on a single crop, thereby limiting losses due to weather fluctuations or market volatility. Multiple income streams from different crops are proving especially beneficial for small farmers.

Across the state, farmers are shifting from monocropping to diversified crop cycles involving banana, tomato, potato, mentha, watermelon, muskmelon, wheat, and other crops.

Briefs

Japan to send pandas back to China

Japan may have to be without its much-loved pandas for the first time since 1972 as the two fluffy bears could be sent back to China due to the aggravation of political relations between the two countries amid statements by Japanese PM Sanae Takaichi about Taiwan. The twins Xiao Xiao and Lei Lei, who are a huge draw at Ueno Zoological Gardens in Tokyo, may have to leave Japan by next month if China declines to renew the bilateral agreement.

2 PIO judges appointed in South Africa

Two senior Indian-origin judges have been appointed to Companies Tribunal, an agency of Dept of Trade and Industry established in terms of the Companies Act to provide independent, speedy resolution of company disputes. Judge Mohammed Navsa and Judge Visvanathan Ponnai will join Judges Kathleen Satchwell, Robert Nugent, and Boissie Henry Mbha on the Tribunal.

Yemeni rebels expand their footprint

An Emirati-backed secessionist group in Yemen said its forces were marching on Monday to another province as part of the group's push to expand areas under its control in the country's south, at the expense of its allies in the internationally recognised government. The Southern Transitional Council this month seized most of the provinces of Hadramout and Mahra, including crucial oil facilities and the border with Oman. The move raised fears that the relative calm in the country's stalemated civil war might be shattered.

Airbnb fined for 'tourist ads' in Spain

Spain's government has fined Airbnb 64 million euros (\$75 million) for advertising unlicensed tourist rentals, officials said on Monday. The rentals didn't include licence numbers—a requirement in many regions in Spain—or included licence numbers that didn't match what authorities had, the consumer rights ministry said. Others listed incorrect information about hosts.

Nepal lifts ban on Indian currency

Nepal's council of ministers has decided to lift the ban on high-denomination Indian currency notes of ₹200 and ₹500, a govt spokesperson confirmed to ANI. Minister for Information Technology and Communication Jagdish Kharel, also the govt spokesperson, said the cabinet meeting decided to allow the import and export of ₹200 and ₹500 denomination Indian notes. "But the cap remains up to ₹25,000 to be carried between India and Nepal."

Iran's rial at all-time low

Iran's rial slid to a record low of over 1.3 million to the USD, deepening the currency's collapse less than two weeks after it first breached the 1.2-million mark amid sanctions pressure and regional tensions. The new low is rising pressure on food prices and other costs. Prices are up on meat, rice and other staples of the Iranian dinner table. People also worry about new fight between Iran and Israel—as well as potentially the US—after June's 12-day war.

BEACH BLOODBATH | Govt is ready to take whatever action is necessary, says Albanese as it emerges the older shooter had licence, legally acquired six guns

OZ PM VOWS TOUGHER GUN LAWS AFTER BONDI ATTACK

SYDNEY

Australian PM Anthony Albanese on Monday proposed tougher national gun laws a day after a mass shooting at Sydney's Bondi Beach left at least 15 people dead.

Albanese said he would propose new restrictions, including limiting the number of guns a licensed owner can obtain. His proposals were announced after the authorities revealed that the older of the two gunmen, a father and son duo, had amassed his six guns legally.

"The government is prepared to take whatever action is necessary. Included in that is the need for tougher gun laws," Albanese said.

"People's circumstances can change. People can be radicalised over a period of time. Licences should not be in perpetuity," he added.

At least 38 people were being treated in hospitals after the massacre on Sunday, when the two shooters fired indiscriminately on the beachfront festivities. Those killed included a 10-year-old girl, a rabbi and a Holocaust survivor. The horror at Australia's most popular beach was the deadliest shooting in almost three decades in a country with strict gun control laws primarily aimed at removing rapid-fire rifles from circulation. Albanese called the massacre an act of anti-semitic terrorism that struck at the heart of the nation.

He pledged swift change, planning to present his gun



Bondi Beach is now a memorial to victims of a shooting where Jewish people came under attack on Sunday during celebration of Hanukkah festival. —AFP



Some laws are commonwealth and some laws are implemented by the states. What we want to do is to make sure that we're all completely on the same page.

Anthony Albanese
Australian PM

law proposals to a national cabinet meeting that includes state leaders. Some of the measures would also require state legislation.

"Some laws are commonwealth and some laws are implemented by the states," the Australian leader said. "What we want to do is to make sure that we're all completely on the same page." Australia's gun laws were revised after a 1996 massacre in the Tasmanian town of Port Arthur, where a lone gunman killed 35 people.

