

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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

## Ladakh admin counters Wangchuk wife

**New Delhi:** Refuting allegations made by activist Sonam Wangchuk's wife against his detention under National Security Act, the Ladakh administration told Supreme Court that due process of law was followed, including informing him about grounds of arrest, and he was also allowed to meet his relatives in jail. It also informed the court that he was not being kept in solitary detention as alleged, and was medically fit. In an affidavit filed in SC, Leh district magistrate Romil Singh Donk said Wangchuk was getting legal assistance and advice in jail in preparing his representation before the advisory board against his detention. "At the outset, the answering respondent denies the baseless allegations made in the petition which suggest that Sonam has been detained illegally."

## US calls India key ally in 'China vs world'

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

# What happens to federal structure: SC

Court asked ED whether its probe into the money laundering aspect

## Structure

□ "What happens to the federal structure Law & order are a state subject

**New Delhi:** Supreme Court asked ED whether its probe into the money laundering aspect of alleged massive corruption in liquor sale by Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (Tasmac) amounted to interference in the state's affairs and federal structure of governance, leading the agency to assert that under the anti-money laundering law it is obligated to investigate cases anywhere once an FIR is



registered. "What happens to the federal structure Law & order are a state subject. Would ED investigations into FIRs lodged by state police not amount to encroaching upon police probe Can ED go and investigate any crime relating to corruption in any state for inquiring into the money laundering aspect," asked a bench of CJI B R Gavai & Justice K Vinod Chandran. A last-ditch effort by a few residents of View Apartments to extend the timeline to vacate the towers failed before Delhi High Court on 1Yas it said, "We will not put our seal at your risk." A bench of Chief

## No one can take any risk: SC

"The apex court said how can we take any responsibility on us if an untoward incident happens. No one can take any risk, given the fact the buildings are dilapidated," he submitted. The high court, however, reminded Jain that the residents were "in this state" because of his client. "Let's not forget that. People buy these flats with their hard-earned money."

Justice DK Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedella pointed out that even the Supreme Court had highlighted that the buildings were in a dilapidated state. "In view of the

## CM Yogi's Diwali gift: Rs 1022 crore bonus for 14.82 lakh UP govt employees



Lucknow

Ahead of Diwali, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has announced a major festive gift for Uttar Pradesh government employees, approving bonuses for the financial year 2024-25. The decision, symbolizing the state government's appreciation for the dedication and hard work of its workforce, will benefit 14.82 lakh employees, with the state exchequer bearing an expenditure of Rs 1022 crore. As per the

Finance Department's order issued under the Chief Minister's direction, a productivity-linked bonus has been sanctioned for eligible employees. The bonus will be calculated on a maximum monthly emoluments limit of Rs 7000 and equivalent to 30 days' emoluments, amounting to Rs 6908 per employee. The Chief Minister said the bonus would bring happiness to employees' families and inject new energy into governance and administration.

## Chhattisgarh CM: Law must strike fear among criminals

**RAIPUR:** Chhattisgarh CM Vishnu Deo Sai called for uncompromising action against cybercrime, narcotics, and violent offences while reviewing the state's law and order at the Collectors-SPs' conference in Nava Raipur, reports Rashmi Drolia. "Law must evoke fear among criminals and confidence

among citizens," Sai said Monday, urging harmony between civil and police administrations to deliver results on the ground. The meeting focused on four key areas - cyber fraud, drug trafficking, crimes against women, and road safety - which Sai called "critical to the people's trust in govern-

nance". He also stressed rehabilitation for surrendered Maoists, saying they must receive vocational training and employment "to rebuild their lives with dignity". Calling narcotics "the root of all crimes", the Chhattisgarh CM ordered a statewide crackdown under the NCORD framework.

## Karur stampede case has political undertone, says SC

## Probe

□ Supreme Court Monday decided to hand over the probe into the tragedy



**NEW DELHI:** Noting that the Karur stampede in Tamil Nadu shook "national conscience" and the case has "political undertone", Supreme Court Monday decided to hand over the probe into the tragedy to CBI & also appointed a three-member panel headed by its former judge Ajay Rastogi to supervise the investigation. Questioning the fairness of the investigation, a bench of Justices J K Maheshwari and N V Anjaria noted that top state police officials had

made a statement that their subordinates were not at fault and said, "Prima facie, this fact in itself creates a doubt in the minds of the public about the independence and impartiality of the investigation." The families of those who died and got injured are in the doldrums and what they want is a free and fair probe, with the political tussle over the stampede being of little solace to them. SC: Karur case has shaken nat'l conscience, deserves fair probeThe

incident of Karur stampede has definitely left an imprint in the minds of the citizens throughout the country, wherein 41 persons died in a stampede and more than 100 were injured; it has wide ramifications in respect of the life of the citizens and in this context enforcing the fundamental rights of the families who lost their kith and kin is of utmost importance. Therefore, looking to the political undertone of the case and the fact that without having regard to the gravity incident, the comments which have been made before the media by the top officers of the police department create doubt in the minds of the citizenry on impartiality and fair investigation.

## INDIA bloc won't join JPC on bills to sack jailed mantris

**NEW DELHI:** The Congress is learnt to have conveyed to the government that the INDIA bloc will not be a part of the JPC set up to scrutinise the bills on automatic dismissal of jailed chief ministers and ministers, putting to an end questions over the issue. Sources said a senior Congress neta and MP



had spoken to a key minister about the opposition's stance. The parliamentary panel is set to be a much-watched platform given that the three bills on the issue, moved by home minister Amit Shah in the monsoon session of

## Intent

□ Sources said the government had conveyed last week its intent to go ahead

Parliament, had triggered bedlam in the Lok Sabha, with the opposition bloc opposing them

vehemently. The government has not been able to constitute the JPC despite the passage of nearly two months since the Lok Sabha's decision to send the three bills to the parliamentary panel. Sources said the government had conveyed last week its intent to go ahead with the JPC, holding that if the opposition parties.

## Supreme Court warns IITs, IIMs: Join suicide survey or face adverse order

## Extended

□ Senior advocate Aparna Bhat, who is assisting the court as amicus curiae



**NEW DELHI:** Around 98 students have taken their lives in premier educational institutes since 2018, of which 39 were from IITs, 25 from NITs, 25 from central universities, four from IIMs, but educational

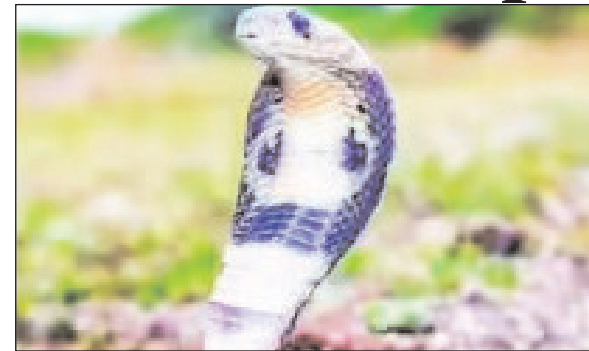
institutions do not seem serious about the problem as 57,000 educational institutes including most of the IITs, IIMs, AIIMs and NITs are not cooperating and participating in the survey being conducted by an apex court-appointed panel to deal with the problem of suicides on campuses. Senior advocate Aparna Bhat, who is assisting the court as amicus curiae, told a bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan that the list of non-cooperating.

## Woman from Manipur found dead in Munirka, partner critical

**NEW DELHI:** A woman from Manipur was found dead, and her alleged live-in partner was critically injured in South Delhi's Munirka on Sunday in what police suspect to be a case of murder followed by an attempted suicide. The deceased was identified as Thempi Khongsai, a beautician by profession. Her partner, Thangjam Viney Meitei, is undergoing treatment at AIIMS.

**Thiruvananthapuram :** Kerala, second only to West Bengal in venomous snake diversity nationwide, has declared snakebite envenomation a disease of public health importance, requiring mandatory hospital reporting of cases, strengthening anti-venom supply chains and standardising treatment protocols. Kerala HC directed the state govt recently to make snakebite a notifi-

## Kerala makes venomous snakebites health priority



able disease within two months in accordance with a circular issued by Union health ministry in Nov 2024. The Sept 26

order came on two petitions filed in 2019 after a Class 5 student suffered a fatal snakebite at a govt school in

Wayanad that year. Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are two other states that have declared snakebite envenomation a notifiable condition. In Kerala, its inclusion in the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme under Section 28(3) of the Kerala Public Health Act, 2023, makes it a structured health priority. The state records over 3,000 critical snakebite

## India likely to scrap French Scorpene project, may go for German-origin subs

**NEW DELHI:** India may scrap the proposed project to build another three French-origin Scorpene submarines at Mazagon Docks (MDL), while it goes full steam ahead with the plan to construct six



new German-origin diesel-electric stealth submarines at the same facility for over Rs 70,000 crore. The plan for the three additional Scorpene submarines, which would have cost around Rs 36,000 crore,

"is not being pursued now" though the "final decision to scrap it has not yet been taken in black and white", top government sources told. While cost negotiations for the three Scorpene.

## ISI-backed smugglers up game, drones can now detect tracking & scoot back

**CHANDIGARH:** In past few weeks, security agencies manning anti-drone systems along Punjab border began noticing a strange trend - drones

from Pakistan would be detected and tracked, but would whirr back behind the fence before they could be brought down. ISI-backed smugglers

in Pakistan routinely try to send arms, including AK-47s and grenades, and drugs, slung under drones, across the 532km-long border with Punjab.



## Children captivated the audience with their outstanding performances at the annual sports day



**Prayagraj.** Children's School, Allapur, organized its annual sports competition and cultural program at KP Ground, Prayagraj, where the children enthralled the audience with their exceptional performances. Red House emerged as the trophy winner. This event was organized to promote the physical development, discipline, team spirit, and healthy competition among the students.

The annual sports day offers physical and mental

benefits, enhancing students' fitness and providing a break from regular studies, thus reducing stress. Team events teach cooperation and coordination, while individual sports instill a spirit of competition. The event included various sports such as running races, long jump, high jump, relay races, football, volleyball, chess, carrom, and musical chairs for the younger children. Teachers, staff, and students participated in the event. Such events help develop

discipline, confidence, and leadership qualities in students. On this occasion, Director Nandini Verma, Principal Pratibha Srivastava, and teachers Pratibha Tripathi, Mudita Srivastava, Mahima, Ragini, and Binu Srivastava, along with students Aarav Singh, Aditya Pandey, Udbhav, Adarsh ??Tiwari, Shreyansh, Sanskar Tiwari, and many others, participated in the sports and cultural programs. Ayushman Pandey secured first place in the running race.

## Former MLA Vijay Mishra's son granted bail by High Court in case of threatening rape victim

**Prayagraj:** The Allahabad High Court has granted conditional bail to Vishnu Mishra, son of former Samajwadi Party strongman MLA Vijay Mishra from Bhadohi, who is currently lodged in Agra jail. The order was passed by a single-judge bench of Justice Rajbir Singh. A woman had filed a case at the Jaipur police station in Varanasi on September 13, 2021, alleging threats and attempted murder, among other charges. The woman named former MLA Vijay Mishra, his son Vishnu Mishra, grandson Vikas Mishra, daughters Reema Pandey and Seema Pandey, and 12 others in the complaint. The woman also accused MLA Vijay Mishra and others of gang rape. She alleged that his son and others came to her house and threatened her to change her statement. She was pressured to compromise in the case. Vishnu Mishra, who was in jail in this case, filed his third bail



application in the Allahabad High Court in April 2025. His first bail application was rejected on October 30, 2023, and the second on March 3, 2025. In the third bail application, the petitioner's lawyer argued that the petitioner is innocent and has been falsely implicated. The FIR was registered almost nine months after the alleged incident, for which there is no satisfactory explanation. The petitioner has been in jail since July 24, 2022. If granted bail, he will not misuse it. Victim's lawyer expresses apprehension of tampering with evidence. The lawyer for

the complainant woman argued that the applicant Vishnu, along with MLA Vijay Mishra, also had an FIR registered against him in 2020 at the Gopiganj police station in Bhadohi on charges of gang rape. The complainant in that case has also been threatened. The accused might tamper with evidence after being released from jail.

