

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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

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## Briefs

KOLKATA

### Coal mine collapses in Asansol

Several people were trapped after a coal mine collapsed on Tuesday at Asansol. BJP MLA Ajay Poddar said a landslide reportedly took place in the mining area 12 BCCL border patch at around 7:45 am. Poddar also said that coal was being extracted through a rat-hole. "They were extracting coal from the rat-hole. This is a syndicate. Police and mafia are involved. It is the villagers who die," alleged Poddar. Heavy machinery, including earth-moving equipment, has been deployed to clear debris. Till the time of reporting, police could not ascertain the exact figures of people trapped under the debris.

—Aritra Singha

MUMBAI

### Snag hits Akasa Air flight to B'luru

Akasa Air deplaned passengers from a Bengaluru-bound flight at Pune airport on Tuesday due to a technical glitch in the Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, according to a source. The passengers were seated in the Boeing 737 MAX aircraft for nearly one-and-a-half hours before they were deplaned, one of the passengers who was on the flight told PTI.

**'JANA NAYAGAN'** | Rahul ups ante before TN polls, says PM will never succeed in 'suppressing voice of the Tamil people'

## 'Bid to block Vijay movie attack on Tamil culture'

NEW DELHI



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi attends golden jubilee celebrations of St Thomas English High School, in Nilgiris district, Tamil Nadu, on Tuesday

### SC to hear film producer's plea on Jan 19

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court is slated to hear on January 19 the plea filed by the producer of Vijay-starrer Tamil film "Jana Nayagan", challenging an interim order of the Madras High Court that stayed a single-judge direction to grant CBFC clearance to the movie. As per the cause list of the apex court, the matter is likely to come up for hearing on Jan 19. The bench is yet to be assigned. On January 9, the High Court stayed a single judge's order directing CBFC to immediately grant a censor certificate to "Jana Nayagan".

single bench's directive to the board to issue the film's certificate forthwith.

Vijay recently launched his political party, Tamila Vetti Kazhagam (TVK). Jana Nayagan, which is widely publicised as Vijay's final film before his full-fledged entry into politics, was slated for a Pongal release on January 9.

However, the film ran into last-minute hurdles after the Central Board of Film

Certification (CBFC) did not issue certification in time.

On January 9, the division bench's order came hours after Justice PT Asha directed the CBFC to give clearance to Jana Nayagan, setting aside the film board's directive to refer the matter to a review committee.

The first bench, comprising Chief Justice M M Shrivastava and G Arul Murugan, on an appeal filed by the CBFC,

### CBI calls actor again over Karur stampede

**New Delhi:** The CBI has summoned TVK chief and actor Vijay for second round of questioning on January 19 in connection with the Karur stampede case, officials said on Tuesday. Vijay, who was questioned at the CBI headquarters here on Monday for more than six hours, was asked to come again on Tuesday but the actor sought another date citing Pongal, they said. The CBI also questioned Tamil Nadu's former ADG (law and order) S Davidson Devasirvatham in the case on Monday.

granted an interim stay against the single judge's verdict.

Earlier, allowing the plea of KVN Productions seeking a direction to CBFC to issue a censor certificate, Justice Asha said once the board had decided to grant the certificate, the chairperson had no power to send the matter to the review committee.

The film board immediately preferred an appeal against the order.

## After taking dig at BJP, Cong holds meet with China team

Party says Khurshid's talks with CPC members took place at the request of visitors and with govt's nod

NEW DELHI



Communist Party of China's Sun Haiyan visits BJP HQ. Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong was also present. They met BJP delegation headed by party general secretary Arun Singh

### Chinese delegation calls on RSS general secretary Hosabale

**New Delhi:** A delegation of the Communist Party of China called on RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale here on Tuesday, sources said. The Chinese delegation met the RSS second-in-command here at 11 am at his office, and the meeting lasted for about an hour, the sources said.

"It was a courtesy call by them. The request for the meeting had come from the Chinese side," they said.

Sun Haiyan, Vice Minister of International Department of CPC, visited BJP head and that it held discussions with a BJP delegation headed by national general secretary Arun Singh.

The BJP posted over 80 messages on its "X" handle during the day but not one pertained to this meeting with the CPC delegation.

It also did not share the post by its foreign affairs department in-charge Vijay Chauthaiwale regarding the meeting. In the brief post, Chauthaiwale had mentioned that a delegation of CPC under the leadership of

social media handles, the Monday meeting between delegations of two of the world's largest parties was grossly underplayed.

The BJP also mentioned that the Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong had joined the delegation.

Singh also posted about the meeting saying "we discussed how to enhance communication and interaction between BJP and CPC".

## Security audit of mosques in Kashmir triggers row

SRINAGAR

Mutahida Majlis-e-Ulema (MMU), the largest conglomerate of Islamic religious organisations in Jammu and Kashmir, on Tuesday expressed deep concern and raised serious questions about the ongoing police exercise in the Valley seeking extensive and intrusive information regarding mosques, their management committees, imams, khatibs and individuals associated with places of worship and even their family members.

MMU has learnt that detailed multi-page forms are being distributed by the police seeking highly personal and sensitive information, including private identification details, family particulars, financial information, phone details, digital and social-media profiles, passport details, travel history and even

## 5 govt employees sacked in J&K over 'terror links'

SRINAGAR

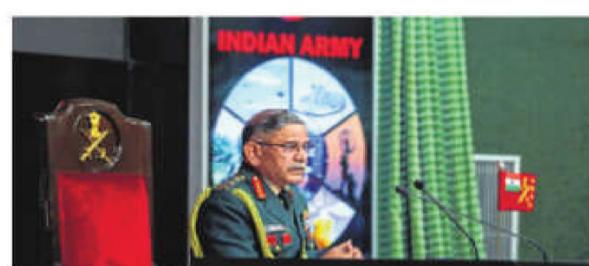
In a decisive move against the terror ecosystem, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has dismissed five government employees for alleged links to terrorist organisations, official sources said on Tuesday.

The number of dismissed government employees has risen to over 80, who were found involved in the ongoing militancy in Kashmir.

The latest set of terminated

## Any Pak mistake, Army set for ground offensive: Gen Dwivedi

NEW DELHI



Indian Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi at Annual Press Conference 2026 in New Delhi on Tuesday

Addressing the annual press conference of the Indian Army here, Gen Dwivedi said, "We had done major mobilisation (during Operation Sindo)... We are still fully prepared for ground offensives if Pakistan makes any mistake."

The past year saw a sharp rise in the number of armed conflicts worldwide. These global shifts underline a simple reality -- nations that stay prepared prevail. In this backdrop, Operation Sindo, India's calibrated, resolute

response to cross-border terrorism, demonstrated our readiness, precision and strategic clarity."

He mentioned that the situation along the North-western Front "remains stable, but needs constant vigil", adding that apex-level interactions, renewed contact and confidence-building measures are contributing to the "gradual normalisation" of the situation that has also enabled grazing, hydrotherapy camps, and other activities along the Northern Borders.

### K'taka Cong set to counter G-Ram-G

**Bengaluru:** Terming it as 'killing Gandhi's name', the Karnataka Congress has decided to initiate an intensive campaign against the 'G-Ram-G' programme, which is set to replace MNREGA. The Congress had a preliminary meeting on Tuesday to work out the modalities of the agitation, which would start from the grassroot level in the entire state.

—Vinay Madhava Gowda



### night-long protest

## For Sir, with love: Raj students in dharna to revoke transfer



JAIPUR

Annoyed by the transfer of a teacher, the students of a government school staged a sit-in protest on Monday evening at 4 PM.

When no one came to address their concerns, the students, with the help of parents, set up tents outside the school and spent the night at the protest site.

A number of other students also joined the protest on Tuesday morning.

The students said that the teacher, Shankar Lal Jat, has been posted in this school for

the last seven years and contributed a lot to the welfare of the school.

"Shankar sir is not just a teacher but a mentor who guides us like a parent. He arranged a flight from Jaipur to Delhi for five students who scored more than 90% in the 2025 board exams and bore the expenses for this trip himself," said the protesting students.

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The school has approximately 600 students who locked the school gates and continued their dharna on Tuesday as well. The students said that the protest will not end until the lecturer's transfer order is revoked.

Responding to the protest, block education officer Ashok Parik said the transfers are a departmental process, but students and villagers have been explained the situation. We are trying to resolve the issue through dialogue.