Alarming rise in anti-semitic attacks since start of Gaza war

Sydney: The Bondi massacre has provoked questions about whether the government had done enough to curb rising anti-semitism. Such incidents have spiked in Australia since the October 7 attack by Hamas on Israeli communities outside Gaza and the subsequent Israeli retaliation.

According to the Executive Council of Australian Jewry,

there were 368 anti-Jewish incidents reported in Australia between Oct 8 and Nov 19. This compares to a total of 478 antisemitic incidents for the entire year from October 2021-22. Australia, a country of 28 million people, is home to about 117,000 Jews, according to official figures.

In the past 12 months, synagogues in Sydney and Melbo-

India pledges 'fullest support'

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday conveyed to his Australian counterpart Penny Wong India's "fullest support" in the wake of the deadly attack. "Just spoke to Australian Foreign Minister @SenatorWong. Conveyed our deepest condolences about the Bondi Beach terrorist attack and offered our fullest support," he said on social media. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio also held a call with Wong.

"We stand in solidarity with the Jewish community and with the Australian people as we pray for the victims and their families. We are grateful to Australian first responders and bystanders for their heroic response," he said in a statement.

urne have been targeted with attempted arson and graffiti. Other Jewish institutions, including a day care centre and an Israeli restaurant, have also been attacked.

"How many times did we warn the government?" the Australian Jewish Association said on Facebook. "We never felt once that they listened."

—Agencies

Pro-democracy HK media tycoon guilty of national security offences

HONG KONG

Jimmy Lai, the pro-democracy former Hong Kong media mogul and outspoken critic of Beijing, was convicted in a landmark national security trial in the city's court on Monday, which could send him to prison for the rest of his life. Three government-vetted judges found Lai, 78, guilty of conspiring with others to collude with foreign forces to endanger national security and conspiracy to publish seditious articles. He pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Lai was arrested in August 2020 under a Beijing-imposed national security law that was implemented following massive anti-government protests in 2019. Lai has spent five years in custody, much of it in solitary confinement, and his family said his health has declined rapidly. He has also been convicted of several lesser offences related to fraud allegations and his actions in 2019.

Lai's trial, conducted without a jury, has been closely monitored by the US, Britain, the European Union and political observers as a barometer of media freedom and judicial independence in the former British colony, which returned to Chinese rule in 1997. Sebastien Lai, one of his children, said the family was saddened but not surprised by the verdict.

"In the 800-page verdict they have there is essentially nothing, nothing that incrimi-



Lai faces life sentence

nates him," he told reporters in London. "This is a perfect example of how the national security law has been moulded and weaponised against someone who essentially said stuff that they didn't like."

"This verdict proves that the authorities still fear our father, even in his weakened state, for what he represents," his daughter Claire said. "We stand by his innocence and condemn this miscarriage of justice." The court said Lai spent years plotting against Beijing. Reading from an 855-page verdict, Judge Esther Toh said Lai had extended a "constant invitation" to the US to help bring down the Chinese government with the excuse of helping Hong Kongers.

Lai's lawyers admitted during the trial he had called for sanctions before the law took effect, but insisted he dropped these calls to comply with the law. But the judges ruled Lai had never wavered in his intention to destabilise the ruling Chinese Communist Party, "continuing though in a less explicit way."

Toh said the court was satisfied Lai was the mastermind of the conspiracies.

Merriam-Webster's word of year is 'slop'

WASHINGTON

Creepy, zany and demonstrably fake content is often called "slop." The word's proliferation online, in part thanks to the widespread availability of generative artificial intelligence, landed it Merriam-Webster's 2025 word of the year.

"It's such an illustrative word," said Greg Barlow, Merriam-Webster's president. "It's part of a transformative technology, AI, and it's something that people have found fascinating, annoying and a little bit ridiculous."

"Slop" was first used in the 1700s to mean soft mud, but it evolved more generally to

mean something of little value. The definition has since expanded to mean "digital content of low quality that is produced usually in quantity by means of artificial intelligence." In other words, "you know, absurd videos, weird advertising images, cheesy propaganda, fake news that looks real, junky AI-written digital books," Barlow said.

AI video generators like Sora have wowed with their ability to quickly create realistic clips based merely on text prompts. But a flood of these images on social media, including clips depicting celebrities and deceased public figures, has raised worries about misinformation, deep-fakes and copyright.

Torrential rains and flash floods kill 37 in Morocco

CASABLANCA

Floods triggered by torrential rains have killed at least 37 people in the Moroccan coastal city of Safi, the interior ministry said on Monday.

Authorities said heavy rain and flash floods overnight inundated 70 homes and businesses and swept away 10 vehicles. Reports said schools announced three days of closures. Rains caused flood and damage elsewhere throughout Morocco, including the northern city of Tetouan and the mountain town of Tinghir.

