

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

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

Briefs

KOLKATA

Sandeshkhali mob attacks police, 9 held

Six policemen were injured and a police vehicle vandalised in a mob attack during an attempt to arrest a TMC worker in Sandeshkhali, once again pushing the coastal block into political focus ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections. The incident occurred on Friday night when a team from Nazat police station went to Boyermari village in Sandeshkhali to arrest local TMC activist Musa Mollah in connection with alleged illegal occupation of land and water bodies for pisciculture, police said. As officers tried to pick up Mollah from his residence and place him inside the police vehicle, a group of villagers, described by police as his supporters, allegedly blocked the car, threw stones and vandalised it.

PATNA

Elderly to get doorstep healthcare

Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday announced a scheme for providing healthcare facilities for elderly at their doorsteps. Providing details, Nitish wrote on social media, "To ensure that people from every section of society in the state can live their lives with respect and ease, we have started working on this with seriousness. We have implemented the programmes under 'Saat Nischay-3' to include the state in the category of the most developed states in the country for the period from 2025 to 2030." "First and foremost, our effort is to ensure that the needy senior citizens of the state can avail essential health services at their homes at the time of need."

GUWAHATI

Bail decision pending in Zubeen case

The Kamrup (Metro) District and Sessions Court reserved its order on the bail plea of accused Amritprabha Mahanta, in the Zubeen Garg death case while postponing the framing of charges to January 17. The court had earlier been scheduled to frame charges on Saturday, but granted an extension, citing procedural considerations. The development comes amid mounting calls from legal bodies, civil society and the singer's family for a fast and transparent trial. Addressing the media after the hearing, advocate Apurba Sharma said the court has kept its decision on Mahanta's bail plea pending, while fixing January 17 as the next date for framing charges.

KILLING FIELDS | Two top commanders among the dead, cache of weapons recovered from the gunfight sites in Chhattisgarh

14 Naxals gunned down in 2 Bastar encounters

SUKMA/BIJAPUR

In the first Naxalite encounter of 2026, at least 14 Maoists, including wanted ultras Vetti Mangdu and Madvi Hunga, were killed in separate encounters in Chhattisgarh's Sukma and Bijapur districts in the Bastar region on Saturday, officials said.

While 12 Naxalites, including Mangdu and Madkam, and five women, were neutralised by the security forces during an exchange of fire in Sukma, the bodies of two Maoist cadres were found in the forests of Gaganpali village in Basgadu, Bijapur.

State Police unit, District Reserve Guard (DRG) had launched the anti-naxal operations based on inputs about the presence of Maoist cadres, a senior police official said.



IGP (Bastar Range) Sundarraj Pattilingam, front left, addresses a press conference, after security forces killed 14 Naxalites, in Chhattisgarh's Sukma and Bijapur districts, on Saturday

Hailing the security personnel, Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said that due to the precise strategy, sustained pressure, and strong ground presence of the security forces, the Maoist network has been rapidly weakening. The operation in the south-

ern region of Sukma was launched on Friday night by the DRG. An exchange of fire broke out around 8 am in the forest of the Kistaram area, said Sukma Superintendent of Police Kiran Chavan.

"The bodies of 12 cadres, including five women, and

automatic weapons were recovered from the encounter site," he said.

Two among them were identified as Vetti Mangdu, in charge of the Konta area committee of Maoists, and Madvi Hitesh alias Hunga, the secretary of the same formation, Chavan said, adding that the identity of the remaining cadres is yet to be ascertained.

A cache of weapons, including AK-47, INSAS, and self-loading rifles, has been recovered from the encounter site.

Mangdu and Hunga were involved in several Maoist incidents, including an IED blast in Konta area in June last year in which then Additional Superintendent of Police (Konta) Akash Rao Girepunge was killed, Chavan said.

BENGALURU

Ballari Superintendent of Police Pavan Nejjur, who was suspended within hours of being posted to the district after a Congress worker was killed during a clash between Congress and BJP supporters, attempted suicide by consuming sleeping pills. He survived after being rushed to the hospital and is now stated to be stable.

The incident followed violence in Ballari over the tying of Congress banners near the residence of BJP leader Gali Janardhan Reddy. During the clash, a Congress worker, Rajashekhar, was killed in crossfire. Holding Pavan Nejjur responsible for the incident, the government suspended him even before he could formally assume charge as Ballari SP. Nejjur had taken over on Thursday evening after having served in non-executive posts for the past 10

years, but had not entered the office when the suspension order was issued.

Soon after his suspension, Nejjur went to his friend Haribabu's farmhouse at Handigunte Agrahara near Baragur in Tumkur district. On Monday morning, he consumed a heavy dose of sleeping pills and fell unconscious. Haribabu noticed the empty pill bottle and immediately shifted him to a hospital in Tumkur. After treatment, his condition was said to be stable, and he was later moved to Bengaluru for further care.

Reacting to the incident, Karnataka Home Minister Dr G. Parameshwar said the officer may have become

depressed due to the unfortunate developments and reacted impulsively. He added that Nejjur was safe and there was nothing to worry about.

Meanwhile, the incident has exposed divisions within the Congress government. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is said to be upset over the episode and reportedly refused to speak to Ballari MLA NaRa Bharath Reddy. According to officials, the trouble began when Bharath Reddy's associates entered the premises of Gali Janardhan Reddy's residence. Video clips circulating showed Sathish Reddy, an associate of Bharath Reddy, and his private gunmen allegedly opening fire during the clash.

Police have confirmed that the bullet recovered from Rajashekhar's body did not belong to the police department.

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HP govt, UGC launch probe into student's ragging death

SHIMLA

The Himachal Pradesh government and the University Grants Commission (UGC) have initiated separate investigations into the suspected ragging-linked death of a 19-year-old Dalit student of Government Degree College, Dharamshala. The state government set up a four-member inquiry committee to examine all aspects of the case, with Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu promising strict action against the guilty.

Sukhu said, "Based on the video statement of the deceased woman in which she had named the professor, the

accused professor would be immediately suspended." He added, "An inquiry... would be initiated against him and strict action would be taken against all those involved."

The UGC has also constituted a five-member fact-finding committee following a student complaint registered with the UGC Anti-Ragging HelpLine. A senior UGC official said, "Student safety is paramount," and assured that "culprits will not be spared and that stringent action will follow."

The student's father alleged three seniors assaulted his daughter on September 18, 2025, while Assistant Professor Ashok Kumar indulged in obscene acts, charges he

Doc harassed in Bengaluru

Bengaluru: A woman doctor was allegedly sexually harassed by an unidentified man near her paying guest (PG) hostel at AGB Layout in Chikkaballapur in Bengaluru, police said on Saturday. According to police, the incident occurred when the doctor was returning to her PG hostel after completing duty at a private hospital.

—Agencies

denied. Following harassment, she was hospitalised and died during treatment at a Ludhiana hospital on December 26, 2025.

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Grand International Exposition of Sacred Piprahwa Relics, titled "The Light & the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One," at the Rai Pithora Cultural Complex here on Saturday.

The exhibition marks a historic moment with the reunification of the Piprahwa gem relics of Lord Buddha, repatriated after 127 years. The display also features relics, gem relics, and reliquaries unearthed during the 1898 excavation and the subsequent 1971-1975 excavations at the Piprahwa site.

PM Modi had posted pic-



tures from the exhibition and exhorted visitors to experience the exhibition.

"This Exposition brings together: The Piprahwa relics repatriated after more than a century. Authentic relics and

archaeological materials from Piprahwa that are preserved in the collections of the National Museum, New Delhi and the Indian Museum, Kolkata. This Exposition is in line with our commitment to further popularise the noble thoughts of Bhagwan Buddha. It is also an effort to further deepen the bond between our youth and our rich culture. I would also like to appreciate everyone who worked towards the repatriation of these relics," he said.

The event has drawn attention from historians, cultural enthusiasts, and Buddhist followers from across the country and abroad, showcasing India's efforts to preserve and celebrate its ancient heritage.

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday paid tributes to Savitribai Phule and Rani Velu Nachiyar on their birth anniversary, acknowledging their inspirational contributions to society.

Cong's MGNREGA campaign from Jan 8

NEW DELHI

and their constitutional rights". He said the Congress would "resist peacefully and firmly from every panchayat to Parliament" the replacement of the original act with VB G RAM G Act.

Through its protests, Kharde said the Congress demands that the Centre "withdraw the VB GRAM G Act; restore MGNREGA as a rights-based law; and restore the Right to Work and panchayats' authority". He said MGNREGA was not a charity but "legal guarantee" to ensure that scores of poorest people got work in their own villages.

"MGNREGA reduced hunger and distress migration, raised rural wages, and strengthened women's economic dignity" whereas "VB GRAM G is designed to dismantle this right," he added.

IIT Jodhpur files record 86 IPRs in 2025

Jaipur: The Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur (IIT Jodhpur) has seen a record 86 Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) filed during 2025, marking the highest number of IPR filings in a single year since the institute's inception in 2008.