After hearing both sides, the court observed that the complainant has already been examined before the trial court. Therefore, this is a case for granting bail. The court granted the conditional bail application.

## Civil Lines Roadways Bus Station Completely Closed, Varanasi Buses Now Operating from Jhansi, Passengers Face Hardship

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**Prayagraj.** Bus services from Civil Lines bus station to Varanasi, Gorakhpur, and other cities in Purvanchal have been completely suspended. This had been announced several days ago. When the buses were



completely stopped on Sunday, the difficulties for passengers increased. From early morning, a large number of passengers arrived at the Civil Lines bus station to catch a bus, but not a single bus was to be seen. They were informed that buses to Varanasi and Gorakhpur are now operating from Jhansi. As a result, a crowd of people gathered to go to Jhansi. Taking advantage of the situation, e-rickshaw drivers started charging exorbitant fares. Sensing the opportunity, a gang of bikers also became active. These bikers are charging Rs. 200 to 300 per passenger to take people to the Jhansi bus stand. People are forced to pay the inflated prices to reach Jhansi.

This same biker gang was also active during the Mahakumbh and took full advantage of the helplessness of the devotees. Seizing the opportunity, this gang became active again on Sunday. The administration closed the roadways bus station at Civil Lines, but has not made any arrangements for passengers to easily reach the temporary bus station in Jhansi. This is causing immense hardship for the people. The regional manager of the roadways department says that people were informed several days ago that the bus station would be closed from Sunday.

## Let the investigation continue; the truth will emerge: CM Yogi Adityanath

Lucknow

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on launched a strong attack on Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav. Speaking to the media ahead of the commencement of the winter session of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly, the Chief Minister said, "It is widely known that almost every mafia operating in the state has had links with the Samajwadi Party." He stated that preliminary investigations have revealed that some of the accused arrested during operations conducted by the STF and the Uttar Pradesh Police were connected to the SP. He added that the Samajwadi Party, already known for its controversial functioning, will see its role further exposed as the investigation progresses. CM Yogi said, "While a final conclusion can only be drawn after the complete report is received, the statements being made by the SP chief mirror the sentiment captured in the line: 'I kept repeating the same mistake, the



dust was on my face, yet I kept cleaning the mirror." He remarked that the emergence of photographs linking Akhilesh Yadav with mafia elements would inevitably bring to light involvement in activities. "Let the investigation continue, the truth will come out," the Chief Minister asserted. Addressing the codeine case, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath explained that codeine phosphate is a regulated drug covered under the NDPS Act and is used in the manufacture of cough syrups meant for treating severe cough. Its quota and distribution are strictly controlled by the Central

Narcotics Bureau and permitted only for authorised pharmaceutical manufacturers. He said, "Complaints were received about the misuse of codeine-based cough syrup as a narcotic, following which the Uttar Pradesh government initiated action." Under the leadership of the UP Police and the Food Safety and Drug Administration (FSDA), proceedings were initiated under the NDPS Act. The Chief Minister said, "The joint operation involving the FSDA, UP Police and STF has so far exposed large-scale illegal trafficking and resulted in extensive arrests. A state-level SIT,

comprising officers from the UP Police and FSDA, is monitoring the case and all critical aspects, including the financial trail of illegal trafficking will be thoroughly investigated. CM Yogi Adityanath announced that the winter session of the Uttar Pradesh Legislature has begun today and will continue until December 24. He welcomed all the members participating in the session and stated that it would focus on public issues, the advancement of development-related legislative work and discussions on supplementary demands from various departments. He informed that a special discussion would be held to mark the 150th anniversary of the national song 'Vande Mataram' and homage would be paid to its composer, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. Noting that Uttar Pradesh foundation day coincides with the date on which 'Vande Mataram' was recognised under the Constitution, he said the discussion would hold special significance. The Chief Minister also said,

**Prayagraj.** On December 21, 2025, in view of the cold wave and extreme cold, Seelam Sai Teja, Municipal Commissioner, Prayagraj Municipal Corporation, instructed all zonal officers to inspect bonfires and night shelters to provide relief from the cold to the homeless and those spending the night on sidewalks and roads. Bonfires were arranged at major intersections, labor hubs, railway stations,



bus stands, and night shelters in all zones. Special attention was also given to maintaining cleanliness in the night shelters, ensuring the availability of pil-

lows, sheets, mattresses, quilts/blankets, and clean drinking water. In addition, the concerned officers were instructed to conduct continuous inspections.

## DM-SP Chair District Udyog Bandhu Meeting in Auraiya

Auraiya

District Magistrate Dr. Indramani Tripathi and Superintendent of Police Abhishek Bharti chaired a meeting of the District Udyog Bandhu at the Vikas Bhawan auditorium on Friday. During the meeting, the problems faced by entrepreneurs and traders were discussed in detail and concerned officials were directed to ensure that eligible beneficiaries receive the benefits of various government welfare and incentive schemes. The District Magistrate instructed officers to take prompt cognizance of issues affecting trade and business and ensure their permanent resolution with the objective of preventing any disruption to commercial activities in the district. During the meeting, complaints were raised regarding non-compliance with the prescribed weekly market closure day by several establishments. Taking a serious view of the matter, the District Magistrate directed the Labour Enforcement Officer to strictly ensure compliance



with the closure day norms. He clarified that permissions granted to keep establishments open on the closure day would be considered valid only after thorough review, otherwise, action would be taken as per rules. The District Magistrate also reviewed the progress of the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme, under which 'Ghee' has been identified as Auraiya product. He directed officials to convene a meeting with all commission agents and ghee producers to accelerate progress under the scheme.

He further instructed that beneficiaries who have received toolkits under ODOP be assessed to verify whether they are effectively promoting and enhancing ghee production. Addressing the meeting, the Superintendent of

Police urged traders and industrial representatives to consider installing CCTV cameras at their shops and residences from a security perspective. He stated that CCTV footage can play a crucial role in providing protected evidence and assisting in the swift detection of incidents. The meeting was attended by Project Director DRDA Manish Kumar Maurya, Deputy Commissioner District Industries Centre Durgesh Kumar, Lead District Manager Rajeev Singh, Executive Engineer PWD Amar Singh, Executive Engineer Electricity Auraiya, District Bank Coordinator, Udyami Mitra Devesh Kumar, Assistant Commissioner Industries Omkar, office-bearers of trade associations, entrepreneurs and other concerned officials.

## Conspiracy to Frame Innocents in False Case Exposed in Auraiya

Auraiya

Auraiya Police have exposed a well-planned conspiracy aimed at falsely implicating innocent villagers in a criminal case. Two accused have been arrested for staging a fake attack on themselves to put pressure on the opposing party. According to the police, the accused deliberately shot their own associate and then named innocent people as attackers in order to force a compromise in an old criminal case. The incident came to light following a detailed and scientific investigation by the police. The case dates back to 17 December 2025 when information was received about Shivam alias Manu Chauhan being shot near village Vaisoli under Achhalda police station limits. Shivam had initially told the police that Aman, Vikas, Harshit and Saurabh all residents of the village, had shot him with the intention to kill. Acting promptly, the police registered a case and began the investigation. However, during the preliminary inquiry, inconsistencies in Shivam statement and the circumstances at the crime scene raised serious doubts. Continued investigation and technical evi-



dence gradually revealed that the entire incident was fabricated. During police interrogation, the main accused Naunihal alias Neetu confessed that their associate Monu Chauhan was already lodged in jail in connection with an earlier firing incident. As the opposing party was unwilling to settle that case, Monu allegedly devised the plan from jail. The idea was to shoot themselves, falsely accuse the opponents and thereby create pressure for a compromise. As per the conspiracy, on 17 December, Naunihal shot Shivam in his left hand using an illegal firearm and subsequently got a false FIR registered against four innocent villagers. Under the directions of the Additional Director General of Police, Kanpur Zone and the Superintendent of Police Auraiya, a joint team com-

prising Achhalda Police, SOG and the Surveillance Unit acted on a tip-off and arrested Naunihal and Shivam on near a railway underpass. Following the revelation, the police amended the charges, adding sections related to false information and criminal conspiracy. The accused are now being booked under BNS Sections 217, 229, 231, 109(1), 61(2) and Sections 3/25/27 of the Arms Act. Both arrested accused are reported to have a prior criminal history. The police administration credited the successful exposure of the conspiracy to the effective efforts of Achhalda Station House Officer Pankaj Mishra, Surveillance In-charge Samit Chaudhary, SWAT Team In-charge Prashant Singh and their respective teams.

## Woman and Brother-in-Law Sentenced to Life Imprisonment for Lover's Murder in Auraiya

Auraiya

In a major verdict in a long-pending murder case, a local court in Auraiya has sentenced a woman and her brother-in-law to life imprisonment for the brutal murder of her lover. The judgment was delivered by Additional Sessions Judge-I, Parul Jain, in connection with a case registered at Phaphund police station. The court found Reena, wife of Deepu and her brother-in-law Kaushal, son of Ramesh Chandra, guilty of murdering Ram Narayan by slitting his throat with a knife. Along with life imprisonment, the court imposed a fine of ₹25,000 on Reena and ₹26,000 on Kaushal. According to the prosecution, the case dates back to 22 March 2013, when Anil Kumar, a resident of Sarai Bihari Das village, lodged a report stating that his father Ram Narayan had gone missing during the night. Later, information was received that a body was lying in an open field on the eastern side of Dibiyapur Road. The deceased was identified as Ram Narayan, whose throat was found partially slit, with injury marks on his stomach and back. An FIR was initially registered against unknown persons. During the investigation, the police revealed that Ram Narayan was involved in a romantic relationship with Reena, a resident of Sarai Bihari Das. When her in-laws came to know about the affair, Reena, along with her brothers-in-law Kaushal and Manoj Kumar, allegedly hatched a conspiracy to eliminate him. As per the investigation, Ram Narayan was lured to the field through a mobile phone call and, unaware of the plot, went there. The accused then allegedly attacked him with a knife and murdered him on the spot. Based on evidence, including call detail records, the police filed a chargesheet against all three accused. During the trial, Manoj Kumar was declared a juvenile and his case was transferred to the Juvenile Justice Board. The trial against Reena and Kaushal continued in the sessions court. Assistant District Government Counsel Chandrabhooshan Tiwari, who represented the prosecution, strongly argued for strict punishment, highlighting the betrayal involved in luring the victim to the field and killing him in a pre-planned manner. The court, after hearing both sides and examining the evidence, held both accused guilty of murder and awarded them life imprisonment. According to defence counsel Mahavir Sharma, the court also ordered that half of the fine amount be paid to the complainant as compensation. Following the verdict, both convicts were sent to Etawah District Jail, to serve their sentence.



# Divisional Commissioner Inspects Various Works Underway in Magh Mela Area

In the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner instructed the Mela Officer to deploy additional manpower to complete all the remaining works within the stipulated time



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**Prayagraj:** Divisional Commissioner Soumya Agarwal inspected various works being carried out in the Magh Mela area in view of Magh Mela 2026, in the pres-

ence of Mela Officer Rishi Raj and other concerned departmental officers. She first visited Sector Four, from Kali Pul towards Jhansi, and inspected the leveling work, electrical work, and related

works being carried out by the Water Corporation and PWD on both sides of Kalimarg, Ramanujacharya Marg, Akshayavat Marg, and Sangam Lower Marg. She also inspected the



areas where leveling work was being done on marshy land, and the sites identified for the construction of toilets. After the inspection, all the officers went to the Sector 6 office and held a meeting with all the

concerned departmental officers, taking sector-wise updates on the work being done by them. In the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner instructed the Mela Officer to deploy additional man-

power to complete all the remaining works within the stipulated time. She also instructed the vendors to coordinate with the organizations in all the sectors and install the toilets as soon as possible.