Safi, a city on Morocco's Atlantic shore, 320 km from



the capital Rabat, is a major hub for the country's critical fishing and mining industries. Both employ thousands to catch, mine and process the commodities for export. The city, with a population of over 300,000 people, is home to a phosphate processing plant. Videos on social media showed cars stranded and partially submerged as water surged through streets.

Japan blizzard hits services

Tokyo: A rapidly developing low-pressure system has brought a blizzard to Hokkaido on Monday, with violent winds and heavy snowfall affecting northeastern Japan, causing disruptions to transportation and prompting warnings of storm surges and flood risks from high tides.

Snowfall has intensified in Hokkaido. Snowfall in the six hours through 6am reached 49 cm in Engaru Town, and 40 cm in Kitami City. Snow depth stood at 172 cm in the Hakkoda mountain range.

Interstellar comet turns green as it comes closer to the earth

Interstellar comet 3I/ATLAS has entered a highly active phase as it travels through the inner solar system, drawing scientific attention with its rapid brightening and unusual green glow. Recent observations show the comet, originating beyond our solar system, is undergoing chemical and physical changes as it responds to solar heating, offering rare insights into material formed around distant stars.

Astronomers observed a distinct greenish hue emerging from the comet's coma after its close solar approach in late October. This colour is produced by diatomic carbon (C₂) molecules released when frozen gases sublimate from the comet's surface. When exposed to



sunlight, these molecules emit green light, a common phenomenon in solar system comets but unexpected for 3I/ATLAS, which earlier appeared predominantly red.

Major win for ultra-conservative gives Chile right-wing president

SANTIAGO

Chile's ultra-conservative former lawmaker Jose Antonio Kast secured a stunning victory in the presidential election on Sunday, defeating the candidate of the centre-left governing coalition and setting the stage for the country's most right-wing government in 35 years of democracy.

Kast won 58.2% of the votes as Chileans overwhelmingly embraced his pledge to crack



down on increased crime, deport hundreds of thousands of immigrants without legal status and revive the sluggish economy of one of Latin America's most stable and prosperous nations.

His challenger, communist candidate Jeannette Jara, clinched 41.8% of the vote. She called Kast to concede the election and congratulate him on his successful campaign after his lead became irreversible. Kast's supporters erupted into cheers in the street, shouting his name and honking horns. "Democracy spoke loud and clear," Jara, who served as labour minister in the centre-left government of President Gabriel Boric, wrote on social media.



Nobody's seen Suu Kyi in 2+ yrs, could be dead: Son Aris

With her health failing and an information vacuum around Myanmar's detained former leader Aung San Suu Kyi, 80, her son worries he may not even know if she passed away. Kim Aris told 'Reuters' he has not heard from his mother in years, and has received sporadic, second-hand details about her heart, bone and gum problems since a 2021 military coup that deposed her government.

"She's got health issues. Nobody has seen her in over two years. She hasn't been allowed to contact legal team, never mind her family," he said in an interview in Tokyo. "For all I know, she could be dead already." "I imagine (Myanmar junta leader) Min Aung Hlaing has his own agenda. If he does want to use her to try and appease the population before or after the poll by either releasing her or moving her to house arrest."

tech threat

Militants experimenting with AI, risks to grow

WASHINGTON

As the rest of the world rushes to harness the power of artificial intelligence, militant groups also are experimenting with the technology, even if they aren't sure exactly what to do with it.

For extremist organisations, AI could be a powerful tool for recruiting new members, churning out realistic deepfake images and refining their cyberattacks, national security experts and spy agencies have

warned. Someone posting on a pro-Islamic State group website last month urged other IS supporters to make AI part of operations. "One of the best things about AI is how easy it is to use," the user wrote in English.

"Some intelligence agencies worry that AI will contribute (to) recruiting," the user continued. "So make their nightmares into reality."

IS, which had seized territory in Iraq and Syria years ago but is now a decentralised alliance of militant groups that share a violent ideology, real-

ised years ago social media could be a potent tool for recruitment and disinformation, so it's not surprising that the group is testing out AI, national security experts say.

For loose-knit, poorly resourced extremist groups—or even an individual bad actor with a web connection—AI can be used to pump out propaganda or deepfakes at scale, widening their reach and expanding their influence.

"For any adversary, AI really makes it much easier to do things," said John Laliberte, a

