

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

Monday, 12 January, 2026

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



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

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 Gaganpallya village in Basaguda, 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.

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 Girepunje was killed, Chavan said.

After clash, Ballari SP tries to kill self

BENGALURU

After treatment, his condition was said to be stable, and he was later moved to Bengaluru for further care

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

Soon after his suspension, Nejur 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 Nejur 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. They said verification was still underway to identify the weapon that caused his death.

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 Chikkabanaavara 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.

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

PM Modi had posted pic

Repatriated relics on display, PM hails 'noble thoughts of Bhagwan Buddha'

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.



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

"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.

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.

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



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.

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, Kharge 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 a "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

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

NEW DELHI

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. The 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 year as well.

money special

Centre pushes states to speed up farm scheme spending



"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 reviewed the progress and budget utilisation of central agriculture schemes, including the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PMRKY) and Krishonnati Yojana (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.

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

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.

Backstage's Enchanting Theatrical Experiment: Fareb-e-Hasti

Prayagraj. The play Fareb-e-Hasti, which brings the great Urdu poet Mirza Ghalib into dialogue with contemporary times, emerges on stage as a fresh and compelling theatrical experiment. Moving compellingly between fantasy and reality, this dramatic proposition uses an intriguing incident to place Ghalib in present-day Delhi, where the ironies of modern life, temporal contradictions, and anxieties of power collide with him in curious and unsettling ways. As the narrative progresses, this light, playful irony encounters the politics of intelligence agencies, identity, and history, transforming into deeply dramatic questions. This highly effective staging was presented by the Backstage theatre group. The play was directed by Pravin Shekhar, with the dramatic text written by Prof. Sadiq. With the support of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, two performances of the play were staged at the Ravindralaya Auditorium. This engaging and enchanting theatrical experiment by the Backstage group also compels a renewed reflection on the relationship between past and present. In Fareb-e-Hasti, an unusual incident forces Mirza Ghalib to



appear in the current century. The incident is so fascinating that when the famed poet of the eighteenth century wanders through today's Delhi, almost everything seems to mock him or turn into comedy before his eyes. This intriguing fantasy is presented in a distinctly realistic manner, where each successive scene grows increasingly dramatic. Amidst all this, countless questions and answers from the past and the present continue to shimmer like fireflies. In this powerful production, Amar Singh's nuanced portrayal of Ghalib is a memorable experience. Performances by Satish Tiwari, Dileep Srivastava, Chahat Jaiswal,

Upasana Tiwari, Ayush Kesarwani, and Ashutosh Manjusharan left a strong impression on the audience. Durgesh, Sanu, Shikhar, Ashish, and Satyavan kept the presentation dynamic and energetic. The production featured a refined lighting design by Toni Singh, while the evocative music that strengthened the narrative was composed by Amar Singh. Costumes were designed by Dalchand, and makeup by Hamid. Direction was by Pravin Shekhar, and production control by Alok Singh. The event was made possible through financial assistance from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

Task Force Constituted to Remove Illegal Encroachments from Govt. Land and No Man Land in Border



Brahraich

A crucial meeting was held in the Collectorate auditorium under the chairmanship of District Magistrate Akshay Tripathi to review the action being taken to remove illegal encroachments on government land and no man land located within a 0 to 15 kilometer radius of the Indo-Nepal international border. In the meeting, the District Magistrate directed the formation of a task force to remove illegal

encroachments located within the 0 to 15 kilometer radius of the Indo-Nepal international border and in the no man's land. He also directed that the illegal encroachments be removed as soon as possible and that a letter be sent to the Survey of India for a joint survey of the Indo-Nepal border. District Magistrate Tripathi also directed that a review meeting of the actions taken by the constituted task force be held every week, with all concerned

officers present, to ensure the progress of the action. On this occasion, the Chief Revenue Officer, Divisional Forest Officer, Katarniaghata Wildlife Division, Brahraich, Commandant 42nd Battalion SSB, Commandant 59th Battalion SSB Nanpara, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Nanpara, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Mihipurwa, Circle Officer Nanpara, Circle Officer Motipur and Assistant Land Records Officer were present.

Students showcase their talent at science exhibition; modern models attract attention

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. A grand science exhibition was organized at Shrimati Indira Gandhi Inter College, Patel Nagar Akodha, with the aim of developing scientific thinking, innovation, and experimentation among children. A total of 76 attractive and informative models prepared by the students were displayed at the exhibition, which greatly impressed the attendees. The exhibition was inaugurated by the chief guest, Er. Amit Shukla, Lecturer, Government Polytechnic Barhgarh, Chitrakoot, by cutting the ribbon. On this occasion, a series of models based on various subjects related to science, environment, and engineering were displayed in the school premises. The students presented several modern and useful projects in a simple and interesting way, including electrolysis of water, microscope, volcano, human eye, water purification system, photosynthesis,



solar system, blood circulatory system, and JCB. While inspecting the exhibition, Chief Guest Er. Amit Shukla said that the role of science is extremely important in India's development journey. Science should not be limited to

laboratories and technical institutions, but it should become an integral part of our thinking, culture, and lifestyle. He said that in today's era, IT, innovation, and technology are being discussed on every platform, so it is necessary that



science should not be considered merely a means of career, but a strong foundation for nation-building. A scientific approach can make India a self-reliant and developed nation. The special guest and school principal, Saba Khan, said

in her address that science is not limited to producing AI specialists or IT engineers, but it is a process of finding new inventions and solutions based on knowledge. Such exhibitions increase the creative ability and confidence of

children. The young scientists participating in the exhibition showcased their talent brilliantly through their models and experiments. All the participating students were honored with medals and certificates by the chief guest, which boosted their enthusiasm and morale. At the conclusion of the program, the school principal, Amit Kumar Pandey, expressed his gratitude to the guests, teachers, and parents. The program was conducted by Pradeep Dwivedi. A large number of teachers, parents, and students were present on this occasion, including P.K. Tripathi, Santosh Yadav, Krishnanand Shukla, Shivam Verma, Sushil Singh, Ram Sundar Shastri, R.S. Yadav, Akhilesh Shukla, Priya Kushwaha, Pooja Mishra, Prachi Kesarwani, Ashish Shukla, Ganesh Shukla, Shailesh Pandey, Brijesh Patel, Ashok Kushwaha, Satyam Kushwaha, Krishna Kumar Dwivedi, Abhishek Pandey, Nagesh Vind, and Ashutosh Kushwaha.

Swami Vivekananda Shubhavirbhav Tithi celebrated with great pomp

Varanasi

According to the Indian calendar, today is Magh Krishna Saptami, corresponding to January 10th, at the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashram in Laxmi, Swami Vivekananda auspicious birth anniversary was celebrated with great pomp. The special morning Shodashopachar puja and havan were performed by Swami Nityakrishnananda under the able leadership of senior monk Swami Alokananda. Dr. Swami delivered a discourse on the Kathopanishad. Afterward, a musical drama based on the life of Swami Vivekananda was presented. In the evening religious gathering, Swami Dharanidharananda said that Swami Vivekananda punctured the balloon of Western superiority deeply ingrained in the Indian psyche and shattered the inferiority complex of Indians. He taught a tired, weak, exhausted and weak India to stand up courageously and be proud of its invaluable heritage. In his presidential address,



Swami Bhedatitananda, Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, said that the news of the Chicago Religious Conference hoisting the bright flag of Indian thought and Hinduism before religious leaders from around the world filled every Indian with pride. His lectures were widely presented at the Chicago Religious Conference and subsequently in many countries, including the United States. The 4-day long protest against the Coronavirus pandemic also played an important role in removing

Mission Nari Shakti Organized in India-Nepal Border Area, Women Take Pledge for Security and Self-Reliance

Brahraich

A Mission Nari Shakti program was organized at the Dev Sanskriti Gramoday Inter College, Rampur Rupaidiha campus, located in the India-Nepal border area, under the auspices of the district administration. The girls and women present at the program took a collective pledge for women safety, respect and self-reliance and committed to conducting a public awareness campaign to connect every household with the "Empowered Women-Prosperous State" campaign run by the Uttar Pradesh government. Certificates were awarded to the girls who performed exceptionally well by the school management and a collective pledge was also taken for the creation of a drug-free



society. Addressing the program, the chief guest, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Nanpara, Monalisa Johri, said that women power is national power. A public awareness campaign is being conducted for the safety, respect and self-reliance of women, so that every daughter and every mother can become safe and self-reliant. School manager and President of the Rule of Law Society Awadh, Sanjeev Srivastava Advocate said that an effective public awareness campaign is being conducted against the illegal drug trade in the border areas in coordination with social service and voluntary organizations, so that drug abuse can be completely eradicated. Station House Officer Rupaidiha, Ramesh Singh Rawat informed that expert counseling has been arranged to prevent domestic disputes, violence and suicides and a women cyber cell has been established at the police station premises, where effective action is being taken on complaints of cyberstalking and cyberbullying. MLA

representative Saurabh Verma and social worker Harihar called for implementing a special action plan to address regional problems and to provide speedy justice to the exploited and neglected people. Spokesperson Rajiv Srivastava appealed to the girls to get educated and trained and move forward. Kisan Parishad convener Shiv Poojan Singh highlighted the physical and mental harm caused by drug abuse and called upon people to join the "Poison-Free Farming- Drug-Free Village" campaign. Educationist Banaras Giri presented a devotional song, giving the message to stay away from drugs. The program was conducted by Principal Shubham Srivastava, while the vote of thanks was given by President Award recipient social worker Ayush Verma.