### Police to check on Bangladeshis: K'taka minister

**Bengaluru:** Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara has stated that Bangladeshi nationals are settling in Bengaluru as it is a peaceful city, and he has instructed the Karnataka Police Department to gather information in this regard. "They will look into the facts regarding where they are living and whether they possess documents. The probe will ascertain how and from where they obtained these documents," he said.

## Closing Ceremony of the Winter Session of the Girl Empowerment Mission Organized by Meja Urja Nigam Meja



Meja

On 12-01-2026, Meja Urja Nigam organized the closing ceremony of the Winter Session 2025-26 of the Girl Empowerment Mission under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative at the auditorium of St. Joseph School. The program commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by the Chief Guest, Shri G Srinivasa Rao, CEO, MUNPL. On this occasion, he extended his best wishes to all and encouraged the girls to pursue education and move forward confidently in life. The welcome address was delivered by the DGM (HR), Shri Ajay Singh. The event was

attended by senior officials of Meja Urja Nigam, office bearers of Aparajita Mahila Samaj, GEM girls, and their parents. During the program, the GEM girls presented cultural performances including dance and songs. The Chief Guest also distributed mementos to all the participating girls. The objective of this one-week workshop was to enhance the creative and artistic talents of the girls, build their self-confidence, and promote awareness towards social equality. Meja Urja Nigam launched the Girl Empowerment Mission in 2019, inspired by the Government of India's 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' initiative. The

Girl Empowerment Mission organized by Meja Urja Nigam aims to provide greater opportunities to girls and eliminate gender inequality. Through this initiative, girls are made aware of important areas such as education, health, self-defense, and life skills. Under the Girl Empowerment Mission at Meja Urja Nigam, every year 40 girls from project-affected villages are provided one month of training through a summer residential workshop. After completion of the training, four girls are selected and provided free quality education at the Meja Urja Nigam school, studying shoulder to shoulder with other students.

## No Entry for Heavy Vehicles at Magh Mela; 12 Major Checkpoints Established Outside the City



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj:** The administration has made strict arrangements to ensure smooth traffic flow during the main bathing festivals of the Magh Mela. To avoid congestion and traffic jams in the area, 12 major no-entry points have been designated for heavy vehicles outside the city. All heavy and light vehicles, except those associated with the Magh Mela, will be diverted to alternative routes before entering the Prayagraj city limits. According to the list released by the administration, Mandar Mod, Thana Paredi Gate, Police Chowki Bamrauli, Sahso Chowk, Habus Mod, Soraon Bypass, Nawabganj Bypass, Malak Harhar Chowk, TP Nagar Katra, Rampur Chowk, Gauhania Gharpur, and 40 Number Gumti have

been designated as no-entry points. Diversion of Heavy Vehicles on Different Routes Heavy goods vehicles coming to Prayagraj from Delhi, Kanpur, Fatehpur, Kausambi, Lucknow, Raebareli, Pratapgarh, Ayodhya, Sultanpur, Jaunpur, Varanasi, Bhadohi, Mirzapur, and Rewa (Madhya Pradesh) will be diverted before entering the city. These vehicles will be safely directed to their destinations via alternative routes including Raebareli, Pratapgarh, Jaunpur, Varanasi, and Banda. The return journey will also be conducted through these designated routes.

Traffic diversions will be in effect during the main bathing festivals. The administration has also released the traffic diversion schedule for the major bathing

festivals: Makar Sankranti (January 15, 2026) Diversion: From 12:01 AM on January 14 to 12:00 AM on January 16 Mauni Amavasya (January 18, 2026) Diversion: From 12:01 AM on January 17 to 12:00 AM on January 19 Basant Panchami (January 23, 2026) Diversion: From 12:01 AM on January 22 to 12:00 AM on January 24 Maghi Purnima (February 1, 2026) Diversion: From 12:01 AM on January 31 to 12:00 AM on February 2 Maha Shivaratri (February 15, 2026) Diversion: From 12:01 AM on February 14 to 12:00 AM on February 16. The administration has appealed to motorists to follow the designated diversion routes and cooperate with the traffic police so that devotees do not face any inconvenience during the Magh Mela.

## Mobile Snatching Gang Busted: Three Suspects Arrested with 28 Stolen Mobile Phones and Two Bikes

## Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj:** The Dhoomanganj police station, in a joint operation with the district SOG and surveillance team, has busted a gang involved in mobile phone snatching. Police arrested three members of the gang and recovered 28 stolen mobile phones and two motorcycles used in the crimes. According to the police, acting on case number 15/2026 registered at Dhoomanganj police station, the three accused were arrested on Monday near the Nehru Park ruins. The arrested individuals have been identified as Suhail alias Jigar (24 years), Sahil Hasmi (23 years), and



Aneesh (19 years). All three are residents of different police station areas in Prayagraj. Based on the interrogation and

recoveries, the police have added sections 317(2), 338, 336(3), and 340(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita

(BNS) to the case.

Police said the gang used to snatch mobile phones from people walking on the

streets in different parts of the city and then flee. 28 Mobile Phones and Two Bikes Recovered Police recovered a total of 28 mobile phones of various companies, including Vivo, Redmi, Samsung, Oppo, Realme, Motorola, and OnePlus, from the accused. Two motorcycles were also recovered, one with a fake number plate and the other without a number plate. Criminal History of the Accused The arrested accused, Sahil Hasmi, already has more than half a dozen cases registered against him in various police stations of Prayagraj related to robbery, theft, and recovery of stolen goods.

Suhail alias Jigar also has previous criminal cases registered against him. This is reportedly the first registered case against Aneesh. Key Role of the Police Team The Dhoomanganj police station, the district SOG, and the surveillance team played a crucial role in this success. Police officials said that other cases related to the gang are also being investigated, and the process of identifying the original owners of the recovered mobile phones and returning them will be initiated. The police said that similar strict action will continue to be taken to curb snatching and robbery incidents in the city.

## GAIL DAV Public School, Dibiyapur Students Win Medals at State-Level VVM

## Auraiya

Students of GAIL DAV Public School, Dibiyapur brought laurels to their school by winning medals at the state-level Vidyarthi Vigyan Manthan (VVM) competition, held at G.D. Goenka Public School, Lucknow. With their outstanding performance, the medal winners have also secured selection for the national-level competition. Yuvraj, a Class VIII student, secured first position at the state level. For his achievement, he was awarded a cash prize of ₹5000, a trophy, and a certificate. Similarly, Zehra Mazhar, a Class X student, also clinched first position, further establishing the academic excellence of the institution. She too received a cash prize of ₹5000 along with a trophy and a commendation certificate. In the Class VI (Group Category), Aditya Upadhyay achieved a commendable third position. He was honoured with a cash prize of ₹2000, a trophy and a certificate for his achievement. All the medal-winning students at the state level have now been selected to represent the school at the national-level VVM competition, which has become a matter of great pride and happiness for the entire school fraternity. Additionally, Class X student H. Haasini Barani was awarded a certificate of participation for her involvement in the competition. On this occasion, School Principal Priyanka Gaur expressed her happiness over the students' success and



stated that this achievement is the result of the students' dedication, hard work and the continuous guidance of their teachers. She added that competitions like Vidyarthi Vigyan Manthan promote scientific thinking, curiosity and innovation among students and expressed confidence that equally well at the national level. The school family congratulated all the successful students, their parents and guiding teachers and extended best wishes for their bright future at the national-level competition.

## Sushruta Surgery and Cancer Clinic treated patients by organizing free health camps

## Bhadoli

A free health camp was organized by Sushruta Surgery and Cancer Clinic at Bida Complex located at Rajpura Square in the city. 215 people took advantage of the free health camp by registering themselves. All types of patients who came to the camp were examined with great care by the doctors. On this occasion, Director of Sushruta Surgery and Cancer Clinic, MBBS, MS, Surgical Oncology (Laproscopic Surgeon, Head Neck and Breast Cancer Specialist) and Gold Medalist IMS, BHU, Ex Sir Tata Memorial, Varanasi, Dr. R. Sinha and Gynecologist MBBS, DIGI Dr. Ajita



Srivastava, presented all types of medicines. Gave advice for successful treatment of cancer, breast lump and ovarian cancer. Dr. R. Sinha and Dr. Ajita Srivastava gave free consultation to the patients related to this disease and along with this, they were given one week medicines for free. In the camp, hydrocele and gall bladder were also examined using binoculars and normal techniques and advice for treatment and operation was given. In the camp, treatment and operation of hernia and stones, treatment of stomach and all types of tumors, treatment of piles and warts in 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 stuck of stool in the intestine due to constipation, treatment of children. All types of treatments and operations, including oral cancer, breast lump and ovarian cancer, were advised for successful treatment and operation after examination.