The IPR filings in 2025 include 77 patent applications, 5 design registrations, and 4 copyrights, spanning a wide spectrum of emerging and interdisciplinary domains. This is a year-on-year growth of more than 150 percent over the previous year's IPR filings.

The officials of IIT Jodhpur said that the patent applications cover advanced engineering solutions, healthcare technologies, materials and manufacturing processes, energy systems, and digital innovations, among others.

—Manish Godha

A&N Islands to be significant revenue hub in 10 years: Shah

SRI VIJAYA PURAM

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday asserted that Andaman & Nicobar Islands will become a major contributor to the country's treasury in 10 years.

He also expressed optimism that in two years, India will advance to become the third-largest economy in the world from the current fourth.

Shah was speaking at the inauguration and foundation stone-laying of various projects worth Rs 373 crore in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which he described as a "pilgrimage site" when it comes to India's independence struggle.

Hinting at the International transhipment project, oil exploration trial and other

developmental projects in the archipelago, the Union Home Minister said this group of islands was once considered a drain on the country's treasury.

"But today, under (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi ji's vision, I am confident that after the next 10 years, this island group will be a major contributor to the country's treasury. Not the least, India has now become the fourth-

largest economy, and I am confident that in two years, it will be the third-largest economy in the world," he said.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose unfurled the national flag and liberated Andaman on December 30, 1943. Shah said, adding that in his honour, the Prime Minister has named the two islands Andaman and Nicobar as 'Shaheed' and 'Swaraj' respectively after his wish.

money special

Centre pushes states to speed up farm scheme spending

MUMBAI

Union Agriculture Minister Shrikrishna Singh Chouhan on Saturday urged states to adopt a strategic approach to budget utilisation, warning that delays in spending allocated funds result in losses for states and hamper the timely release of subsequent central instalments.

Addressing a review meeting with state agriculture ministers, Chouhan said states must ensure funds earmarked for various schemes are spent before March to avoid administrative bottlenecks that delay the effective implementation of programmes.



"If states are unable to spend their budgets on time, it only results in losses for them," the minister said, adding that budget allocations are often held up due to minor administrative and procedural issues.

The meeting was attended by agriculture ministers from Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, and Jizoram, along with Agriculture Secretary Devesh Chaturvedi, and senior ministry officials.

RKVVY) and Krishnottan (KY).

Chouhan stressed the need for prompt verification of eligible farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme, expanding coverage under the crop insurance scheme, and ensuring timely settlement of claims. He also emphasised the importance of seed and fertiliser availability, their balanced use, and strengthening central-state coordination.

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Govt proposes Aadhaar-like number to EV batteries for efficient traceability

NEW DELHI

The transport ministry has proposed assigning Aadhaar-like unique identification number to EV batteries to ensure their end-to-end traceability and efficient recycling. The proposed framework will make it mandatory for battery producer or importer to assign a 21-character Battery Pack Aadhaar Number (BPAN) to batteries, as per the draft guidelines issued by the ministry. They will also have to upload the relevant Battery Pack Dynamic data on the official portal of BPAN.

The battery producer or importer shall have the obligation of assigning a unique Battery Pack Aadhaar Number (BPAN) to each battery that they introduce in the market.

and the battery they put to self-use." BPAN shall be in a clearly visible and accessible position. The location shall be chosen in a way that it cannot be destroyed or deteriorate," the guidelines said. BPAN will capture and store vital information starting from raw material extraction and manufacturing to its usage, recycling, or final disposal, as per the Guidelines For Implementation Of Battery Pack Aadhaar System'.

According to the guidelines, any change in attributes of BPAN due to recycling and repurposing shall result in a new BPAN by the same or a new producer or importer.

This system aims to bring transparency, accountability, and sustainability to the battery ecosystem by enabling accurate tracking of performance, and environmental impact.

Zomato delivery partner earnings up 10.9% in 2025'

Deepinder Goyal, Founder of Zomato has reiterated his position after a purported strike call by certain gig workers brought the gig-model into the spotlight.

According to Goyal, average hourly earnings for delivery partners at Zomato increased by approximately 10.9% y-o-y in 2025, reaching Rs 102 compared to Rs 92 in 2024, according to data shared by him. The figures, which exclude tips, reflect a steady growth in earnings over a longer horizon for the gig workforce. Goyal noted that if a partner works for 10 hours a day for 26 days a month, the gross earnings translate to approximately Rs 26,500. After accounting for roughly 20% in fuel and maintenance costs, net earnings stand at about Rs 21,000 per month.

Rally in industrial metals pushes household goods prices

Industrial metals including copper, aluminium and nickel have surged sharply, due to tightening supply and robust demand. Aluminium climbed past \$3,000 a tonne mark for the first time in over three years, while copper traded near all-time highs surging beyond \$12,000 per tonne mark. Many household appliance manufacturers struggled to absorb higher input costs which affected household budgets with copper-intensive goods such as air-conditioners, kitchen appliances, bath fittings and cookware facing higher costs.

Defence, capital goods to lead India's capex revival: Report

India's capital expenditure (capex) upcycle is showing early but credible signs of revival, and market strategists believe several investment-linked sectors are poised to benefit the most over the next two to three years. According to Antique Stock Broking, improving macros, policy support, and rising private and household investment are setting the stage for a broad-based capex recovery.

Gold and silver may extend gains

Speaking to IANS, Nainesh Pachchigar, Gujarat President of the India Bullion and Jewellers Association, said gold and silver rewarded investors handsomely in 2025, and given prevailing global conditions, the positive momentum could continue this

Birth Anniversary of India First Woman Teacher Savitribai Phule Celebrated with Enthusiasm

Etah

The birth anniversary of renowned social reformer and India first woman teacher Savitribai Phule was celebrated with great enthusiasm and fervour at the premises of Shakya Muni Buddha Vihar in village Agaunapur of the Aliganj area. The programme was organised by the Savitribai Phule Educational Upliftment Committee, Aliganj (Etah). The event commenced with the chief guests lighting the ceremonial lamp and offering floral tributes to the portraits of Lord Shakya Muni Buddha and Savitribai Phule. With the objective of motivating children towards education, a general knowledge competition was organised, in which school students from Aliganj, Jhakrai, Garhiya, Jaunra, Kalinjar, Rai, Kayamganj and surrounding areas participated enthusiastically. In the competition, Ayush, Divyansh, Tripti and Aryan



Shakya secured first position in the Classes 4 to 5 category, while Harsh Pratap, Kinsuk and Ararth emerged as winners in the Classes 6 to 8 category. The winning participants were awarded shields by the committee and all participating children were given educational materials as consolation prizes. On this occasion, the dignitaries present on the dais were honoured by the committee with mementoes of Savitribai Phule and shawls. Speakers highlighted the life, struggles and invaluable contributions of Savitribai Phule in the field of education, inspiring society to adopt education as a tool for social reform and equality. The programme was attended by chief

guests Dr Alok Singh Shakya, Pramod Kumar Yadav, Dr Bhupendra Singh Shakya and Bhupendra Ratan, along with K.P Singh, Munnalal, Arvind Singh, Arjun Singh, Saurav, Rahul and Ompal, among others. From the organising committee, President Ramaresh Shakya, Jayant Baudh, Ashutosh, Abhishek, Anubhav, Ajay Kumar, Jaiveer Singh, Prashant Pal, Himanshu, Chandrashekhar, Shivam Pal, Aamir Khan, Narendra Singh, Sachin Darshu Shakya, Sanju, Sahil, Vipin and Deepak Ratan, along with a large number of present. The programme concluded with a strong message promoting education and social equality.

The programme was attended by chief

In view of upcoming festivals, intensive checking campaign launched against those selling Chinese Manja



Chandauli

In view of the upcoming festivals, under the direction of Superintendent of Police Chandauli Aditya Langhe and under the leadership of Area Officer Sadar Devendra Kumar, a special checking campaign was conducted by the Chandauli police station team against the sellers of Chinese Manja in Chandauli town. During the campaign, Area Officer Sadar conducted a thorough search of the shops selling Manja in the town area. Police clarified that strict legal action will

be taken against any shopkeeper who is found selling banned Chinese Manja repetitively for the purpose of earning profit or who is found in possession of Chinese Manja. The police administration has appealed to the general public to make their family members and friends aware about the dangers of Chinese Manja. Use only safe and legal floats to fly kites. The Chinese manja is extremely sharp, which poses a risk of serious injury and is also extremely harmful for the environment. If information is received about the sale of

Chinese Manja in any market or shop, citizens can inform their nearest police station. The name of the person giving information will be kept completely confidential. Checking of 15 shops, 120 bundles of Chinese Manja recovered. During the operation, a total of 15 shops were checked by the police team, in which 120 bundles/loaches of banned Chinese Manja were recovered. Necessary legal action is being taken regarding material. Police have appealed to the general public to stay away from Chinese Manja and stay safe.