Woman Constable Priya Pandey provided detailed information about the Mission Shakti Center, Women's Help Desk, Women's Reporting and Counseling Center, Anti-Romeo Squad etc. Presiding over the program, Block Head of Nawabganj, Jai Prakash Singh said that the government is empowering society through the principles of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas" (Together with all, Development for all, Trust of all, Efforts of all). He provided information about Women Power Line 1090, Women Cyber Cell, Chief Minister Kanya Sumangala Yojana, Destitute Women Pension Scheme and other schemes. Many dignitaries were present at the program, including Kisan Parishad Block President.

Kala Sangam Cultural Evening at Magh Mela: Folk Art, Bhajans, and Dance Captivate the Audience



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. The Kala Sangam cultural evening, organized by the Culture Department of Uttar Pradesh under the Magh Mela, was held grandly at the "Ganga Pandal," Sector 3, Parade Ground. Performances of folk songs, classical music, folk dances, and traditional tunes mesmerized the audience.

Renowned artists from across the country added vibrant colors to both the stage and the audience with their amazing performances. The program began with a Ganesh Vandana (prayer to Lord Ganesha) by Hitesh Bhardwaj and his

team, renowned Bhajan singers from Lucknow. They captivated the audience with their renditions of compositions based on Kabir's Sufi philosophy, such as "Kuch Lena Na Dena Magan Rehna," "Man Laga Mera Yaar Fakir Mein," etc. In classical music, the eminent singer Professor Pandit Sahitya Kumar Nahar presented Raag Kalyan, Mishra Khamaj traditional tunes, and "Shri Ram Chandra Kripalu Bhajman" with a sitar ensemble. During this time, 10-year-old child poet Kaviraj Raghunandan captivated the audience by reciting a poem based on the bravery of Jatayu, the vulture king, titled



"Vesh Badal Kar Chali Dashanan, Parn Kutir Ke Dwar Khada." Renowned Bhajan singer Masoom Ali and his team from Varanasi won the hearts of the audience with their performances of Ganga songs and bhajans such as "Ganga Maiyya Sun Lo Arziyan Hamari," "Jai Bolo Raja Ram Ki," and "Jai Shiv Shankar vinashi." Ranjana Upadhyay and her team staged a dance performance in praise of Lord Shiva. Mala Sharma gave a splendid per-

formance of Kathak and folk dance. Dr. Menka Mishra, a classical music, the eminent singer Professor Pandit Sahitya Kumar Nahar presented Raag Kalyan, Mishra Khamaj traditional tunes, and "Shri Ram Chandra Kripalu Bhajman" with a sitar ensemble. During this time, 10-year-old child poet Kaviraj Raghunandan captivated the audience by reciting a poem based on the bravery of Jatayu, the vulture king

renowned folk and light music singer from Lucknow, mesmerized



the audience with her Ram bhajans and Sufi performances. Mala Sharma, a disciple of Pt. Arjun Mishra and Poornima Pandey, along with her team, staged the dance drama "Kevat Ke Ram." Kathak and folk dancer Anshika Tyagi from Lucknow won the hearts of both the stage and the audience with her performances of Rajasthani, Awadhi, and Haryanvi dances. In the cultural evening, renowned devotional singer Tripti Shakya and her fellow artists captivated the audience with their renditions of bhajans such as "Kabhi Ram Banke Kabhi Shyam Banke," "Satyam Shivam Sundaram,"

and others. The event was successfully hosted by Piyush Srivastava.

Present on the occasion were Shri Ashwini Patel, President of the Backward Classes Front, Kashi Province; R.P. Baghel, member of the Tourism and Culture Council; Subhash Chandra Yadav, Nodal Officer of the Culture Department; Ghulam Sarwar; Superintendent of Police Arvind Mishra; and Devendra Tripathi, an officer from the Lalit Kala Akademi, Lucknow. All the distinguished artists were honored with shawls and certificates of appreciation.

Divisional Commissioner Inspects Polling Station at St. Joseph Girls Inter College

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: Divisional Commissioner/Roll Observer, Mrs. Saumya Agarwal, on Sunday inspected the polling station at St. Joseph Girls Inter College, Mumfordganj, under Assembly Constituency-262, Allahabad North, as part of the special intensive revision campaign for electoral rolls. Upon arrival, she inspected the voter list and instructed the concerned BLOs (Booth Level Officers) to replace the photos of voters whose pictures were unclear in the voter list. She also directed that



necessary action be taken to include the names of all voters from families whose names are listed in different polling booths at a single

polling station. She said that if the name of any eligible voter is missing from the voter list or if there is a new voter, their Form-6 should be filled out along with the declaration and included in the voter list. She also said that if there is any error in the name, age, gender, etc., of any voter

in the voter list, Form-8 should be filled out along with the declaration for correction. If a voter's photo in the list is blurry, dark, too small, or very old, the latest photo of the concerned voter should be updated. If there are any discrepancies in the entries, Form-8 should be filled out along with the declaration for correction. The Divisional Commissioner also interacted with the voters present at the polling station. During the interaction, the voters stated that there were no problems in filling out Form-6 and Form-8 for any kind of correction. They also

mentioned that the BLOs were providing assistance. She inquired about the reading of the voter list from the BLOs present at the polling station, namely Geeta Kumari, Danpatti Verma, Kalawati, and Pradeep Kumar Mishra. The concerned BLOs and supervisor informed her that the voter list had been read aloud in the presence of the voters. During the inspection, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Sadar Singh, Assistant Electoral Registration Officer Ganesh Kanojia, supervisors, and BLOs were present at the spot.

Potato Production in the State Remains Strong

Uttar Pradesh is among the leading Potato-Producing states in the country. Potatoes are cultivated over an area of more than 600,000 hectares in the state and this year too, as in the previous year, a good yield of potatoes is expected. Due to surplus production, potatoes from Uttar Pradesh are supplied to other states of the country as well as exported abroad.

Administration on Alert Over Proposed Anti-Erosion Works in Sherpur Area, Site Inspection

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Ghazipur: On the instructions of the District Magistrate, the district administration and the Irrigation Department have accelerated preparations regarding the proposed anti-erosion works in the Sherpur area of the district. In this sequence, on Thursday, the Assistant Engineer of the Irrigation Department conducted an inspection of the identified site in the Sherpur area and reviewed the necessary arrangements. During the inspection, the Assistant Engineer examined the riverbank areas vulnerable to possible erosion and reviewed the action plan for the proposed works. He issued necessary directions to the departmental staff present on site, emphasizing that the anti-erosion works must be completed in a timely and quality-oriented manner so that villagers do not face any problems in the future. Sub-Divisional Magistrate Dr. Harshita Tiwari was also present at the inspection site. She stated that, in accordance with government directives, pub-



lic welfare-related works are being carried out on a priority basis. The anti-erosion measures will not only protect farmers' agricultural land but will also safeguard the rural population from potential damage. Other departmental officials and local staff were also present during the inspection. The officers discussed the availability of necessary resources and materials, as well as the preparatory steps required before the commencement of the work. The administration assured that no negligence will be tolerated in the execution of anti-erosion works and that regular monitoring will be ensured.

