

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

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

Pankaj Chaudhary is set to become the Uttar Pradesh president

Maharajganj

Uttar Pradesh's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is soon to get a new state president. Union Minister of State for Finance and seven-time MP from Maharajganj, Pankaj Chaudhary, filed his nomination papers for the post of state president at the party head-



quarters in Lucknow on Saturday. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath acted as his proposer, while several senior leaders, includ-

ing both Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak, were present. The political circles are abuzz with activity regarding Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary. The party is giving him a major responsibility in the state. The party can benefit from his strong

hold on the backward communities. The party has played a strategic move to consolidate its traditional vote bank while weakening the PDA (Pichhda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak - Backward Classes, Dalits, and Minorities) alliance. According to current calculations, Pankaj Chaudhary is almost certain to

become the BJP state president. Born on November 20, 1964, in Gorakhpur's Ghantaghara Harbansh Gali, Pankaj Chaudhary received his education from MP Inter College and Gorakhpur University. Born into an industrial family, Pankaj Chaudhary entered politics and became a corporator

BJP achieves historic victory in Thiruvananthapuram elections

Thiruvananthapuram

The NDA has achieved a major victory in the Kerala local body elections. The alliance has won 50 out of the 101 wards of the Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation. The Left Democratic Front (LDF) has held power here for the past 45 years. The LDF won 29 wards and the Congress alliance (UDF) secured 19 wards. In the 2020 Thiruvananthapuram local body elections, the LDF had won 52 wards. The BJP-led NDA had secured 33 wards and the UDF had won 10 wards.

Thiruvananthapuram is considered a stronghold of Congress MP Shashi Tharoor. Counting of votes for Kerala's 1,199 local bodies is underway since 8 am. Voting was held in two phases on December 9 and 11. The newly elected panchayat



We are definitely going to win the next assembly elections: Rahul Gandhi

This is a big victory for us. We are definitely going to win the next assembly elections." He added that he did not want to comment on anyone from Thiruvananthapuram (Congress MP Shashi Tharoor) as they would review both the successes and failures anyway. BJP candidate R. Sreelekha said, "Since my candidature was announced, the LDF and Congress have criticized me more than expected. I am happy that the people of my ward ignored all those things and supported me.

members, municipal councilors, and corporation councilors will take oath on December 21.

PM Modi thanks BJP workers

Prime Minister Modi said, "Heartfelt thanks to the hardworking BJP workers for the spectacular victory in the

Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation. Today is a day to remember the work and struggles of generations of workers in Kerala who have worked at the grassroots level. Our workers are our strength and we are proud of them." Rahul Gandhi

The NDA's victory is a turning point in Kerala politics: PM

New Delhi

The Prime Minister wrote, "I express my heartfelt gratitude to all the people of Kerala who supported BJP and NDA candidates in the local body elections in the state. The people of Kerala are now fed up with both the UDF and the LDF. They believe that only the NDA can deliver good governance and build a developed Kerala with opportunities for all. "Thank you

Thiruvananthapuram! PM Modi wrote, "Thank you Thiruvananthapuram! The mandate received by the BJP-NDA in the Thiruvananthapuram.

says victory is certain in the upcoming assembly elections. Congress MP KC Venugopal said, "This is the highest number of seats the UDF and Congress have ever won in the history of Kerala local body.



On the anniversary of the terrorist attack on Parliament House, heartfelt tributes were paid to the brave martyrs who sacrificed their lives. Prime Minister Modi is seen meeting with the families of the martyrs.

Nadda launches scathing attack on Sukhu govt.

Shimla

Bharatiya Janata Party National President and Union Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda launched a strong attack on the Sukhu government of Himachal Pradesh at a felicitation rally held in his honor in Shimla on

Saturday. He said that the central government has provided thousands of crores of rupees in assistance to Himachal Pradesh, but development is not visible on the ground in the state. Nadda termed the Congress government as a failed, dishonest, and disruptive govern-

ment. JP Nadda questioned Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, asking what the central government has left undone for the state. He said that the center has provided ample assistance for disaster relief (Rs 3,789 crore), Smart City projects (more than Rs

1000 crore), AIIMS Bilaspur, medical colleges, Bulk Drug Park, four-lane projects, and making Baddi a pharma hub, among other schemes. In addition, special assistance of more than Rs 2000 crore and a JICA fund of Rs 1442 crore were also provided.