## Assistant Registrar S.B. Singh's Uncle Passes Away

**Utraon.** Vijay Pratap Singh, a resident of Dhannikapura village in Saidabad development block, passed away unexpectedly on Sunday. He was the eldest of three brothers. His younger brother is a retired officer from the Uttar Pradesh Police Intelligence branch. The deceased Vijay Pratap Singh's nephew, S.B. Singh, is currently working as an Assistant Registrar at Kota Open University, Rajasthan. Upon receiving the news of his uncle's death, he left for Prayagraj immediately. This tragic event has plunged the entire family into grief. People from the area and well-wishers have expressed their deepest condolences and prayed for the peace of the departed soul.



## Youth Arrested with Illegal Weapon, Sent to Jail

**Ghazipur.** Under the ongoing campaign against crime and criminals in the district, the Mohammadabad Kotwali police station has achieved a major success. During a checking operation, the police team arrested a youth with an illegal country-made pistol and live ammunition. Acting on the instructions of the Superintendent of Police and under the supervision of the Additional Superintendent of Police (Rural) and Circle Officer Sudhakar Pandey, the police were conducting night patrols and checking suspicious persons. In this sequence, at approximately 12:30 AM on the night of December 21, 2025, a suspicious person was stopped and searched near Mahadeva Gate, Mohammadabad. During the search, the accused was identified as Alauddin Ahmed alias Sonu, son of Ali Hussain Ahmed, resident of Kotiya Ward Number 3, Mohammadabad town and police station, age approximately 32 years. An illegal country-made pistol and one live cartridge (.315 bore) were recovered from his possession.



## Tears Flow on the Death Anniversary of Senior Advocate Chaturbhuj Narayan Sinha; His Ideals Live on in Memories

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**Ghazipur.** On the death anniversary of senior advocate late Chaturbhuj Narayan Sinha, who dedicated his life to the path of justice, truth, and service, a deeply moving tribute ceremony was held at his residence in the Mohammadabad municipal area of the district. This occasion was not merely for remembrance, but also to pay homage to a personality who brought dignity to the legal profes-



sion through his conduct and work. The tribute ceremony was presided over by Govind Sinha. During the program, the advocates present offered floral tributes to the portrait of the late Sinha. The atmosphere was deeply

emotional, with respect, gratitude, and the shadow of memories clearly visible on every face. In their addresses, the speakers said that Chaturbhuj Narayan Sinha was not only a successful advocate but also a guide

imbued with human values, who not only imparted legal knowledge to many young advocates but also showed them the way to live life. His simple nature, unwavering commitment to justice, and dedication to truth remain a source of inspiration for the legal community even today. During the ceremony, the advocates shared their personal experiences, stating that the guidance of the late Sinha had been like a beacon in their professional and personal lives. He always remained

steadfast on the path of justice and inspired others to follow the same path. At the end of the program, all the advocates present observed a two-minute silence to pray for the peace of the departed soul and resolved to incorporate his ideals into their lives. The atmosphere during the tribute ceremony was completely filled with reverence, respect, and emotion, as if the late Chaturbhuj Narayan Sinha was still present among everyone through his thoughts.

## Shri Narayan Ashram Girls' Intermediate College Celebrates its 47th Foundation Day

**Prayagraj.** The 47th Foundation Day of Shri Narayan Ashram Girls' Intermediate College, located in Shivkuti, was celebrated with great enthusiasm on Sunday. Saints from the ashram performed the puja (religious ceremony). The program was inaugurated by the chief guest, Mayor of Prayagraj, Umesh Chandra Ganesh Kesarwani, and the special guest, Mrs. Prabha Agarwal, Secretary of the ashram, by lighting the lamp. The students captivated everyone with their performances, including Saraswati Vandana (prayer to Goddess Saraswati), welcome songs, humorous skits, dances, dramatic presentations, religious and devotional performances. The Manas Prasang (episode from Ramcharitmanas), English play, and Mahishasuramardini dance were particularly moving. On this occa-



sion, the winning students of the competitions held throughout the year were also awarded. The contribution of all the teachers in making the program a success was commendable. The chief guest encouraged the children and said that the annual day

provides an opportunity for children to develop their talents. Neeraj Sant Ji, Ajit Rai Ji, Dr. Manoj Mishra, Manager Bhagwan Pandey, and several other dignitaries were present on this occasion. Finally, Principal Vibha Mishra thanked all the guests.

## Block employee's house gutted in fire

**Prayagraj.** The house of Arvind Kumar, a block employee working in Karchhana block, is located just two yards from the Karchhana police station. On Sunday, Arvind Kumar had gone to Naini with his wife to see a doctor. A 10-year-old boy was alone at home when a fire suddenly broke out under suspicious circumstances around 1 PM. Neighbors called the fire brigade, but they did not arrive. The Karchhana



police reached the spot and showed promptness, joining in the efforts to extinguish the fire. With the help of the police and the neighbors, the fire was finally

brought under control after much effort. The victim, Arvind Kumar, says that household goods worth lakhs of rupees were completely destroyed in the fire.

## Son Kills Father in Dispute Over Feeding Cattle; FIR Registered

**Prayagraj:** A father died in the hospital after being injured in an assault by his son in Sidhikhat village of Bara police station area. A dispute arose between the father and son on Saturday night over feeding the cattle. The son attacked his father on the head with a stick. Family members admitted him to SRN Hospital for treatment, where he died on Sunday. The police have taken the body into custody. Based on a complaint from the family, a case has been registered.

## Jewelry and cash stolen from a house by unknown thieves

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Tharwai.** In Mohammadpur village, under the Tharwai police station area of the Ganganagar zone, unknown thieves struck last night. They stole cash and gold and silver jewelry and fled the scene. Police are investigating the matter. The incident occurred last night in Mohammadpur village, under Tharwai, at the house of the victim, Dina Nath, son of Yamuna Prasad Shukla. Unknown thieves climbed onto the roof of the house, entered inside, and ransacked three rooms. The victim, Dina Nath, said that when he opened the door to go upstairs in the morning, it was locked. He became suspicious and investigated, finding the doors of the three rooms upstairs open and all the belongings scattered. The cupboard was also found open. He immediately informed Dial 112 and the local Tharwai police station. Upon receiving the information, Inspector Santosh Kumar Pandey of Tharwai, along with his team, reached the crime scene and began the investigation. Shortly afterward, ACP Tharwai Arun Parashar also arrived at the scene, took cognizance



of the matter, and questioned everyone. He also thoroughly inspected the room where the theft took place. The forensic team present at the scene also investigated from every angle. The victim, Dina Nath, filed a written complaint at the Tharwai police station. Police teams are continuously investigating the matter. ACP Arun Parashar said that the theft by unknown thieves has been taken into cognizance, and police teams have been formed to investigate. He added that the culprits will soon be apprehended. The thieves stole cash and valuables worth lakhs of

rupees from the victim's house. The police are investigating the matter from every angle. The family was distraught and weeping uncontrollably after the incident. ACP Tharwai Arun Parashar reached the crime scene. In a theft case that occurred in Mohammadpur village under Tharwai police station, unknown thieves broke into three rooms of a house last night and stole valuables. ACP Arun Parashar said that the matter has been taken into cognizance and the culprits will be apprehended soon, for which police teams are working.

## 43 Parking Lots Created for Magh Mela

**Prayagraj:** A total of 43 parking lots have been created for devotees arriving from various routes for the Magh Mela 2026. To identify these parking lots, symbols of various animals are being marked at all locations. The symbols for some of the major parking lots on each route are as follows. Details of the symbols for all other parking lots are in the attached PDF. For devotees coming from the Jaunpur route, 4 parking lots have been created, which will be marked with a kangaroo at Poorva Surdas, a lion at Chini Mill, a barasingha (swamp deer) at Old GT Kachhar, and a cheetah at Saraswati Parking. On the Rewa route, 5 parking lots have been created, which will be marked with a crow at Gajia village, an eagle at Navprayagam 01, and an ostrich at Navprayagam 02. For devotees coming from the Varanasi route, 6 parking lots have been created, which will be marked with a camel at Triveni Puram East, a horse at Triveni Puram West, and a sheep at Chhatnag. Similarly, on the Mirzapur route, 3 parking lots have been created, which will be marked with a rooster at DPS Kachhar, a duck at Devarakh Upahar, and a pigeon at Omax Parking. On the Kanpur route, 18 parking lots have been created, of which the George Town Association parking will be marked with a heron, CMP with a squirrel, and KP College parking with a rhinoceros. On the Lucknow route, 7 parking lots have been created, which will be marked with a bat at Colonelganj Inter College, a penguin at Chhota Bhagara, and a snail at Bakshi Bandh.

## Rapido Bikes to be Available for Devotees at Magh Mela

**Prayagraj:** To further facilitate the transportation experience for devotees attending the Magh Mela 2026, the administration is providing Rapido bike services. For this purpose, the administration has signed an MoU with the Rapido company and provided them with 28 pickup and drop-off locations, a list of which is given below. The Rapido company is organizing a sourcing camp at Allahabad University on December 23, 2025, Tuesday, to provide employment opportunities to students studying in the district. This camp will offer Allahabad University students the opportunity to earn part-time income by driving Rapido bikes. Interested students can reg-

ister with the Rapido company to avail this employment opportunity. The university administration has granted permission for the camp to be held there at 11:00 AM. In the same vein, another camp is being organized at the RTO Licensing Office, Naini, at 12:00 PM on the same day. Divisional Commissioner Mrs. Soumya Agarwal will be the chief guest. All interested young people (boys and girls) from the district can apply for employment with the Rapido company through this camp. Everyone must bring their driving license, Aadhaar card, and other relevant documents. Parking List: Railway Station Platform No. 6 side, No. 10

side Platform No. 1 side, near KP Inter College Complex Petrol Pump, Nehru Park, Kamala Guest House Prepaid Taxi Booth at the Airport, Rambagh Railway Station, Prayag Station, Subedar Ganj Station, Chhivaki Station, Naini Station, Jhusi Station, Phaphamau Station, Balsan Chauraha, Bela Kachhar Bus Stop, Sahso, near Sugar Mill, Jhusi Bus Stop Leprosy Chauraha, New Prayagam, Parking No. 17 Old GT, TP Line Parking, Soham Ashram, Lotus Hospital, Fort Chauraha Old Yamuna Bridge, IERT, Bhardwaj Marg Nag Vasuki Bajrangdas Parking Sector 2A Parking Drop-off - Selfie Point Airl.



## Editorial

### Why Iran, Israel avoided crossing red lines

The Israeli reaction took place within the week. On April 19, they struck a military airbase near the city of Isfahan, and Iranian officials also claimed to have shot down small drones near the northern city of Tabriz, but this was downplayed. Isfahan Province, in the centre of Iran, is home to significant Iranian military infrastructure, including a large air base, a major missile production complex, and nuclear facilities. As per reports in the Jerusalem Post, the Israelis were targeting an air defence radar site near Isfahan that's part of the protection of the Natanz nuclear facility. The choreography of missile strikes once again ensured that there were no casualties and, moreover, no targeting of Iranian nuclear facilities. Iranian media and officials described a small number of explosions, which they said resulted from air defences hitting three drones over Isfahan. They referred to the incident as an attack by "infiltrators" rather than by Israel, obviating the need for retaliation. The Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, downplaying the attack, said, "They're ... more like toys that our children play with, not drones." He also added, "As long as there is no new adventurism by Israel against our interests, we are not going to have any new reactions." With Israel remaining deadlocked in Gaza, where around 130 Israeli hostages remain but have inflicted more than 34,000 civilian casualties, including women and children, the Iranian strikes must have seemed like a welcome relief as the narrative shifted from the humanitarian crisis Israel is causing in Gaza. Further, in a timing that cannot be a mere coincidence, the US House of Representatives quickly passed an aid package of \$26.38 billion for Israel. With no hostage deal or ceasefire mechanisms apparent, the risk of miscalculation remains high. The region remains in a uniquely dangerous position, in which Prime Minister Netanyahu may feel that he has little choice but to escalate with Iran in order to maintain public support. But responses to the strike within Israel have exposed the country's political fissures. Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir described the strike on Iran as "feeble" or "lame". In response, Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid called for him to be sacked and said his remarks had ridiculed and embarrassed Israel.