On this occasion, Dr. R. Sinha, director of Sushruta Surgery and Cancer Clinic,

said that the purpose of organizing this free health medical counseling camp is that the people of Bhadoli and surrounding rural areas, who due to lack of money are not able to get treatment in expensive and big cities, can get treatment at low cost. He said that in the camp, along with free consultation, one week medicine is being given free of cost after free check-up. Sinha said that now this camp will be organized after 15 days on Sunday only at Rajpura Chaura Beeda Complex. Said they should come to the camp first and take their number so that they can be given timely consultation and treatment.

## Young Woman Killed in Truck Accident While on Her Way to Work

**Prayagraj:** A young woman was killed in a road accident near Tripathi Chowk in Mumfordganj area under Colonelganj police station today when she was hit by an army truck while on her way to work. The deceased has been identified as Astha Kumari (20), a resident of Sadiabad in the Kareli area. The incident occurred when Astha Kumari was riding her scooter to her workplace. According to reports, Astha Kumari was going to work on her scooter this morning. As she reached near Tripathi Chowk, an out-of-control army truck hit her. The young woman died on the spot due to the impact of the collision.

**Married Man's Promise of Marriage to a Woman to Obtain Consent for Sexual Relations Constitutes Deception; Case Will Not Be Quashed**

**Prayagraj:** The Allahabad High Court has stated that if a married man obtains a woman's consent for sexual relations by promising marriage, it constitutes deception. This is a punishable offense under Section 69 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). With this observation, a single-judge bench of Justice Avinash Saxena rejected the plea of ??Kuldeep Verma, a resident of Aligarh, to quash the proceedings in the trial court. A woman had filed a First Information Report (FIR) against Kuldeep at the Quarsi police station on June 20, 2025. She alleged that she had been in a live-in relationship with him for 11 years. During this time, Kuldeep had sexual relations with her under the pretext of marriage. Later, she discovered that he was married and had three children. The case was ongoing in the trial court. The accused filed a petition in the High Court seeking to quash the proceedings. The advocate argued that the relationship between the petitioner and the woman was consensual. The victim was aware of the petitioner's marital status. However, after hearing both sides, the court stated that Section 69 of the BNS specifically declares sexual relations obtained through a false promise of marriage or other fraudulent means as a crime. The court cited the case of Pramod Suryabhan Pawar vs. State of Maharashtra. It stated that in the present case, the accused was already married and knew he could not marry the woman, which prima facie indicates deception. It is a matter of investigation whether the victim was aware of the accused's marriage beforehand. Considering the facts and the material on record, the court refused to interfere with the trial court proceedings and dismissed the application to quash the case.

# District Magistrate Inspects Holding Area at Khusro Bagh with Senior Officials

He instructed officials to ensure all necessary arrangements are in place



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj:** District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma, along with Additional Commissioner of Police Dr. Ajay Pal Sharma and Municipal Commissioner



Sai Teja, inspected the holding area being constructed at Khusro Bagh near Prayagraj Railway Station on Tuesday. This inspection was conducted in view of the upcoming major bathing festivals of Makar Sankranti and Mauni Amavasya during the Magh Mela 2026, and the expected large influx of devotees to the Magh Mela area. He instructed officials to ensure all necessary arrangements are in place. He directed that adequate arrangements for drinking water, mobile toilets, lighting, and proper sanitation be made in the holding area, which is being created for crowd management and the safe movement of devotees. He also instructed that arrangements be made for bonfires. He inspected the holding area and inquired about the entry and exit routes for devotees and the capacity of the holding area. He instructed the Municipal Corporation to ensure proper sanitation. He also inspected the night shelter built near the railway station.

Higher Education Minister released 21 books at Lucknow University

Uttar Pradesh Higher Education Minister Yogendra Upadhyay, as the chief guest, released 21 books based on arts, science and social science subjects. The book release program, held at Lucknow University campus was presided over by the Vice-Chancellor of the university, Prof. Manuka Khanna. The books were released under Vidya Bharati Higher Education Institute ambitious 'Bharat Boudhik' scheme.

## Fire breaks out at Magh Mela camp, two tents gutted, one person injured

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj:** A major tragedy was narrowly averted at the Magh Mela on the eve of Makar Sankranti. A fire broke out suddenly on Tuesday evening at a camp of pilgrims in Sector five on Kali Road, causing panic at the fair. Several fire tenders rushed to the spot and, after considerable effort, brought the fire under control. Two tents were completely destroyed in the fire. Cash, puja materials, and other essential items kept inside the tents were also destroyed. During the incident, a man was partially burned while trying to rescue his wife, and he was



sent for first aid. According to reports, Bharat Shankar Shukla, a resident of Garapur in the Sahso area, had set up a camp of the

Shri Ram Naam and Manas Prachar Sangh (Shri Namayan Shukla Dham) in Sector five, Kali Road, North side, at the Magh

Mela. On Tuesday evening, around 5 pm, some people were engaged in prayers and preparing prasad (offerings), while others were

warming themselves by a bonfire outside. At that moment, a short circuit occurred when the power came on, and a tent suddenly caught fire. According to eyewitnesses, the fire quickly spread.

There was chaos all around, and people started running in all directions to save their lives. An elderly woman, Santosh Shukla, who was resting in the camp, was somehow safely rescued by the people. The camp's operator, Pranshu Shukla, said that approximately one lakh rupees in cash, along with puja materials and all daily necessities, were destroyed in the fire. The prompt action of the fire brigade prevented the fire from spreading to other camps, thus averting a major tragedy.

## BJP Minority Front officials meet Deputy CM, discuss health system in Prayagraj



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj:** In a bid to further improve health-care services in the Sangam city of Prayagraj, officials of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Minority Front paid a courtesy call on Deputy Chief Minister and Health Minister Brajesh Pathak in Lucknow. The meeting was led by BJP Minority Front Vice President Mohammad Sharif. During the

meeting, Mohammad Sharif honored Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak by presenting him with a shawl and a memento. Minority Front leader Mohammad Imtiaz alias Guddu also greeted the Deputy CM with a bouquet of flowers. Several other office bearers and workers of the front were also present on the occasion. During the courtesy call, the leaders appreciated the facilities provided by the health department in Prayagraj and demanded that they be further strengthened. They discussed issues related to resources, facilities, and public amenities in government hospitals. Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak assured the delegation that the state government is committed to providing better healthcare services to the common people and that every possible support will be given to strengthen the health system in Prayagraj.

## District Magistrate holds meeting regarding ensuring clean water supply, gives necessary instructions to concerned officials

Instructions given to investigate complaints of contaminated water supply or other drinking water-related issues and to ensure quality resolution of all complaints

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj:** A meeting was held on Tuesday at the Sangam Auditorium in the Collectorate, chaired by District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma and attended by Municipal Commissioner Sai Teja, regarding ensuring the supply of clean water. In the meeting, the District Magistrate gave necessary instructions to all concerned officials to ensure the supply of clean drinking water. Referring to the incident in Indore, he told the Municipal Commissioner that under no circumstances should contaminated drinking water be supplied. He instructed the Municipal Commissioner to prepare a list of complaints regarding contaminated drinking water supply over the past six months and to obtain feedback on them again. He said that these complaints should be re-examined to ascertain whether the work related to the drinking water supply was done in a quality manner.



He said that if there are any shortcomings in the work, they should be rectified again with quality. He instructed that in areas where there are still complaints of contaminated water supply or other drinking water-related issues, the water quality should be tested and all complaints should be resolved in a quality manner. He said that in areas where complaints of contaminated water supply are frequently received, the pipelines should be inspected on a priority basis, leaks should be repaired, and if the pipelines are faulty or dilapidated, they should be replaced.