DM, SP offered prayers at Baba Semradhanath Dham and prayed for the welfare of Bhadohi residents

Bhadohi

On the auspicious occasion of the 31st year of Kalpas at Mahatirth Semradhanath Dham, the great confluence of Kashi-Vindhya-Prayag, District Magistrate Shailesh Kumar and Superintendent of Police Abhimanyu Manglik inaugurated Shri Kalpas Makar Magh Mela by worshiping Mother Ganga, chanting Vedic mantras, doing Bhoomi Pujan and installing the religious flag. First of all, District Magistrate Shailesh Kumar and Superintendent of Police Abhimanyu Manglik prayed for the welfare of the people of Bhadohi at Baba Semradhanath Dham. Thereafter, while giving good wishes for the New Year to the visitors who had come for darshan and worship on the New Year, he inquired about their well-being in a



heartfelt spirit. On the most auspicious occasion of the 31st year of Kalpas at Mahatirth Semradhanath Dham, the great confluence of Kashi-Vindhya-Prayag, worship was done by chanting Vedic mantras for the pure and continuous flow of Mother Ganga on the banks of Ganga. He symbolically inaugurated Indian Sanatan Dharma and faith by hoisting the religious flag on the banks of Maa Ganga as a symbol of Magh Mela Kalpas. After the darshan puja, the District Magistrate said that in the new year 2026, I feel proud to participate in this sacred program with the respected public, public and scholars. It is a matter of pride for the district that Kalpas is being organized in Magh Mela on the banks of Ganga for the last 31 years. Seeing the grandeur of Shri Kalpas Makar Magh Mela, the District

Magistrate made a proposal to declare it as a provincial fair and assured to send it to the government. Emphasis was laid on the availability of toilets, drinking water and hospitals in the entire temple and fair area.

He said that to ensure successful completion of this Kalpas Magh Mela, ground work is being done by holding regular meetings with the government administration. In view of the convenience of the devotees in Kalpas Magh Mela, checkered plates for the road are provided by the Public Works Department, smooth arrangement of lighting, cleanliness, sanitation, drinking water arrangement by the Electricity Department, sound arrangement, tents, toilets, barricading in the fair premises by the District Panchayat Department, bonfire by the Forest

Department For the arrangement of wood, peace and security, work is being done at a fast pace with the mutual coordination of all the concerned departments including police administration, traffic police. He visited the pilgrimage site and observed the Kalpavriksha, Vanshi tree, Sindo tree, Lotus lake etc. in the natural environment there and made people aware by throwing light on the importance of trees, plants and environment. Superintendent of Police Abhimanyu Manglik toured the entire Kalpas fair area and took stock of peace and law and order and gave necessary guidelines. He said that the fair will be completed safely with adequate police arrangements. Water police and divers have also been deployed in view of the Ganga river. The District Magistrate and Superintendent of

Police inaugurated the health camp organized by the National Medicos Organization by cutting the ribbon. On this occasion, Additional District Magistrate Kunwar Virendra Maurya, Fair Incharge/Deputy District Magistrate Gyanpur Bhan Singh, Police Area Officer Gyanpur Prabhat Rai, Executive Engineer PWD Sandeep Saroj, DPRO Sanjay Mishra, AMA Anil Tyagi, BDO Diwakar Singh, EO Gopiganj RB Yadav, Junior Engineer Electrical, District Information Officer Dr. Pankaj Kumar, Mahant Karunashankar Das, Village Head Semradhan Alok Kumar Singh, President Magh Mela Committee Rambali Singh, Ajit Pratap Singh, Narendra Shukla, Sherbahadur, Dinesh Singh along with saints, Kalpavasis and devotees were present.

Confluence of reverence and faith on the inauguration of Magh Mela, Prince Gupta congratulated the people of the state

Bhadohi

A wonderful confluence of devotion, faith and Sanatan tradition is being seen in Tirthraj Prayagraj on the occasion of the inauguration of Magh Mela and the holy Paush Purnima. On this auspicious occasion, former city president BJP Bhadohi Prince Gupta sent hearty congratulations and best wishes to all the devotees, Kalpavasis and people of the state. Prince Gupta said that Magh Mela is not just a religious event, but a living symbol of Indian culture, spirituality and unity. He heartily welcomed and congratulated all the revered saints, religious leaders, various Akharas and Kalpavasis who had come to Tirthraj Prayag to



take a dip of faith in the holy Sangam. While praying to Mother Ganga, Mother Yamuna and Mother Saraswati, he said that by the grace of Triveni, the wishes of all the devotees should be fulfilled and there should be happiness, peace and prosperity in the state and the country. Prince Gupta expressed confidence that Magh Mela will become a powerful medium to convey Sanatan culture to the new generation and will further strengthen social harmony.

Mother Savitribai Phule's birthday was celebrated with great pomp in Samyak Buddha Vihar

Chandauli

The birthday of the country first teacher Mata Savitribai Phule was celebrated with enthusiasm at Samyak Buddha Vihar complex located in Dabri village under Dhanapur development block of Chandauli district at 2 pm on Saturday afternoon. On this occasion, the speakers remembered the struggles of Savitribai Phule and Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and highlighted the importance of education in detail. While addressing the program, Hemant Kushwaha paid tribute to Mata Savitribai Phule. He said that with the construction of Buddha Vihar at every place, people will celebrate the birthday of Savitribai Phule there. He stressed that only when the society moves towards education, people will be



able to demand their rights and entitlements. Referring to Gautam Buddha Vihar, New Sarnath, located in Chandauli district near Ramnagar, Hemant Kushwaha said that 7.5 bighas of land situated on the banks of Ganga, which was bought by the people with mutual cooperation, is being forcibly acquired by the Uttar Pradesh government and an attempt is being made to sell it to Adani. He told that 50 people are continuously sitting on strike every day in protest against this acquisition. He also announced to celebrate the birth anniversary of Jagdev Babu on 8th February at Gautam Buddha Vihar, in which a large number of people from entire Purvanchal are expected to reach. District Panchayat member Rajesh Yadav said that the biggest need of today is to educate our children by adopting the thoughts of Mata Savitribai Phule. He said that only educated children can bring positive change in the society. On this occasion, District Panchayat members Ganesh Prasad, Rajneesh Yadav, Dr. A large number of men and women including Hanslal Maurya, Paras Singh Maurya, Sukhraj, Lalit Maurya, Pappu Raja, Dr. Chandrika, Dr. Kashinath, Bhante Mahakashyap, Dr. Sunil Maurya, Rajkumar Maurya, Geeta Devi, Shail Maurya, Mamta Devi were present. The program was presided over by former soldier Munna Singh Dada, while Vijay Kumar conducted it.

Awartika Secures Second Place in State Competition

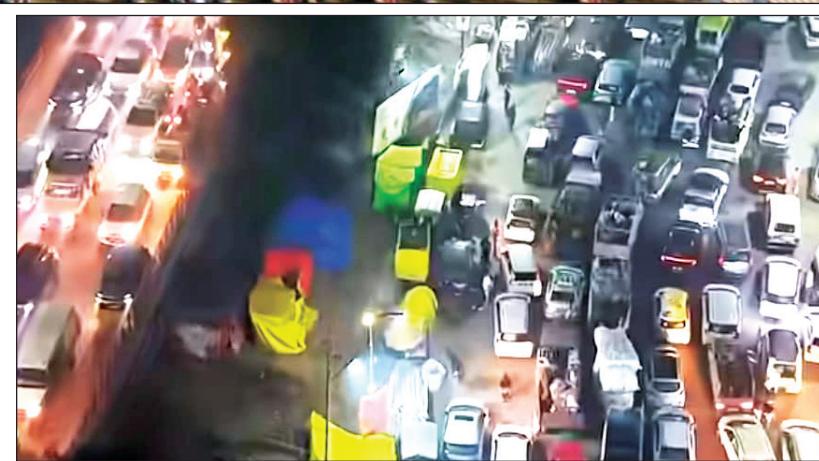


Ghazipur

Students of the Government Homeopathic Medical College and Hospital have brought laurels to the institution by showcasing their talent. Under the guidance of Principal Professor Dr. Rajendra Rajput, fourth-year BHMS students secured second place at the all-India level in poster and paper presentations at the Indian Science Congress held at IIT Shillong, bringing pride to the state and district. Meanwhile, second-year student Awartika Srivastava secured second place in the state-level "Vikas Bharat Challenge" competition, part of the "Vikas Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2025-26", organized by the Youth Welfare Department of Lucknow University. Awartika Srivastava journey doesn't end here, she will now present her work at the all-India level before Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. Similarly, Shreya Singh has also made the college proud by reaching this stage in the Youth Parliament program. Professor Dr. Subodh Tripathi, Professor D.P. Singh, Professor Dr. Sengar, Dr. Pranesh, Dr. Srivastava, Dr. Awadhesh and all the staff members congratulated the students on their outstanding performance and wished them continued success.