Voter List Reading Program Concluded, Public Reading Held

at Booths 150 to 157



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Ghazipur: In compliance with the instructions of the Honorable Election Commission of India, a successful voter list reading program was organized on Saturday, January 11, 2026, in the Mohammadabad Yusufpur tehsil area of the district. During this program, the voter list was publicly read aloud by Booth Level Officers (BLOs) at various polling stations. The main objective of the program was to ensure transparency in the voter list and to provide citizens with accurate information about their names, age, address, and other details. Under this program, the voter list was read sequentially at polling stations located at booths 150 to 157. The citizens present listened carefully to the list and verified their details. During the reading,

citizens were also given the opportunity to provide information regarding any missing names, errors, or necessary corrections in the voter list, so that necessary amendments could be made in a timely manner. The program witnessed active participation from the public. On this occasion, the Additional District Magistrate, Sub-Divisional

Magistrate, Tehsildar, Chairman of the Municipal Council, councilors, public representatives, and other dignitaries were present. The officials monitored the program, provided necessary instructions to the BLOs, and appealed to the general public for maximum participation. The officials stated that the voter list reading program is an

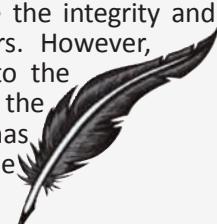
important initiative towards strengthening the democratic system.

It ensures that every eligible citizen's name is included in the voter list and that no eligible voter is deprived of their right to vote. The successful organization of the program sent a positive message of democratic awareness in the region.

Editorial

Civil servants are running India's regulatory bodies. It dilutes institutional independence

Looking back at India's reform story of more than three decades, it is worthwhile to recall that economic liberalisation of the 1990s had a few implicit assumptions of how an economy should function and grow on a sustainable basis. One of those assumptions followed from the government decision to allow the private sector to operate in areas that were hitherto monopolised by state-owned enterprises. Under such liberalisation, it was assumed that while the government would continue to frame policies for areas opened up to the private sector, the regulation or enforcement of those policies would be undertaken by independent regulators through rules framed by them. A classic example of this thinking was India's telecommunications sector that was opened up to the private sector in the early 1990s. This was followed by the setting up of the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of India or Trai a few years later. Subsequently, the business of basic telephone services, run in large parts of the country by a government department, was hived off to a newly created state-owned enterprise. Something similar, in varying degrees, happened in other areas such as the insurance, airports, and power sectors. In addition, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) was set up to regulate and adjudicate upon issues of market dominance and practices that undermined competition in various sectors. The principle was clear: Let the government frame the policy (and not run a business), while independent regulatory bodies could enforce the policy by framing necessary rules. Another implicit assumption behind such a separation of responsibilities between the government and the regulators was about who should steer those regulatory bodies. To impart autonomy and independence to these institutions and insulate them from government interference, the pool of talent for hiring key personnel was widened. Experts and private-sector professionals in related fields, along with even retired members of the judiciary (though under some pressure as was seen when the legislation for setting up the CCI was framed), were among those the government believed could be hired to head these regulatory institutions. Thus, the first chairperson of the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission was an economist. Trai was set up under the chairmanship of a retired judge and its next chairperson was a former banker. Even the first capital market regulator was a banker in the late 1980s, and the first chairperson of the insurance sector regulator was a former chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes. The first full-fledged chairperson of the CCI was a retired Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer. So, there was a mix of regulatory heads chosen from a pool of experts from both the government and the private sector. In spite of a few civil servants heading these institutions, the idea that continued to be pursued was to insulate regulation from the stranglehold or influence of the political executive. The third significant aspect of regulation in the early days of economic reforms was the framing of rules for appointing heads of regulatory bodies in a way that effectively ruled out conflicts of interest. Thus, a regulator would usually not be considered for another job in the government system after the completion of his or her term. The idea was that the regulator should be able to act freely and fairly without any expectation of future assignments from the government or the private sector. Indeed, one of the regulators under the law was, until recently, barred from accepting any government job after having served in that regulatory post. These were guardrails to preserve the integrity and independence of regulators. However, the situation with regard to the last two assumptions behind the regulatory framework has changed significantly in the last few decades.



Can A 'Technocrat' Fix All That's Wrong With BJP In Kerala?



On June 9, 2024, as the Modi 3.0 government was set to swear in, Rajeev Chandrasekhar came up with a cryptic tweet: "Today, curtains down on my 18-year stint of public service, of which three years I had the privilege of serving with PM Narendra Modi's Team Modi 2.0. I certainly didn't wish to end my 18 years of public service as a candidate who lost an election, but that's how it has turned out". The tweet was deleted after a day, and the amended version conveniently laid the blame for the confusion on an "intern". It was an emotional response, a mark of Chandrasekhar's utter disappointment with not finding a place in Modi 3.0. It also signified how the 'technocrat' was not a run-of-the-mill politician who believed in rehearsed or curated responses. Less than a year since then, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) high command has now sprung a surprise by naming Chandrasekhar as its new Kerala state president. By no means was Rajeev Chandrasekhar the frontrunner. Incumbent K. Surendran, who overstayed his term by two years, was tipped to get another year's extension, until the assembly elections in the state in 2026. There were other contenders too, such as firebrand Sobha Surendran and veteran MT Ramesh. Even conventional wisdom suggested that social engineering compulsions would go against Chandrasekhar, a Nair hailing from Thrissur. With the two Malayalis in Modi's third ministry being a Nair and a Syrian Christian—Suresh Gopi and George Kurian—an

Ezava/Hindu OBC candidate would've been the more practical option. But the high command had enough reasons to pick Chandrasekhar. The BJP in Kerala is a divided house with multiple factions, and none of the frontrunners would have been able to function smoothly on account of internal dissension. Even K. Surendran's five-year term was marred by friction with the PK Krishnadas-led faction, as well as his running feud with Sobha Surendran. The BJP leadership reckons that Rajeev Chandrasekhar can carry all the factions together. He is not a natural politician, but the central leadership deems that this very characteristic will become Chandrasekhar's USP. It is very much a repetition of the 'K. Annamalai' experiment in Tamil Nadu.

True, Chandrasekhar's acceptability cuts across factions. But there are various other considerations at play. For all the gains it made elsewhere, the BJP has hardly had any electoral impact in Kerala, despite a steady rise in vote share. Even after faring reasonably well in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, cornering nearly 20% votes and Suresh Gopi's win from Thrissur, it did badly in the Palakkad by-election last November. That loss probably

put paid to Surendran's hopes to stay on until the assembly polls, as he had turned the issue into a battle of prestige. The central leadership also cannot quite understand why the BJP does so poorly in a state where the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has the second-largest network of shakhas (branches) in the country. For a long, the RSS in Kerala had been deeply involved in the functioning of the state BJP, though the party's ideological mentor has taken a backseat in recent times. This was meant to afford more autonomy to the state party president, but it ultimately culminated in RSS organising secretary K. Subash's resignation, with the Sangh not naming a replacement in his stead for an extended period.

Now, Rajeev Chandrasekhar's appointment is likely to be followed by the RSS naming an organising secretary to assist the new president in his functioning. The last time the high command named an out-of-the-box candidate as state president was in the run-up to the 2016 assembly polls, when veteran Sangh leader Kummanam Rajasekharan, whose hardliner image and association with the Nilakkal protests of 1982

had proved to be a baggage for the party in the past. The central leadership also believes that Chandrasekhar can cater to sections of Kerala's aspirational middle class that are yearning for change and are unhappy with both the ruling Left government and the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF).

Since Chandrasekhar doesn't fit the mould of a regular politician, he may be able to connect better with this class and some increasingly 'apolitical' sections of voters that support, say, a Shashi Tharoor. In many ways in fact, it was the spirited contest that he put in against Tharoor in the Lok Sabha election in Thiruvananthapuram, despite being a late entrant, that may have propelled Chandrasekhar to the coveted position today. Giving a tough fight to Tharoor, a lot of people were left wondering whether Chandrasekhar could have emerged victorious had he been pencilled in sooner. "Ini Karyam Nadakkum" ('Now things will move') was Chandrasekhar's campaign slogan. This may well be called Chandrasekhar's second coming in Kerala politics. Contrary to what many may believe, the contest in Thiruvananthapuram wasn't his initiation in state politics, even if he was based in Bengaluru until then. Much before that, he had been a key mediator for getting the Bharat Dharma Jana Sena (BDJS), affiliated to the Ezava community outfit Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNP), to join the National Democratic Alliance

(NDA) in 2016. That is when Chandrasekhar was named the NDA's vice-chairman for Kerala, despite being a Rajya Sabha MP from Karnataka. Now, he may be expected to act as a bridge to the Christian clergy and cater to their grievances. The Christian community in Kerala has traditionally stood with the Congress, although cracks have begun to appear in recent times. Chandrasekhar may be expected to utilise issues such as the controversy surrounding the Munambam suburb of Ernakulam, where some 600 Christian and Hindu families are protesting against the Wakf Board's claim over the area. Notably, Chandrasekhar was a key figure in getting veteran leader PC George to merge his splinter party with the BJP. Shone George, the latter's son, is also expected to emerge as an important leader during Chandrasekhar's term. It would also be remiss not to mention Chandrasekhar's ownership of Asianet News, which has consistently topped BARC (Broadcast Audience Research Council) ratings for Malayalam news channels. He is the majority shareholder of the news channel through the holding company Jupiter Capital. While some BJP leaders think that with the channel maintaining an independent editorial line Chandrasekhar's business interests may backfire on him, that could be a thin reading of the situation. This view got amplified recently when he had to tweet an apology on account of the channel's alleged slighting of the Maha Kumbh on a news show.