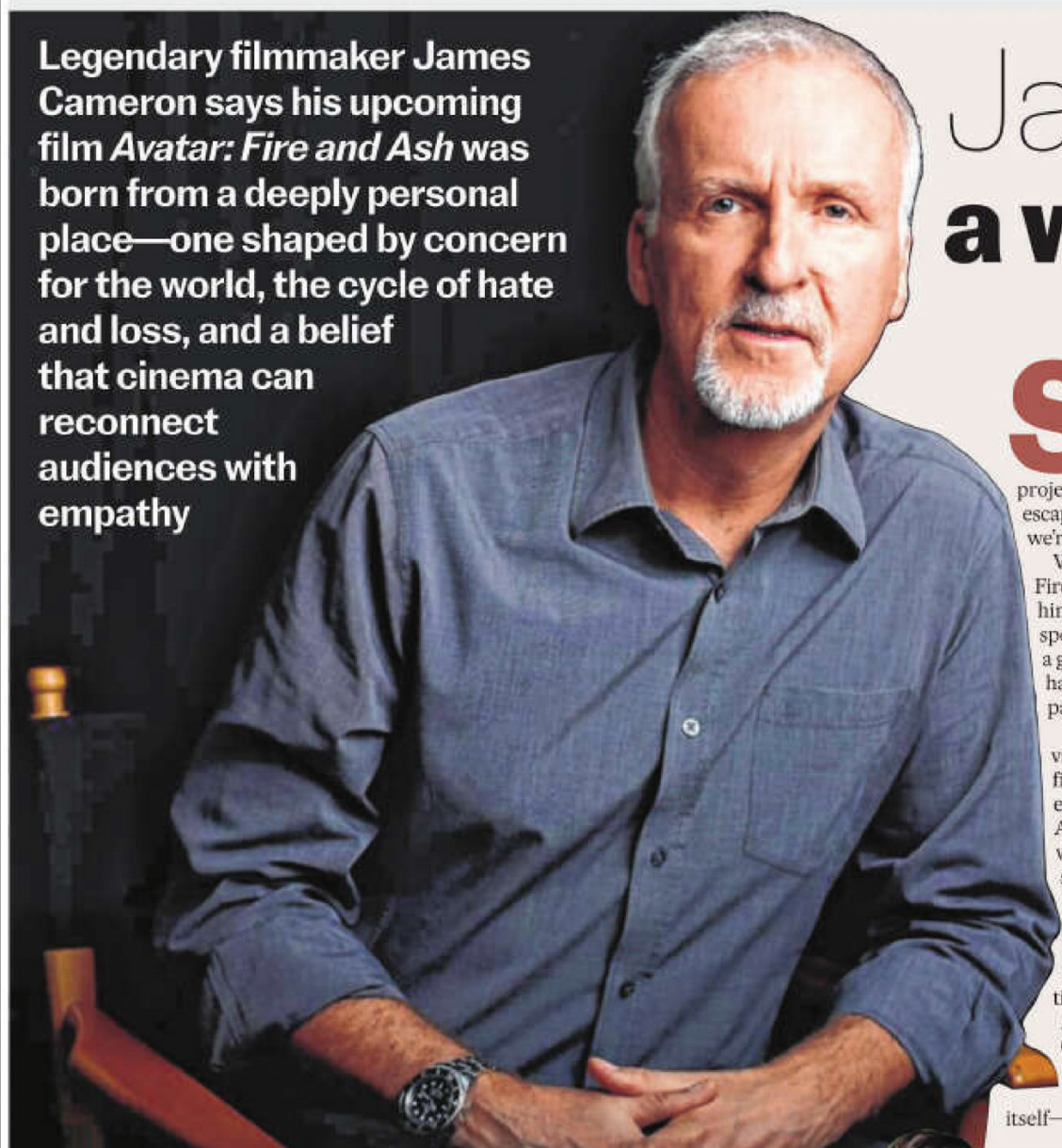
vulnerability researcher at the National Security Agency who is now CEO of cybersecurity firm ClearVector. "With AI, even a small group that doesn't have a lot of money is still able to make an impact."

Militant groups began using AI as soon as programmes like ChatGPT became widely accessible. In the years since, they have increasingly used generative AI programmes to create realistic-looking photos and video. When strapped to social media algorithms, this



fake content can help recruit new believers, confuse or frighten enemies and spread propaganda at a scale unimaginable just a few years ago.

Legendary filmmaker James Cameron says his upcoming film *Avatar: Fire and Ash* was born from a deeply personal place—one shaped by concern for the world, the cycle of hate and loss, and a belief that cinema can reconnect audiences with empathy



James Cameron: A film for a world in need of empathy

Speaking in a recent interview, James Cameron reflected on the emotional and philosophical roots of the project, describing it as both an escape and a mirror for the times we're living in.

When asked where *Avatar: Fire and Ash* came from within him, Cameron didn't point to spectacle or technology, but to a growing sense that humanity has drifted away from its capacity to care for one another. Early reactions from private screenings suggest the film is resonating powerfully, even before its wider release. According to Cameron, viewers have told him the story feels urgently relevant, offering hope while confronting uncomfortable truths about human behavior, environmental destruction, and moral choice.

As with much of his work, Cameron uses the world of Pandora and the Na'vi to reflect humanity back at itself—highlighting both our po-



A still from the film

tential for compassion and our tendency toward greed. While *Fire and Ash* offers audiences the chance to escape into a richly imagined world, Cameron is clear that the film's true power lies in what audiences bring back with them when they return. James Cameron said, "It came from my feeling that we need to be more in touch with our empathy.