#### Things were going Iran's way

Since the 1979 revolution, Iran has taken an anti-Israeli posture and, as part of its deterrence strategy, has cultivated and financed support for the 'axis of resistance' network in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Palestine, surrounding Israel's borders.

The Hamas attack on October 7 suited Iran's agenda. Israel had suffered an unprecedented and humiliating setback; its much-lauded intelligence and defences had failed. Its subsequent actions in Gaza had received widespread condemnation and aligned the Middle Eastern countries against Israel. Israel's war was steadily harming its image, simultaneously exposing the hypocrisy of its Western backers. Israel was getting increasingly isolated internationally due to its disastrous war in Gaza.

The Palestinian cause in the region and around the world had been resurrected. Sympathy for Palestinian, particularly in the West, was more volatile. Iran did not need to intervene; its proxies acted on its behalf. Hezbollah had been routinely shelling Northern Israel, and the Houthis in Yemen have launched numerous unsuccessful missile and drone strikes against Israel, disrupting global shipping. However, Israel's attack against the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in Damascus forced Iranian officials to make a more difficult choice. Iran had two choices, it could refrain from overt retaliation and continue to benefit from the present situation.

The spotlight would remain on the atrocities in Gaza.



## Maryam Kartarpur Sahib overture points at new Pak thinking

The election results also showed that Imran, despite all that the army and the People's Democratic Movement government had thrown at him, retained a substantial measure of support in Punjab. At the same time the Pakistan Peoples Party did well in Sindh. Very difficult PML(N)-PPP negotiations, clearly overseen by the army, from behind the scenes, followed. The arrangement that emerged saw Shehbaz Sharif as prime minister forming the government with outside PPP support, Asif Zardari becoming president of Pakistan, and Maryam becoming the first woman CM of the Punjab. In this the person who has temporarily lost out is Hamza Sharif

but the final word has not been said on how the reconciliation of political interests between Maryam and Humza will eventually occur.

Now, to return to Maryam's visit to Kartarpur Sahib, she made an impressive speech to the sangat. She struck the right notes. She spoke in chaste Punjabi and projected herself as the daughter of Punjab who was the first woman to become CM in either Pakistani or Indian Punjab. She stressed her family's background in the village of Jati Umra in the Amritsar district from where her grandfather had migrated to Pakistan in 1947. Three other points that she made deserve special mention. One, that Pakistan was a

place where the minorities had the freedom to practice their faith and only recently the country had marked Eid, Easter, Holi and now she had come to be with the Sikh pilgrims at Baisakhi. Maryam's reference to this aspect is part of Pakistan's current endeavour to project itself as a moderate and liberal Muslim country. This is, of course, at variance with the prevalence and growth of extremist Islamist forces which want the country's governance to be strictly in accordance with the Sharia. The second point — and one of great significance — was Maryam's mention of the commonalities between Muslims and Sikhs. She took care to use the formulation

"you" and "us"; thus, carefully avoiding mentioning either Islam or Sikhism or Muslims and Sikhs. Obviously, she did not want to ruffle the feathers of the Pakistani ulema. She said that both "you" and "us" believe in one power which is the supreme power of the universe. She added that both "you" and "us" believe in honest living and earning through righteous means and giving to charity. Finally, Maryam referred to her father Nawaz Sharif's conviction that neighbours should open their hearts to each other and live in peace and also cooperate and trade with each other. It is true that Nawaz has always wanted to trade with India.

# Analysing Raisi's Islamabad visit and its impact on India



amid talks covering religious, cultural, investment, and diplomatic spheres. Iran reportedly launched missile strikes on two strongholds of the anti-Iranian rebel organisation Jaish al-Adl (Army of Justice) on January 16 in the province of Baluchistan, Pakistan. A major actor in the ongoing tensions between Iran and Pakistan is Jaish al-Adl, which was founded in 2012 by Abdul Rahim Mollazehi as a breakaway faction of Jundullah. As an "unprovoked violation" of its airspace, Pakistan denounced the bombing. The assault posed a threat to Pakistan's formidable army chief, Gen Asim Munir, whose reputation for toughness and resolve has been a point of contention in his relations with other nations as well as at home. This made political analysts wonder if Iran respected Pakistan's sovereignty. Retaliating quickly, Pakistan launched a surprise

attack two days later using fighter jets and missiles directed at the purported hideouts of anti-Pakistan ethno-nationalist insurgents in the Sistan-Baluchistan region who were allegedly operating from Iranian soil. In light of worries about regional security, these incidents do highlight the complex and unstable dynamics that define Iran and Pakistan's relationship, especially as root causes of terrorism, smuggling, and border infiltration are not addressed. Pakistan serves as Iran's primary regional ally against adversaries such as Saudi Arabia and other Western powers. Iran's keen interest in joining China's economic corridor initiative aligns with Pakistan's close ties to Beijing. Notably, over 70 per cent of the electricity in Pakistan's Gwadar port city is sourced from Iran. The proposed gas pipelines, including the "peace pipeline" intended to

supply Iranian gas to India via Pakistan, have faced setbacks, notably India's withdrawal in 2009 due to US sanctions on Iran. However, Iran and Pakistan remain committed, signing a separate gas supply agreement. Notably, in June of that year, both nations entered into a multibillion-dollar agreement to develop a gas pipeline. However, while Tehran successfully completed construction of a 900-kilometre pipeline on its side by 2011, Islamabad still grapples with the task of installing 80 kilometres of pipeline on its territory. This discrepancy has sparked tensions, with Tehran issuing warnings of potential legal action and threats of an \$18 billion fine due to missed deadlines.

Despite Islamabad's recent pledge to finalise the project by September of this year, doubts linger over its feasibility. The primary obstacle remains Pakistan's apprehension of invoking U.S. sanctions, a concern that has consistently hindered progress, echoing previous justifications for delays. Conversely, assuming a hostile stance towards Iran upsets the delicate equilibrium of Pakistan's already complicated neighbourly ties. Tensions with India continue despite a current cease-fire along the border. The Taliban's support for the TTP's anti-Pakistan insurgency has caused relations between the two parties to

deteriorate dramatically on Pakistan's western border. The recent deportation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan has further caused tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan. During Raisi's visit, the Pentagon warned of sanctions for those engaging in business with Iran. Three Chinese firms aiding Pakistan's missile programme were recently sanctioned for WMD proliferation. Iran immediately shot back, stating that Israeli aggression on Iranian soil will result in a drastic shift in the balance of power. Raisi warned Israel on Tuesday: "Things will be different if the Zionist regime commits an error once again. If Tel Aviv attacks Iran once more, 'Israel will be completely different' and 'there will be nothing left of the Zionist regime.' According to Iranian Ambassador to India, Iraj Elahi, Tehran is optimistic that India will start purchasing crude from them again, as it did prior to May 2019, when the purchases stopped due to US sanctions against the West Asian nation. In order to advance the Chabahar Port project and strengthen bilateral relations, President Ebrahim Raisi might visit India later this year. Bypassing Pakistan completely, India will have access to Afghanistan through the Chabahar port, a symbol of strategic and economic cooperation between Iran and India.

## Defence spending shoots up as conflicts rise globally

Total global military expenditure reached an all-time high of \$2443 billion in 2023, an increase of 6.8 per cent in real terms from 2022. This was the steepest year-on-year increase since 2009. The 10 largest spenders in 2023 were led by the United States, China, and Russia, all of whom increased their military spending. It was the ninth consecutive year of a rise in military spending. Also, it was the first time since 2009 that military expenditure went up in all five of the geographical regions. Particularly large increases were seen in Europe, Asia, Oceania, and West Asia. Clearly, there is a deterioration in peace and security. As the states prioritise military expenditure and strength, there is a risk of a spiral effect in the

neighbourhood. Russia's military spending increased by 24 per cent to an estimated \$109 billion in 2023, marking a 57 per cent rise since 2014, the year that Russia annexed Crimea. The Russian 2023 military expenditure was 16 per cent of total government spending and 5.9 per cent of GDP. Russia's military and war-related spending is set to rise sharply in 2024 under new federal budget plans for 2024–26 signed into law by President Vladimir Putin in November 2023. The plans suggest that the Russian government is committed to pursuing the war to a successful conclusion. Some have questioned the economic assumptions, though. Russia's rising debt burden has also meant reduced allocations to some key social

spending, including housing, education, and healthcare. Ukraine was the 8th largest military spender in 2023. Yearly spending surged 51 per cent to reach \$64.8 billion. It represented 58 per cent of total government annual spending. Interestingly, this spending was 59 per cent of Russia's defence expenditure. Ukraine also received at least \$35 billion in military aid during the year, including \$25.4 billion from the USA. When combining the two, it became

91 per cent of Russian spending. The US remains NATO's major spender, but European members have increased their share. In 2023, the 31 NATO members accounted for \$1,341 billion, equal to 55 per cent of the global military expenditure.

## Ppro-India hare and hunting with anti-India hounds

India has not just become the "only bright spot" economically, as the IMF wants us to believe, but also diplomatically and geostrategically, the country has started behaving like a global power. Image: REUTERS In 2021, The New York Times posted an online advertisement for the job of a South Asia business correspondent based in New Delhi. One of the requirements sought for the position even startled the staunchest of NYT supporters. For, the American newspaper, quite categorically, sought the candidate to be critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his "muscular nationalism".

Explaining its stand, the newspaper wrote, "India's future now stands at a crossroads. Mr (Narendra) Modi is advocating a self-sufficient, muscular nationalism centred on the country's Hindu majority. That vision puts him at odds with the interfaith, multicultural goals of modern India's founders." Interestingly, the NYT has never put such preconditions for postings in Hong Kong or in mainland China. It has never asked the applicants to prove their pro-democratic credentials for a position in Hong Kong, or to publicly criticise Emperor Xi Jinping for a job in Beijing. If one thought the problem was NYT-centric, then hang on. Others in the West, too, aren't behind in targeting Prime Minister Modi and India. The Time magazine, for instance, just when Prime Minister Modi landed in Washington, DC, for his first official state visit in June 2023, questioned the very idea of India being an American ally. "India is not a US ally, and has not wanted to become one," a Time article thundered on 21 June. Interestingly, an even more scathing article appeared in the magazine a day earlier—on 20 June: "India's Worsening Democracy Makes It an Unreliable Ally." The Economist isn't behind either. It has often reproached Prime Minister Modi for stoking "divisions in the world's biggest democracy". It has singled out the Modi government

for its "flagrantly biased approach to citizenship" and delivering "collective punishment" for the people of the Kashmir Valley. It goes on to say that the "electoral nectar for the BJP" has become "political poison for India". It would, however, be wrong to assume that Western prejudice is only Modi-centric. Although it is today largely influenced and inspired by anti-Modism, prejudice is deeply entrenched against India and its rising global influence. This explains why the West has very rarely celebrated India's dance with democracy in the past seven decades. This despite the fact that India since Independence has been a case of democratic miracle—the only genuine democracy in the region between Israel and South Korea. Moreover, no other country, despite socio-political advancements and economic prosperity, comes even closer to India's democratic successes. What the country could achieve in 75 years, it took Britain and the United States centuries to reach there. Interestingly, in the given timeframe, the US found itself amid the Civil War which almost tore the country into two halves, but for Abraham Lincoln's sagacious leadership. It took the US another 50 years to make voting gender neutral and 100 years to give the Blacks the basic voting rights—something that India bestowed upon its citizens in one go in 1947 despite unprecedented poverty and astounding illiteracy. Yet, in the 1950s and '60s, the West was busy writing democratic India's obituaries: Its balkanisation was a foregone conclusion, and the only thing keeping the country together was Nehru! "What after Nehru?", was the most obvious question being asked during those times. After Nehru, during Indira Gandhi's time, the democrats of America and Britain found great comfort in Mao's company and had even dispatched an aircraft carrier, Enterprise, to bully India at the height of the Bangladesh war!



## Briefs

KANPUR  
Children  
impress  
metro  
commuters

Under Kanpur Metro's "Show Your Talent" initiative, a dance competition was organised at Bada Chauraha Metro Station where 15 child artists delivered energetic performances on film songs. Commuters appreciated the initiative aimed at promoting young talent. Anisha Pathak secured first place, followed by Satvika Gupta and Vaishnavi.