Why's Turkey erupting for Ekrem Imamoglu?

He's the biggest threat to Erdogan yet

In Turkey, the vox populi is rising once again, reminiscent of the Gezi uprising that occurred 12 years ago. After a week of continuous protests in multiple cities—against the arrest of Istanbul mayor Ekrem Imamoglu—authorities have put a ban on gatherings and detained close to 2,000 individuals. The unlawful and unconstitutional arrest of Imamoglu is the culmination of over two decades of political erosion under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's increasingly autocratic governance. It has systematically undermined democratic institutions, silenced dissent, and played up the Islamist agenda internationally, particularly on the matter of Kashmir. Now, in the streets of Turkey's major cities, thousands of people, mostly students and youth, are pushing back against Erdogan, and their defiance is growing louder by the day. At the heart of this unrest lies the struggle for Turkey's political future—and the figure leading this charge—Ekrem. Imamoglu, a calm and charismatic mayor, was arrested

under politically motivated charges of corruption and embezzlement—accusations that many see as a pretext for silencing a rising political star. His arrest was an absurd spectacle. Taken from his walk-in closet while calmly adjusting his tie, Imamoglu was detained merely hours before he was set to be nominated as the presidential candidate by Turkey's Opposition in the 2028 elections. For a leader with immense support across Turkey, this act of political repression has galvanised protests not just in Istanbul but across the nation. But why has one figure—mayor of Istanbul since 2019—become the focal point of such a significant crisis. Obscurity in 2019, defeating the candidate supported by Justice and Development Party (AKP) by 13,000 votes—when no one thought he could. Before Imamoglu, conservatives from the AKP had ruled Istanbul for 25 years. Erdogan himself owes the foundations of his political career to his mayoralship of Istanbul in the 1990s.

BJP has a new Muslim strategy up its sleeve. Saugat-e-Modi isn't just about Bihar election

This Ramadan, a quiet gesture from the Narendra Modi government has stirred conversation. Eid kits for 32 lakh underprivileged Muslims, described as a goodwill initiative timed with the holy month. The offering appears festive, including familiar Eid ingredients such as dry fruits, semolina, vermicelli and sugar. The kits also include kurta-pyjamas for men and suit fabrics for women, all neatly packaged to reach Muslim households before Eid. At first glance, it appears to be a thoughtful cultural outreach by the Bharatiya Janata Party, an attempt to bring warmth and festivity into homes that might otherwise go without. But as with most things in Indian politics, the surface is rarely the whole story. The move hasn't gone unnoticed by political observers. Why this sudden and massive outreach to Muslims—by a party that has so far built much of its narrative on distancing itself from appeasement politics? This is the same BJP whose leaders have routinely criticised political opponents for attending Iftar parties, framing such gestures as opportunistic pandering. And yet, here we are, with the ruling party preparing curated Eid hampers not just for a symbolic few but for over 30 lakh Muslim households.

For many, the question is not whether the gesture is kind—but why now, and why like this? The BJP's 'Saugat-e-Modi' kits have not only surprised political commentators but also drawn scathing remarks from the Opposition. For some, it's a clear contradiction of the BJP's usual stance on such gestures. But for political analysts watching the timing closely, the move seems less like a change of heart and more like a strategic calculation—with Bihar in mind. The upcoming Bihar assembly election has raised concerns within the BJP that rising Opposition

momentum could impact not just the party, but also its key allies—Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United), Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), and Jitan Ram Manjhi's Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular). In that light, the Eid outreach feels less like an act of cultural generosity and more like a political buffer—an attempt to soften the blow in a state where coalition math can shift quickly. That analysis may hold some truth—but it also seems to overlook the broader outreach pattern the BJP has been steadily building, particularly toward poor Muslims, Pasmanda communities, and Muslim women. Over the past few years, the party has made targeted efforts to create an opening within sections of the Muslim electorate long seen as distant. In the 2023 urban local body elections in Uttar Pradesh, the BJP went as far as fielding Pasmanda Muslim candidates—a move once considered politically unthinkable. Of the 395 Muslim candidates it fielded, 54 went on to win. These numbers may seem modest when seen in the larger national context, but they speak to a subtle shift in the party's approach.

One that goes beyond gift boxes and hints at reimagining of BJP's political strategy—at least on the surface. BJP's effort to engage with Pasmanda and poor Muslims isn't new. In UP, Danish Ansari, a Pasmanda Muslim, was appointed as Minister of State for Minority Welfare, Muslim Waqf, and Haj in Yogi Adityanath's second cabinet—which was seen by many as a symbolic but politically significant move. The party and its spokespersons often claim that it was the BJP that made APJ Abdul Kalam the President of India, citing it as proof of its inclusive credentials. Added to this are a number of welfare schemes that directly

Trump should withdraw USCIRF's authorisation. It's interfering in India's domestic governance

In a strongly worded statement, Government of India has condemned and refuted the findings of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom report as "biased and politically motivated, and continuation of persistent attempts to misrepresent isolated incidents and cast aspersions on India's vibrant multicultural society which reflects USCIRF's deliberate agenda rather than a genuine concern for religious freedom". Though this is not the first time such reports have painted India as a coun-

try highly intolerant of its religious minorities, the March 2025 report is the first time a recommendation has been made for India to be designated as "country of particular concern". It alleges that minorities in India are facing 'deteriorating treatment'. Fifteen other countries, including Afghanistan, Russia, China, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, have been found to be treating their respective minorities badly. Three aspects of this report should be of concern to New Delhi, and it should be brought to

the attention of those the report is supposedly submitted to. The first is the report's mention of the assassination of separatist Sikh elements in Canada posing as members of the Sikh religious community and the alleged attempt on the life of another Khalistani separatist. "The Indian government also continued to expand its repressive tactics to target religious minorities abroad, specifically members of the Sikh community and their advocates... International reporting and intelligence

ment corroborated allegations linking an official in India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and six diplomats to the 2023 assassination attempt of an American Sikh activist in New York," the report has said. It's important to note that these radical elements do not represent the Sikh community. While the Government of India has categorically rejected the allegation, the Canadian government and the prosecuting authorities in the then Biden dispensation initiated legal actions against Indian officials.

Special Hindi Workshop Organised at NTPC Auraiya on World Hindi Day

Auraiya. to promote the effective use, development and wider adoption of Rajbhasha Hindi in official work, a special Hindi workshop was organised at the NTPC Auraiya Project on the occasion of World Hindi Day.

World Hindi Day is observed every year on January 10 to highlight the global significance of the Hindi language and to encourage its promotion and effective use in official communication. In this context, NTPC Auraiya organised a special Hindi workshop on January 9, 2026 aimed at strengthening the use of Hindi in administrative and official functions. On this occasion, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Mishra, APS Rashtrapati Bhawan was invited as the guest speaker. The workshop was conducted in two sessions. The first session was held in the Project Head Conference Hall of the Administrative Building under the chairmanship



of Mr. Shubhashish Guha, Project Head, NTPC Auraiya. Heads of departments and senior officers participated in this session. The second session took place at the Employee Development Centre, where a large number of NTPC Auraiya employees participated with enthusiasm. During his insightful address in both sessions, Dr. Mishra elaborated on the importance of Rajbhasha Hindi, its historical evolution, global presence, and its effective use in government correspondence. He stated, "Hindi is not only a powerful global language, but also the soul of India." Emphasising simple, pure and effective Hindi writing, he expressed

pride in the language and said, "Rajbhasha Hindi is not only our identity, but also the soul of our thoughts and work culture. Let us all adopt Hindi with pride in our daily official work and contribute to building a prosperous India." The workshop provided participants with a new perspective, motivation and practical knowledge regarding the Hindi language. Participants of both sessions were greatly benefited by the programme. All heads of departments and a large number of employees were present during the workshop. The programme was efficiently conducted by Alok Adhikari Manager (Human Resources-Rajbhasha).