It's about the cycle of hate and loss, and people have told me. I mean, not a lot of people have seen the film, but we've done some screenings for friends and so on. And the feedback is, 'We need this film right now, with where the world is.' It. You, you get to escape from the world...but you can't escape the world, and what

you find within the film is things that resonate with you and make you hopeful about us as a species. I mean, obviously it's the Na'vi are the good guys for the most part. We got some bad ones, but I think we see the best of ourselves in the Na'vi and the worst of ourselves in all the greedy corporate guys that are coming to, destroy the planet."

Sohail Khan apologises for not wearing helmet



Sohail Khan faced backlash after a video of him riding his ₹17 lakh bike in Mumbai's Bandra without a helmet went viral

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan's brother and actor Sohail Khan grabbed attention on social media after a viral video showed him riding his Rs 17 lakh bike on the streets of Bandra, Mumbai, without wearing a helmet, following which he faced backlash. Days later, the actor issued a statement on his Instagram handle, apologising and revealing that he sometimes feels claustrophobic, which is why he prefers not to wear a helmet.

He wrote, "I would like to request all the bike riders please wear helmets. I avoid wearing them at times as I feel claustrophobic, but that's no excuse to not wear one.

Riding has always been my passion since childhood. It began with BMX cycles, and now I ride bikes. I mostly ride late nights when there is not much traffic to cut risks that too, at a slow pace and with my car following me."

Further, Sohail also vowed to obey all the traffic rules in the future. "I assure fellow riders that I will make a genuine effort to overcome my claustrophobia and wear a helmet, so please bear with me. My sincere apologies to the traffic authorities, and I assure them that I will follow all the rules henceforth. I salute all the riders for wearing their helmets at all times despite the discomfort as it is necessary for our safety. It is better to be safe than sorry. Once again, I am really sorry."



SIDHARTH MALHOTRA:

Sidharth Malhotra gets the texture and selective embellishments running in a full black suit, with details all along the coat's front and the sleeves. He pairs it up with a crisp black shirt and well-fitted pants, bringing the whole look together with tinted frames.

These actors' all black ensemble proves that subtle and classic styling can make the loudest statement! They're classic, sharp, experimental and polished enough to be interesting!

Bollywood's men in black

The style radar of Men in Black Suits is always a mix of luxe and real-world cool

From quiet confidence in sharp tailored suits to the one with textures and accents, Bollywood men know how to get attention! Together, they show what classic menswear can be - fluid, expressive and refreshingly individual.

ARJUN KAPOOR:

In a sleek black velvet suit, Arjun Kapoor shows his classic style ascent, one that's tailored, confident and has a polished edge, all indicating that he's paying attention. He keeps the look elevated without shouting for attention, and brings the spotlight on the silver brooch and structured glasses

SHAHID KAPOOR:

Shahid Kapoor plays on the texture and proportion, bringing his trademark charming appeal to a look that's anything but ordinary. Printed patterns, textures, and chained patches, Shahid Kapoor gives a refreshing touch to classic suiting style

ADITYA ROY KAPUR:

Aditya Roy Kapur brings in a sturdy and larger-than-life appeal in a classic black suit with a satin vertical patch along his pants. He maintains the standards of classic clothing by pairing his suit with a spherical brooch, a bow and glossy black shoes.

VICKY KAUSHAL:

Vicky Kaushal defines refined tailoring in a crisp black suit, rich in fabric and fitting. It's exactly what you'd expect from an actor who's built his own. His wardrobe pick clearly indicates his appreciation for classic luxury. And Vicky adds to the suit's sharpness by topping it up with metal-framed glasses.

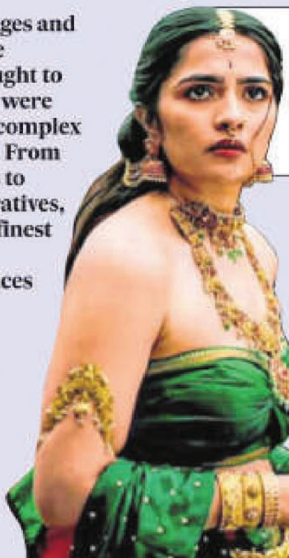
Standout female performances of 2025

2025 has been a standout year for female-driven storytelling in Indian cinema, with actresses delivering some of the most layered, nuanced and emotionally resonant performances of the decade.

Across languages and genres, these women brought to life characters that were vulnerable, fierce, complex and deeply human. From intimate dramas to ambitious narratives, here are the finest female performances of 2025.

YAMI GAUTAM - *Haq*

Yami Gautam delivers one of her most compelling performances to date in *Haq*, embodying a woman fighting for dignity, justice and self-worth. With restraint and quiet intensity, she navigates emotional conflict and inner strength, making her character's journey both gripping and deeply relatable.