Every year, 200,000 people are giving up their Indian citizenship

New Delhi

The number of Indians renouncing their citizenship is continuously increasing. The Ministry of External Affairs informed Parliament that approximately 900,000 Indians have given up their citizenship in the last 5 years. Responding in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for External Affairs Kirtiwaran Singh said that between 2011 and 2024, approxi-



mately 2.1 million Indians acquired foreign citizenship. A significant surge in the number of people renouncing citizenship was observed after 2021. While this figure dropped to around 85,000 in 2020, the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, it subsequently

The police play a crucial role in maintaining law and order in society: Nitish Kumar

Patna

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar attended the passing out parade ceremony of trainee police sub-inspectors at the Bihar Police Academy in Rajgir, Nalanda district, on Saturday. ??On this occasion, he said that the role of the police in maintaining law and order in society is extremely important. The Chief Minister inspected the passing out parade and took

the salute from an open jeep. Encouraging the trainee police sub-inspectors, he said that they had all received excellent training. He expressed confidence that they would discharge their duties with complete dedication, honesty, sensitivity, and discipline. On this occasion, trainee police sub-inspectors who performed exceptionally well during their training were awarded.



strate a country's military capability. Without naming Pakistan, he took a dig at the country, saying that in recent times, there have been false claims of victory and social media propaganda, while the reality on the ground has been quite different. The new

officers are joining the service at a time when Operation Sindo is underway. In the current security environment, constant vigilance, agility, and preparedness are essential. Military service is not limited to moments of crisis; continuous preparation is

the key to success. Vigilance, readiness, and a professional attitude will determine success not only during wartime but throughout the entire service period. India's strength rests on strong institutions, democratic stability, and the professional capabilities of its armed forces.

General Anil

Chauhan had also participated in the Chanakya

Defence Dialogue being

held at the Sam

Manekshaw Centre in

New Delhi. During this,

he had said that warfare

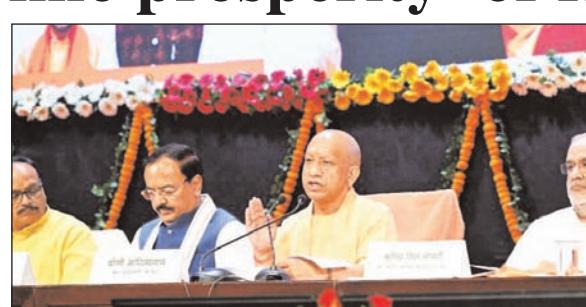
is constantly changing

and evolving.

The Yogi government is emphasizing the 'economic prosperity' of farmers

Lucknow

The Yogi Adityanath government is placing special emphasis on the economic prosperity of farmers. On one hand, the Yogi government is providing all necessary facilities by setting up 4645 procurement centers for paddy sales at Minimum Support Price (MSP), and on the other hand, it is directly transferring money to farmers' accounts through DBT (Direct Benefit



Transfer). According to the data, more than 3.15 lakh farmers have sold 19.14 lakh metric tons of paddy. In return, more than Rs 4500 crore has been paid to the farmers. Not only this,

curement started on October 1st in Western Uttar Pradesh and on November 1st in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. More farmers registered than in the previous season. The Yogi government is breaking its own records year after year. In the Kharif marketing year 2024-25, by December 13th, 6.70 lakh farmers had registered for paddy sales, while in 2025-26, this figure has already crossed 7.83 lakh.

The AQI in Delhi-NCR has crossed 400

New Delhi

Pollution levels in Delhi-NCR have risen again. On Saturday, the Air Quality Index (AQI) in Delhi was recorded at 401 at 10 AM, which falls into the "severe" category. In view of the rising pollution levels, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has implemented restrictions under the Graded Response Action Plan.

Angry fans went on a rampage at an event featuring Argentine football legend Lionel Messi at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata. Several videos related to the incident are going viral on social media. The fans' anger was so intense that they vandalized the entire stadium. Meanwhile, the Kolkata Police have taken the first action, arresting the main organizer of the event, Shatadru.

Dutta. Main Organizer of the Event

Arrested Regarding the chaos at the event featuring the famous footballer Messi, Additional Director General of Police (ADG) Javed Shamim said, "The situation is now normal.