LUCKNOW  
Health checks  
at Atal fair

On the concluding day of the Atal Health Fair, ARL Healthcare conducted blood tests for 51 people and provided free medical consultation and homeopathic medicines to 178 patients. Tests included blood sugar, haemoglobin, blood group, CBC and liver function. The initiative focused on early detection and community health awareness.

BALLIA  
Farmers  
build  
irrigation  
tank

Facing prolonged irrigation disruption, farmers in Ratsar pooled funds to construct a delivery tank and main channel for a government tubewell. The earlier tank was demolished in October with assurance of replacement, but no work followed. With Rabi crops affected, farmers undertook the construction after repeated appeals went unanswered.

JAUNPUR  
Sanatan  
values  
outreach  
programme

Intellectual dialogue sessions and Bhagavad Gita distribution programmes were organised in Amari village and at a divyang girls' school in Ghanashyampur. State Minister Dharmveer Prajapati attended as chief guest and spoke on Sanatan values. Clothes and books were also distributed, with participation from several public representatives.

JHANSI  
Railway  
fitness cycle  
rally

Marking one year of the 'Sunday on Cycle' initiative under the Fit India Movement, Jhansi Railway Division organised a cycle rally from the DRM office to the RPF office. Officials, staff, students and families participated. The rally promoted daily physical activity as a social responsibility and public health priority.

LALITPUR  
Nirankari  
satsang held

A Nirankari satsang was organised at the Sant Nirankari Bhawan in Lalitpur under the guidance of spiritual preacher Gyaneshwar Ji from Dehradun. He emphasised love for humanity as true devotion and highlighted selfless service, meditation and tolerance as paths to spiritual growth. Devotees attended in large numbers.

## RELIEF | UP to offer cooperative loans at just 6% Interest

## CM Yogi unveiled major reforms at state cooperative expo 2025

LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday announced significant relief for small and marginal farmers by reducing the interest rate on loans provided through the UP Cooperative Rural Development Bank (LDB) to six percent. The announcement was made during the inauguration of the Youth Cooperative Conference and UP Cooperative Expo 2025 at Jupiter Hall, Indira Gandhi Pratishthan, organised as part of the International Year of Cooperatives 2025.

The Chief Minister said that LDB loans earlier carried an interest rate of around 11.5 percent, which placed an additional financial burden on farmers. Under the Mukhyamantri Krishak Samridhi Yojana, eligible farmers will now receive loans at six percent interest, with the remaining interest subsidy borne by the state government.



Addressing the conference, CM Yogi highlighted the role of cooperation in ensuring trust, social equity, and self-reliance. He said that the United Nations' declaration of 2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives had provided an opportunity to further strengthen the cooperative movement in the country. He noted that India accounts for nearly one-fourth of the world's cooperative societies, with over 8.44 lakh societies and more than 30 crore

State moves  
towards 'One  
District, One  
Cooperative Bank'  
framework

members.

The Chief Minister said that digitalisation and transparent governance have improved accountability in the cooperative sector. He cited the expansion of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies

(PACS), growth in membership, and increased access to financial services as key outcomes of recent reforms.

Referring to initiatives taken in Uttar Pradesh, CM Yogi said that the state launched the International Year of Cooperatives with a 'Run for Cooperation' on January 26, followed by several sector-specific programmes throughout the year. He noted that a mega PACS membership drive conducted between September and November added 24 lakh

new members and generated a share capital of ₹43 crore.

The Chief Minister said that all 50 District Cooperative Banks in the state are currently operating in profit, marking a turnaround from the period before 2017 when several banks had been declared defaulters. He added that cooperative banks have recovered ₹4,700 crore of farmers' funds and are now expanding their operations.

Highlighting infrastructure development, CM Yogi said that PACS in the state have conducted business worth ₹6,400 crore and earned profits of ₹191 crore. Warehousing capacity is being expanded through new M-PACS units, while solar rooftop panels have been installed in over 500 societies. He also announced that the state is moving towards a 'One District, One Cooperative Bank' system, with the process already initiated in Balrampur.

## Official suspended after animal near CM's Car



GORAKHPUR

A municipal supervisor in Gorakhpur was suspended on Sunday after a stray cow approached the Chief Minister's vehicle moments after he alighted to inaugurate an overbridge on Friday evening. Video footage from the event shows the cow moving towards the vehicle shortly after the CM and local MP Ravi Kishan exited the car. Security personnel immediately surrounded and diverted the animal. Gorakhpur Municipal Commissioner Gaurav Singh Sogarwal ordered an internal investigation to ascertain how the cow breached the security perimeter established for the VVIP movement. Preliminary inquiry pointed to negligence by Nagar Nigam Supervisor Arvind Kumar, who was responsible for monitoring municipal work in

Municipal Supervisor  
Suspended for Alleged  
Negligence; Internal  
Probe Launched into  
Third Security Breach  
in 17 Days

the area, leading to his suspension. The Commissioner stated that lapses concerning VVIP security would not be tolerated and that surveillance protocols would be strengthened.

This marks the third reported security concern in the past 17 days. Previous incidents include an intoxicated youth breaching the security ring to approach the stage at an event in Varanasi on December 2, and an unauthorized bus appearing ahead of a warning point on the CM's convoy route in Lucknow on December 4, which also resulted in action against police personnel.

## Degrees on sale: Gang charged ₹15,000 for BA, ₹2 lakh for PhD

LUCKNOW

Police have uncovered a major inter-state racket involved in manufacturing and selling fake educational certificates, including BA, MA, BTech and PhD degrees, at fixed prices. The operation was being run from a cyber café in the Gomti Nagar area, where forged mark sheets and degrees of multiple universities were prepared and sold to job aspirants.

Gomti Nagar police arrested three accused — Satyendra Dwivedi (32) from Ayodhya, Akhilesh Kumar (44) from Unnao, and Saurabh Sharma (35) from Lakhimpur Kheri. According to police, the gang charged around ₹15,000 for undergraduate degrees and up to ₹4 lakh for higher qualifica-

Police recover  
923 fake  
certificates,  
seals of 15  
universities,  
laptops and  
printing  
material

tions such as PhD.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Shashank Singh said the accused used high-quality paper, university-style seals and digital templates to create fake documents. Degrees and mark sheets from nearly 25 universities across Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Nagaland were being sold, mainly for private sector jobs.

Investigations revealed that the racket had been active since 2021 and had allegedly supplied fake certificates to around 1,500 people, earning an estimated ₹15 crore. Police recovered 923 forged degrees, seals of 15 universities, 65 certificate papers and six laptops from the accused. Further investigation is underway to identify beneficiaries and trace the wider network involved in the scam.

American  
Couple gets  
married by  
hindu ways

VARANASI

In a beautiful display of cultural harmony, an American couple from Los Angeles, Jason Matzner and Lauren Kozak, chose the spiritual banks of the Ganges to solemnize their marriage. On Saturday, the couple exchanged vows following traditional Hindu Sanatan rituals at Varanasi's ancient Gauri Kedareswar Temple. The ceremony, organized by the Varanasi Experience, was complete with Vedic chanting, the exchange of garlands, and the sacred Saptapadi around the holy fire. Jason, a guitar artist and devotee of Lord Ganesha, and Lauren, a marketing expert who carries.

## Weather alert sounded across Uttar Pradesh

LUCKNOW

Cold conditions in Uttar Pradesh continue to intensify as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an alert for dense fog and cold wave conditions over the next 48 hours. According to the department, 48 districts are likely to experience severe cold, with Kanpur emerging as the coldest district in the state over the past 24 hours.

For the last five days, large parts of Uttar Pradesh have remained under a thick blanket of fog, accompanied by cold winds. The persistent fog has significantly reduced visibility, with cities such as Ghaziabad, Agra, Kanpur, and Prayagraj reporting zero visibility on Saturday. In several districts,

IMD warns of  
intensified cold  
conditions over the  
next 48 hours  
across 48 districts

cold day conditions prevailed, further intensifying the chill. The prolonged fog has disrupted normal life. School closures and revised timings have been implemented in multiple districts, while train and flight services have faced significant delays. The IMD has cautioned

that both fog density and cold wave intensity may increase over the next two days.

Districts under dense fog alert include Lucknow, Kanpur Nagar, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Ayodhya, Barabanki, Rae Bareilly, Ghaziabad, Agra, Mathura, Jhansi, and several others across eastern, central, and western Uttar Pradesh.

In Lucknow, the maximum temperature was recorded at 16°C, nearly eight degrees below normal, while the minimum stood at 10°C. Kanpur recorded the lowest minimum temperature at 6.4°C.

Meteorologists have indicated that while minimum temperatures may briefly rise by 2-3°C, a further drop is expected, with cold day and dense fog conditions likely to persist.

## Food processing to boost women's livelihoods in rural UP

LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Sunday said the State Rural Livelihood Mission is playing a key role in economically empowering women by linking self-help groups (SHGs) with food processing enterprises. Addressing a state-level workshop at Vishveshwarya Auditorium in Lucknow, he said sustained efforts are being made to enhance women's income opportunities and strengthen rural livelihoods.

Maurya directed officials to promote the establishment of food processing units in rural areas so that women associated with SHGs can access stable income sources. He said women's economic participation is essential for building self-reliant villages and strengthening the rural economy.

Keshav Prasad  
Maurya distributes  
₹7.24 crore subsidy  
to food processing  
entrepreneurs

omy. During the event, subsidies worth ₹7.24 crore were distributed to entrepreneurs under the Uttar Pradesh Food Processing Industry Policy-2023. Symbolic cheques for ₹400 crore in bank credit linkage were also issued, and a portal for livelihood mission cadre honorariums was launched. Several SHG members and district resource persons were felicitated for their work.

## Interstate job fraud racket busted in Noida, aeven arrested

BAGHPAT

Uttar Pradesh Police have busted an interstate job fraud racket operating from a call centre in Noida and arrested seven accused, including two women, in connection with a scam worth crores of rupees. The action was taken by the Baghpat cyber cell following complaints registered on the Government of India's Pratiimb portal.

According to police, the accused targeted job seekers by posing as representatives of reputed companies. Victims were subjected to fake interview processes and later sent forged offer letters and agreement documents. Under the pretext of registration fees, security deposits, and processing charges, the gang extracted money from candidates across



Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Assam, and Meghalaya.

Superintendent of Police Suraj Kumar Rai said investigations led to the recovery of data containing nearly 10,000 mobile numbers, many of which were already used for fraudulent transactions. Out of these, 6,450 numbers were found directly linked to financial dealings related to the scam. Police are analysing the

data to identify the total number of victims and the exact amount siphoned off.

The arrested accused include residents of Baghpat, Muzaffarnagar, East Delhi, and Noida. During the operation, police seized 12 mobile phones, two laptops, forged SIM cards, fake appointment letters, bank passbooks, cheque books, ATM cards, and audio recordings of fake interviews.

## SIR turns into battleground in UP

LUCKNOW

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Uttar Pradesh has triggered fresh political controversy after remarks made by the Chief Minister during a BJP organisational workshop in Lucknow. Senior party leaders stressed that the SIR process would shape electoral outcomes for nearly two decades, urging legislators and cadres to prioritise voter list corrections with urgency.

According to party functionaries, BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh cautioned MPs and MLAs that failure to actively participate in SIR could cost them future elections. He described the revision as a decisive exercise, advising leaders to complete the work within the stipulated

leadership pushes  
aggressive voter list  
revision, warning  
legislators of long-  
term electoral  
consequences

timeline rather than rely on later procedural remedies.

The controversy intensified after the Chief Minister reportedly advised greater focus on booths with demographic imbalances, comments that opposition parties allege reinforce a divisive narrative.

## initiative

## AYUSH app to offer online OPD and digital consultation

LUCKNOW

Government is set to take a major digital leap in the healthcare sector with the launch of a dedicated AYUSH mobile application, aimed at making traditional systems of medicine more accessible to the public. The initiative aligns with the government's broader vision of integrating technology with healthcare delivery and expanding the reach of Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy.