In the meeting, the District Magistrate instructed that in places and narrow lanes where drinking water pipelines are near sewer lines, it should be ensured that the drinking water pipelines are placed above the sewer lines. In the meeting, the District Magistrate instructed the Municipal Commissioner and the Chief Medical Officer that if any person suffering from infection due to contaminated water comes to medical colleges, private and government hospitals, and CHCs/PHCs, the information should be shared with the Municipal Corporation and the Water Department, and the drinking water in the patient's residential area should be tested. If the water quality is not good, arrangements for the supply of clean water should be ensured immediately. The District Magistrate has directed that necessary action be taken to replace the old water supply lines, which are extremely old and prone to leakage. The District Magistrate instructed all concerned officials to coordinate with the councilors and other elected representatives to obtain a list of complaints regarding drinking water supply and locations of faulty pipelines in their respective areas, and to rectify them on a priority basis. He also directed the Chief Development Officer to ensure the supply of clean drinking water to all in rural areas and the Additional District Magistrate (Urban) to do the same in the Nagar Panchayats (town councils), by making all the necessary arrangements.

## Editorial

### Buying Russian oil, misreading Trump—3 points will define India's next energy strategy

India's crude oil trade has evolved from a purely economic exchange into both a geopolitical test of strategic autonomy and a measure of the constraints in its energy policy. Over the past three years, India has gone from being a marginal buyer of Russian crude to one of its largest importers, carefully balancing ties with the US, Europe, and shifting global energy markets. That balance is now under pressure from Donald Trump's 50 per cent tariff offensive, aimed selectively at India and leaving little ambiguity about his objectives—and in Trump's world, what he wants, he usually gets. Yet the national debate has taken too many assumptions for granted. It is worth applying a deconstruction approach to India's famous oil bargains with Russia—a decision once hailed as tactical brilliance, but one now risking entanglement in overlapping economic and diplomatic challenges. While public commentary has focused heavily on Trump, tariffs, and New Delhi's indignation, the more pressing task is to interrogate the rationale behind these choices. To navigate the road ahead, India must revisit three fundamentals: why it embraced Russian oil, how it misread Trump's European recalibration, and where future India-Russia energy engagement should head. Clarity on these three points may well define the next chapter of India's energy strategy. Despite close political ties and deep defence cooperation, India and Russia were never bound by energy dependence. Even with India's heavy reliance on imports—currently 88 per cent of its daily crude requirement of 5.5 million barrels—its primary suppliers have traditionally been Gulf countries. The earlier chapter of India capitulating to Trump 1.0's sanctions on Iran and Venezuela is well known; today, however, the challenge is starker. Russia entered India's energy equation only after the geopolitical earthquake of President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. That act shattered the European order painstakingly built since the Second World War and crystallised after the Soviet Union's collapse. Central to this upheaval was Putin's weaponization of energy: Europe's decades-long dependence on cheap Russian oil and gas became a vulnerability. In response, Europe diversified away from Russia, while the G7 imposed a \$60 per-barrel price cap on Russian crude in December 2022. The logic was clear: as one of the world's top three oil producers, Russia could not be cut off overnight. The aim was instead to squeeze Moscow's revenues, which were funding its war machine, while keeping prices stable and securing alternative supplies for Europe. India saw opportunity in this upheaval. With vast import needs, it began rerouting Russian oil at supposedly lower prices, rejecting G7 sanctions and arranging direct and indirect deals through intermediaries. Early reports spoke of a "free on board" discount of 30 per cent, though never confirmed.

Brent crude fell from \$86.51 in January 2022 to \$80.92 in December, peaking briefly at about \$90 in June 2023 before sliding again. While some credit India's purchases with stabilising prices, Russian oil for India almost always remained way above the \$60 price cap. The critical question is whether India ever bought below that threshold. Reports suggest an average discount of only \$5 per barrel—hardly transformative—and potentially offset by hidden costs and surcharges. Even so, large volumes (peaking at over 2 million barrels per day before dropping to 1.5 million) meant cumulative savings. But if cheap oil was the goal, why not join or informally align with the price cap, securing crude closer to \$60 without the complications of shadow fleets and sanctions risks?



## Government's outreach ties need renewed focus



India has enjoyed historical, cultural and civilisational links with Central Asia for several millennia. Brisk trade of goods, ideas and thoughts took place from India to Central Asia and beyond over the Silk Road from 3rd century BC to 15th century AD. Buddhism travelled to Afghanistan, Central Asia and western China from India over this route. India and the Central Asian Republics (CARs) viz. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan shared vibrant economic, people-to-people and cultural ties till recent times when the latter were a part of the Soviet Union. India has not been able to take full advantage of its close ancient linkages with this region after their independence from the erstwhile Soviet Union in 1991 because it does not share a de facto land boundary with any of these countries (although de jure it shares a border with Tajikistan through the Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir). To overcome this obstacle, several initiatives which have been in the pipeline for many years have now been fast-tracked. Two of the most significant are the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the Chabahar port.

#### Evolution of relations

In current times, Central Asian Republics constitute the extended neighbourhood of India. Peace and security in Central Asia is

critical to peace and stability in India. This is intimately connected with peace and security in Afghanistan. Three Central Asian Republics — Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan — share borders with Afghanistan. India and Central Asia need to collaborate with other regional powers like Russia, Iran, China and Pakistan as also with the US and the EU to promote security and stability in Afghanistan. The advent of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in August 2021 after the sudden and unceremonious withdrawal of the US and NATO troops has introduced further complications in promoting connectivity between India and Central Asia. In addition to the

above, the region is also richly endowed with natural and mineral resources like oil, gas (Turkmenistan contains the world's fourth largest reserves of natural gas), uranium (Kazakhstan is the world's largest producer of uranium ore and has the world's second largest reserve of this mineral), lead, iron ore, coal, rare earths, water, etc. The region can contribute to India's energy security through fossil fuels and hydro-power.

and meet its need of many critical minerals and metals. The area is ideally situated for providing seamless connectivity between Europe and India. It encompasses the "heartland" of Halford Mackinder's "Heartland Theory" propounded in his

article "The Geographical Pivot of History" in 1904. Moreover, the region harbours great potential for promoting trade and investment, tourism, people-to-people connect, cultural, business and academic exchanges between India and these countries. India and Central Asia started on a strong and robust note when these countries attained freedom from the Soviet Union in 1991. The then Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao sensed the strategic significance of the region and visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in 1993, and Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan in 1995. The next twenty years however witnessed a relative neglect of the region by the Indian leadership

owing to its preoccupation with domestic affairs, absence of a strong, single party government in New Delhi and its focus on expanding ties with major, strategic powers. The 20 years from 1995 to 2015 witnessed only four prime ministerial visits from India to the region — in 2002 by PM Vajpayee to Kazakhstan for the CICA (Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia) Summit followed by a half day bilateral visit, and in 2003 to Tajikistan; in 2006 by PM Manmohan Singh to Uzbekistan, and in 2011 to Kazakhstan for an overnight visit on his way back from Sanya, Hainan after the BRICS Summit.

#### Relations expand in Modi era

This indifference was corrected after PM Narendra Modi assumed power in May 2014, becoming the first Prime Minister after 30 years with a full majority in the lower house of Parliament (Lok Sabha). In just a little more than a year after becoming PM, he travelled to all five Central Asian countries in July 2015, the first Indian Prime Minister to do so, sending out a clear message about India's intent in expanding its ties with these countries. The last 10 years of PM Modi's rule have witnessed a significant upswing in bilateral partnership and engageThe rapidly changing dynamics of Central nomic architecture provide a bright opportunity.

### Good politician, bad statesman — what Muhammad Yunus' one year in power reveals

If Sheikh Hasina had her way, Muhammad Yunus would have been dunked into the Padma River by now. Not once but twice. But it has been a year since the ousted Bangladeshi prime minister hasn't had her way. In that time, not only has Yunus avoided a plunge into the Padma, but also dashed Hasina's dreams of returning to Bangladesh, all while sitting pretty in the chair she was forced to vacate. In the one year since Yunus took over as the caretaker to the interim government of Bangladesh on 8 August 2024, the accidental politician has proved himself a consummate one. Detractors who had claimed he won't last three months are now worried if he will even vacate his chair. Not only has Yunus deftly navigated the choppy waters of Bangladeshi politics, he has even turned foes into friends. Plunged into chaos after Hasina's hasty exit on 5 August 2024, Bangladesh, though, is in desperate need of a statesman. There has been no love lost between Sheikh Hasina and Muhammad

Yunus, much before the latter replaced the former as Bangladesh's premier last year. On 18 May 2022, Hasina had allegedly said, "He (Yunus) stopped funding for a project like the Padma Bridge because of one managing director post. He should be given two dunks in the Padma River, but lifted up so he doesn't die. Then maybe he will learn a lesson." Hasina had said this while blaming Nobel Peace Prize winner, economist Dr Muhammad Yunus, for blocking the World Bank's funding of the Padma bridge project. That's not all. As recently as 1 January 2024, a court in Bangladesh had sentenced the Nobel laureate to six months in jail for violating Bangladesh's labour laws. Yunus' supporters said the case was politically motivated. The acclaimed economist and three colleagues from Grameen Telecom—one of the firms Yunus founded—were found guilty of failing to create a welfare fund for their workers. I call for the Bangladeshi people to speak in one voice against injustice.