Vandalism at the stadium during Messi's visit, organizers arrested

Kolkata

The second phase is the investigation. An FIR has been registered and the main organizer has been arrested. The organizers are promising that they will refund the ticket money to the fans. Let's see how this is possible.



Meeting held with All India OBC and SC/ST Railway Employees Association under the chairmanship of DRM

Chandauli

Two informal meetings were held in the conference room of the DRM office on Friday under the chairmanship of DRM Uday Singh Meena. The first meeting in the morning was held with All India OBC Railway Employees Association and then with All India SC/ST Railway Employees Association. ADRM Dilip Kumar and officers of all branches of the division were present in both the meetings. Zonal and divisional level officials participated from both the associations. In both the meetings, various points related to the welfare of employees, facilities at the workplace and the association were discussed. Necessary guidelines were given by DRM for the welfare of railway employees and provision of due facilities. In his address in both the meetings, DRM underlined



that DDU Division is an important Division of Indian Railways, which is continuously achieving new achievements. In recent times, the Board has ensured smooth and safe operations even on occasions with heavy passenger pressure like Chhath and Pitru Paksha. The Division has also made significant progress in employee welfare with 100% punctuality at

times, operation of the longest Rudrastra goods train, better wagon and track maintenance and digital initiatives such as biometric log-in and M-UTS. DRM also underlined that the continued support of employee organizations has been extremely important in making these achievements possible. Describing the cooperation between the administration and the associations as the basis of the progress of DDU Mandal, he said that by working together like this, the Mandal will be taken to new heights. The meeting was conducted by Senior Divisional Personnel Officer Ujjwal Anand. On this occasion, the officials of both the associations expressed gratitude towards the railway administration.

Women's Innovation at Malawan Cow Shelter Develops an Exemplary Model of Self-Reliance: CDO

Etah

Under the directives of the Uttar Pradesh Government and the guidance of Chief Development Officer (CDO) Dr. Nagendra Narayan Mishra, the Malawan cow shelter in the district has emerged as an inspiring example of women self-reliance and rural innovation. Women from Self-Help Groups (SHG) have developed a unique model that promotes sustainable livelihood, recycling and environmental conservation by producing 'cow-cast' items from cow dung,



preparing vermi compost and crafting eco-thermal blankets using straw and jute sacks. The newly constructed office and innovation model at the Malawan cow shelter were inaugurated by BJP District President Pramod Gupta. On this occasion, CDO Dr. Nagendra Narayan Mishra, Block Pramukh Representative (Sakteet), CVO Dr. R. B. Ram, Secretary Navneet, DPO Aryan Gaur and other officials were present. Praising the district administra-

tion's initiative, BJP District President Pramod Gupta said that the model would boost the income of cow shelters while creating new livelihood opportunities for SHG members and rural women. He suggested that similar models should be implemented in all cow shelters across the district to ensure both their development and the economic advancement of women. CDO Dr. Mishra lauded the efforts of the women groups, describing the initiative as a strong blend of cow welfare and rural economy.

He directed officials to prepare a list of 30 SHG women for the production of cow-dung-based products such as incense sticks, dhoop sticks, mementos and planters. He also proposed opening a sales outlet near the national highway to market these products. The CDO informed that these activities will provide SHG women with an additional monthly income of 4,000 to 5,000. This initiative will not only make the cow shelter self-sustainable but also create stable employment for local women.

SSP Shyam Narayan Singh Inspects Friday Parade at Police Lines



Etah

Following the inspection, a physical run was organized to keep the police personnel physically and mentally fit. To ensure discipline and uniformity, squad-wise drills were also conducted during the parade. SSP Singh carried out a comprehensive inspection of PRV-112 vehicles, examining lights, hooters, PA systems and other technical equipment. He also checked the riot control and safety gear deployed on the PRV and instructed the personnel to ensure optimal response time under all circumstances. After the parade, the SSP inspected the mess, canteen, barracks, residential quarters and the training arrangements for recruit constables. He reviewed cleanliness, residential facilities and other amenities in the premises. Interacting with the recruits, he inquired about their basic needs and assured prompt redressal of staff grievances. During the inspection, Circle Officer Sadar Sankalp Deep Kushwaha, along with other officers and staff of the Police Lines, were present.