Car Occupant Shot at in Auraiya, Police Form Teams to Nab Accused: ASP

Auraiya

A youth travelling in a car was critically injured after unidentified assailants opened indiscriminate fire at him on Saturday afternoon near the Dibiyapur canal bridge under the Sadar Kotwali area of Auraiya district. The injured youth was immediately rushed to the district hospital, where his condition remains serious. According to police, the incident occurred when two unknown attackers arrived on a motorcycle and fired multiple rounds at Ashutosh Tiwari, son of late Rajkumar Tiwari, a resident of Karampur. Ashutosh sustained gunshot injuries, while his companion alerted the police. In his statement to the



police, the injured Ashutosh Tiwari said that his car had been parked at a Tata agency on Dibiyapur Road for an insurance claim. He alleged that an employee of the agency called him, claiming that the vehicle had been repaired. However, upon reaching the agency with a companion, he found that the

car had not been fixed. Ashutosh stated that while returning in his car, the attackers opened fire on him near the canal bridge. He termed the incident a conspiracy and further alleged that police personnel stationed nearby left the area after hearing the gunshots instead of responding to the situation.

Upon receiving information, City Circle Officer Ashok Kumar and Kotwali in-charge Rajkumar Singh reached the spot along with police teams and questioned the injured youth. Additional Superintendent of Police Alok Mishra said that a caller named Gopal had informed Dial 112 that two unidentified persons abused and shot the victim. The injured youth was immediately shifted to the hospital for treatment. ASP Mishra added that Ashutosh has provided details regarding the attackers. The Superintendent of Police has constituted three special teams to trace and arrest the named accused. He assured that the case would be solved at the earliest.

Efforts for quick redressal of the problems of the complainants by organizing Police Station Solution Day

Bhadoli

According to the intention of the government, in order to provide speedy justice to the complainants, in order to organize Police Station Redressal Day every Saturday, Police Station Redressal Day was organized at all the police stations of the district on Saturday. The problems of the complainants were heard under the direction of District Magistrate Shailesh Kumar and Superintendent of Police Abhimanyu Manglik. By organizing Samadhan Divas at all the police stations, the police team along with the administrative team at the respective police stations heard the problems of the public and resolved them with the presence of revenue personnel. Listening seriously to the complaints received during the public hearing, all the applications related to the Police Department were



posed on the spot and instructions were given to the concerned for quality and timely disposal of all the applications related to the Revenue Department. After listening to the complaints of the public, necessary instructions were given to the concerned officers to resolve the cases jointly by police and revenue teams in all the land related cases, so that the complainants do not have to wander separately and the cases can be resolved quickly and justly. During the Police Station Solution Day organized today, special emphasis was laid on

North Central Railway Shines at Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar 2025

The North Central Railway (NCR) marked a significant milestone today at the Yashobhoomi Convention Centre, New Delhi, as it was honored with top organizational and individual awards during the Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar-2025 ceremony. The awards, which represent the highest annual honor in Indian Railways, were presented by the Minister of Railways, Ashwini Vaishnaw. In a proud moment for the zone, Naresh Pal Singh, General Manager/NCR, along with Satendra Kumar, PCSTE/NCR, received two prestigious organizational trophies: the Telecommunication Efficiency Shield and the Signal Efficiency Shield. These awards recognize NCR's outstanding performance in maintaining high safety standards and implementing cutting-edge communication technology across its network.

Individual Feats of Excellence

The ceremony also celebrated the exceptional contributions of five NCR personnel whose dedication has set new benchmarks for the Indian Railways: Ashutosh Sharma, Dy Financial Advisor & Chief Accounts Officer was honored for his masterful financial management during the high-pressure Mahakumbh operations. His meticulous scrutiny of works totaling nearly 50 Crore led to the successful recovery of approximately 7 Crore, showcasing his commitment to fiscal integrity and organizational efficiency. In the realm of infrastructure, Kush Gupta, Deputy Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer (Dy. CSTE) was recognized under the category of "Completion of Projects in Record Time." His professional expertise and leadership were instrumental in executing critical signal and telecom projects ahead of schedule, significantly enhancing the zone's operational capacity. The technical brilliance of Dhananjay Kumar Singh, Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer (Prayagraj) was highlighted for his strategic planning during the Mahakumbh. He managed the maintenance of over 150 rakes across multiple locations including Jhansi, Gwalior, and Agra. His comprehensive "zero-detachment" strategy ensured that no coach was removed for maintenance during the massive event, ensuring seamless passenger travel. Safety and alertness remained at the forefront of



the honors. Sushmita, Senior Assistant Loco Pilot (Prayagraj Lobby), received the award for her heroic presence of mind while operating the Banaras-Agra Cantt Vande Bharat Express. By identifying a delayed green signal at a road-traffic interface and taking immediate emergency action, she successfully averted a major accident. Similarly, the dedication of the "foot soldiers" of the railway was recognized through Parvat, A Trackman from Jhansi. During routine patrol under sensitive circumstances, he detected unsafe track conditions and alerted the administration immediately, preventing a potential untoward incident through his unwavering vigilance.

The Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar continues to serve as a powerful motivator for the railway workforce. The achievements of North Central Railway this year stand as a testament to the zone's culture of professionalism and its mission to provide a safer, faster and more efficient transport experience for the nation.

Free health camp by Sushruta Surgery and Cancer Clinic

Bhadoli

There is no need to worry about wandering from door to door due to serious illnesses or moving to big cities and paying huge sums of money for treatment. Now it is easy to get treatment for serious diseases in your city Bhadoli itself. For the first time in the city, a free health camp is being organized on January 11 from 11 am to 4 pm in the context of various diseases including successful treatment and operation of oral cancer, breast lump and ovarian cancer. Giving the above information, Dr. R. Sinha MBBS, MS S U R G I C A L O N C O L O G Y (Laparoscopic Surgeon, Head Neck and Breast Cancer Specialist) and Gold Medalist of Sushruta Surgery and Cancer Clinic said that a free health camp is being organized on Sunday, January 11 from 11 am to 4 pm. Singh told that in the camp, treatment and operation of hydrocele and gall bladder will be advised using binoculars and general techniques. There is treatment and operation of hernia and stones, treatment of stomach and all types of tumors, treatment of piles and warts in the anus, treatment of any kind of lump and pus in the body, formation of milk lump in the chest, treatment and operation of circumcision and chest tumor, treatment of thyroid, getting including oral cancer, breast lump and ovarian cancer will be successfully treated and operated. Shri Dr. Sinha said that such a camp is being organized for the first time in Bhadoli. If anyone has such a problem, then he should come to the free health camp to be held on January 11 from 11 to 4 pm and get the problem solved.



Committee Officials Extend New Year Greetings to SHO

Bahraich

Under the leadership of Santosh Kumar Mishra, the representative of the President of Adarsh Samaj Seva Samiti committee officials paid a courtesy visit to the Station House Officer of Rupaidia Police Station, Ramesh Singh Rawat. On this occasion, the committee officials presented the Station House Officer with the committee calendar and a pen-diary, extending their heartfelt greetings and best wishes for the New Year 2026. Station House Officer Rawat welcomed all the officials and expressed his gratitude for the New Year wishes. He said



that the New Year brings new resolutions, new energy, and new opportunities. He urged all the residents of the area to play their important role in the overall development of the country with a positive mindset and strong commitment. After the program, the newly appointed officials of the committee were presented with ID cards by the Station House Officer, who also extended his best wishes to them. Sher Singh Kasodhan, Ramesh Singh, Vinod Giri, and others were present on this occasion.

DM and SP Hear Public Grievances at Samadhan Diwas in Kudarkot



Auraiya

District Magistrate Dr. Indramani Tripathi and Superintendent of Police Abhishek Bharti heard public grievances during the Samadhan Diwas organised at Kudarkot Police Station. They personally received applications from complainants and took cognisance of the problems raised. The District Magistrate directed the concerned area in-charges and lekhpal to conduct on-site inspections of the issues received and ensure their lawful disposal within the stipulated

time frame. He emphasised that efforts should be made to resolve disputes in a manner satisfactory to both parties so that the solution remains permanent. During the programme, several complaints related to land disputes and illegal encroachments were received. Taking serious note, the District Magistrate instructed the concerned Station House Officer and lekhpal to resolve the complaints after proper field verification and to keep the complainants duly informed about the action taken.