### Dharali floods a wake-up call for IMD, NDMA to buck up

The deadly flash floods and landslides in Uttarkashi on 5 August, in which 16 people were killed, highlight the problems of illegal riverbank constructions and inadequate warning systems. Videos of submerged villages, ravaging floods sweeping up buildings and cars in their tide, and stranded people have become an almost annual occurrence now in the Himalayan region. Dharali's floods struck in the absence of any weather warning, and authorities are still confused about the actual cause. While the Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority called it a cloudburst, the India Meteorological Department could not confirm it with the available data. Uttarkashi district recorded 12.7 cm of rain in 8 hours on 5 August; it is still lower than districts such as Haridwar and Dehradun, which got 15-30 cm of rain on the same day. In a state that sees frequent cloudbursts and floods during the monsoon, and has been explicitly marked as a 'high vulnerability zone' for landslides by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the damage from the Dharali floods is not merely nature's fault. The blame also rests squarely on building norms, mass road construction and mining projects, and other anthropogenic activities that have exacerbated Uttarakhand's fragility. The floods should be another wake-up call for the IMD and the NDMA to buck up and ensure the safety of people and ecology in the Himalayas. Dharali is a small hamlet 2,680 metres above sea level, situated 18 km from Gangotri, and is a common stopover for tourists and pilgrims going to one of the Char Dhams of Uttarakhand. It is dotted with hotels, restaurants, and homes built precariously close to the banks of the Kheerganga River that runs through the village. On Tuesday afternoon, a barrage of water descended upon the village and

### Bank nationalisation will be a blow to India's mixed economy, lead to totalitarianism: Phiroze Shroff

Every now and then we hear the cry that banks should be nationalised. The taking over of banks by the State is urged on various grounds, namely, that it is necessary in order "to mobilise resources" for the economic development of the country, "to prevent the concentration of economic power", "to check malpractices in the working of banks" and to put a stop to profiteering" by banks. All these arguments will be found to be untenable on a dispassionate scrutiny of the issues involved. The primary function of banks

is to mobilise resources for economic development and that is exactly what the banks in our country have been doing. They have been working to attract deposits from those who have funds to spare on [a] long or short term basis. They have been making loans for industrial as well as agricultural expansion in accordance with numerous legislative requirements. During recent years, they have opened numerous branches in order to extend credit facilities to people even in remote areas, even though the banking business

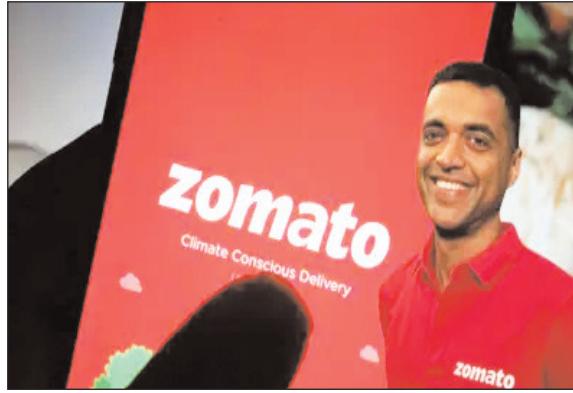
in several branches has proved unremunerative. They have invested more than Rs 600 crore in Government securities. They have been broadening their capital base and increasing their reserves in accordance with statutory requirements. The enormous increase in their deposits during recent years bears testimony to the confidence which the public have in their working. By undertaking the foreign exchange business, our banks render considerable help in promoting exports. An occasional appearance of a black

sheep in the sphere of banking, as in any other sphere, does not detract from the value of the service which the banks as a whole are rendering to the country. What is regrettable is that though the Reserve Bank is invested with extensive powers to prevent malpractices, in one or two cases it failed to exercise them to protect the interests of the depositors as well as shareholders. Ninety-five per cent of bank advances in India are secured loans. The corresponding figures for the USA, is only thirty per cent.



## Zomato's Q4 net profit falls 77% to Rs 39 crore

**Delhi :** Eternal Ltd. (previously Zomato) announced a 77% drop in overall net profit to Rs 39 crore in Q4 FY25 from Rs 175 crore the year before. Zomato, which owns Blinkit, lost 33% of its quarterly net profit to Rs 59 crore in October-December. Overall expenditures rose 67% to Rs 6,104 crore from Rs 3,636 crore. QoQ, costs rose over 10%. Food delivery company consolidated income from operations rose 64% to Rs 5,833 crore from Rs 3,562 crore in the January-March quarter of the previous financial year. Zomato earned Rs 6,201 crore in the quarter, up from Rs 3,797 the year before. Its expenses rose from Rs 3,636 crore to Rs 6,104 crore. Zomato shares finished at Rs 232.5 on the BSE, up 0.58 percent. According to its stock exchange filing, Blinkit opened 294 net new stores in Q4 and is on track to reach 2,000 by



December 25. Deepinder Goyal, Founder and CEO, Eternal, said, "We don't see any long-term structural reason for this slowdown, as the fundamentals – low penetration of restaurant food and increasing urbanisation and per capita income in India – remain unchanged." The company has several promising initiatives in the pipeline and hopes some will work and lead to higher growth without compromising profitability. The company began reporting NOV and GOV for its B2C activities (food delivery, rapid commerce, and going-out) in Q4 FY25.

### Coconut oil prices rise, hurting users

**Delhi :** Coconut oil, a staple in most Indian households, may be raising your grocery expenditures. Due to rising coconut oil inflation, Marico and Dabur raised prices by 40% in the past year. According to Saugata Gupta, MD & CEO of Marico, commodity prices have 'peaked' and are unlikely to climb much unless a 'black swan event' occurs. He expects higher volume growth in the FMCG sector this financial year. For Marico, which creates Parachute coconut oil, copra dominates its commodity basket.

## Supreme Court rejects Airtel and Vodafone's requests to waive AGR fees

**Delhi :** Airtel and Vodafone Idea were denied a waiver of interest and penalty on their outstanding adjusted gross revenue (AGR) debts, totaling Rs 80,000 crore, by the Supreme Court. The order would have an effect on Tata Teleservices as well. After the initial SC order in 2019, which aimed to recover industrial dues, the outstanding AGR is now little less than 1.5 lakh crore.

Since it entered the telecom market in 2016 with only a



minor exposure to past dues and adjustments, Reliance Jio was the only company that walked out relatively unscathed.

The businesses' request for a postponement was denied by a panel of Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan, who

deemed the companies' petitions "shocking and misconceived" and rejected them.

Multinational corporations' filing procedures for petitions seeking remedies for enforcement of rights under Article 32 were also examined by the court.

## High prices reduce India's January-March gold demand by 15% to 118.1 tonnes

**Delhi :** The WGC predicts 700-800 tons of gold demand from India in 2025. Since 2025, gold prices have increased 25%, approaching the psychological threshold of ₹1,000,000 per 10 gm, impacting consumer purchasing behaviors. Price increases have hurt

affordability. However, gold's cultural significance, especially ahead of Akshaya Tritiya and the wedding season, supports buying sentiment. WGC India CEO Sachin Jain stated in its quarterly report. Experts say the gold market is buzzing on Akshaya Tritiya, a culturally significant day in India that generally boosts gold buying. Record costs have driven shoppers toward smaller, lighter pieces, with some delaying purchases awaiting price drops. Wedding demand remained consistent.

## Brokers can now invest in new business



embedded in the rules so that the intent of the rules is served without constraining activities of the stakeholders," the government said in a release. Broking house executives believe this SCRR modification is a major regulatory change. Leading broker Motilal Oswal said stock brokers could only invest in securities and commodity derivatives until now. "This amendment allows stock brokers to invest in any firm without using client funds or securities or creating financial obligation.