Massive Influx of Devotees at Paush Purnima Bathing Festival

3.1 million devotees took a dip in the holy Sangam, Administrative vigilance ensured the Magh Mela was completely safe and well-organized



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj

An unprecedented confluence of faith and devotion was witnessed on Saturday on the auspicious occasion of Paush Purnima, the first bathing festival of the Magh Mela. From early morning, there was a continuous flow of devotees towards the Sangam ghats. By 8 PM, approximately 3.1 million devotees had taken a dip

in the holy Sangam, including about 500,000 Kalpavasis (devotees observing a month-long religious vow). To ensure the safety, convenience, and smooth conduct of the event, all senior officers were active in the Mela area since last night. Additional Director General of Police Sanjeev Gupta, Inspector General of Police Ajay Mishra, Divisional Commissioner Saumya Agarwal, Police

Commissioner Prayagraj Joginder Singh, Additional Police Commissioner Ajaypal Sharma, District Magistrate Manish Verma, Mela Officer Rishiraj, and Mela Superintendent of Police Neeraj Pandey continuously monitored the arrangements and issued necessary instructions. As a result of the vigilant, well-planned, and coordinated arrangements made by the administration, the first

bathing festival of Paush Purnima concluded peacefully without any untoward incident, and all devotees were safely escorted to their destinations. Keeping in mind the convenience of the devotees, several innovations were introduced in the Magh Mela area this year. The golf cart service operating from Parking Lot No. 17 to the Bade Hanuman Temple was utilized by approximately

9,500 devotees, with a large number of devotees receiving this service free of charge. This initiative provided special convenience to senior citizens, women, and differently-abled devotees. In addition, approximately 10,000 bookings were made through the Rapido bike service, which was operated to quickly transport devotees from various pickup points to the parking lots near the Magh Mela

area, helping devotees reach the Mela area easily and in less time. Due to the continuous presence of administrative officials, effective monitoring, and innovative arrangements, the first bathing ritual of Paush Purnima was completed in a completely safe, orderly, and successful manner, which was clearly reflected in the sense of satisfaction and confidence among the devotees.

Free Eye Examination and Cataract Surgery Camp Organized Today

Tharwai/ Amrit

Disarray Angers Religious Community, Serious Allegations Leveled Against Administration?

Prayagraj. The Magh Mela 2026 commenced in Prayagraj on January 3rd, but serious questions have already been raised about the functioning of the administration. In this great festival of faith, penance, and devotion, sadhus, saints, Kalpavasis, and cultural organizations are facing immense difficulties due to the lack of land allocation and basic facilities. The religious community alleges that they have been visiting the administration offices day and night for the past month, but their problems are not being addressed. They allege that even after wandering for 16 hours a day without finding a solution, the frustrated saints are forced to roam around the officer's office to seek justice, which exposes the administrative insensitivity. Arun Tripathi, secretary of the Krishak Utthan Seva Samiti, Kaundhiyara-Karchhana, said that his organization's camp has been set up at the Magh Mela continuously for the past 20 years, but this year, despite visiting the offices for a month for land allocation, their pleas are being ignored.

the camp are required to bring their Aadhaar card, ration card, and mobile number. This information was provided by the Trust's President, Teerthraj Vishwakarma.

Grand cultural performances to be organized in Prayagraj from January 3 to 30, 2026

Colorful programs will be presented by renowned artists through the Department of Culture - Jaiveer Singh

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: Under the Department of Culture, Government of Uttar Pradesh, autonomous institutions working under the Directorate of Culture are organizing grand cultural performances in Prayagraj from January 3 to 30, 2026, on the auspicious occasion of Magh Mela-2026. This event will be a vibrant symbol of the confluence of Indian culture, Sanatan tradition, and spiritual consciousness. The state's Tourism and Culture Minister, Jaiveer Singh, said that the Magh Mela, held in Prayagraj, the sacred land of the Triveni Sangam, has been a center of penance, meditation, bathing, charity, and spiritual gatherings since ancient times. Inspired by this spiritual energy, the cultural performances will provide a powerful expression of Indian philosophy of life and cultural values through classical, folk, and devotional traditions. He informed that the Department of Culture, Uttar Pradesh, will organize vari-

ous cultural programs under the process of selecting and determining the honorarium of highly distinguished and renowned artists from the world of art and literature. These will include classical music (Dhrupad, Khayal), instrumental music (Sitar, Sarod, Flute, Panchanaad, orchestra), classical dance and dance-dramas (Kathak, Odissi), folk dances (Dhedhiya, Karna, Mayur, Faruwhi, Awadhi folk dances, Phoolon ki Holi, Pai Danda), bhajans, Kabir Vani, Sundarkand, conch shell playing, classical/semi-classical singing, and patriotic performances. On this occasion, Jayveer Singh, the Honorable Minister of Culture and Tourism, Uttar Pradesh, said that "the Magh Mela is not just a religious event, but a vibrant expression of the Indian spirit. These cultural performances organized by the Directorate of Culture will connect our classical and folk traditions with spiritual consciousness, awakening a sense of values, harmony, and cultural pride in the public. This confluence of art and

spirituality on the sacred land of Prayagraj will further strengthen the spirit of 'Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat' (One India-Great India). To further enhance the dignity of the cultural and spiritual traditions under the Magh Mela-2026 being held in Prayagraj, it is proposed to invite renowned and celebrated celebrity artists from across the country. The performances of these artists, through various genres of folk, devotional, classical, and contemporary music, will make the cultural evenings of the Magh Mela especially attractive, soulful, and memorable. The artists include the renowned folk singer Malini Awasthi, the popular classical and devotional singer Mamta Joshi, the Maihar Band (Uttam Pandey) associated with the Maihar Gharana tradition, Bhajan Samrat Anup Jalota, and the extremely popular spiritual folk fusion group Kabir Cafe among the youth. After Makar Sankranti, performances by Rishi Singh, after Mauni Amavasya by Suresh Shukla, Pratibha Singh

Baghel and Piyusha Kailash, and on the occasion of Basant Panchami by Sam Workshop, Sadho Band, Shivam Mishra (Andaz Band), Swati Mishra and Akanksha Tripathi are proposed. With the participation of these celebrity artists, the Magh Mela will be further enriched." The Magh Mela 2026 will be celebrated as a grand festival of art, culture, and spirituality. Devotees, saints, tourists, and art lovers will experience the vibrant, emotional, and spiritual essence of Indian culture at the confluence of the rivers, further strengthening the dignity and cultural significance of the Magh Mela. These cultural initiatives at Magh Mela 2026 will connect devotees, saints, tourists, and art enthusiasts with the spiritual depths of Indian culture and the rich heritage of its folk traditions. This event will embody the concept of "spirituality through art," widely disseminating the eternal values of Indian culture: truth, compassion, devotion, and harmony.

Editorial

Punjab govt must take Centre into confidence on new anti-sacrilege bill

The Aam Aadmi Party-led Punjab government has tabled the Punjab Prevention of Offences Against Holy Scripture(s) Bill, 2025 which was discussed in the Assembly on Tuesday amidst ruckus and then referred to a select committee. It might take about six months for the committee to send the bill back to the Assembly for clearing and then to the governor for approval. If the bill is referred to the Union government, then it would be another year before it finally becomes an Act. Earlier governments — the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)-Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) coalition government and the Congress government headed by Captain Amarinder Singh — had also brought similar bills which were found to be insufficient to meet the demands of the situation and hence junked. The new anti-sacrilege bill is said to have taken note of the shortcomings of the earlier bills and is hence more comprehensive, secular, and sufficiently stringent to be a deterrence for sacrilege offences considered very serious in the state. Meanwhile, 42-year-old Gurjeet Singh Khalsa, supposedly a non-political activist, has been staging a protest on top of a BSNL mobile tower in Punjab's Samana since October 2024 demanding an anti-sacrilege law. Though not widely reported in the mainstream media, such protests should be handled deftly by the government, lest it rakes up discontents of the past. In fact, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), under Sections 298, 299, and 300, already provides stringent punishments for religious offences. Punjab government as well as the activists who are protesting for a new law against sacrilege of religious texts are of the view that the provisions of the current Union laws are not stringent enough. Incidentally, the bill inadvertently equates the Bhagavad Gita with the holy books of other faiths, which may trigger a controversy. The bill could be amended to also include other religious texts considered holy by a vast majority of Hindus and/or be worded appropriately to capture the essence of all holy books of all faiths without naming any of them. Needless to say, the issue is a complex one. Going by the text of the present bill, albeit a short one, there are sufficient indications to suggest that adequate care has been taken to make the acts of sacrilege a serious offence inviting harsh punishments. But it is not clear why these provisions could not be added to the existing Sections of the BNS. After all, the BNS is an all-India law that applies equally to all states and all faiths. The AAP-led Punjab government appears to have not consulted the Union government or had any discussions with the Union Law Ministry on this issue. What should be of concern are the possibilities of other states following suit and enacting separate laws to suit the political environment of respective states citing the Punjab bill as a precedent. In a federal setup, the Constitution allows states to enact sufficient laws to maintain law and order and preserve religious harmony through stringent punishments for offences involving religious practices, texts, icons, and symbols. There have been instances of religious books being vandalised, places of worship desecrated, and statues of widely revered socio-political leaders popular among certain communities damaged. Another aspect of concern should be the misuse of any law, however sincere the intentions of the lawmakers might be. The anti-sacrilege bill may have good intentions, but there is hardly any guarantee that such a law will not become a tool for miscreants wanting to drive a wedge between communities and followers of different faiths in the state. In a politically volatile border state where religious fault lines have been exploited by extreme elements bent on hurting the unity and integrity of the country, the state government needs to be extra-vigilant and take the Union government into confidence at every stage.