Get your case and your decision resolved in a single day through the Lok Adalat: District Judge

Bhadohi

As directed by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and the High Court of Uttar Pradesh, a mega National Lok Adalat is being held at the District and Sessions Court in Bhadohi district on 12, 2025 from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. District Judge Akhilesh Dubey stated that the National Lok Adalat will be held on December 13, 2025 starting at 10:00 am. He urged people to visit the Lok Adalat to have their cases resolved easily and cost-effectively.

He said that



MV Act, electricity-water-telephone bill disputes etc. can be resolved simply and easily through mediation. He said that you will not get these solutions anywhere else. Same day settlement, same day decision, same day relief. Come directly to Lok Adalat with your lawyer or even without a lawyer, sit, talk, settle and return home smiling. One day Lok Adalat is peace for a lifetime. Come and avail this golden opportunity. Tell your friends and relatives also about the golden moments of Lok Adalat.

ASP Shwetabh Pandey Conducts Surprise Inspection of Kotwali Nagar and Rijor Police Stations, Orders Improvement in Arrangements



Etah

Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Etah Shwetabh Pandey, conducted a surprise inspection of Kotwali Nagar and Rijor Police Stations on Friday. During the inspection, he closely reviewed all arrangements within the station premises. ASP Pandey

thoroughly examined record management, the malkhana, armoury, lock-up, women help desk, CCTNS operations, computer room, visitor register and the cleanliness of washrooms. He issued clear directions to the concerned officers for necessary improvements wherever required. Emphasizing sensitive

behaviour towards every victim and visitor arriving at the police stations, the ASP instructed staff to maintain well-organized records and ensure further strengthening of law and order. He also directed immediate corrective action to keep all security and technical systems in proper working condition.

BLO must upload meeting attendance, minutes and geo-tagged photos: District Magistrate

Bhadohi

District Election Officer Shailesh Kumar stated that all 1256 BLO in the district will meet with the Booth Level Agents (BLA) appointed by all recognized political parties at their respective polling stations and provide them with a list of absentee, deceased, shifted and duplicate voters identified during the special intensive revision counting period. Additionally, the attendance, minutes, receipts and meeting photographs (with geo-tagging) will be uploaded to the BLO app and maintained. The Sector Officers already posted in the attached list are directed to ensure the safe completion of the said meeting by coordinating with the concerned BLO and supervisors under their supervision at the booths already allotted against their names in the list. Apart from this, as per the instructions given by the Chief Electoral Officer office, they will also ensure that the attendance, minutes, receipt and photographs of the meeting (with geo-tagging) related to the meeting are uploaded through the BLO app and made available to the Election Office so that all the above material can be uploaded on the DEO portal from the district headquarters level. Strict compliance of the said order should be ensured and no laxity/negligence should be shown in the work of Special Intensive Revision (SIR)-2026.

Oath-Taking Ceremony of Samajik Chetna Manch Postponed Following Extension of SIR Work Period

Etah

The Samajik Chetna Manch has informed all its office bearers and members that the ongoing SIR (Special Intensive Revision) work in Uttar Pradesh has been extended until 31 December 2025. Due to this extension, the organization has decided to postpone its scheduled oath-taking ceremonies. The social organisation, operated under the Bhagwan Parshuram Seva Sansthan, had collected oath forms from nearly 21,000 office bearers representing 36 communities across Etah and Kasganj districts. The oath-taking ceremony for these groups was scheduled to be held on 20 December 2025 at the Ramlila Ground in Etah. Similarly, the ceremony for Firozabad and Mainpuri districts was planned to be held in Karhal. As per the directives of the organisation Chief Patron and former Governor of Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan, Kalraj Mishra, both programmes have been postponed. The directive emphasized that, in view of the crucial nature of the SIR exercise, all office bearers must prioritise participation in this national campaign to ensure accuracy in the voter list. The organisation's National President, Arun Dixit, stated that new dates for the oath-taking ceremonies of Etah-Kasganj and Firozabad-Mainpuri districts will be finalized in the upcoming Core Committee meeting. All office bearers will be informed of the revised schedule 15 days prior to the event.