The AYUSH app is being developed in collaboration with

App being developed  
with IIT Kanpur to  
integrate online OPD,  
hospital details, and  
treatment information

avoid long waiting hours at hospitals and AYUSH centres. Officials said this will be particularly beneficial for senior citizens, women, and patients from rural or remote areas.

AYUSH Principal Secretary Ranjan Kumar said the objective is to ensure that AYUSH healthcare systems are easily available to everyone. He noted

that the app will reduce crowding at medical facilities, save time for patients, and improve overall efficiency in service delivery. According to him, the digital platform will also bring greater transparency to the functioning of AYUSH institutions.

The app will provide detailed information on various AYUSH systems, including treatment options for different diseases, medicine details, doctor profiles, and locations of nearby AYUSH hospitals and dispensaries. Users will also be able to access information related to government schemes and pro-

grammes promoting traditional medicine. Designed with a focus on user convenience, the app will be secure, fast, and reliable, with strong safeguards to protect patient data. In later phases, features such as teleconsultation, online medical reports, and digital health records are planned, enabling patients to receive expert guidance from their homes.

Officials said the initiative is expected to strengthen public trust in AYUSH systems and support the government's efforts to give traditional Indian medicine wider recognition through modern digital tools.

LUCKNOW

In a shocking case of animal cruelty in Lucknow's Thakurganj area, a street dog was brutally beaten to death with bricks and sticks near Bari Kala. The senseless act has sparked widespread outrage among local residents and animal welfare activists. Following the incident, the organization "Asra - The Helping Hand" intervened, with its president, Charu Khare, filing an FIR



against nine individuals at the Thakurganj police station.

Charu Khare has warned of a protest and a direct appeal to

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath if the perpetrators are not arrested immediately. She alleged that the accused are repeat offenders whose previous lack

of accountability has emboldened such violence. Thakurganj Inspector Omveer Singh confirmed that a case has been registered under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.





Photo: Instagram, @urmilamatondkarofficial

## Has Urmila Matondkar quit acting?

**51-year-old actress returns to acting, ready to explore new roles on OTT, ending rumours about quitting the film industry**

**A**ctress Urmila Matondkar made her acting debut as a child in the 1977 film *Karm*. In 1991, she debuted in a leading role with *Narasimha* and went on to feature in notable projects such as *Rangeela*, *Judaai*, *Satya*, *Kaun*, *Bhoot*, and *Pinjar*. However, she has been absent from the screens for years, leading audiences to assume she might have quit the film industry.

Reacting to the rumours, Urmila told Hindustan Times, "When it comes to my work, I have always been selective. I can't blame anybody if they

thought that maybe I'm not doing movies or something. But that never was the case. I'm definitely at this moment all ready to get back onto the silver screen."

She also announced that she is making her debut on the OTT platform, exclaiming that "it's just about time to get back onto the sets and start rocking again."

Talking about the kind of roles she wants to explore, Urmila stated, "I am looking for roles which I have not done before, especially on OTT. Because there is just so much that is happening on OTT, which has opened a different gamut of genres, characters and emotions, which were unexplored earlier."

On the work front, the 51-year-old actress was last seen in 2022 as a judge on the dance reality show *DID Super Moms*, alongside choreographer-filmmaker Remo D'Souza and actress Bhagyashree.



Actor suffers abdominal injury while shooting *Awarapan 2*, undergoes treatment, and returns to sets early under medical supervision

## Munawar Faruqui condemns lynching in Bangladesh

**S**tand-up comedian Munawar Faruqui has strongly condemned the brutal lynching of a Hindu man in Bangladesh. On Sunday, he reacted to the disturbing videos of the incident that have been circulating on social media and said the culprits should be 'hanged'. Taking to X (formerly known as Twitter), Munawar expressed outrage and anguish over the visuals.

He also called the act inhuman and urged accountability. "Horrible footages and lynching videos from Bangladesh makes me sick and question humans," he wrote. "Protecting religion? These people are nothing but inhumane monsters and the world is watching in silence. Speak and make culprits hang," Munawar added in his post.

The incident, which has sparked global outrage, reportedly took place amid unrest following the death of activist Sharif Osman Hadi. According to media reports, the Hindu man was attacked by a mob over alleged remarks about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The violence escalated brutally, and horrifying visuals of the lynching have since gone viral. It

also triggered condemnation. Several celebrities and public figures have spoken out against the incident, condemning the violence and calling for justice.

Actors Swara Bhasker and Devoleena Bhattacharjee, along with reality TV personality Rajiv Adatia and others, also took to social media to express their shock and denounce the lynching, urging authorities to take strict action against those responsible.

Rajiv wrote, "What's happening in Bangladesh is breaking my heart. I have always stood for humanity whether in Gaza, Ukraine, or anywhere else in the world. But what I'm witnessing in Bangladesh is truly appalling: people being attacked simply for being Hindu. The world needs peace. No religion teaches us to harm or destroy others because of their faith. This must stop."



Photo: Instagram, @munawarfauqui



Photo: Instagram, @anupamkher

## Anupam Kher remembers meeting Bebo 25 years ago

**V**eteran actor Anupam Kher recently bumped into actress Kareena Kapoor Khan during a flight to Delhi. *The Marathon Man* took to his Instagram account on Sunday to share pictures from the flight and said meeting Bebo brought back old memories.

Kher shared a series of stunning pictures with Kareena along with a detailed note as he recalled the time the first time he met the actress during the shooting of her debut film *Refugee* in the year 2000.

In his long post, Kher remembered how Kareena was eager to make her mark in films and how she achieved that goal over the years.

"IN FLIGHT WITH KAREENA: First time I met #Bebo was on the sets of JP Dutta's #Refugee! Year was 2000! And It was her debut film. She was stunningly beautiful, confident yet vulnerable, restless to make it big (which she did) and amazingly real as a per-

**Veteran actor shared a series of stunning pictures with Kareena Kapoor Khan along with a detailed note**

son! Over the years I have watched her grow into a very fine and elegant actress! Yesterday, we were in the same flight! We chatted about lots of things," Kher said.

"25 years later was delightfully happy to find that she is hungry for great roles, remains a beautiful person who still is real and loves conversations. Thank you dearest #Kareena for your warmth and appreciation! Yes! I do look the same in all these years. May God keep you and your family happy and healthy! Love and prayers always. #Divya Actor @kareenakapoorkhan," he added.

## Emraan Hashmi injured on set

**A**ctor Emraan Hashmi recently suffered a serious abdominal injury while filming a high-octane action sequence for *Awarapan 2*. According to media reports, it required immediate medical attention and surgery. Despite the setback, the actor has now resumed shooting for the much-awaited film and returned to the sets much earlier than expected.

Reportedly, Emraan was rushed for treatment soon after the incident and advised rest during his recovery period. However, the actor resumed work far earlier than expected. He is currently shooting in Rajasthan, where his schedule has been modified to prioritise his health.

Reports further reveal that Emraan is performing only controlled action movements under close medical supervision, with the production team monitoring his condition on set. A photo re-

cently surfaced on social media which shows the actor with a bandage on his abdomen in what appears to be a hospital.

To support Emraan's recovery, the *Awarapan 2* team has reportedly revised the shooting plan, ensuring that filming continues smoothly without compromising the actor's health. The adjustments include shorter work hours and reduced physical strain, allowing Emraan to balance his recovery with his professional responsibilities.



Photo: Instagram

## Priyanka shares Nick's romantic gesture

Priyanka reveals Nick Jonas' romantic *Karwa Chauth* gesture, taking her above clouds to spot the moon and break fast

**G**lobal star Priyanka Chopra Jonas recently shared an anecdote about husband Nick Jonas going out of his way to make *Karwa Chauth* special for her. The actress opened up about the romantic gesture while appearing on actor-comedian Kapil Sharma's *The Great Indian Kapil Show Season 4*. During one of the segments, she joined Kapil for a candid conversation about her personal life.

During the chat, Priyanka

revealed how Nick has always made an effort to embrace Indian traditions and ensure she can observe *Karwa Chauth*, even when his work commitments make it challenging. Recalling one such memorable incident, the actress shared how they struggled to spot the moon due to bad weather while Nick was performing at a packed stadium.

"Humne itni ajeeb ajeeb jagahon pe moon ko dhundhne ki koshish ki hai. Ek baar woh stadium pe the aur show ho raha hai. Chand mile hi nahi. Clouds the aur baarish aane wali thi. 60-70 hazaar

log the show mein aur woh show kar rahe the. 10 baj gaye, 11 baj gaye, dikh hi nahi raha tha," Priyanka Chopra said, explaining how they waited for hours as clouds and rain threatened to spoil the moment.

She then went on to share what she described as Nick's most romantic gesture yet. "Ek romantic cheez bataun? Woh apne plane mein clouds ke upar leke gaye aur chaand dikhaya aur phir humne vrat toda," she added, revealing that Nick eventually arranged for them to fly above the clouds so she could see the moon and break her fast.



## Briefs

## IS man kills 2 US soldiers and civilian

Three Americans were killed on Saturday in Syria in an ambush attack by an IS group member, US Central Command (CENTCOM) said. "Two US service members and one US civilian were killed, and three service members were injured, as a result of an ambush by a lone ISIS gunman in Syria. The gunman was engaged and killed," CENTCOM, which oversees the American military in West Asia, said on X. Meanwhile, Bangladesh Army said six of its personnel in the UN peacekeeping mission in Sudan were killed and eight others wounded in a terrorist attack.

## Belarus frees Nobel laureate

Belarusian authorities have released Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski and key opposition figure Maria Kolesnikova from prison, Pavel Sapelka, human rights advocate with the Viasna rights group, confirmed to the AP. Their release comes as authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko seeks to improve relations with Washington. The US earlier on Saturday announced lifting sanctions on the country's potash sector. In exchange for sanctions relief, Lukashenko pardoned 123 prisoners.

## Ex-president jailed for graft

A Bolivian court on Friday ordered the country's former President Luis Arce to remain detained for five months while he awaits trial on corruption charges, the latest development in a case that threatens to exacerbate Bolivia's political tensions. Arce, 62, a leader from Bolivia's Movement Toward Socialism party, was elected in 2020 and left office a month ago following the election of Bolivia's first right-wing leader in nearly two decades.

## Indian envoy falls ill

Indian Ambassador Naveen Srivastava fell ill on Saturday while hiking in Nepal's Lalitpur, and was airlifted to Kathmandu for treatment, officials said.

## PEACE PLAN | Trump readies next phase; storm kills 14 people

## Int'l troops deployment in Gaza early next year

TEL AVIV

International troops could be deployed in the Gaza Strip as early as next month to form a UN-authorised stabilisation force, two US officials told Reuters, but it remains unclear how Palestinian militants Hamas will be disarmed.

The officials, requesting anonymity, said the International Stabilisation Force would not fight Hamas. They said many nations had expressed interest in contributing and Washington is currently working out the size of the ISF, composition, housing, training and rules of engagement. An American two-star general is being considered to lead the ISF but no decisions have been made.

Deployment of the force is a key part of the next phase of US President Donald Trump's Gaza peace plan. Under the first phase, a fragile ceasefire in the two-year war began on October 10 and Hamas has released hostages and Israel has freed detained Palestinians. Indonesia is prepared to deploy up to 20,000 troops to take on health and construction-related tasks in Gaza.

Husam Badran, a member of Hamas' political bureau, told Xinhua Palestinian factions in Gaza have given initial approval for a potential international force in the territory,



Palestinians struggle to live under harsh conditions as cold weather damages tents amid Israeli attacks

**The US Central Command will host a conference in Doha on Dec 16 with partner nations to plan the ISF for Gaza. Over 25 countries' representatives are expected to attend the meet, which will include sessions on the command structure and issues related to the Gaza force.**

provided its mandate is limited to "monitoring the ceasefire and maintaining a presence along the borders to separate the two sides."

## DISPLACED GAZANS FACE FLOODS

Hundreds of thousands of displaced Gazans face flooding of their tents and shelters by heavy rains, and materials for shelters and sandbags are not being allowed to enter the enclave, the UN International Organisation for Migration said. Torrential rain swept across Gaza on Thursday, flooding

tents sheltering families displaced by two years of war, and leading to the death of a baby girl due to exposure, local health officials said.