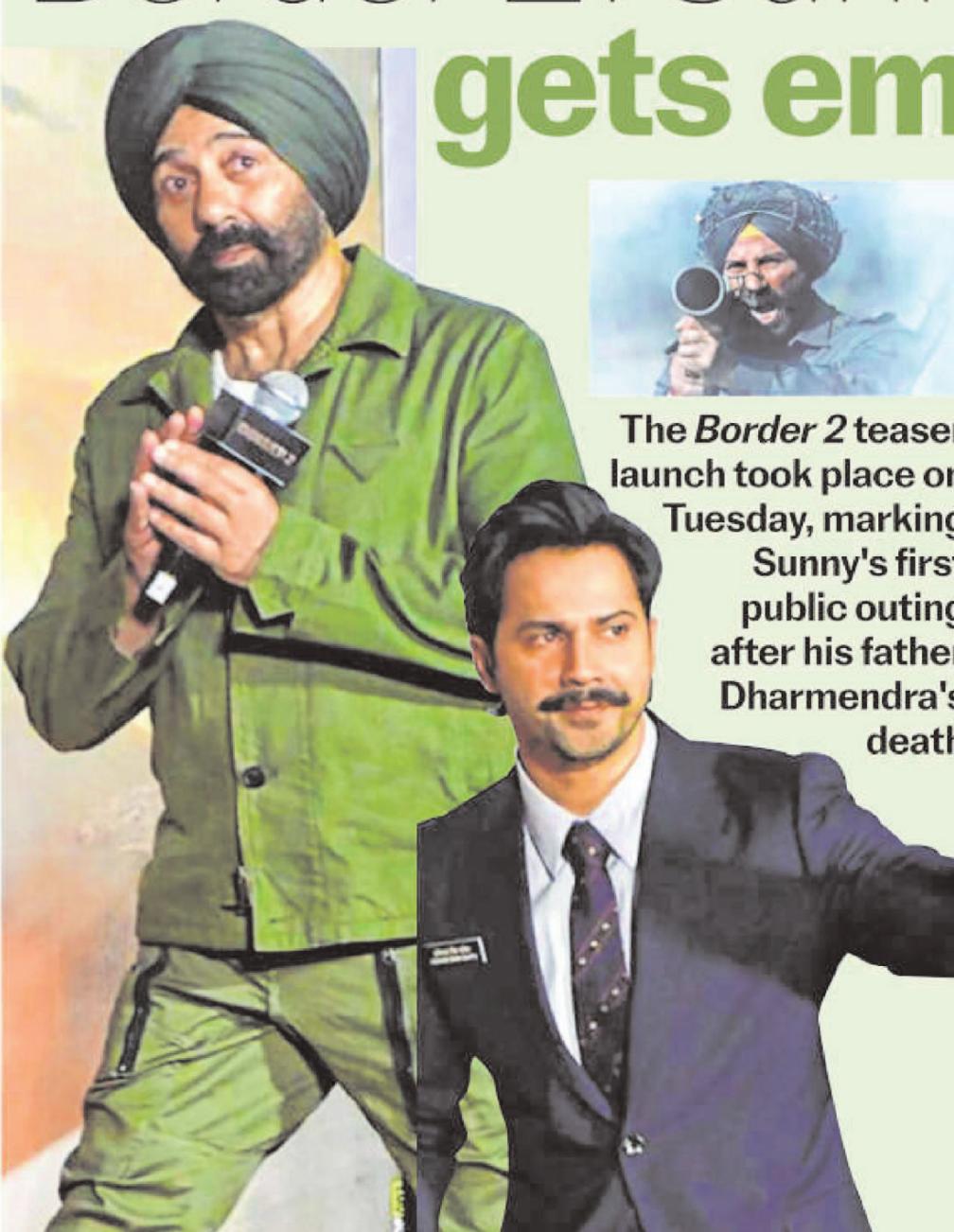
Subsequently, the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police conducted a surprise inspection of the under-construction Kudarkot Police Station building. They reviewed the progress and quality of the construction work and directed the executing agency to complete the police station building strictly in accordance with prescribed standards and quality norms. On the occasion, Bidhona Tehsildar Sharmanand, along with the concerned Station House Officer, lekhpal and complainants, was present.

Two Youths Arrested in Nepal with 47 Grams of Smack

Bahraich

Smack is being smuggled into Nepal from the bordering Indian territory. Despite the heavy deployment of security forces at the border, smack is still reaching Nepal from the Indian side. The Nepali police are apprehending youths with smack on a daily basis. DSP Chakra Bahadur Shah of Dang district said that all police stations in the district have been instructed to remain vigilant regarding drug trafficking. On Thursday night, police personnel were patrolling near Milan Chowk at the Ghorahi bus park when a motorcycle, number Lu80P6311, was spotted. Two people were riding on the motorcycle. The police team stopped the motorcycle driver, Sushil Gahatraj and the passenger, Ammar Nepali, both residents of Kholi village, Ward No. 14, Ghorahi Sub-Metropolitan City. Sushil was carrying a bag. Upon searching his bag, 47 grams of smack were recovered in a plastic packet. The DSP said that they were coming from the Nepalganj side on the motorcycle. Both have been booked under the NDPS Act and sent to jail.

Border 2: Sunny roars, gets emotional



The Border 2 teaser launch took place on Tuesday, marking Sunny's first public outing after his father Dharmendra's death



'Daiva element is sensitive & sacred': Rishab Shetty

Expressing his discomfort, actor-filmmaker Rishab Shetty said that while cinema often involves performance and dramatisation, the Daiva element in Kantara holds deep emotional and spiritual significance



Actor-filmmaker Rishab Shetty shared a measured yet firm response amid the controversy surrounding Ranveer Singh's imitation of a sacred Daiva scene from Kantara, stressing that certain onscreen moments rooted in faith and tradition should be treated with sensitivity. Speaking at a Behindwoods event in Chennai recently, Shetty addressed the issue without naming Ranveer directly, but his remarks come in the wake of the recent backlash over the Dhurandhar actor's mimicry of a realistic sequence from the film.

Expressing his discomfort, Shetty said that while cinema often involves performance and dramatisation, the Daiva element in Kantara holds deep emotional and spiritual significance.

"That makes me uncomfortable. While much of the film is cinema and performance, the Daiva element is sensitive and sacred. Wherever I go, I request people not to perform it on stage or mock it. It is emotionally deeply connected to us," he said.

Shetty further underlined the care and research that went into



portraying local customs authentically in Kantara: A Legend Chapter 1. He noted that the team made conscious efforts to respect traditions and rituals, not merely for cinematic effect but to help audiences understand their cultural importance.

According to him, these depictions were meant to convey the gravity and sanctity of the practices rather than turn them into spectacle.

The comments follow a controversy involving Ranveer, who recently issued a public apology after facing criticism for mimicking a scene inspired by Kantara during the closing ceremony of IFFL.

Performed in front of Shetty, the act referenced the iconic Chaundi sequence, which is associated with rituals dedicated to Goddess Chamundadevi.

In his apology, Ranveer clarified that his intention was to praise Shetty's performance and acknowledged the effort it takes to portray such a powerful scene. He also apologised to anyone whose sentiments may have been hurt.

However, the matter escalated further after the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (HJS) filed a police complaint, alleging that the performance hurt religious sentiments. The organisation claimed that the portrayal disrespected Chamundi Daiva, considered sacred by the Tulu community.

Aneet Padda's time on *Saiyara* wasn't just another film schedule... it was a mix of weather surprises, personal firsts and plenty of laughs



'We were running for our lives': Aneet Padda

Aneet Padda has been revisiting her entire *Saiyara* experience as the film heads for its world television premiere on December 20, 2025 at 8 pm on Sony MAX.

The actress, who grew up in Amritsar before making her mark in Bollywood with this Yash Raj Films romance, says one of her favourite memories from the shoot came from way up north in Manali. "I saw snow for the first time in Manali and I was very excited," she shares.

While shooting for the song *Tum Ho Toh* with Ahaan Panday, the rising heat

made even the basics tricky. "The sand was so hot that our feet were burning, and even though the crew kept pouring cold water, it would disappear within seconds," she recounts.

Things got tougher during a drone shot where she had to run across the beach. "I tripped and fell, and the heat was intense. Ahaan picked me up and we continued," she recalls, laughing as she adds, "I joke that even though the shot looks like we're happily running, we were actually running for our lives!!"

Directed by Mohit Suri and produced by Yash Raj Films, *Saiyara* became an instant crowd favourite, thanks to its emotional screenplay, riveting performances and a soundtrack for the ages.