RUKMINI VASANTH - *Kantara Chapter 1*

Rukmini Vasanth brings grace, intensity and a magnetic stillness to *Kantara Chapter 1*. Her performance adds depth to the film's mystical world, enriching the narrative with emotional clarity and cultural sensitivity.

KAJOL - *Maa*

In *Maa*, Kajol gives a powerhouse performance rooted in fierce maternal instinct and emotional rawness. She seamlessly oscillates between vulnerability and unshakable strength, grounding the story in a way only a seasoned actor of her calibre can.



PATRALEKHA - *Phule*

Patralekhaa shines in one of the most compelling portrayals of the year, bringing dignity, emotional weight and quiet power to Savitribai Phule. Her performance is both tender and resolute, capturing the revolutionary educator's spirit with remarkable authenticity.

SHEFALI SHAH - *Delhi Crime*

Shefali Shah once again proves why she is among India's finest performers with her commanding turn in *Delhi Crime*. Balancing steely resolve with emotional vulnerability, she brings immense gravitas to her role, anchoring the narrative with realism, restraint and quiet authority.



In a year where women led some of the most compelling stories on screen, these actresses stood out for their brilliance and emotional truth. Their performances not only shaped 2025's cinematic landscape but also reaffirmed the power of strong female narratives in Indian cinema.

Briefs

DHARAMSALA

Morkel happy with bowlers performance



India bowling coach **Morne Morkel** said he is happy with the way his wards bounced back in the low-scoring win over South Africa in the third T20 International here after being hammered in the previous game. After conceding 213 runs, including 22 extras, in the lost second game, Indian bowlers fought back to dismiss South Africa for 117 runs in the third T20I here on Sunday to help the side to a seven-wicket triumph and a 2-1 lead in the series. "I am just happy how the boys bounced back," Morkel said in a video posted by 'bccitv'. Jasprit Bumrah missed Sunday's game as he rushed home for personal reasons, leading to the inclusion of Harshit Rana. Arshdeep and Rana snared two wickets apiece in tight spells during a clinical performance.

COLOMBO

Dammika Ranatunga arrested



Former Sri Lankan Test cricketer and elder brother of World Cup-winning captain Arjuna Ranatunga, **Dammika** was arrested by the country's anti-graft commission and later released on bail on Monday. The Commission to Investigate Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC) said Dammika was arrested for wrong tendering procedure in the purchase of crude oil by state entity Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) in 2017 when he was its chairman. CIABOC said Dammika's undue influence had caused a loss of 800 million Sri Lankan rupees to CPC. CIABOC told the Colombo Magistrate Court that Arjuna had been named as the second accused in the case.

ADELAIDE

Eng recalls Tongue for 3rd Ashes Test



England recalled **Josh Tongue** in place of Gus Atkinson for the third Ashes test in Adelaide but there was no place for specialist spinner Shoaib Bashir despite the match being

IPL AUCTION | Venkatesh Iyer, Liam Livingstone also in focus as Knight Riders, Super Kings ready to loosen purse strings

Green set for record pay

ABU DHABI

Cameron Green could well be the biggest beneficiary of IPL's skewed demand-supply market dynamic surrounding seam-bowling all-rounders during the mini-auction here on Tuesday with Kolkata Knight Riders and Chennai Super Kings seemingly ready to break the bank for the Australian.

The 10 teams need to fill up 77 slots with a cumulative purse of ₹237.55 crore and among them, Mumbai Indians (₹2.75 crore) will hardly have any role to play save picking a few uncapped players at their base price.

Green, along with out-of-favour India all-rounder Venkatesh Iyer and English dasher Liam Livingstone, is likely to enjoy a handsome payday.

Kolkata Knight Riders, with a purse of 64.30 crore and an eye on rebuilding the outfit with 13 slots to fill, can only be challenged by Chennai Super Kings, who enter the mini-auction with a purse of ₹43.40 crore.

The mini-auction is always more intriguing than the mega auction as franchises come with specific choices and are always ready to go the distance to procure the services of players with distinct skill-sets.

Pace bowling all-rounders always come at a premium and therefore, the troika of Green, Venkatesh Iyer and West Indies' Jason Holder, all coming at the highest base price of ₹2 crore (USD 220,000), are set to headline the bidding war.

If one looks at their IPL

stats, Green, especially, has middling numbers -- 704 runs and 16 wickets in the 29 matches -- but the mini-auction is more demand-driven activity and an Australian all-format regular is certain to get traction.

When it comes to Venkatesh, everyone save KKR CEO Venky Mysore, believed that an auction bid of ₹23.75 crore was way too high and the player had his worst season trying to justify the price. Having also released Andre Russell, who is the team's new "Power Coach", KKR are in need of at least two good top order batters and one all-rounder.