A total of 14 Palestinians are dead as a result of the storm, with multiple buildings having collapsed, Palestine's official Wafa news agency reported on Friday.

Nearly 795,000 displaced people are at heightened risk of potentially dangerous flooding in low-lying, rubble-filled areas where families are living in unsafe shelters, the IOM said.

## Witkoff, Zelenskyy Berlin meet today

**Washington:** US envoy Steve Witkoff and President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner will meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European leaders in Berlin this weekend, a US official said. Witkoff will also meet his counterparts from France, Britain and Germany on Sunday and Monday.

The Wall Street Journal was first to report the meeting. The choice to send Witkoff, who has led negotiations with Ukraine and Russia regarding a US peace proposal, highlights Washington's growing urgency to bridge remaining gaps with Kyiv over the plan's terms.

French President Emman-

uel Macron, British PM Sir Keir Starmer and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz were also expected to attend, the Journal said.

## 1MN HOUSEHOLDS SANS POWER IN UKRAINE

Over a million households were without electricity in Ukraine after a barrage of overnight Russian strikes hit energy and industrial infrastructure, officials said. Ukraine's internal affairs minister Ihor Klymenko said five regions were hit and five people were hurt, and work was under way to extinguish fires and restore supplies. At least two people were killed in a drone attack in Russia's Saratov region.

## Move in US House against India tariffs

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON

Three influential US lawmakers have introduced a resolution in Congress aimed at ending the tariffs imposed by President Trump on India, saying the "irresponsible tariff strategy" toward Delhi is a counterproductive approach that "weakens a critical partnership".

Representatives Deborah Ross of North Carolina, Marc Veasey of Texas and Raja Krishnamoorthi of Illinois introduced the resolution on Friday in the House of Representatives to terminate Trump's national emergency authorising tariffs of up to 50% on imports from India, helping to restore Congress' constitutional authority over trade.

The resolution would terminate the national emergency that Trump invoked to impose sweeping tariffs on Indian goods under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) and rescind the additional 25% "secondary" duties that took effect on August 27 on top of earlier reciprocal tariffs.

Together, these measures raised duties on many Indian-origin products to 50%, a statement issued by Ross said.

Krishnamoorthi said Trump's "irresponsible tariff strategy toward India is a counterproductive approach that weakens a critical partnership." "Instead of advancing American interests or security, these duties disrupt supply chains, harm American workers, and drive up costs

Trump leans towards Warsh or Hassett to lead Federal Reserve

US President Donald Trump indicated he is leaning towards selecting either former Fed governor Kevin Warsh or National Economic Council Director Kevin Hassett as the next Federal Reserve chair.

In an Oval Office interview with 'The Wall Street Journal' on Friday, Trump said Warsh was at the top of his list. "Yes, I think he is. I think you have Kevin and Kevin. They're both—I think the two Kevins are great," he said, adding "there are a couple of other people that are great."

While Hassett has recently emerged as the perceived front-runner following Trump's hints about making a decision, the president's latest comments suggest Warsh remains a strong contender.

Trump met with Warsh for 45 minutes on Wednesday at the White House, where he questioned whether Warsh would support interest rate cuts if appointed to lead the central bank. "He thinks you have to lower interest rates," Trump said of Warsh.

The president expressed his belief the next Fed chair should consult with him on interest rate decisions. "Typically, that's not done anymore. It used to be done routinely. It should be done," Trump said. "It doesn't mean—I don't think he should do exactly what we say. But certainly we're—I'm a smart voice and should be listened to."



To curb consumption, smuggling,

## Iran raises fuel prices 1st time since 2019 stirs

**Tehran:** Iran introduced a new pricing tier on Saturday for its nationally subsidised gasoline to rein in spiralling costs for the first time since a price hike in 2019 that sparked nationwide protests and a crackdown that reportedly killed over 300 people.

Cheap petrol has been viewed for generations as a birthright in Iran, sparking mass protests in 1964 when a price rise forced the shah to put military vehicles on the streets to replace the striking cabbies.

But Iran's theocracy faces a growing squeeze from the country's rapidly depreciating rial currency and economic sanctions imposed due to Tehran's nuclear program.

That has made the cost of having some of the world's cheapest gasoline at a few pennies per gallon that much more expensive. The government's hesitant move towards increasing prices likely signals it wants to avoid any confront-

tation with the exhausted Iranians following the 12-day war with Israel in June. "Contentment has no result," commented Saeed Mohammadi, a teacher who works as a taxi driver in spare time to make ends meet. "The government does whatever it likes. They don't ask people if they agree."

## NEW RATE IS STILL PENNIES PER GALLON

The new pricing system adopted a third pricing level to curb the country's long-running subsidy system. The revised structure allows motorists to continue receiving 60 litres (15.9 gallons)/month at the subsidised 15,000 rials/ltr, or 100 US cents, and the next 100 litres (26 gallons) will remain at 30,000 rials/litre, or 2.5 cents. Under the new scheme of 50,000 rials/ltr, 4 cents. Iran introduced fuel rationing in 2007, but that has yet to ease demand for the ultra-cheap petrol.

## Ready to deal with threats, Pak CDF Muni

ISLAMABAD

Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir on Saturday said his forces were ready to deal with the threats posed by the external and international elements.

Munir visited Gujranwala and Sialkot garrisons, where he was briefed on the formation's operational readiness and initiatives for strengthening combat preparedness, an army statement said. "Pakistan Army remains fully focused on both internal and external challenges including hostile hybrid campaigns, extremist ideology and divisive elements seeking to undermine national stability," he said.

Meanwhile, a UN expert has called on the Pakistani government to take urgent action to address reports of "inhumane and undignified detention conditions" at a former PM Imran Khan.

The UN Special Rapporteur on torture Alice Jill Edwards said prolonged or indefinite solitary confinement prohibited under international human rights law. When it extends longer than 15 days, it is a form of psychological torture.

## 'No big deal': Trump on new Epstein pics

**Washington:** US President Donald Trump played down the significance of new photographs showing him alongside convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, calling the matter "no big deal".

About the newly released images by the Oversight Committee that featured Trump, Bill Clinton and Steve Bannon, the US president said, "I haven't seen them, but I mean, everybody knew this man. He was all over Palm Beach."

Trump added, "He (Epstein) has photos with everybody. I mean, almost there are hundreds and hundreds of people that have photos with him. So that's no big deal. I know nothing about him."

## BALLROOM PROJECT: DON FACES LAWSUIT

Trump was sued on Friday by preservationists asking a federal court to halt his White House ballroom project until it goes through reviews and wins Congress approval.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a privately funded group, is asking the US District Court to block Trump's White House ballroom addition, which already has involved razing the East Wing, until it goes through comprehensive design reviews, environmental assessments, public comments and congressional debate and ratification. "No president is allowed to tear down portions of the White House without any review whatsoever," the lawsuit said.

## Security clampdown as fresh unrest grips B'desh

DHAKA

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus-led interim government on Saturday ordered a nationwide security clampdown as fresh unrest gripped Bangladesh following the shooting of a youth leader of a right-wing cultural group who was also a candidate in the February 12 general elections.

"The government is going to start the second phase of Operation Devil Hunt to help ensure public safety and combat the growing threat of illegal arms," Home Affairs adviser Lt Gen (rtd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury told a press conference.

The announcement came after three assailants shot Inquilab Mancha leader Sharif Osmann Hadi on Friday, as he

**A reward of Taka 50 L has been announced for information leading to the arrest of one of the suspects who shot Hadi, while his picture has also been released.**

initiated his election campaign at central Dhaka's Bijoynagar area—from where

he stood as an independent candidate. Doctors stated his condition to be critical.

Adviser Chowdhury announced a reward of Taka 50 lakh (US \$40,985.81) for information leading to the arrest of one of the suspects who shot Hadi, while police issued his picture, identifying him as Faisal Karim Masud.

The government first launched the Operation Devil

hunt in February this year, following protests over an attack on the private house of a former minister in the northern suburb of the capital.

The clampdown targeted alleged "henchmen" and supporters of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's now disbanded Awami League.

The Inquilab Mancha was on the forefront of a campaign to disband the Awami League.

## Pak univs launch Sanskrit courses

LAHORE

First time after partition, two universities of Pakistan's Punjab have launched short courses in Sanskrit citing shared

heritage and plan to teach Gita and Mahabharat in future.

The University of Punjab Lahore (public) and The Lahore University of Management Sciences (private) have launched a 3-month course in this

classical language.

The instructors are banking on an archival collection of Sanskrit manuscripts in the Punjab University for research. While the preparations began for the short duration

courses last year, 2025 saw admissions to the first course.

"The LUMS was the first to start the basic levels I and II followed by PUL," Prof Dr Ashok Kumar of Hindi Dept Punjab University said. —PTI

## Lords commemorate Dadabhai Naoroji's 200th birth anniv

LONDON

The House of Lords in London played host to a special reception in honour of the 200th birth anniversary of Dadabhai Naoroji, the nationalist leader who became the first Indian to win a popular election to the British Parliament during the colonial era.

Known as the "grand old man of India", Naoroji was born in September 1825 to a Parsi family in Mumbai and first travelled to England in 1855 before becoming an influential figure.

Lord Karan Bilimoria, a fellow Parsi parliamentarian, hosted Friday's reception in honour of the life and legacy

of the polymath who straddled multiple roles of Zoroastrian priest, businessman, academic and politician.

"In many ways, I have followed in the footsteps of Dadabhai Naoroji, who came initially for business to the UK," said Bilimoria, founder of Cola Beer. "He was also an academic as a professor at Elphinstone College and, of course, he was a politician — the first Indian, first ethnic minority ever to be elected to the Parliament," he noted.

Bilimoria revealed the bicentenary commemoration was initially planned for September, to coincide with the month of Dadabhai Naoroji's birth 200 years ago but had to be postponed due to strike action. —PTI

## Charles reveals 'good news' in cancer fight

LONDON



Britain's King Charles III has shared an important "milestone" in his battle against cancer that will see his weekly treatment schedule scaled back and used the "good news" to urge people to take up screenings to ensure early diagnosis of the disease.

The 77-year-old monarch issued a rare health-related video message on Friday evening to coincide with a 'Stand Up To Cancer' joint campaign by the Cancer Research UK charity and Channel 4 televi-

sion. It marks nearly two years since Buckingham Palace had revealed Charles would undergo treatment for an unidentified form of cancer.

"I am able to share with you the good news that thanks to early diagnosis, effective intervention and adherence to 'doctors' orders', my own schedule of cancer treatment can be

reduced in the New Year," said Charles, the pre-recorded message.

"This milestone is both a personal blessing and a testimony to the remarkable advances that have been made in cancer care in recent years; testimony that I hope may give encouragement to the 50% of us who will be diagnosed with the illness at some point in our lives," he said. He promoted a new national "Screening Checker" online tool, which allows Britons to check if they are eligible for breast, bowel or cervical cancer screening through the National Health Service.

"Throughout my own cancer journey, I have been profoundly moved by what I can only call the 'community of care' that surrounds every cancer patient—the specialists, the nurses, researchers and volunteers who work tirelessly to save and improve lives," said Charles. "But I have also learned something that troubles me deeply - at least 9 million people in our country are not up to date with the cancer screenings available to them. That is at least 9 million opportunities for early diagnosis being missed. Early diagnosis quite simply saves lives."



## Briefs

BARCELONA

## Mbappe equals 'idol' Ronaldo's Real record



Kylian Mbappe scored his 59th goal for Real Madrid in 2025 on Saturday to equal the club record for the most in a year held by Cristiano Ronaldo. The milestone was about to escape the France striker until he converted a penalty kick with four minutes left to complete a 2-0 win over 10-man Sevilla in Madrid's final game of the year. On his 27th birthday, Mbappe matched Ronaldo's tally from 2013. After embracing his teammates, he marked the feat with a subdued version of Ronaldo's trademark goal celebration - whereby the Portugal forward leaps up and thrusts his arms downwards upon landing - before blowing a kiss at the television cameras. The former PSG star, who joined Madrid in 2024, has scored 29 times for Madrid this season, including a league-leading 18.