Views

2025 Music Rewind

Looking back at which tracks had us grooving non-stop this year



Shreya Ghoshal



Karan Aujla

Taylor Swift

Ed Sheeran

As 2025 comes to a close, Amazon Music India dropped a year-end rewind with its Best of 2025 roundup, a power-packed reflection of the sounds, trends and musical moments that defined the year. Featuring favourites from Karan Aujla, Shreya Ghoshal, Anirudh Ravichander, Taylor Swift and many more, the play-

lists capture the moods and movements that shaped listeners across the country. *Sapphire* by Ed Sheeran and Arijit Singh takes the crown as Amazon Music's most-played track of 2025, leading the Best of 2025: India playlist. In Hindi music, *Saiyara* stood out as the year's breakout favourite, while Madhubbanti Bagchi, Shreya Ghoshal and Sonu Nigam emerged as the top Hindi artists of 2025.

On the global front, Taylor

Single Papa through Aisha's lens



'I had never thought about it so deeply before. Like most people, when I imagined parenting, I only thought of the cute parts: playing with my baby, watching them grow up.'

Aisha Ahmed

people, when I imagined parenting, I only thought of the cute parts: playing with my baby, watching them grow up.

But watching the show made me realise how difficult it really is. What stood out for me was the portrayal of a single father. I grew up with a single mother, and for me, that experience was wonderful. I never felt like I was missing out.

After watching *Single Papa*, I thought that even having a single father wouldn't be a bad thing. You see so much love in Gaurav's character for the baby. It definitely shifted my perspective and made me think differently about family structures.

Views

Three days after *Single Papa* dropped on OTT, actor Aisha Ahmed is still processing the wave of emotion the show has stirred

among viewers. Known for her grounded, relatable performances, Aisha plays Dr Shreya, a calm, non-judgmental presence in a story that explores single parenting, relationships, and emotional responsibility without preaching. In an exclusive interview with

she speaks about unexpected audience reactions, working with Kunal Kemmu, trusting silences as an actor, and why fulfilment on set matters as much as applause outside.

Q. Did portraying Dr Shreya challenge any preconceived notions you had about relationships or family?

A. It actually helped me more than it challenged me. Shreya is divorced, and Gaurav's character is also divorced and chooses to be a single parent. Because of my own life experiences, these things were always normal for me.

I never saw divorce as the end of someone's life, which society often tends to do. That openness really helped me play Shreya. She is not judgmental. She likes Gaurav for who he is: open-minded, kind, and charming. My personal experiences made it easier to bring that honesty to the character.

Q. Was there a scene that stayed with you even after the shoot wrapped?

A. Definitely the last scene, when Mrs Nehru takes baby Amul away. We were all very attached to the baby. Hami Ali Hamil, who played Amul. Everyone held him every day.

While shooting that scene, the entire set was emotional. Kunal actually broke down, and it felt very real. I remember looking at Suhail, who was my closest friend on set, and his tears just wouldn't stop. That scene stayed with all of us, even after watching the final cut.

Q. Your scenes with Kunal Kemmu rely more on chemistry than confrontation. How did that equation develop?

A. I met Kunal briefly during the readings and then directly on set. We weren't friends before, and that taught me something important: acting is acting.

I used to believe that personal bonding was necessary for chemistry on screen, but this experience proved otherwise. We just did our scenes sincerely. The writing was simple and honest, and we trusted that. I think that's what made it work.

Q. Do you think Indian storytelling has moved beyond stereotypes for women?

A. I think this shift started years ago, especially after the OTT boom. Even *Adulting* focused on women beyond clichés. Being modern was never reduced to just drinking or smoking.

Today, it also depends on the makers what story they want to tell. Sometimes, just letting a woman exist without explaining her choices is powerful.



Swift dominated as the year's top international artist. Punjabi music continued its explosive rise, with Karan Aujla and Ikky topping the Best of 2025: Punjabi playlist with their hit *For a Reason*.

Sonu Nigam

Age of retirement for Tata Trusts trustees is something to think about



When oil prices drop every month, US stocks go up

Delhi: One day after stepping down as a director, Vijay Singh, vice chair of Tata Trusts, was present at the Tata Sons board meeting. Tata Sons welcomed him to attend the meeting as a token of their thanks for his time on the board, but since he had already resigned, he was unable to vote on any matters on the agenda. Despite his status as a nominated director of Tata Trusts—the parent company of Tata Sons—Singh did not have any additional authority during board meetings. Nominee directors of Tata Trusts have far more clout than other directors at Tata Sons; they can veto acquisitions or capital expenditure programs worth more than Rs 100 crore, for example. But they still need the majority vote of the Tata Trusts trustees to make decisions. The only item on the agenda that did not pass was an investment plan that did not receive approval from Tata Trusts; all the others included Air India, Tata International, and Tata Capital. After the approval of the biggest shareholder is obtained, the proposal would be reviewed again at the subsequent board meeting

region. According to a White House source, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of Ukraine will depart the Oval Office early Friday after a contentious meeting with Trump. Following reports of falling yearly inflation and sluggish consumer spending in the latest statistics tracked by the Federal Reserve, U.S. Treasury rates hit multi-month lows. A drop of 2.93 points, or 0.34%, was recorded by MSCI's global stock index.

of Tata Sons. After Singh left, the two remaining nominee directors at Tata Sons are Noel Tata, chairman of Tata Trusts, and Venu Srinivasan, vice-chairman.

India resists full crypto framework, fears systemic risks

Delhi: A government paper reveals that India is considering not regulating cryptocurrencies but rather maintaining partial monitoring, due to concerns that integrating digital assets into the country's mainstream financial system could pose systemic dangers. According to the memo reviewed by Reuters, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) believes that it would be impossible to regulate cryptocurrencies in a way that effectively limits their dangers. The inauguration of U.S. President



Donald Trump has coincided with a rise in the price of bitcoin, the most valuable cryptocurrency by market capitalization, and a general improvement in the worldwide acceptability of cryptocurrencies. Stablecoins, a type of cryptocurrency that is backed by fiat currency and hence less susceptible to violent swings, have also been legalized in the US. Despite China's ongoing cryptocurrency ban, Reuters reported last month that the country is looking into a stablecoin.

Tata Capital's home financing records substantial growth



Govt allows companies to display revised MRP on old unsold packs

Delhi: Housing financing has been a consistent area of growth for Tata Capital, and the company sees this as a key component of its overall retail growth plan. Tata Capital Housing Finance is well-positioned to take advantage of structural opportunities in India's underdeveloped housing finance sector, as its portfolio expanded at a robust 33 percent compounded annual growth rate between FY23 and FY25. With an increase from ₹30,850 crore in FY24 and ₹22,100 crore in FY23, the home loan segment of the firm now accounts for ₹38,400 crore, or 17 percent, of Tata Capital's consolidated gross loan book as of March-end. This represents a gain of 74% over the past two years and a 24% increase over the past year, suggesting that

the demand for residential credit is still high and that the category is expanding. Tata Capital continues to

BUSINESS

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Adani group bans sanctioned ships at ports



Delhi: India's largest private port operator, Adani Group, has banned entry of tankers that are sanctioned by Western countries at all of its ports—sources said and documents show move that could hit Russian oil supplies for two Indian refiners that regularly get Russian oil delivered at Adani's Mundra Port in Gujarat. India is the biggest buyer of Russian seaborne oil, mostly shipped on tankers that are

sanctioned by the European Union, the US and Britain. HPCL-Mittal Energy, which operates a 226,000-barrels per day Bathinda refinery in northern Punjab, gets all of its crude supplies at the Mundra Port. The

port is also used by Indian Oil Corp, the country's biggest refiner, for oil imports. IOC gets crude supplies for its 10 refineries at multiple ports in India. Adani, IOC and HMEL had no immediate comment when reached out.

Gadkari says Mercedes-Benz wants to export 'made in India' cars

Delhi: According to Nitin Gadkari, India's minister of road transport and highways, Mercedes-Benz has told the government that it plans to increase production at its plant outside of Pune in order to fulfill its goal of exporting "Made in India" automobiles to

markets worldwide. The chairman of Mercedes, according to Gadkari, informed him that the production quality in India is strong, which has led the company to consider increasing manufacturing in the nation to fulfill the demands of worldwide

markets. "The chairman of Mercedes was telling me that they are going to look at increasing the productivity of Mercedes in India... And they want to export Mercedes from here to (markets) all over the world," Gadkari said.

at the Auto Retail

market.

Samsung partners with India R&D for next-gen phone speech AI



Delhi: Samsung is counting on its India research hub to drive a global push toward voice-first AI, putting its engineers at the center of the Galaxy AI ecosystem. At a media roundtable, Samsung R&D Institute India - Bengaluru (SRI-B) representative Mohan Rao said India is one of the company's main AI locations outside Korea. "When it will be voice-first relies on research discoveries. Current research is extensive," Rao stated. "We faced numerous hurdles in making AI models run in the gadget. Native platforms must develop and operate natural language ASRs well. We can then consider voice-only phones." Multiple ecosystem stakeholders say voice will be the main way consumers connect with AI. In an interview, India AI Mission CEO Abhishek Singh said the organization was creating voice-first AI models for Indian languages. Tech companies like Google and OpenAI will favor voice interfaces globally. Voice-first AI could help Samsung's phones stand out from competitors, as it sells its AI directly in consumer hardware.