Critical minerals are the new oil. India can't afford to depend on China

Critical minerals have now become instruments of geopolitical bargaining and means to assert domestic autonomy and security. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Argentina and meeting with Chilean President, Gabriel Boric, the two legs of the lithium triangle, on the sidelines of the recently held BRICS summit in Brazil, were strategically aimed at exploring cooperation and engagement on critical minerals. At the Summit, Modi warned against the weaponization of critical minerals and stressed the need to

work together to make supply chains secure and reliable. Other global leaders have also echoed similar concerns at the G20, Quad, and BRICS summits, and have discussed collaborating to secure and diversify critical mineral supply chains. Currently, India is heavily dependent on imports for critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, and rare earth elements (REE). Much of this supply comes through re-export channels, which creates a third-level dependency while exposing us to potential supply shocks and strategic coercion.

Mineral security is no longer just an economic concern but a national security imperative, underpinning the country's ambitions in clean energy, defence self-reliance, and advanced manufacturing. Globally, China holds roughly 62 per cent of lithium refining capacity, 33 per cent for nickel, 77 per cent for cobalt, 87 per cent for graphite, and 76 per cent for REEs, according to the International Energy Agency's (IEA) Global Critical Minerals Outlook 2025. This underscores China's overwhelming dominance in supply

chains, even though it does not host most raw material reserves. Compared to 2023, India's lithium imports from China surged by roughly 921 per cent in 2024, while graphite imports rose 85 per cent between 2022 and 2024 and Nickel imports jumped 137 per cent in 2024. Such dominance gives Beijing an asymmetric leverage over supply chains vital to clean-tech sectors and key defence applications, including advanced electronics, missile systems, and communication technologies. As a result, securing reliab

India's TRP ecosystem needs a reset. Time to end BARC monopoly

Television advertising revenues have been in freefall, declining from Rs 334 billion to Rs 294 billion in just two years. Twelve per cent of the brands that used TV to reach the masses in 2023 adopted a different distribution medium in 2024. Despite this, the TV industry continues to expand its offerings. DD Free Dish, a state-run distribution platform that requires only a one-time installation fee and no subscription charges, added both consumers and channels last year. The number of Free-to-Air channels on TV that recover costs from advertising is also increasing. Clearly, there is a disconnect between broadcasters' and advertisers' assessment of the true value of India's 160 million-household-strong TV market. At the heart of this mismatch is a measurement gap that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) is now trying to resolve through reforms to TV ratings guidelines. The MIB is in the process of amending the 2014 television ratings guidelines that led to the accreditation of the Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) to measure the relative popularity of TV channels. This much-needed proposal aims to end BARC's monopoly and allow additional entities to conduct TV ratings,



which can revitalise TV advertising. Before BARC, TAM (Television Audience Measurement)—a joint media research venture by Kantar and Nielsen—tracked what India watched. But India is a large country, and TAM could only place meters to measure audience preferences in a limited number of households, that too mostly in urban areas. As a solution, broadcasters, advertisers, and media agencies came together in 2010 to form BARC, which was empanelled by the MIB and started operations in 2015. BARC roped in TAM for back-end technological expertise and rejigged sampling methods. When BARC was rolled out, it measured 12,000 out of the 145 million TV households in India.

This was still only 0.008 per cent. Panel sizes have grown over the years to 55,000, but BARC continues to use the same data-collection methods. Watch time is measured in clock minutes through audio-watermarking tech-

nology that detects the channel being viewed. Before watching, each family member in a metered household must press a button to indicate whether they are an adult or a child, and to record their gender. They must press the same button again when they stop viewing. This approach rests on the optimistic assumption that viewers comply every time they switch channels. Meanwhile, the global media landscape has been moving ahead with qualitative, platform-agnostic measurement tools enabled by big data, advanced meter technologies, and more demographically inclusive panels. Advertisers rely on BARC's single measurement currency, Television Rating Point (TRP), which estimates the duration and frequency of viewership. These ratings help them determine which channels attract the most viewers and where to spend their ad budgets. There are no alternative estimates to go by. In con-

India's solar ambition needs financial vision – ISA must move from commitments to execution

As the world confronts the realities of climate change and energy insecurity, solar energy presents itself not merely as a technological solution but as a transformative geopolitical and developmental strategy. The International Solar Alliance is uniquely positioned to catalyse this transformation. But to succeed, it must go beyond declarations. It must now design and implement financial architectures capable of supporting its ambitions. The potential of solar energy is undeniable. It is modular, scalable, and increasingly cost-effective. Yet, for the nations most abundant in sunlight, finance remains a key constraint. The International Energy Agency estimates that clean energy investments in emerging economies must rise from \$770 billion in 2022 to over \$2.2 trillion annually by 2030. A significant portion of this must be allocated to solar energy.

However, the fiscal realities of many countries—either still recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic, burdened by debt, or struggling to cope with press-

ing social needs—limit the ability of governments to invest at scale. India's experience illustrates this well. Despite policy successes in solar deployment, the government's ability to directly invest in grid infrastructure or generation assets is capped by fiscal deficit targets and debt ceilings. Even green bonds, while helpful, are bound by ring-fenced rules and are limited in scale. Public financing, therefore, can only act as a catalytic lever—it cannot be the backbone. Turning to the private sector, we find both potential and limitations. Many solar developers operate on highly leveraged balance sheets, and with rising global interest rates, the space for fresh capital is narrowing. Moreover, risks such as currency volatility, regulatory uncertainty, and weak transmission infrastructure dampen investor appetite, especially in frontier markets. Private capital is crucial but requires structured entry points, credible exit mechanisms, and active risk mitigation to be effective.

Trump's sanctions have failed to deter Russia. Now the West faces a dilemma

Last week, Russia once again pulled the nuclear weapon threat out of its sleeves, two days after US President Donald Trump — following his meeting with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte — threatened to impose 100 per cent secondary tariffs on Moscow if it doesn't reach a deal with Kyiv in 50 days. Trump also confirmed that "top-of-the-line" weapons, including the Patriot missile defence system and batteries, would be sent to Ukraine in an operation coordinated by NATO members. Russia's newly updated nuclear doctrine apparently allows Moscow to use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear weapon state that is supported by a nuclear one, unsettling deterrence dynamics in Europe. Though Trump's about-turn on the Russia-Ukraine war might bring some sigh of relief in Kyiv, Moscow's counter-threats echo a Biden-era tit-for-tat escalation when Washington's no-holds-barred support for Ukraine's war efforts was met with Moscow's nuclear threats. The question is: will Trump's threats be enough to affect any change in Russia's behaviour? Or will such threats be counter-productive, embolden Putin's hand, and give him more ammunition to project a Russia reclaiming its lost status of parity with the US and standing up to the combined might of the Western alliance? Sanctions are meant to bite, and not just bark.

They are coercive economic tools that the US and its Western allies have often used as a default policy to punish adversaries. However, do they really affect consequential changes in a country's behaviour as expected? In the case of Russia, sanctions have won tactical gains, but have failed to achieve the desired strategic goals. US-led Western sanctions have hit Russia since 2014, when the latter annexed Crimea from Ukraine after the Maidan Square event. Though Russia has seen rising infla-

tion, labour shortage, and devaluation of its currency, the sanctions have had too little impact to make Moscow kowtow. On the contrary, the Central Bank of the Russian Federation has kept the key rate at 21.5 percent per annum, indicating that inflation and economic growth are relatively stable under the current circumstances. The Russian stock exchange market has also continued to grow despite Trump's warnings. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has forecasted Russia's growth rate in 2025 at 1.5 per cent while the Russian Economic Development Ministry has kept it at 2.5 per cent. This month, the US Senate tabled additional sanctions on Russia, calling them a 'sledgehammer'.