### The cancellation of fleet

#### talks by Uber is bad news for BluSmart.

**Delhi :** Two sources familiar with the matter have confirmed that Uber has canceled plans to transfer approximately 5,000 electric vehicles owned by Gensol Engineering Ltd. from BluSmart to its platform. The negotiations broke down because everyone was unhappy with the asking price for the autos. Discussions had begun as part of BluSmart's strategy to revitalise its taxi business. It was expected that BluSmart would partner with Uber's fleet. One of the individuals mentioned earlier asserted, "Uber has now withdrawn its interest", while requesting anonymity.

## Promoters of Prudential, HCL to form health insurer



company, for over two decades in life insurance and asset management. The Prudential cooperation intends to provide quality health insurance in India, according to Vama executive director Shikhar Malhotra. "Through this collaboration, we aim to advance our common mission to enhance access to quality health insurance and drive greater penetration across the country," stated. If approved by regulators, Amar Joshi will lead the joint venture..

## Automakers from other countries are searching for ways to cut electric vehicle tariffs



**Delhi :** In March 2024, India offered to let international automakers import a certain number of electric cars with low duties in exchange for a commitment to invest a certain amount in the country. Meanwhile, three industry officials have stated that manufacturers are now focusing on anticipated tariff reductions in free trade agreements (FTAs) that are currently being discussed, as the scheme's criteria have not been finalized by the Centre. Following CEO Elon Musk's public criticism of India's high import levies on autos, the country's

plan to promote manufacturing of electric passenger cars in India (SPMPECI), also known as the "Tesla Policy," was viewed as an effort by New Delhi to entice the American automaker. The plan called for authorized automakers to be able to import 8,000 EVs per year for a 15% tariff, as opposed to the typical 70-110% tariff on

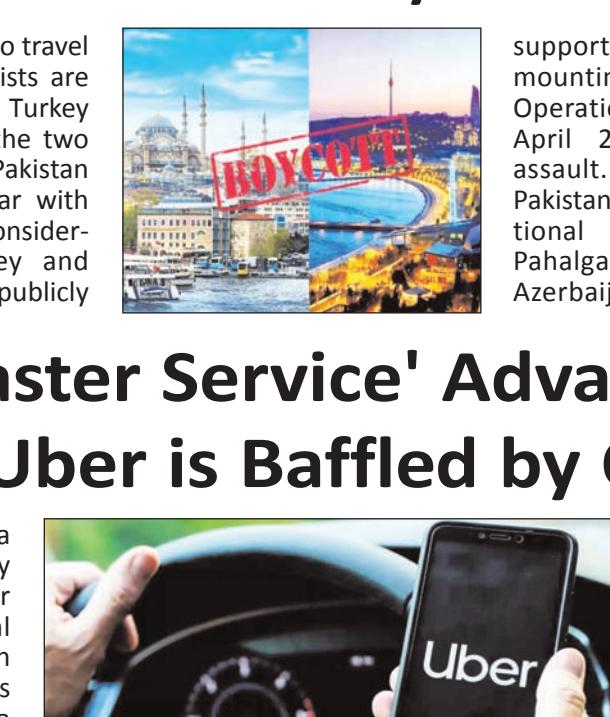
fully assembled cars, also known as CBUs. Minimum investments of ₹4,150 crore were required to qualify for the incentive. People and companies said to be interested in the project include Tesla, VinFast of Vietnam, Toyota Kirloskar, Hyundai Motor Ltd., Volkswagen Group, and Hyundai Motor Ltd.



supported Pakistan amid mounting tensions after Operation Sindoor and the April 22 Pahalgam terror assault. Turkey supported Pakistan's call for an international probe into the Pahalgam incident, while Azerbaijan repeated

Pakistan's position. Turkish weapons have also been given to Pakistan. "Bookings for Azerbaijan and Turkey decreasing by 60% (over the last week) while cancellations have surged by 250%," a MakeMyTrip spokeswoman told

## Indian tourists boycott Turkey, Azerbaijan



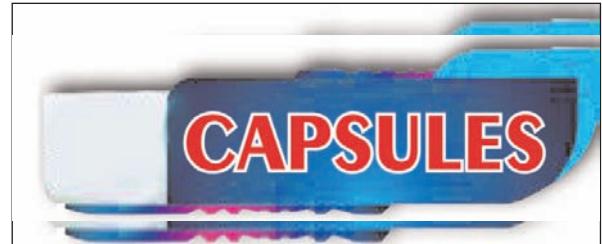
For first 30 days" Publicly voicing his disapproval, the Minister said that gratuities should be an after-service, optional gift of appreciation rather than a prerequisite for better service. Uber is being asked to provide an official explanation by the CCPA about this behavior. Users alleged

### NBD Bank PJSC gets RBI approval for India wholly owned subsidiary

**Delhi :** Emirates NBD Bank PJSC, a renowned UAE banking firm, received "in-principle" approval from the RBI to create a wholly owned subsidiary (WOS) in India. This is part of the RBI's Scheme for Foreign Banks to Set Up WOS

in India. In India, Emirates NBD has branches in Mumbai, Chennai, and Gurugram. The RBI has allowed the bank to transform these branches into wholly owned subsidiaries, subject to regulatory compliance.

driver. The present scrutiny is a result of this prompt, which seems to position the tip as a way to influence service speed rather than a reward.



## Meta releases standalone AI app to challenge ChatGPT

**Delhi :** competing with ChatGPT creator OpenAI with a standalone AI app. Meta said that its new AI assistant will use Llama AI. The Discover stream shows how others are using the tool and provides prompts. The AI arms race pits Meta's new software against ChatGPT and other AI platforms. Claude, Grok, and Gemini from Anthropic, xAI, and Google are also leading contenders. In September 2023, Meta debuted an AI chatbot as a generative AI-powered digital assistant that can respond to user questions and produce graphics in its apps. Meta AI became prominent in April when it replaced Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Messenger's search feature with a chatbot. Zuckerberg claimed in January that 2025 "is going to be the year when a highly intelligent and personalized AI assistant reaches more than 1 billion people, and I expect Meta AI to be that leading AI assistant." Meta finance head Susan Li said Meta AI has 700 million monthly active users in January. It rose from 600 million in December. Meta launched a standalone AI app after Google and Elon Musk's xAI. Both firms released Gemini and Grok applications recently.



# 'No malice in it at all'



**Aamir Khan reacts to Sunil Grover mimicking him on *The Great Indian Kapil Show***



Photo: Instagram

**A**ctor Sunil Grover, in the latest episode of Kapil Sharma's Netflix show *The Great Indian Kapil Show*, featuring Kartik Aaryan and Ananya Panday, who had arrived to promote their latest film *Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri* took everyone by surprise when he appeared dressed like Aamir Khan and delivered a spot-on mimicry so seamless that the internet almost believed it was the superstar himself.

While audiences showered him with praise, Aamir Khan has now reacted to Sunil's impersonation. In an interview with Subhash K Jha for *Bollywood Hungama*, Aamir said, "I won't even call it mimicry. It was so authentic. I felt I was watching myself. I saw a small clip. Now I'm going to watch the whole episode. But what I saw was priceless. I was laughing so much I couldn't breathe!" "There was no malice in it at all. I must have laughed the loudest," added Khan.

During the episode, Sunil also subtly took a dig at veteran actress and politician Jaya Bachchan. A clip from the latest episode has been doing the rounds on social media, leaving viewers amused. In the viral clip, Sunil is seen posing for paparazzi on the show's set and interacting with them. While praising the photographers, he cheekily remarks, "Kapde acche pehne hue hai tumne. Pant aachi hai aaj," a line that many viewers interpreted as a tongue-in-cheek reference to Jaya's recent controversial comments about paparazzi.

Meanwhile, on *The Great Indian Kapil Show*, Sunil often mimics other celebrities, including Shah Rukh Khan, SS Rajamouli, and Salman Khan.

His perfect mimicry consistently leaves the audience in splits.

# Leonardo questions cinema's future

Leonardo DiCaprio questions if audiences still visit cinemas, worried streaming platforms may change the future of movie theaters

the future that are seen in the cinema. But that remains to be seen," the *Shutter Island* actor added.

**H**ollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio says he is unsure if the audience still has the "same appetite" for cinema halls amid the surge of streamers and wonders if theatres will become as rare as jazz bars and other cultural rarities.

DiCaprio said there is a "huge transition". "It's changing at a lightning speed. We're looking at a huge transition... First, documentaries disappeared from cinemas. Now, dramas only get finite time and people wait to see it on streamers. I don't know. Do people still have the appetite? Or will cinemas become silos - like jazz bars, he said.