Adani will spend 70,000 crore in Maharashtra; govt. inks five MoUs for 1.08 lakh



Delhi: Adani Enterprises Limited would invest 70,000 crore in Nagpur, Maharashtra, to establish a coal gasification and downstream derivatives complex. This MoU was signed with the state government. Project is projected to enhance state energy and industrial output and create 30,000 jobs.

The Maharashtra government signed five MoUs worth 1.08 lakh crore. Adani's investment tops. The com-

pany develops high-growth enterprises and spins them off as independent companies in mining, infrastructure (airports, roads, data centres, water management), solar manufacturing, defence, and edible oils. Adani Enterprises would invest ₹70,000 crore in the Integrated Surface Coal Gasification and Downstream Derivatives Project in Linga, Kamleshwar, Nagpur to provide next-generation energy solutions for Maharashtra.

EU to Give a Hand to India's Seafood Exports Following US Tariff

Delhi: After suffering under the US's harsh tariff regime, Indian seafood exporters are about to receive a vital lifeline in the EU. Shrimp exports, which were struck particularly hard by Washington's recent 50% tariff on Indian goods, could see an immediate 20%



increase, according to the Commerce Ministry. The European Union (EU) cleared

102 new Indian fishing operations for export this month, effectively eliminating all pending permissions, marking a significant milestone. With the listings in place, which encompass aquaculture units, sea-caught processing factories, and cold storage facil-

ties, all of India's main seafood exporters can now begin shipping to the EU. India sent \$1.1 billion worth of seafood to the European Union in FY24, making it the country's second-biggest seafood export market.

Ad exchange sues Google for monopolistic violations



Delhi: The advertising exchange PubMatic Inc. is suing Alphabet Inc.'s Google, claiming that Google has unlawfully monopolized the ad technology market and is seeking billions of dollars in damages. This is the second lawsuit that an advertising exchange has filed against Google in as many months. In April, a federal judge found that Google had unlawfully monopolized two important technology markets, namely ad exchanges and the tools used by websites to sell ad space, called ad servers. The lawsuit was filed in a federal court in Virginia. Another trial to determine whether

Google must divest portions of its advertising business to fix the unlawful behavior is scheduled to take place this month before the same Virginia judge who agreed with the Justice Department and a few states in April. The US Department of Justice has demanded that the corporation sell its AdX advertising exchange and enable its technology to communicate with competitors' systems without delay. Instead of selling off its assets, Google plans to integrate its advertising exchange with other technologies.

Amazon eyes bumper sales

Delhi: Amazon is preparing for an even greater surge in festive sales this year as a result of the reorganization of GST slabs, which would lower the prices of many consumer goods. This will increase spending by the salaried class, many of whom look for online offers when purchasing products, especially for expensive ones. Outside of ethnic clothing, which is the norm for festivals, the most purchased items during festivals tend to be smartphones, gadgets, and durables. We anticipate a greater increase in holiday sales compared to previous year. Regardless, consumers typically wait for sales to begin before making large purchases; however, this time around, the trend has quickened thanks to the GST cuts. Customers can expect to save a ton of money this holiday season because to merchants' enticing bargains and a drop in GST on millions of products, according to Saurabh Srivastava, VP of categories at Amazon India.

Briefs

VADODARA

Jurel replaces injured Pant in ODI squad



Dhruv Jurel on Sunday replaced an injured

Rishabh Pant in India's ODI squad for the three-match series against New Zealand. Jurel, who has been in stellar form in the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy, has joined the squad on Sunday. Pant suffered a side strain while batting in the nets on Saturday. "Wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant felt a sudden onset discomfort in his right lateral abdominal area while batting in the nets during India's practice session on Saturday afternoon at the BCA Stadium, Vadodara," BCCI said. "He was taken for MRI scans immediately and the BCCI Medical Team had a detailed discussion with an expert on his clinical and radiological findings. Pant has been diagnosed with a side strain (Oblique Muscle Tear) and is subsequently ruled out of the ODI Series."

RANCHI
Lancers win 3-1 against HIL GC

Jed Snowden came off the bench in the shootout to secure a 3-1 win for the Vedanta Kalinga Lancers against HIL GC after the two teams were locked 1-1 at the end of regulation time in the men's Hockey India League (HIL) here on Sunday. Ajeet Yadav (19th) and Alexander Hendrickx (23rd) scored for their respective sides in regulation time at the Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Astro Turf Hockey Stadium. The shootout was also a tense affair with both goalkeepers standing tall in goal. After conceding a goal on their respective first attempts, James Mazarelo and Jed Snowden denied the next two takers. Arthur Van Doren held his nerve for the Lancers.

BRISBANE
Sabalenka wins final in Brisbane

Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka has captured her second consecutive Brisbane International title, and 22nd overall, with a

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Mob. 9415235084, 9565333000**ODI SERIES | Kohli's 93 sets up India's nervy four-wicket win in 1st ODI against NZ, Harshit took 2 wickets and scored 29; Mitchell and Jamieson efforts in vain**

Virat, Harshit star in victory

VADODARA

Virat Kohli reigned supreme once again with a 91-ball 93 and skipper Shubman Gill hit 56 but India huffed and puffed before completing a nervy four-wicket win against New Zealand in the opening ODI of the three-match series here on Sunday.

In pursuit of 301, India were in complete control when Kohli departed in the 40th over but a flurry of wickets saw the home side going over the line with 306 for six in 49 overs.

Kohli fell a few runs short of what could have been his 54th ODI century when India needed 67 from 68 balls with seven wickets in hand. Ravindra Jadeja (4) and Shreyas Iyer (49) followed him soon in the dressing room, giving New Zealand a real chance to clinch the game.

However, KL Rahul (29 not out) put on 37 runs with Harshit Rana (29), and the remaining runs came in company of an injury-hit Washington Sundar (7 not out), aided by a few uncharacteristic dropped catches by the Kiwis towards the end.

It was Kyle Jamieson (4/41) who dragged New Zealand back in the game when all seemed lost, getting Kohli caught at mid-on to deny the India batting stalwart a deserving ton. He also cleaned up Iyer with an off-cutter and got rid of Jadeja.

Even as he fell a few runs short of a century, Kohli became the quickest to reach 28,000 runs in international cricket and now only the second behind the legendary Sachin Tendulkar, going past Sri Lankan legend Kumar Sangakkara.

New Zealand had posed an



India's Harshit Rana celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of New Zealand's Henry Nicholls during the first ODI at Kotambi Stadium in Vadodara on Sunday. PTI

at-par 300/8 but with Kohli in such imperious form, it never was enough especially with a depleted bowling attack.

If he didn't refrain from hitting over the top early on against South Africa, Kohli pulverised the Kiwis from the moment he arrived on the crease with a flurry of fours.

There was that trademark planted front foot for a majestic on-drive to pull behind the short fine leg for a four.

And if the 23-year-old Adithya Ashok was starstruck, Kohli pummelled boundaries off the leg-spinner to make another brisk start.

There was a stroke of luck involved too. Batting on a 'different level' by his own admis-

Scoreboard

New Zealand: D Conway b Rana 56, H Nicholls c Rahul b Rana 62, W Young c Rahul b Siraj 12, D Mitchell lbw b Krishna 84, G Phillips c Iyer b Yadav 12, M Hay b Krishna 18, M Bracewell run out (Iyer) 16, Z Foulkes b Siraj 1, K Clarke (not out) 24, K Jamieson (not out) 8 **Extras:** (W-7) 7
Total: 300-8 (In 50 overs) **FW:** 117-1, 126-2, 146-3, 170-4, 198-5, 237-6, 239-7, 281-8
Bowling: M Siraj 8-0-40-2, H Rana 10-0-65-2, W Sundar 5-0-27-0, P Krishna 9-0-60-2, Kuldeep Yadav 9-0-52-1,**India:** R Sharma c Bracewell b Jamieson 26, S Gill c Phillips b Ashok 56, V Kohli c Bracewell b Jamieson 93, S Iyer b Jamieson 49, R Jadeja c Kristian Clarke b Jamieson 4, KL Rahul (not out) 29, H Rana b Hay b Clarke 29, W Sundar (not out) 7
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