Sanctions on Russia will also impact countries that trade with Russia in oil, gas, uranium, and other products. Such secondary sanctions on third countries are reportedly proposed to touch 500 per cent. Some US lawmakers are even hinting at the US, together with its European allies, accessing frozen Russian assets, including the \$5 billion located in the US, to dent Russia's warfighting resources and utilise the money in Ukraine's reconstruction. This would be an unprecedented move as no US president has ever taken the central bank assets of a foreign country that the US is not at war with. However, secondary sanctions have not been too successful either, with Russia, through its 'shadow fleet', exporting energy to the other countries, including China, Turkey, UAE, Belarus, and Armenia. Moreover, partner countries of the US such as Turkey, UAE, and Armenia have not participated in sanctions, creating an enforcement gap, helping Russia maintain access to sanctioned goods and continue its economic activities. A report, published by the Kyiv School of Economics,

Hadiyakol: Minister takes pledge of service at the Human Service Mahakumbh



Barabanki

At the Human Service Mahakumbh being organised at Ramyan Kutir Ashram, located on the banks of the Reth River in the Hadiyakol forest area, the Minister of State for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Satish Chandra Sharma, participated in the service activities. The Minister offered flowers at the statue of Swami Vivekananda installed at the free OPD centre and visited the Rogharan Shri Hanuman Temple, where he prayed for the speedy recovery of patients who underwent eye surgeries starting from December 28. He sought blessings from Bhagwan Das, Chairman of Shri Ramyan Kutir Trust Committee and Tulsi Das Maharaj from Haridwar. The Minister congratulated eye surgeon Dr. Jacob Prabhakar and his team on behalf of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for restoring vision to poor patients of the state. He also visited the OPD services and met Dr. Ramesh Hunda from Rohtak, Haryana, congratulating him for his

dedicated service. The Minister encouraged volunteers who had come from across the country to serve the patients. Ashram volunteer Manish Mehrotra informed that all the doctors performing the surgeries are followers of Lord Jesus Christ. On this occasion, members of Dr. Jacob Prabhakar team participated in a collective prayer along with intellectuals from all faiths, wishing for the speedy recovery of all patients. Those present at the programme included Dharmendra Yadav (Block Pramukh, Deva), City Circle Officer Sangam Kumar, Jahangirabad In-charge Inspector Durga Prasad Shukla, Dr. Sanjeev Sahu, Senior Eye Examination Officer T.N Verma, Eye Examination Officer Arvind Kumar, senior trust members Shankar Lal Somani, Ramkishan Rathi, Shiv Kumar Nigam, Ramashankar Jhanwar, Ankit Gupta, Anjani Kumar, Balwant Singh, Adarsh Verma, youth leader Sanjay Yadav (Paliya) along with Richa, Pooja Mehrotra, Rimjhim, Shashi Nigam, Manju Gupta and many other dignitaries.

A Spectacular Glimpse of the Brave Tradition of the Khalsa Panth. The town resonated with slogans of “Bole So Nihal” and praises of Guru Gobind Singh



Touch With World

Shobit Shukla

Barabanki. On the occasion of the Prakash Purab (birth anniversary) of the tenth Sikh Guru, Shri Guru Gobind Singh, a grand Nagar Kirtan procession was taken out on Saturday from Gurdwara Guru Singh Sabha, Barabanki. The procession began at around 2 pm, led by the Panj Pyare with Guru Granth Sahib seated in a beautifully flower-decorated palki. Dressed in traditional attire, the Panj Pyare walked with kirpans in their hands, while Gyani Tirath Singh waved the chaur sahib. Devotees walked alongside, cleaning the route and showering flower petals as a mark of reverence.

(An extraordinary confluence of valour and devotion)

The procession passed through the

main streets of the town, where devotees bowed in reverence to Guru Granth Sahib. The world-famous Bir Khalsa Gatka Group from Punjab captivated the audience with a spectacular display of traditional Sikh

martial arts. Daring feats such as breaking coconuts while blindfolded left spectators amazed. The military-style performance by the Punjab Hasda Band further filled the atmosphere with enthusiasm and energy. (Shabad Kirtan, service and harmony)

Amarjeet Singh Goldy and his kirtan group from Lucknow rendered soulful recitations of Gurban, including "Deh Shiva Bar Mohe Ehae." A special attraction of the procession was the majestic falcon brought by the Nihangs known as "Baaj Wale Singh" from Fatehgarh Sahib, Punjab. The spirit of service shown by the Sikh Youth Association of Lucknow was also commendable. Tea, snacks and prasad stalls were set up at various places along the route.

(Guard of honour and continuous

langar)

The Nagar Kirtan passed through Lajpat Nagar, Chhaya Chauraha, Rajkamal Marg, Pir Batawan, Nageshwar Temple Road, Darpan, Dhanohar, Niblet and Begumganj Chauraha before returning to the Gurdwara Sahib. There, the ceremonial procession of Guru Granth Sahib was accorded a guard of honour. At the conclusion, an uninterrupted langar was served and kesariya (saffron-flavoured) milk prasad was distributed to devotees despite the biting cold. Gurdwara Management Committee President Bhupinder Singh stated that with the cooperation of the sangat and volunteers, the event became a symbol of unity within the Sikh community. The Nagar Kirtan concluded with the message of devotion, selfless service and brotherhood.

NNB Group honored bouncer team, more than 50 soldiers got encouragement Mathura



Mathura

A felicitation ceremony was organized at a local hotel on Govardhan Road in honor of the NNB bouncer team under the auspices of NNB Group, which is fast making its mark in Mathura. In the program, NNB Group founder and journalist Kunwar Gopal Thakur honored the entire bouncer team including NNB bouncer team co-founder Vikas Thakur alias VK Baba for their outstanding work, discipline and professional services. On this occasion, discussing the responsibilities and working style of bouncers, the speakers said that security arrangements, crowd control, VIP movement, emergency management and maintaining the dignity of the program in any event is the main responsibility of the bouncer team. It was reported that the NNB bouncer team never compromises discipline, vigilance and professional code of con-

duct in their work. The program informed that NNB Bouncer Group is a fast emerging professional bouncer group of Mathura, which is active in celebrity events, marriage functions, corporate events, private parties and private security services. The team methodology is considered strict, well-planned and thoroughly professional. More than 50 bouncers were invited to the function in view of their loyalty and services. A mass banquet was also organized with everyone during this time. All the guests and

team members were awarded with special certificates on behalf of NNB Group. Raju Thakur and Ajit Chauhan (Journalist), Prakash Singh (Jaswant Telecom), Pranjal Agarwal (Coco India Cafe), Dr. S.P. Jadoun (New Pulse Hospital), Thakur Dinesh Singh (Karni Seva District President), Thakur Bhupendra Singh, Thakur Bablu Singh and Thakur Dhirendra Parihar (Kisan Union District President) and many other dignitaries were present.

The program was presided over by founder and journalist Kunwar Gopal Thakur, while co-founder Vikas Thakur alias VK Baba was specially present. The purpose of the program was to boost the morale of the bouncer team and motivate them to deliver more responsible and professional services in the future. The function concluded with wishing Power Supply (team) a bright future.

Women and Girls Made Aware Under Mission Shakti 5.0 Campaign



Brahmapur

Under the Mission Shakti 5.0 campaign, Mission Shakti teams formed at all police stations in the district, through women police personnel, visited major markets, towns, intersections, religious places and other important public places to raise awareness among women and girls about the objectives of the campaign. During the awareness program, information was provided about various schemes and facilities operated by the government and the police department for the safety, empowerment and self-reliance of women. Women and girls were informed in detail about their rights, safety measures and the resources available under Mission Shakti. Under the Mission Shakti 5.0 campaign, information was given about various schemes being run for the safety and empowerment of women, such as the Chief

Minister Kanya Sumangala Yojana, Destitute Women Pension Scheme, Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihoods Mission, National Nutrition Mission, Chief Minister Mass Marriage Scheme, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Swarnidhi Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Samman Nidhi Yojana, One Stop Center, Ayushman Bharat Yojana, Surakshit Matritva Ashwasan (SUMAN) Yojana, Mahila Shakti Kendra Yojana, Chief Minister Abhyudaya Yojana etc. Along with this, pamphlets were distributed to

raise awareness about various helpline numbers related to the police department, such as Women Power Line 1090, Police Emergency Service 112 (Emergency Call, demonstration of panic button on mobile), CM Helpline 1076, Health Service Helpline 102, Ambulance Service 108, Women Helpline 181 and Cyber Crime Helpline 1930. The objective of this campaign was to provide a safe environment for women and girls, make them self-reliant and make them aware of how to seek help in any emergency situation.

Inspection of Divisional Railway Manager at DDU JuRaju Bhaiya and Saurabh Singh



Brahmapur

National Patron of the

All India Lodhi Rajput Welfare Mahasabha, Rajveer Singh alias Raju Bhaiya and National President of the Youth Wing, Saurabh Singh Verma, were given a grand welcome on the main road of Jarwal town on Saturday.