Grand Organization of National Lok Adalat

Record Disposal of a Total of 227,876 Cases



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. As per the directions of the Uttar Pradesh State Legal Services Authority, Lucknow, a National Lok Adalat was organized today, December 13, 2025, at the District Court, Prayagraj, and all the tehsils, under the aegis of the District Legal Services Authority, Prayagraj. The event commenced at 10:00

AM with the lighting of the lamp by the Honorable Administrative Judge, Prayagraj, Shekhar B. Sarraf. The proceedings of the National Lok Adalat began under the chairmanship of the Honorable District Judge and Chairman of the District Legal Services Authority, Prayagraj, Satyaprakash Tripathi. A total of 227,876 cases were settled in the National



Lok Adalat. District Judge Satyaprakash Tripathi settled 2 civil cases. A total of 11,519 criminal cases were settled in the National Lok Adalat. The Family Court settled a total of 72 cases based on mutual compromise. The Honorable District Judge of Prayagraj facilitated reconciliation between 13 couples, who agreed to live together, and exchanged garlands and sweets.

Presiding Officer of the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (North), Parvendra Kumar Sharma, settled 310 cases. Presiding Officer of the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (South), Nikunj Mittal, settled 112 cases. Sudama Prasad, Presiding Officer, Commercial Court, settled 1 case. Presiding Officer, Land Acquisition, Krishna Swaroop Dhar

Dwivedi, settled 6 cases. Rahul Singh, Additional District Judge, EC Act, settled 602 electricity-related cases. Chief Judicial Magistrate, Trisha Mishra, settled 5,857 cases. Vinay Kumar Jaiswal, Railway Magistrate, settled 2,180 cases, and Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate-2, Arun Kumar Yadav, settled 1,057 cases. A total of 127,064 cases

were disposed of by the revenue courts, and 1,776 pre-litigation cases of the bank were settled. The Lok Adalat was successfully organized under the direction of Ravikant-II, Nodal Officer/ADJ, Lok Adalat, in coordination with all departments. This information was provided by Dinesh Kumar Gautam, Secretary/ADJ, District Legal Services Authority, Prayagraj.

Motorcycle-Riding Couple Hit by Car; Wife Dies, Husband Injured



deceased woman's body for post-mortem examination. According to reports,

Ramraj Pal, a resident of Isipur village in the Sarai Akil police station area, was taking

his wife, Meena Devi, to Kalyanpur for treatment on his motorcycle. As they reached

near Moazzam Pur Gate in the Karari police station area, a speeding car hit their motorcycle, causing the couple to fall onto the road. Meena Devi died tragically in the accident, and her husband, Ramraj Pal, was seriously injured. Local residents informed the police, who arrived at the scene, sent the injured husband to the hospital for treatment, and took the woman's body into custody for post-mortem. The incident has caused great distress in the family.

Providing a proper platform by organizing sports events is our collective duty: Ajay Pandey



Seeing the large gathering of children at the sports event, the children present were seen laughing and playing with each other. A large number of children participated in the sports and showcased their talent in the competition, securing their place. He also said that if such an event happens again, the sports events include long jump, rope skipping, high jump, 100-meter race, 500-meter race, 300-meter race, Kho-

A total of 32,666 cases were settled and 4,81,08,654 was recovered at the National Lok Adalat

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kaushambi. Under the directions of the Uttar Pradesh State Legal Services Authority, Lucknow, and the auspices of the District Legal Services Authority, Kaushambi, the National Lok Adalat was inaugurated on December 13th by lighting a lamp, under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Administrative Justice Shri Shekhar B. Saraf and District Judge Shri J.P. Yadav. All the respected judicial officers of the judicial establishment, bank officers and employees, and the general public were present. Stalls were set up at the National Lok Adalat for the exhibition and sale of products made by the District Jail, Kaushambi, juveniles and women, and self-help groups/non-governmental organizations. The medical department also set up free check-up camps, and wheelchairs were available for the convenience of persons with disabilities. In the process of settling cases at the National Lok Adalat, the Hon'ble District Judge settled 2 cases and recovered a fine of 500. The Hon'ble Principal Judge, Family Court, settled a total of 40 family cases. The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal settled 54 cases and awarded compensation of