"I just hope enough people, who are real visionaries, get opportunities to do unique things in

DiCaprio's latest work is *One Battle After Another*, which released in September 2025. Directed by Paul Thomas Anderson, the film also featured Sean Penn, Teyana Taylor and Benicio del Toro alongside the actor.



## Alia shares New Year moment

Photos: Instagram @\_aliaabhatt



**B**ollywood couple Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor rang in the New Year with family, giving fans a glimpse into their holiday time.

Alia posted an adorable picture on Instagram on Sunday that quickly caught everyone's attention.

The *Raazi* actress posted a silhouette photo from what appears to be a beach holiday. The picture shows the family standing by the sea, dressed in soft white outfits. Ranbir Kapoor is seen lifting their daughter, Raha, high in the air, while the little one looks at her father with joy. Alia stands close to them, smiling freely and holding a fairy wand as she watches the moment.

The picture soon won hearts online, and fans were quick to react in the comments section. One fan wrote, "Life in a full circle picture <3, (Aww)dorable." Another fan commented, "Awww...beautiful pic."

On the work front, Alia Bhatt will next be seen in the film *Alpha*. As per trade analyst Taran Adarsh, the makers have decided to postpone the release of the film. The move, according to Adarsh, has been made to avoid a clash with Salman Khan's upcoming war film *Battle of Galwan*.

Directed by Shiv Rawail, *Alpha* is the sixth film in the YRF Spy Universe. The franchise includes films like *Ek Tha Tiger*, *Tiger Zinda Hai*, *War*, and *Pathaan*. Along with Alia Bhatt, the film also stars Sharvari and Bobby Deol in key roles.



Photo: Instagram @\_anupampkher

## 'Worked together long time back'

Veteran actor Anupam Kher welcomes Ravi Kishan to the cast of his upcoming film, *Khosla Ka Ghosla 2*

**V**eteran actor Anupam Kher has welcomed actor and MP Ravi Kishan to the cast of his upcoming film *Khosla Ka Ghosla 2* and praised his acting skills and personal qualities.

On Sunday, Anupam Kher posted a video on Instagram. The actor looked happy as he introduced Kishan to the cast and spoke about his long association with him. While welcoming him, Kher described Kishan as a "brilliant actor" and a "great human being."

In his post, Kher wrote, "A BRILLIANT ACTOR AND A GREAT HUMAN BEING: Extremely Happy, Delighted and Joyous to have a very dear friend @ravikishan join the cast of #KhoslaKaGhosla2. We worked together long time back. But this is going to be super special. I admire Ravi as an excellent actor, a hardworking parliamentarian and above all as the PERSON that he is!! Calm, Humble, Compassionate, Helpful, Sincere and someone who LOVES #Bharat passionately! Looking forward to our scenes together! Har Har MAHADEV! Actor #KKG2."

## Cibi Chakaravarthi to direct *Thalaivar 173*

**F**ilmmaker Cibi Chakaravarthi is set to direct Rajinikanth's upcoming film *Thalaivar 173*. Produced by Kamal Haasan and R. Mahendran under the banner of RaajKamal Films International, the film will release around the festival of Pongal in 2027.

Haasan shared the news with a post on his X handle on Saturday. "Celebrations begin #Arambikalam #Thalaivar173 #SuperStarPongal2027," read the caption.

Chakaravarthi penned a lengthy note on his handle and said he is grateful for the opportunity to direct the film. "Once, a small-town boy's big dream was to meet his favourite star

**T**amil superstar Thalapathy Vijay's film *Jana Nayagan*, one of the most anticipated releases of 2026, is set to be his last outing as an actor, as he has announced his retirement from acting after a 33-year-long career in the film industry.

On Saturday, the makers unveiled the action-filled trailer of *Jana Nayagan*, leaving fans emotional. The 2-minute-and-52-second trailer opens with a tense exchange in which one man questions another about a figure

named Thalapathy Vetri Kondan, introduced as the 'King of criminals,' as he is seen fighting goons.

The story takes a turn when Vetri's daughter, played by Mamitha Bajju, is kidnapped. This pushes Vetri to go on a dangerous rescue mission and face the villain, played by Bobby Deol, as Vijay's character vows revenge.

The trailer showcases Vijay performing high-octane action sequences, including fights with an axe. In the final moments, he looks straight into the camera and declares, "I am coming," giving a fresh twist to his iconic line, "I am waiting."

A still from the *Jana Nayagan*





## Briefs

MUMBAI

Pak origin US cricketers denied visa



Four Pakistani-origin cricketers, who were picked to be part of the United States team, have been denied visas to visit India, which now threatens their participation in next month's Twenty20 World Cup, a news report claimed on Tuesday. One of the players told Telecom Asia Sport that he, along with three others, has been denied visas to travel to India for the T20 World Cup, which is being jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

"Yes, it is true that three Pakistani-origin players are denied an Indian visa, which means we are unable to feature in the Twenty20 World Cup," pacer Ali Khan told (www.telecomasia.net) in a video message. The other three players named in the USA squad are Shayan Jahangir, Mohammad Mohsin, and Ehsan Adil, the report claimed. IANS

DHAKA  
BCB refuses to budge despite ICC reluctance



The ICC on Tuesday "requested" the Bangladesh Cricket Board to reconsider its demand of shifting the country's T20 World Cup matches out of India but the BCB has refused to back down, reiterating its security concerns. In a statement, the BCB said the board's position remains unchanged despite the ICC's reluctance to entertain its request and both parties will continue to "explore possible solutions". BCB has written to the ICC multiple times demanding that its World Cup games be shifted out of India due to security concerns but considering that the schedule for the T20 showpiece beginning Feb 7 is finalised, the world body is unlikely to relent.

PUNE  
ISSO conducts Ignite Football training event



The International Schools Sports Organisation (ISSO) successfully conducted its flagship Ignite Football Training Program from January 9-11, 2026 at Sanjay Ghodawat International

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**WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE** Skipper hammers unbeaten 71 in seven-wicket win after Fulmal's late blitz took Giants to 192

# Harmanpreet leads MI chase against Gujarat

NAVI MUMBAI

Harmanpreet Kaur struck a brilliantly paced half-century to propel Mumbai Indians to a seven-wicket victory over Gujarat Giants chasing a stiff 193 for victory in their Women's Premier League (WPL) match at the DY Patil Stadium, here on Tuesday.

Chasing a tough 193 for a win, Mumbai Indians were in a spot of bother at one stage but skipper Harmanpreet's calming presence and timely knock of 71 off 43 balls with seven fours and two sixes ensured they came away with two points reaching 193/3 in 19.2 overs.

Nicola Carey supported Harmanpreet with a useful 38. Harti Fulmal's fireworks in the 20th over powered Gujarat Giants to a very competitive 192/5 in 20 overs as they set Mumbai Indians a chase of 193 in their Women's Premier League match (WPL) at the DY Patil Stadium, here on Tuesday.

Bharti slammed two maximums and two fours as 23 runs came off the Gujarat Giants' last over against Amanjot Kaur as they lifted themselves up after Mumbai Indians had pegged back the scoring rate with wickets at regular intervals.

For Mumbai Indians, Shabnim Ismail, Hayley Matthews, Nicola Carey and Amelia Kerr picked up a wicket apiece.

Earlier, electing to field first after winning the toss, Mumbai Indians copped an early blow when G Kamalini dropped a regulation caught behind opportunity to let off



Mumbai Indians' Nicola Carey (R) celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of Gujarat Giants' Ashleigh Gardner in Navi Mumbai on Tuesday. PTI

## Scoreboard

**Gujarat Giants:** B Mooney c&b Kerr 33, S Devine c Kamalini b Ismail 8, K Ahuja c Carey b Matthews 35, A Gardner lbw b Carey 20, G Wareham (not out) 43, A Soni (retired out) 11, B Fulmal (not out) 36

**Extras:** (LB-4, NB-1, W-1) 6 **Total:** 192-5 (In 20 overs) **FW:** 22, 2-64, 3-97, 4-99, 5-136 **Bowling:** Shabnim Ismail 4-0-25-1, Hayley Matthews 3-0-34-1, Nicola Carey 4-0-36-1, Amelia Kerr 4-0-40-1, Amanjot Kaur 4-0-48-0, Sanskriti Gupta 1-0-5-0.