The program was led by Vikas Rajput. Members of the community warmly greeted both leaders with garlands and shawls. On this occa-

sion, National Treasurer and Dibai MLA Chandrapal Singh, National President of the Women Wing and former Mayor of Bhilai Neeta Lodhi, State General Secretary and Syana MLA Devendra Singh Lodhi, State General Secretary and former Babina MLA Krishnapal Rajput, State Organizing General Secretary Dinesh Lodhi and Ashish Lodhi were specially present. Anil Verma, Vikas Rajput,

Krishnapal, Rahul Duddh Dairy, Rambabu Lodhi and dozens of other local workers from the Jarwal area participated in the program. In his address, Raju Bhaiya emphasized the unity of the community, the strength of the organization and mutual cooperation, while Saurabh Singh Verma appealed to the youth to play an active role in social and organizational activities. The program concluded in a cordial atmosphere.

Assam DGP Harmeet Singh Firm Resolve: Police to Ensure Public

Assam

On the advent of 2026, Assam Director General of Police (DGP) Harmeet Singh extended heartfelt New Year greetings to the state residents via a social media message on Thursday. In the message issued on behalf of the Assam Police, DGP Singh wished all citizens of Assam a happy new year, reaffirming that with the cooperation of the sangat and volunteers, the event became a symbol of unity within the Sikh community. The Nagar Kirtan concluded with the message of devotion, selfless service and brotherhood.



force remains steadfast in upholding peace and law and order. He highlighted that the Assam Police has worked with full dedication to safeguard vulnerable sections of society and address public needs with sensitivity and courage. The DGP acknowledged the trust placed by the people of Assam in the police, stating that this confidence further strengthens the force's commitment to its duties. He expressed hope that collective cooperation will ensure a safe, harmonious and optimistic year ahead for the state.

Free Plastic Surgery Camp: BJS Delhi

Delhi

BJS Delhi (Bharatiya Jain Sangathan-Delhi) is organizing a three-day free plastic surgery camp from January 14 to 16 at Muni Mayaram Jain Hospital, Pitampura for underprivileged children and adults suffering from congenital facial deformities. This camp will provide world-class corrective surgeries free of charge to needy patients from across the country. The press conference held at Anuvrat Bhavan, New Delhi to announce the camp, began with the chanting of the Navkar Mantra by Shasan, Muni, Vimal Kumar and Bahushrut Muni, Udit Kumar. The Munis urged society to adopt a drug-free and virtuous life, stating that the objective of social service should not be merely physical treatment, but holistic well-being. Dr. Kamal Jain Sethia, President of BJS Delhi said that this camp symbolizes the organization's ethical commitment to dignified and accessible healthcare. Camp coordinator Vijay Jain informed that deformities such as cleft lip and palate, strabismus and facial scars will be treated completely free of charge. OPD and examinations will be conducted on January 14, while surgeries and post-operative care will be provided on January 15-16. National Secretary Pradeep Jain stated that BJS has conducted more than three lakh free surgeries to date. National Head Rajesh Khivansara described it as a life-changing initiative. This will be BJS Delhi's sixth major camp with over 100 beneficiaries expected. Renowned plastic surgeons Dr. Larry Weinstein and Dr. Whitney Pafford from the USA will be providing their services alongside Indian doctors at the camp. A helpline number 902433322 has been issued for registration. Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta is expected to visit the camp on January 14. This initiative reinforces the message that quality healthcare should be accessible to all.



China expels three corrupt military men

Chinese parliament has expelled three high-ranking military officials in the latest crackdown against corruption. The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress expelled Wang Renuha, head of the Central Military Commission's Political and Legal Affairs Committee; Zhang Hongbing, political commissar of the People's Armed Police, and Wang Peng, director of the CMC's training department. All 3 remain full members of Central Committee, ruling Communist Party of China's decision-making body.

Thailand parties name PM nominees

Political parties in Thailand on Sunday registered their candidates for the next PM, marking the unofficial start of campaigning for the Feb 8 general election. PM Anutin Charnvirakul dissolved Parliament earlier this month to call early poll, after the main opposition prepared to seek a no-trust vote over constitutional change. Calling a new election allows Anutin and his Bhumjaithai Party to build up their numbers in House of Representatives to gain a more secure grip on govt. Voters will also cast votes in a referendum asking if they want a new constitution.

S Africa bldg collapse kills baby, 2 others

Three people, including a 1-year-old child, died when a 2-storey building collapsed in South Africa's Soweto township, west of Johannesburg, early on Sunday. Three others sustained injuries. A total of six people were inside the building when it collapsed, and emergency officials rescued the three people injured who were trapped under the rubble.

Three dead, scores hurt in Syria clashes

Clashes broke out in Syria between protesters from Alawite religious minority and counterdemonstrators on Sunday, killing over three and injuring dozens, officials said. The clashes came two days after a bombing at an Alawite mosque in Homs killed eight people and hurt 18 during prayers. Thousands gathered in Latakia and Tartous and elsewhere. Sunday's protests were called for by Ghazal Ghazal, an Alawite sheikh living outside of Syria who heads a group called the Supreme Alawite Islamic Council in Syria and the Diaspora.

Khaleda Zia is 'extremely critical'

Bangladesh's former PM Khaleda Zia is "extremely critical", her personal physician has said. Zia, 80, the BNP boss, has been undergoing treatment since Nov 23. "It cannot be said her condition has improved. She is passing through an extremely critical phase," Dr AZM Zahid said.

NY subway switches to tap-go fares

When the MetroCard replaced the New York City subway token in 1994, the swipeable plastic card infused modernity into one of the world's oldest and largest transit systems. Now, over 3 decades later, the gold-hued fare card and its finicky magnetic strip are following the token into retirement. The last day to buy or refill a MetroCard is Dec. 31, 2025.

'SHAM POLL' | First voting since military seized power in 2021

First round: Myanmar poll 'widely criticised'

YANGON

The first of three phases of voting has finished in Myanmar in an election widely dismissed as a "sham", with major political parties dissolved, leaders jailed and as much as half the country not expected to vote due to an ongoing civil war.

The military government is holding a phased ballot nearly five years after it seized power in a coup, prompting widespread opposition and spiralling into civil war.

Observers say the junta, with China's support, is seeking to legitimise its power as it seeks a way out of the devastating stalemate.

More than 200 people have been charged for disrupting or opposing the polls under a new law which carries severe punishments, including the death penalty. There were reports of explosions and airstrikes across multiple regions as the first round of voting took place on Sunday. A rocket attack on an uninhabited house in the Mandalay region in the early hours of the morning injured three people, the region's chief minister told the BBC.

Separately, a series of blasts damaged over 10 houses in the Myawaddy township, near the border with Thailand, late on Saturday. A resident told the BBC a child was killed and three others were taken to hospital. Voters said the election feels more "disciplined and systematic" than previous polls. "The experience of voting has changed a lot," said Ma Su Zar Chi, who lives in the Mandalay region.

First-time voter Ei Pyay Phy Maung, 22, said she was voting as she believed it is "the responsibility of every citizen".

"My hope is for the lower classes. The prices are skyrocketing. I want to support someone who can bring them down for those struggling the most," she said.

While over 4,800 candidates from 57 parties are competing for seats in national and regional legislatures, only six are competing nationwide with the possibility to gain political clout in Parliament. The well-organised and funded Union Solidarity and Development Party, with its support from the military, is by far the strongest contender, reported AP.

An election organised by a junta that continues to bomb civilians, jail political leaders, and criminalise all forms of dissent is not an election — it is a theatre of the absurd performed at gunpoint," Tom Andrews, the UN-appointed human rights expert for Myanmar, posted on X.

Khin Marlar, 51, a Yangon's Kyauktada township voter, said she felt she needed to vote as she hoped peace would follow afterwards. "I had fled my village in Thaungta in central Mandalay due to the fighting. I will go back to my village when it is peaceful," she said.

A resident of Mon state, Khin, fearing arrest by the military, said, "I have to go and vote even though I don't want to, because soldiers showed up with guns to our village to pressure us yesterday."

Suu Kyi, 80, Myanmar's former leader, and her party are not participating.

Dhaka rejects India's claim of hostilities against minorities



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Dhaka: Dhaka rejected India's concerns over treatment of minorities in Bangladesh, calling it an "inaccurate, exaggerated, or motivated narrative" that does not reflect the facts. Bangladesh foreign ministry spokesperson SM Mahbubul Alam said,

GUINEA

GUINEA VOTES IN FIRST POLL SINCE 2021 COUP

CONAKRY: Guineans are voting on Sunday to elect a new president in the country's first election since a 2021 coup, as analysts say a weakened opposition will result in a likely win for junta leader Gen Mamadi Doumbouya. Sunday's election is the culmination of a transition process that began 4 years ago after Doumbouya ousted President Alpha Conde.

KATHMANDU MAYOR PM FACE

KATHMANDU: Kathmandu Metropolitan City Mayor Balendra Shah, aka Balen, 35, was named PM candidate as he and Rastriya Swatantra Party inked a pact to jointly contest March 5 Nepal poll. The 7-point agreement designates Balen as parliamentary party leader and PM face, while Rabi Lamichhane will continue as chairperson of RSP, 4th-largest party in dissolved house of representatives.