2,06,86,000. Similarly, the Additional District Judge-I settled 1 case and recovered a fine of 500. The Additional District Judge/Special Judge SC/ST settled 4 cases and recovered a fine of 2,000. The Additional District Judge/Special Judge POCSO Act settled 7 cases and recovered a fine of 3,500. The Additional District Judge-III settled a total of 2 cases. The Additional District Judge/Fast Track Court-I settled 139 cases under the Electricity Act and recovered a fine of 500. The Additional District Judge/Fast Track Court-II disposed of a total of 1 case and recovered a fine of 500. The Chief Judicial Magistrate disposed of a total of 1,526 criminal cases and recovered a fine of 8,95,240. The Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate/Civil Judge (Senior Division) disposed of a total of 287 cases, imposed a fine of 3,100, and issued succession certificates worth 22,91,177. The Civil Judge (Senior

Division)/Fast Track Court disposed of 118 cases and recovered a fine of 1,030. The Civil Judge (Junior Division) disposed of a total of 220 cases and issued succession certificates worth 50,951. The Judicial Magistrate disposed of 216 cases and recovered a fine of 12,000. Similarly, the Additional Civil Judge (Junior Division) II disposed of 68 cases and recovered a fine of 12,300. The Civil Judge (Junior Division)/Fast Track Court-I disposed of a total of 241 cases and recovered a fine of 2,020. The Gram Nyayalaya (Village Court), Chayal, disposed of a total of 102 cases and recovered a fine of 5,220. The Civil Judge (Junior Division)/Fast Track Court-II disposed of a total of 131 cases and recovered a fine of 26,547 cases, and Purvanchal Vidyut Vitan Nigam Limited disposed of 1996 cases, resulting in a total recovery of 74,20,180.

DM takes strict action against negligent panchayats

Village heads who fail to respond to audit objections will not receive NOC



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma has taken a tough stance on irregularities found in the audit of development works in the district's village panchayats. Despite repeated notices, neither the current nor former village heads responded to the objections. Now, these individuals will not receive a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for the next panchayat elections. All development work in the panchayats is carried out through the village heads, and payments are also made through their digital signatures. Irregularities were found in the audit of several projects from both the previous and current panchayats. DPRO Ravi Shankar Dwivedi issued several notices to the concerned village heads and former village heads, but no satisfactory response was received. The DPRO wrote to the DM seeking guidance, upon which the DM issued a clear order. DM Manish Kumar Verma said that those who fail to respond will not be given the opportunity to contest the elections. This will increase transparency at the panchayat level and curb negligence in development works. There are hundreds of panchayats in the district where such objections are common. Officials believe that this step will ensure accountability in the future.

Bike Stolen from Naini Central Jail Gate, Jail Warden's Bike Missing, Thief Caught on CCTV

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: A case of a jail warden's bike being stolen from the main gate of Naini Central Jail has come to light. The theft of the bike from the jail gate has raised serious questions about the security of the jail. Jail officials and staff are quite disturbed after the bike was stolen in broad daylight. However, the entire incident of the bike theft has been captured on CCTV. It shows how a young man was loitering near the bike and then stole it in the blink of an eye. After a thorough search, the warden has filed a complaint at the police station. Pushpraj Singh Sengar,

originally from Kanpur Dehat, is posted as a jail warden at Central Jail Naini. He is the driver of the jail superintendent's vehicle. He lives with his family on the jail campus. On Thursday, he had gone to the Central Jail. When he reached near the gate, he met the jail's head warden, Surendra Kumar, and asked him to drop him off at the road. After dropping him off on his bike, he was returning when he started talking to a constable from Naini police station, Akhilesh. He suddenly arrived and parked his Splendor Plus bike, UP 77E 4399, outside the main gate of the jail and went inside. When he came back

out, his bike was missing. Despite searching for a long time, his bike could not be found. The entire incident was captured on CCTV. The incident took place on Thursday afternoon at around 1:42 PM.

When Pushpraj went inside the jail, a young man in a white T-shirt and half-pants approached the gate and was seen loitering for some time. A short while later, he put the key in the bike and rode away. The entire incident was captured on CCTV. The young man was seen riding away on the bike. The young man has not yet been apprehended. The jail warden has filed a complaint at the Naini police station.