The third of three pace-bowling all-rounders, Holder, is equally adept at using the long handle and bowl those heavy balls.

Green will get only ₹18 Cr

There is buzz that Green might surpass countryman Mitchell Starc (₹24.75 crore) to become the overseas player with the highest price tag at an IPL auction but there would still remain a catch. Even if Green's bid goes northwards of ₹25 crore, his salary for the season would still be ₹18 crore (USD 1.9 million). The bid amount and players' salary would be mutually exclusive with the former being deducted from team's annual player purse. The reason being foreign player's maximum fee at a mini auction will be the lower value between the highest retention slab and the highest price (₹27 crore).

Livingstone, De Kock could be in high demand

England swashbuckler Liam Livingstone, who can also bowl handy spin is another player, who can hit the million dollar mark (₹9 crore) along with Quinton de Kock, who has time and again shown that he is a match-winner with the bat aside from being safe as a house behind the stumps.

Uncapped Indians Prashant Veer, and Mukul Choudhary will attract bidders while Prithvi Shaw and Sarfaraz Khan would also hope to find takers.



27cr

The highest price at the previous mega IPL auction for Indian wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant in 2025.

18cr

Maximum salary that Green can earn

File photo of all-rounder Cameroon Green BCCI/IPL

I will be back: Messi after winding up tour

Jay Shah presents Lionel first ticket of T20 World Cup 2026 in New Delhi



ICC Chairman Jay Shah (2nd R) felicitates Lionel Messi (C) ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026.

The Lionel Messi G.O.A.T. India Tour that began in shambolic fashion ended in a blaze of glory as the football icon promised to return after giving his fans a lifetime of memories in just 30 minutes here on Monday.

For a change, it was football that took centre stage at the Arun Jaitley Cricket Stadium as devotional fans joyously gathered to catch a glimpse of a man that does things on the field that are often beyond human comprehension.

The Messi mania reached a fever pitch when he took the mike to address the large gathering that also included Delhi's Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, ICC chairman Jay Shah and former India football captain Bhaichung Bhutua among others.

"Well, I just want to thank everyone for the love and affection during these days in India. In fact, it was a truly beautiful experience for us to be able to share it," Messi told the crowd.

Speaking in Spanish, a language not spoken by most in the city but still created a sense of yearning among the

fans, "Messi added, "And although it was short and intense, it was wonderful to receive all this love that I knew existed, but receiving it directly was amazing. It was a crazy experience, everything they did for us these days.

"So, we carry all this love with us, and we will definitely return, hopefully one day to play a match or on another occasion, but we will definitely return to visit India. Thank you very much."

In the end, the much-publicised and anticipated event had the ending it wanted,

after a chaotic beginning in Kolkata on the tour's first stop on Saturday.

The thousands of heads totting the stands at Kotla, as well as the few Indian celebrities and dignitaries inside the ground, basked in the euphoria of hosting one of the world's most recognisable and bankable athletes at an extravagant event.

They were perhaps swept away by the otherworldly talent, the humility, and the impact that this man has had on the game over the last two decades.

Shah felicitates Messi

In a rare crossover moment for global sport, ICC Chairman Jay Shah met football icon Lionel Messi during his ongoing India Tour in New Delhi on Monday, marking a symbolic meeting of two of the world's most followed sporting cultures.

Shah felicitated Messi with the Team India jersey, a signed bat, and presented him the first official ticket to the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, an edition to be jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

The first ticket to the much-anticipated 10th edition of the tournament going to a global icon like Messi, testifies a vision rooted in Shah's leadership to enhance cricket's global reach. "The gesture also underscores cricket's growing confidence in engaging beyond traditional boundaries," a release from the organisers said.

The moment drew a thunderous response from the crowd, with chants for both Messi and Jay Shah echoing across the venue. The reception reflected not just Messi's universal appeal, but also the stature India and its cricket leadership now command on the global sporting stage.

Vijay Hazare

Compulsory for all India players to play 2 games: BCCI

NEW DELHI

The BCCI has made it mandatory for all current national team players to turn up in at least two one-day matches of the upcoming Vijay Hazare Trophy starting December 24.

It is understood that with a gap of three weeks between the last T20I against South Africa in Ahmedabad (December 19) and the first ODI against New Zealand (January 11, 2026), the Board

wants all its senior players to play domestic cricket.

The diktat has been communicated to the players by the Ajit Agarkar-led national selection committee.

This is in line with the recommendations of a review that was undertaken after the Test debacle in Australia earlier this year. The review had sought greater emphasis on domestic cricket across formats.

While veterans Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma have already intimated their avail-

ability for the tournament, other senior stars like Shubman Gill, Jasprit Bumrah, KL Rahul, Hardik Pandya and Suryakumar Yadav have also been asked to play at least two games for their respective teams.

Save Shreyas Iyer, who will take a lot more time to get fit, others are expected to represent their state teams.