**Mumbai Indians:** G Kamalini st Mooney b Renuka 13, H Matthews c Devine b Gautam 22, A Kaur c Gardner b Devine 40, H Kaur (not out) 71, N Carey (not out) 38 **Extras:** (B 4, LB 4, W 1) 9 **Total:** 193-3 (In 19.2 overs) **FW:** 1-20, 2-37, 3-109 **Bowling:** Renuka Singh 4-0-39-1, Kashvee Gautam 4-0-33-1, Rajeshwari Gayakwad 2-0-22-0, Sophie Devine 3-2-29-1, Georgia Wareham 2-0-23-0, Tanuja Kanwar 3-0-29-0, Ashleigh Gardner 1-0-10-0

Gujarat Giants' Beth Mooney on the fifth ball of the first over. Mooney made the most of the reprieve smashing a consecutive fours off Hayley Matthews in the second over to get the GG innings going.

Shabnim Ismail was sharp to begin with and struck in the third over of the match to see the back of Sophie Devine getting her snapped up by

Kamalini for eight. New batter Kanika Ahuja got into the act smashing a four in the last ball of the third over. Kanika went ballistic in the fourth over as she took on Matthews and hoisted her for a majestic six over deep mid-wicket. The very next ball she blasted a four to deep mid-wicket's left. She struck another boundary off

Shabnim in the fifth over as Mumbai Indians reached 51/1 in five overs. Gujarat had a fantastic powerplay as they completed six overs at 62/1 with Mooney on 32 and Kanika on 20.

However, MI struck to thwart the developing partnership between Mooney and Kanika as Amelia Kerr had the former caught.

Despite the available options, India's white-ball set up would not want to see more injuries with the T20

World Cup less than a month away. That squad would feature an entirely different batting line-up from the one in the ODIs. But some names are common to both sides and an important one, all-rounder Tilak Varma, is out of at least the first three T20s against the Kiwis due to a groin injury.

Match starts  
at 1.30 P.M.  
Live on Star sports

## WPL matches sans spectators

NAVI MUMBAI

heavy crowds, traffic congestion and potential law-and-order issues. In view of these concerns, the matches are most likely to be played in a closed-door format, with entry restricted to players, match officials and authorised organisers.

The police communication to the BCCI was sent soon after the election dates were announced, making it clear that security cover for the matches could not be ensured on the specified days.

While the decision has disappointed cricket fans, the police have underlined that ensuring a peaceful, transparent and fear-free election process remains the administration's top priority. Authorities have clarified that normal spectator entry at the stadium will resume after the completion of the election exercise.

Meanwhile, UP Warrior need to sort out their top-order while Delhi Capitals would aim to improve their powerplay bowling as both sides look for their first win in the WPL here on Wednesday.

Capitals have not made an ideal start under Jemimah Rodrigues.

## 'Kohli, Rohit actively involved in planning'

Batting coach Kotak says the senior duo are also involved in preparations for 2027 ODI World Cup

RAJKOT

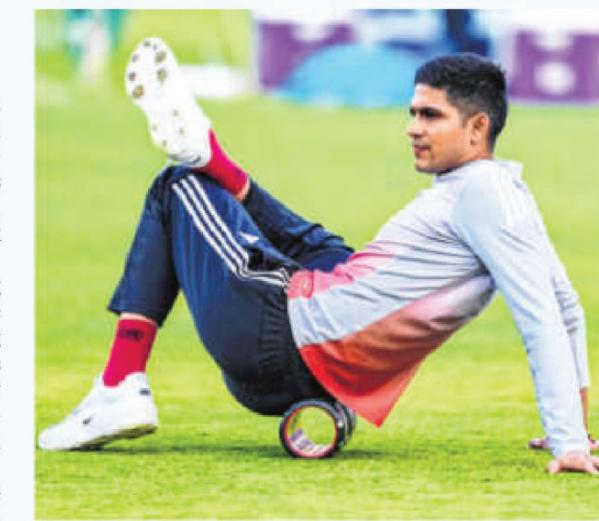
Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma remain actively involved in India's long-term ODI planning, including preparations for next year's World Cup, batting coach Sitanshu Kotak said on Tuesday.

Kotak said the two batting superstars, who remain at the forefront of India's batting firepower in the 50-overs format, are completely aligned with the team management, including head coach Gautam Gambhir.

"They definitely make plans. Now that they're playing only one format, they want India to win everywhere when they are there," Kotak told the media on the eve of India's second ODI against New Zealand.

"With the amount of experience they have, they can share a lot of ideas with other players, and they do discuss. They discuss with Gautam the ODI format, the matches that we have and our plans for South Africa."

"Most of the time I'm there



India's captain Shubman Gill during a training session ahead of the second ODI in Rajkot on Tuesday. PTI

and if I'm listening, they definitely share the experience and I always see them talking. Obviously, on social media, you see a lot of things which I try to avoid seeing. But (from) what I see, there are a lot of positives," Kotak added.

The equation between Kohli, Rohit and the new coaching setup has been under scrutiny in recent months, especially after India's struggles in the Test format and the transition that saw both batters step away from red-ball cricket.

Kotak, meanwhile, said India would need a revision of their batting template for ODIs once the T20 World Cup ends in March, keeping in mind the new one-ball rule after the 34th over mark.

Rana. **New Zealand:** Michael Bracewell (c), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul (wk), Dhruv Jurel (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Ayush Badoni, Kuldeep Yadav, Arshdeep Singh, Prasidh Krishna, Mohammed Siraj, Harshit

first ODI but his stroke-filled 91-ball 93 set up India's win.

Skipper Shubman Gill hit a measured half-century and his deputy Shreyas Iyer missed his by one run in the series opener. But a robust batting show heralded by a dazzling start from Rohit Sharma would keep India assured of going full throttle once again. Kohli is riding high on confidence and performing at a different level.

Kohli and Rohit Sharma are clearly enjoying themselves in what is the final leg of a glittering international run. Kohli narrowly missed his 54th ODI ton in the

## 'Bilateral ODIs crucial before major events'

It's a format that we enjoy playing, says NZ batter Henry Nicholls

RAJKOT

New Zealand batter Henry Nicholls on Tuesday said having a limited amount of one-day cricket between global events makes the series such as the ongoing one against India "more important than ever".

While the next 50-over World Cup being still 22 months away, questions on the relevance of the format and context of the ongoing series have resurfaced as focus primarily remains on next month's T20 World Cup.

"Like you say there's not as much one-day cricket between major events, I think that makes these series even more important."

**Henry Nicholls**  
New Zealand batter

with limited amount. From a batting point of view, we did a lot of things pretty well and it's a case of us being able to do them for a bit longer. Devon and I (had a) partnership at the top, if one of us is able to bat for an extended period of time," he added.

## Alyssa to retire from Intl cricket after India series

SYDNEY

Alyssa Healy, one of the finest cricketers to have played for Australia, will retire from the game following the home series against India in March.

The 35-year-old will lead the Australian team one final time in the three ODIs and the one off women's Test in Perth. Healy won't be part of the T20s against India as she will not be around for the T20 World Cup in the UK.

"Knowing I won't be going to the T20 World Cup this

later this year. "It's with mixed emotions that the upcoming India series will be my last for Australia," Healy, one of the most destructive batters in the women's game, said in a statement.

"I'm still passionate about playing for Australia but I've somewhat lost that competitive edge that's kept me driven since the start, so the time feels right to call it a day."

year and the limited preparation time the team has, I won't be part of the T20s against India, but I'm excited to have the opportunity to finish my career and captain the ODI and test side at home against India - one of the biggest series on the calendar for us."

Healy has played an integral role in Australia's domination over the past decade. Considering she has won eight world titles, six in the T20 format and two in one-day cricket, losing the semi-

nals to eventual winners in the ODI World Cup last year was a disappointing outcome for Healy and her team.

The wicket-keeper batter has represented Australia in 10 Tests, 123 ODIs and 162 T20 Internationals. She has so far scored 489 Test runs at an average of 30.56, 3563 ODI runs at 35.98 with seven

hundreds and 3054 at 25.45 with one century in T20Is.

"I'll genuinely miss my teammates, singing the team song and walking out to open the batting for Australia. Representing my country has been an incredible honour and I'm grateful for one last series in the green and gold," said Healy.

**HEALY'S CAREER**  
**10 Tests**  
**123 ODIs**  
**162 T20Is**



Australia women's cricket team skipper Alyssa Healy will play his last series against India. AP