Despit

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Despit

Editorial

Putin's worry isn't the military

Recently sworn in for a fifth term, Russian President Vladimir Putin did a surprise reshuffle of his defence establishment, demoting two of his closest aides—former defence minister Sergei Shoigu and ex-secretary of Security Council of Russia Nikolai Patrushev. This re-shuffle comes at a time when 'mobilisation' was expected to be Putin's first move after re-election. The President has chosen deputy prime minister and long-time economic advisor Andrei Belousov to replace Shoigu, who in turn has replaced Patrushev. The latter's new appointment remains unknown. The move is being seen as an effort to reduce the unsustainable and soaring costs of the war in Ukraine. It also challenges the narrative that the Russian economy is unaffected by the sanctions in the long-standing war. For 2024 alone, Putin has allocated \$117 billion for the special military operation against Ukraine. His war economy runs feverishly in an overheated mode. Most international estimates state that 7.5 per cent of Russia's GDP is directed to the military-industrial complex although Kremlin's official estimates claim it is 6.7 percent. It is a rare submission of a rising-cost problem from Putin, who had preferred to continue with his hunting-holidaying excursions pal Shoigu despite repeated allegations of systemic corruption and inefficiency against him for years. These allegations became the order of the day when mercenary group Wagner, led by Yevgeny Prigozhin, was brought to deliver victory in the infamous battle for Bakhmut in 2023. Putin's slighting of Prigozhin's outright allegations against Shoigu and Chief of General Staff Valery Gerasimov led to the incredible Wagner mutiny against the two generals, which ended up with Prigozhin's death in uncanny circumstances. It, however, unleashed an investigation into rampant corruption inside Russia's military leadership, of which Prigozhin had become the most notorious victim. Russia-watchers had an inkling of Shoigu's exit after Prigozhin and his aides were made to bid adieu into the flannel skies, and many corrupt links started to get exposed in the Ministry of Defence. The inkling became stronger as Shoigu's deputies, including Timur Ivanov, got arrested on corruption charges last month. Soon, two other deputy defence ministers allegedly backdated their resignations before 9 May, or the Soviet Victory Day. The Russian army was supposed to make an impressive win in Chasiv Yar on the eastern front but had to make do with American tanks captured at a small village called Berdychi when Ukrainians retreated, running out of ammunition to fire. All has certainly not been going as planned. The latest reshuffling in key defence and security offices has been Putin's biggest shake-up in the past 15 years. There are two reasons for this. One is ensuring economic efficiency at a time when the stakes are very high for Russia and Putin. And two, Shoigu's leadership has not been able to yield the anticipated results in the Ukraine war. His current appointment is a step-down with little direct authority. Getting an economist like Belousov in the key position of a defence minister also shows that Putin is preparing for the longer haul. It is a solemn reiteration that the Ukraine war has indeed been reduced to a grinding war of attrition, with both sides lacking the capabilities to end it anytime soon. Europe's combined strategies to support Kyiv militarily won't come to fruition until mid-2025. American aid and the conditionalities attached are likely to help Ukraine stay afloat, but not gain a decisive edge.



Congress Focusing on Fewer Lok Sabha Seats, But Will It Work

We are more than halfway through the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. There is no denying that the Opposition INDIA bloc, led by the Congress, has been able to create a perspective that it isn't a one-sided battle and that it is for sure not going to be "400 paar" (over 400 seats) for the ruling BJP. The usual gimmicks of stock market predictions and illegal satta (gambling) forecasts have started to emerge on social media and private WhatsApp groups. However, the underlying message is that come what may, the BJP shall be able to form the government. This probably emerges from the faith the BJP support-

ers have in the abilities of Prime Minister Narendra Modi being a leader with gargantuan mass appeal. However, there is also no denying the fact that the Opposition was in tatters when the poll campaign started, but by the passing of time, has been able to create an image of a close fight, which in the end could prove to be just a mirage. Nevertheless, the Congress campaign in the 2024 polls, whatever the results, would remain an area of discussion among the political scientists in the times to come. The Congress's poll preparation could be said to have begun from the conclave it held in