Agitating Serbia students urge support for early poll to oust Vucic

Belgrade: Serbia's protesting university students on Sunday collected signatures across the country for their request for an early parliamentary election they hope would oust the autocratic government of President Aleksandar Vucic from office.

Braving freezing weather, the students set up nearly 500 stands in dozens of cities, towns and villages in the Balkan country for residents to sign the election demand, which isn't a formal petition. Students have said Sunday's action was meant to pressure Vucic and as a test of support.

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Briefs

MUMBAI
Anish, Nirmaben to headline TMM



The top three finishers in the Indian Elite men's and women's categories will be awarded prize money of Rs 5 lakh, Rs 4 lakh, and Rs 3 lakh respectively. In addition, an event record bonus of Rs 2 lakh is on offer, along with an Indian event record jackpot of Rs 1 lakh.

NEW DELHI
Mayank attains 90 per cent fitness



NEW DELHI
AIFF to reveal ISL schedule next week



The Indian Football crisis could be coming to an end. The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has confirmed that it will reveal the dates for the ISL

VHT: Pant slams unbeaten half-ton in Delhi victory

Axar Patel hits century for Gujarat

BENGALURU



India keeper-batter **Rishabh Pant** overcame a patchy form to strike an unbeaten half-century as Delhi thrashed Services by eight wickets to return to winning ways in a fifth-round Vijay Hazare Trophy Group D match here on Saturday.

Delhi rode on opener Priyansh Arya (72 not out off 45 balls) and Pant's (67 not out off 37 balls) half-tens to overhaul Services' meagre total of 178 all out in just 19.4 overs. The Pant-led side drastically improved their net run rate (NRR), which was battered following their crushing defeat by Odisha in the previous round in Alur.

Delhi are back on top of the table with 16 points and a healthy NRR of +0.803, followed by Haryana (16 points, +0.460), Odisha, Railways and Saurashtra are on 12 points each while Gujarat are on eight points.

This was Pant's second half-century in five games and came after two below-par

performances with the bat. **Maharashtra inflict Mumbai's first defeat**

Arshin Kulkarni struck a run-a-ball 114 while Ramakrishna Ghosh made a stunning 27-ball 64 not out to set up Maharashtra's comprehensive 128-run win over Mumbai in their Vijay Hazare Trophy Group C match here on Saturday. It was Mumbai's first loss but they remained in top-two along with Punjab on 18 points each. Maharashtra are at third spot with 12 points with three wins from five matches. Kulkarni shared 140 runs with Prithvi Shaw (71 off 75 balls) for the opening wicket to lay foundation for Maharashtra's massive 366.

Brief Scores

Group D: Services: 178 all out in 42.5 overs (Harshit Rana 4/47, Prince Yadav 3/28) **lost to Delhi** 182 for 2 in 19.4 overs (Priyansh Arya 72 not out, Nitish Rana 32, Rishabh Pant 67 not out) by 8 wickets.

Odisha: 305 for 9 in 50 overs (Swastik Samal 101, Govinda Poddar 72, Biplob Samantray 47; Anuj Thakral 3/68, Parth Vats 3/60) **lost to Haryana** 309 for 6 in 48.4 overs (Parth Vats 157 not out, Anuj Thakral 59 not out) by 4 wickets.

Saurashtra: 294 for 8 in 50 overs (Sammar Gajjar 147; Rahul Sharma 2/32, Kunal Yadav 3/71, Zubair Ali 3/82) **beat Railways** 263 in 49.1 overs (Upendra Yadav 86, Ashutosh Sharma 65; Ankur Panwar 3/49, Prerak Mankad 3/48) by 31 runs. **Gujarat:** 318 for 9 in 50 overs (Axar Patel 130, Vishal Jayswal 70; Nitish Kumar Reddy 2/65, Satyanarayana Raju 4/53, Midde Anjaneyulu 2/45) **beat Andhra** 311 for 7 in 50 overs (CR Gnaneshwar 102, SD Prasad 40 not out; Arzan Nagwaswala 2/69, Axar Patel 2/27, Ravi Bishnoi 3/64) by 7 runs. **Group C: Maharashtra:** 366 for 4 in 50 overs (Arshin Kulkarni 114, Prithvi Shaw 71, Ruturaj Gaikwad 66, Ramakrishna Ghosh not out; Tushar Deshpande 2/83) **beat Mumbai** 238 all out in 42 overs (Angkrish Raghuvanshi 92, Siddhesh Lad 52; Pradeep Dadhe 3/43, Satyaajeet Bachhav 2/44)

NZ SERIES | Despite speculation, Pant has retained his place in the squad

Siraj makes ODI comeback

NEW DELHI



Iyer, who was hospitalised during the ODI series in Australia in November for spleen laceration, will need to prove his match fitness in a Vijay Hazare Trophy game on January 6 to get fitness clearance from the Centre of Excellence (COE). He returns to the squad as vice-captain.

Star all-rounder Hardik Pandya was not cleared by the COE to bowl 10 overs in a match and therefore the selectors did not include him in the team for the series beginning in Vadodara on January 11. There is also little point in risking him with T20 showpiece around the corner.

The other two matches will be played in Rajkot and Indore on January 14 and 18 respectively.

"Shreyas Iyer's availability is subject to fitness clearance from BCCI COE," said the BCCI in a statement.

"Hardik Pandya has not been cleared by the BCCI COE to bowl 10 overs in a match, and considering the ICC Men's T20 World Cup to follow, his workload is being managed," it added.

Ruturaj Gaikwad could not get the selectors' nod

despite scoring a fine hundred during the South Africa series. With captain Shubman Gill and Shreyas Iyer not part of the South Africa ODIs due to injuries, Gaikwad had made a splendid 105 off 83 balls batting at number four in Raipur.

After being dropped from the T20 World Cup squad,

Gill will take back the ODI leadership mantle from KL Rahul, who led the team in the former's absence.

Despite speculation,

Rishabh Pant has retained his place as the second wicket-keeper in the squad.

Tilak Varma and Dhruv Jurel, who were part of the previous series, have been left out with senior players returning from injuries.

The pace attack comprises Siraj, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh with all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy being the fourth option.

India superstars Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, now one format players, are once again expected to draw huge crowds to the three venues.

With the ODI World Cup just over a year away, Rohit and Kohli would look to push their case certainly.

Shreyas Iyer to play VHT tie on Jan 6

MUMBAI: India batter Shreyas Iyer is set to play his first competitive match since sustaining a spleen injury last October when he turns out for Mumbai against Himachal Pradesh in the Vijay Hazare Trophy but his availability for the upcoming series against New Zealand will be subject to fitness. Iyer had suffered the injury during the third and final ODI against Australia in Sydney and was hospitalised for spleen laceration with internal bleeding. The BCCI had informed about Iyer's release in early November and the right-handed batter has been on a comeback trail since. According to a source in the BCCI's Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, the 31-year-old will play in the 50-overs premier domestic competition for his home side Mumbai, but his availability for New Zealand series will be subjected to fitness. 'Shreyas successfully completed the first 50-over RTP (return to play) match on January 2, 2026. He will be playing the Vijay Hazare match on January 6th as part of his second RTP match before final fitness clearance,' the official told PTI on Saturday.

KKR release Mustafizur after BCCI instructions

Knight Riders had acquired the Bangladeshi player for Rs 9.20 crore

GUWAHATI

Bangladesh pacer **Mustafizur Rahman** has been released by IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders after being instructed to do so by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) amid heightening diplomatic tensions between the two neighbouring countries.

KKR had acquired the services of the 30-year-old left-arm for Rs 9.20 crore from a base price of Rs 2 crore after an intense bidding war with Chennai Super Kings and Delhi Capitals at the players' auction last month.

The BCCI said KKR will be allowed to name a replacement player if required for the event scheduled to start on March 26.

"The BCCI has asked Kolkata Knight Riders to release Mustafizur Rahman from its squad. They can ask for replacement, if needed. And upon request, BCCI will allow a replacement player," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia told PTI

The BCCI has asked Kolkata Knight Riders to release Mustafizur Rahman from its squad. They can ask for replacement, if needed. And upon request, BCCI will allow a replacement player

Devajit Saikia, BCCI secretary



here on Saturday. Asked why the BCCI has asked Kolkata Knight Riders to do so, he replied, "Because of recent developments all across." In a statement, the franchise said it has released the player as instructed by the BCCI.

"Kolkata Knight Riders confirms that BCCI/IPL as the regulator of IPL has instructed it to release Mustafizur Rahman from the squad ahead of the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) season. "The release has been carried out following due process and consultations, upon the instruction of the Board of Control of Cricket in India," KKR said in a statement.

In Sylhet, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) President Aminul Islam Bulbul announced an emergency meeting of the body to discuss the issue later tonight.

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