PUDUCHERRY

## Mandaviya leads Fit India celebrations



Sports Minister **Mansukh Mandaviya** on Sunday led the first anniversary celebrations of the 'Fit India Sundays on Cycle' initiative with more than 1,500 participants cycling along the Rock Beach promenade here. Legendary India hockey goalkeeper P R Sreejesh and table tennis icon Sharath Kamal joined the ride, which saw participation from people across age groups and backgrounds, including school students, members of NaMo Cycling Clubs and students from Puducherry University. According to the Sports Ministry, the Fit India Sundays on Cycle initiative was conducted at over 700 districts in two lakh locations across the country.

MUMBAI

## Jio Institute, INSMA host conference



Jio Institute, in collaboration with the Indian Sport Management Association, INSMA, concluded the second edition of the Indian Sport Management Conference, ISMC 2025, on

3RD TEST | Hosts register 82-run win over England on last day

## Australia retains Ashes with two Tests to spare

ADELAIDE

Australia retained the Ashes with two matches to spare after paceman Mitchell Starc took three of the last four wickets to blunt England's defiant comeback Sunday in a tense fifth-day finish to the third cricket test.

Australia started Day 5 needing four wickets to retain the Ashes, with England resuming at 6-207 and still 228 runs away from the victory target of 435 that would have required a world record to achieve.

"Feels pretty awesome," Australia captain Pat Cummins said of the 82-run win at the Adelaide Oval. "We got it done." Cummins missed the first two tests while recovering from a back problem, with Steve Smith leading the team to two eight-wicket wins. Smith was ruled out of the third test about a half-hour before the toss because of vertigo.

"You can't really rush things here in Australia, it doesn't work that way," Cummins said of the test going the distance. "It's a good old fashioned grind a lot of the time and, yeah, I love the toil from all the guys today. "It got a little bit closer than I would have liked, but pretty happy."

## Tense Day 5

Starc took the only wicket in the morning session - Jamie Smith running out of patience and caught by Cummins for 60 - as England piled on 102 runs.

England's rally had narrowed the Ashes equation at lunch on the last day: Australia needed three wickets to clinch the old urn in Adelaide and England needed 126 runs to keep the



Australia's Jake Weatherald (C) celebrates with his teammates after taking catch to dismiss England's Jofra Archer on the final day of the Test in Adelaide on Sunday. AP

five-match series alive.

No team had scored more than West Indies' 418 (in a three-wicket win over Australia in 2003) in the fourth innings to win a test.

But England skipper Ben Stokes later said he felt like his team were "on for another heist" in the morning session and was confident of achieving a record total.

With England's lower-order doggedly mounting pressure and Australia's attack missing veteran spinner Nathan Lyon, who limped off the field with an injured hamstring, the leading bowler in the series delivered for the hosts.

Starc, who was voted player of the match in Australia's eight-wicket wins in Perth and Brisbane, took the wickets of Will Jacks (47) - spectacularly caught by Marnus Labuschagne, who dived from slip in front of the

wicketkeeper - and Jofra Archer (3).

That left Scott Boland to finish it off. He dismissed Josh Tongue (1) and left Brydon Carse stranded on 39 as England was all out for 352.

## Player of the match

Australian wicketkeeper Alex Carey was voted player of the match after posting a home ground hundred in the first innings, a half-century in the second innings in a 162-run stand with Travis Head, who top-scored with 170, and completing seven dismissals for the test.

England captain Ben Stokes said he was happier with the resilience shown by his team this week, despite ultimately surrendering the series in 11 days.

"This is going to hurt quite a bit," Stokes said. "Obviously that dream that we came here

with is now over, which is obviously incredibly disappointing.

"But look, we've got two more (tests) to go on and that's where the focus needs to switch to now."

## Injured Lyon

A day after swinging the momentum back in Australia's favor with a three-wicket burst, veteran spinner Lyon hurt his right hamstring diving to cut off a boundary in the outfield and was ruled out of the remainder of the match. He got up and clutched the back of his right leg before walking off with a trainer when England was 249-6.

## Long, long drought

Domestic media noted Sunday that it had been 5,462 days since England last won a test match in Australia - dating back to January 2011.

## India overpowered by Minhas' big ton

Later pacers shine as Pakistan clinch U19 Asia Cup

DUBAI

India faltered against the big-hitting Sameer Minhas and the extra zip of pacers, suffering a massive 191-run defeat against Pakistan in a one-sided 50-over Under-19 Asia Cup final, here Sunday.

Pakistan lifted their second U19 Asia Cup, and as it is the norm now, there was no formal greetings between the players of two teams.

Once Pakistan posted a mammoth 347 for eight, riding on Minhas' 172 (113b, 17x4, 9x6) they needed a lion-hearted chase to clinch a ninth title in the tournament.

But the tall Pakistan pace troika -- Ali Reza (4/42), Mohammad Sayyam (2/38) and Abdul Subhan (2/29) -- hurried their top-order with consistent hard-lengths as India folded for 156 in 26.2 overs.

India skipper Ayush Mhatre said his team played well throughout the tournament but wayward bowling cost them dear on the crucial day.

"We were clear to bowl first, there were some inconsistencies in the line of the bowling. It was a simple plan to play the 50 overs. The boys really played well and tournament was good for us and some players stood up," he said.

Pakistan skipper Farhan Yousaf said he "was not disappointed with the final score." "We're very happy with the collective performance. We had lost the first match against India, but our management had a good talk with us and we could provide the win in the final," Yousaf said.

Minhas was adjudged the Player-of-the-Match and also Player-of-the-Series.



Pakistan U-19 opener Sameer Minhas made 172 runs. X

## Scoreboard

**Pakistan Under-19s:** H Zahoor c Mhatre b Henil 18, S Minhas c Chouhan b Deepesh 172, U Khan c Singh b Khilan 35, A Hussain c Mhatre b Khilan 56, F Yousaf b Deepesh 19, H Ahsan c Malhotra b Chouhan 0, M Shayan c Kundu b Henil 7, A Subhan c Henil b Deepesh 2, N Shafiq (not out) 12, M Sayyam (not out) 13 **Extras:** (LB-1, W-12) **13 Total:** 347-8 (50 overs) **FoW:** 1-31, 2-123, 3-260, 4-302, 5-307, 6-319, 7-319, 8-327 **Bowling:** Kishan Singh 5-0-50-0, Henil Patel 10-0-62-2, Deepesh Devendran 10-0-83-3, Kanishk Chouhan 10-0-72-1, Khilan Patel 10-0-44-2, Ayush Mhatre 5-0-35-0.

**India Under-19s:** V Suryavanshi c H Zahoor b Ali Raza 26, A Mhatre c F Yousaf b Ali Raza 2, A George c M Shayan b M Sayyam 16, V Malhotra b A Subhan 7, V Trivedi c N Shafiq b M Sayyam 9, A Kundu c N Shafiq b A Subhan 13, K Chouhan c F Yousaf b Ali Raza 9, K Patel c M Sayyam b H Ahsan 19, H Patel c U Khan b H Ahsan 6, D Devendran c A Hussain b Ali Raza 36, K Singh (not out) 3 **Extras:** (B-1, LB-2, NB-2, W-5) 10 **Total:** 156-all out (in 26.2 overs) **FoW:** 1-32, 2-49, 3-49, 4-59, 5-68, 6-82, 7-94, 8-115, 9-120 **Bowling:** Ali Raza 6.2-0-42-4, Mohammad Sayyam 5-1-38-2, Abdul Subhan 8-1-29-2, Nigab Shafiq 5-1-32-0, Huzaifa Ahsan 2-0-12-5.

"It was a good innings, I had in mind to score a big score, I want to play my natural game, we wanted to bat first looking at the track. It is very memorable for me," he said.

India's chase began on an explosive note despite losing Ayush Mhatre early. Vaibhav Suryavanshi hammered Raza

for two sixes and a four to take 21 runs in the first over.

Aaron George too began brightly, caressing Sayyam for three fours in a row in the fourth over as India raced off the block at 10 runs an over.

But George and Suryavanshi fell inside two overs to change the game.

## Jemimah stars in India's eight wickets win over Sri Lanka

Harmanpreet-led side lead 5-match T20I series by 1-0

VISAKHAPATNAM

Jemimah Rodrigues struck an unbeaten 69 to help India beat Sri Lanka by eight wickets in the first of the five-match T20 International series here on Sunday.

Rodrigues was in fine form as she hit 10 fours from the 44 deliveries she faced, while opener Smriti Mandhana and captain Harmanpreet Kaur chipped in with 25 and 15 not out, as India chased down the target of 122 with 32 balls to spare. India reached 122 for 2 in 14.4 overs.

India were playing their first match since winning the ODI World Cup in November.

Earlier, India restricted Sri Lanka to a modest 121 for six after the visiting batters struggled to put away the loose balls in the first Women's T20I in which dew has already had a say here on Sunday.

Opener Vishmi Gunaratne top-scored for the visitors with a 43-ball 39, while Hasini Perera and Harshitha Samarawickrama chipped in with 20 and 21 respectively.



India's Kranti Gaud (L), Vaishnavi Sharma (C) and Shree Charani during the first Women's T20I against Sri Lanka in Visakhapatnam on Sunday. PTI

Sri Lanka skipper Chamari Athapaththu got into the act straightaway, clipping an innocuous Kranti Gaud delivery off her pads for a four. Player of the Series in India's triumphant campaign in the recent ODI World Cup, Deepti Sharma (1/20 in 4 overs) dived to keep what looked like a certain boundary to just one run in the next over, before Athapaththu got two fours in three balls off Gaud.

The left-handed Athapaththu's aggressive approach forced Gaud to go around the wicket and the young seamer struck with a change in angle, the ball going through the gap between bat and pad to disturb the Sri Lankan captain's stumps and give India their first breakthrough.

Bowling a lot slower than her other left-arm spin colleague Shree Charani (1/30, 20-year-old debutant Vaishnavi Sharma (0/16 in 4 overs) began her journey in international cricket with a tidy spell.

History isn't the only thing the Gunners are fighting. Manchester City is the closest challenger, just two points behind in second, and continued its strong recent form by sweeping aside West Ham 3-0.

**Haaland past Ronaldo** Haaland scored in each half to move to 19 goals in 17 matches in this campaign - in doing so passing Cristiano Ronaldo on the Premier League's all-time scoring list - and also set up Tijjani

Reijnders for the other goal. Haaland has 38 goals in a combined 28 games for City and Norway in what is shaping up to be the most prolific season of his career.

His two goals gave Haaland 104 in the Premier League, one more than Ronaldo - who had two spells at Manchester United - having played 122 games fewer.

## Premier League

## Arsenal beats Everton to take top spot for Christmas

LONDON

Arsenal secured top of the Premier League position on Christmas Day. A 1-0 victory at Everton, secured by Viktor Gyokeres' first-half penalty, means Arsenal - seeking a first English top-flight title since 2004 - will spend Dec. 25 in first place for the fifth time since the Premier League was formed in 1992. On none of the four occasions so far did Arsenal go on to win the title.

City manager Pep Guardiola is still not completely satisfied and revealed his locker-room message to the team. "I said to the players, Merry Christmas everyone but it will not be enough if we don't improve," Guardiola said.

Liverpool won at nine-man Tottenham 2-1 but lost record signing Alexander Isak to a left ankle injury sustained when scoring the first goal. Chelsea came from two goals down to draw at Newcastle 2-2.

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## Isak injured

Isak just can't catch a break at Liverpool. The Sweden striker has struggled in his first few months as British soccer's record signing, having joined Liverpool after training mostly alone in the offseason. He then recently had time out with a groin injury. On as a sub against Tottenham, Isak scored within 11 minutes but in the act of converting his finish his left ankle was hurt by a challenge from Tottenham's Micky van de Ven.



Liverpool's Alexander Isak reacts after sustaining an injury against Tottenham in London on Saturday. AP