"There are six rounds of Vijay Hazare Trophy scheduled between December 24 and start of the New Zealand ODIs. It is up to the players

and their state associations to decide which two rounds they would like to play.

"But after the second T20I in Mullanpur, the players have been categorically told that playing Hazare isn't optional," a senior BCCI official told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Exceptions would be made only if a player is declared unfit by the Centre of Excellence, but officials believe there is enough time to recuperate after the South Africa series.

‘Everyone should have faith in Shubman’

He will win games at World T20: Abhishek Sharma

DHARAMSALA

Having played alongside Shubman Gill since the age of 12, Abhishek Sharma knows that it is just a matter of time before his currently off-colour best buddy starts winning T20I matches for India, including games in the upcoming T20 World Cup next year.

Gill's selection in the Indian T20I playing eleven has been questioned after a settled Sanju Samson was benched. The vice-captain in the format has managed only 291 runs in 15 innings at a strike-rate of 137.3.

He struck only four sixes in those games and on Sunday against South Africa in the third T20I here, Gill scored a painstaking run-a-ball 28, which didn't matter much since Abhishek (35 off 18 balls) had given the team a rousing start in a chase of a paltry get of 118.

"I'll tell you one thing straight away, that trust me, these two guys are going to win matches in World Cup (in February-March) and in this series as well," Abhishek replied when asked about Gill and skipper Suryakumar Yadav's poor run of form in the ongoing five-match series which India leads 2-1 right now.

When it came to Gill, his closest friend of more than a decade, Abhishek was predictably protective.

"Because I've been playing with them since so long, especially with Shubman, so I



India's Shubman Gill being bowled by South Africa's Marco Jansen during the third T20I at HPCA Stadium in Dharamshala on Sunday. PTI

Axar ruled out of last two T20Is against Proteas

New Delhi: Team India allrounder, Axar Patel has been ruled out of the remaining two T20Is against South Africa due to illness.

However, he is with the team in Lucknow where he will be further medically assessed, BCCI said in a release on Monday. Shahbaz Ahmed has been named his replacement for the last 2 T20Is.

India's updated squad for last two T20Is: Suryakumar Yadav (C), Shubman Gill (VC), Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Jitesh Sharma (WK), Sanju Samson (WK), Jasprit Bumrah, Varun Chakravarthy, Arshdeep Singh, Kuldeep Yadav, Harshit Rana, Washington Sundar, Shahbaz Ahmed.

know which match he can win, which conditions, irrespective of the team, whoever it is," he said.

"So I have a lot of faith in him from the beginning, and I hope everyone will see him

very soon and everyone will have faith in him," added the world's No.1 T20 batter.

Abhishek said in cold December evenings, the pacers get movement both in the air and off the surface.

GCL: Hosts Mumba Masters make it 2 wins on the trot

Ganges Grandmasters stun Pipers for maiden win

MUMBAI

With two wins from their first two matches, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave-led upGrad Mumba Masters went top of the Global Chess League (GCL), a joint initiative of Tech Mahindra and FIDE, on Monday.

The Masters defeated Fyers American Gambits 9-7, before Ganges Grandmasters mounted a stunning comeback to beat Alpine SG Pipers 13-7 with Black for their first win of Season 3.

Matchday 2 action kicked off at the Royal Opera House in Mumbai, where "hosts" upGrad Mumba Masters edged past Fyers American Gambits in a tightly contested tie, with resilience across the boards proving decisive. Under early pressure, Masters steadied themselves as Wesley So held Vladislav Artemiev to a draw, followed by Koneru Humpy mounting a strong comeback to also split the point, keeping the scores level at 2-2.

The momentum swung sharply when Shakhriyar



Viswanthan Anand in action against Fabiano Caruana in the Global Chess League in Mumbai on Monday.

Mamedyarov outplayed Richard Rapport on board three, patiently building a dominant position to give Masters a 5-2 lead in a crucial spell. The tie turned decisively when Bardiya Daneshvar stunned reigning World Rapid Champion Volodar Murzin, sealing the win for Masters.

Though Teodora Injac drew with Harika Dronavalli and Hikaru Nakamura struck back with a composed Black win over Maxime Vachier-Lagrave using the Petrov Defence, the damage was done as Mumba closed out a

9-7 victory. Mamedyarov was named Player of the Match, saying, "It was an amazing game, with sacrifices. A very good win for the team, and I hope to continue playing like this. Winning even one match feels great, so to win two in a row makes it very special."

Later, Alpine SG Pipers and Ganges Grandmasters entered the tie searching for a first win, with the marquee icon clash between Fabiano Caruana and Viswanathan Anand setting the tone. Caruana delivered under pressure to secure a vital win and put the Pipers 3-0 up.



Virat Kohli (R) and Rohit Sharma in a file pic. PTI