Udaipur in 2022. The declarations at the Udaipur Shibir talked of building a vibrant organisation. This came in the backdrop of desertions plaguing the party, especially from its most prominent leader Rahul Gandhi's coterie. Prior to the Congress meeting in Rajasthan that year, leaders from Rahul Gandhi's charmed circle like Jyotiraditya Scindia, Jitin Prasada, Sushmita Dev, and RPN Singh had already deserted the party. From Sonia Gandhi's protected circle, Ahmed Patel had fallen to the coronavirus, Ghulam Nabi Azad had walked out, many had aged, and many passed away. Given the situation, how

was the party to revitalise itself? The one right decision it took was to hold the polls for the post of the president of the All India Congress Committee. It did activate the party and in Mallikarjun Kharge, the Congress has found a good campaigner, who not only canvasses hard but makes a lot of sense with what he says. Strategically, unlike the Vidhan Sabha polls held some months back in the four states, the leadership has consolidated on the alliance despite the initial hiccup caused by its very convener, Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar walking out of the formation.

BJP will not get a big victory in UP without Yogi



against the wrongdoers and working in the interest of the common people.

He is the first Chief Minister of the country, who, apart from being famous as a saint after becoming the Chief Minister, has also become famous as Kulchhner Baba. He has also received the title of the most popular Chief Minister of the country. Chief Minister Adityanath has not only benefited the people of Uttar Pradesh, but has done excellent work under many development schemes on behalf of the Uttar Pradesh government. And not only is his support base the strongest in Uttar Pradesh, but he is the main face of all the MLAs and ministers in his government, due to which he is able to take decisions in his government unopposed. He not only gave free hand to the police to deal with the criminals to

end the lawlessness in Uttar Pradesh, but also by ordering bullock carts to break the chains of those who grab property illegally, he created the image of a good Chief Minister in the minds of those people who eat simple food. Even today he finds immense joy in serving cows and used to sing Hindu Hriday Samrat. He is known as the image of Ram Rama Raja.

Apart from this, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has done major reforms in the pilgrimage places of Uttar Pradesh and has also given the names of places changed in the modern times to their historical names.

The old name of Allahabad Sangam was Prayagraj. It has got its own identity. The biggest Kumbh Mela of the country has been held in Prayagraj for centuries, but no one till the time of the state paid attention to its

development and improvement.

But after becoming the Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath first got the Pracharagran renovated and the Prayagraj is worth seeing. Similarly, he has also developed many other places. Eastern Uttar Pradesh was once suffering in terms of development, now international level roads have been built there. Apart from this, his government has made efforts to provide water to every village. Now in Uttar Pradesh, whether it is the election of the Prime Minister, Assembly or Lok Sabha, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has a big and strong influence in the elections, on the basis of which BJP gets a good number of seats in every election.

Actually, I am getting all this because many people are not aware of the stature of Chief Minister Aditya and his clean political record or it can be said that they are taking Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath lightly. Yesterday, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, after coming out of jail, held a press conference and said that as soon as Modi becomes the PM, he will finish Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Arvind Kejriwal said that PM Modi does not want to fight this election for the country or the party.

he wants to fight only for one person Amit Shah. He said that he will remove Yogi Adityanath from power next time. Sources say that after Arvind Kejriwal's statement of removing Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the game of checkmate and checkmate started in the coin division, and it also revealed who all are in the race for the post of Prime Minister in BJP. According to the number of supporters and impeccable record, Yogi Adityanath is the youngest leader in India who has the capability to become the Prime Minister after Modi.

But due to past experience and the decision of the Central Government to ignore the decisions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in the formation of the cabinet, rumours spread that the Gujarat lobby does not like Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. But now the supporters of Uttar Pradesh are angry with the Chief Minister of Delhi saying this and due to this the Gujarat lobby has started doing something and Chief Minister Yogi has intensified his strategy by drawing his Laxman Rekha. And there are such political experts that if Gujarat Chief Minister does not help, then BJP will be able to get only 30-40 seats in Uttar Pradesh.

Why Delhi-Tehran deal on Chabahar Port is good news for India's Shia Muslims

After extensive negotiations, India and Iran have finally sealed a historic 10-year bilateral agreement for the operation of the strategically located Chabahar Port on the Gulf country's eastern coast. While India initially engaged in short-term agreements with Iran starting in 2016, the newly inked deal marks a significant milestone. With its presence in Chabahar, India aims to circumvent reliance on Pakistan's ports in Karachi and Gwadar, facilitating smoother access to landlocked Afghanistan and other Central Asian nations via Iran.

This deal has a lot of economic significance for India. Despite the nation's preoccupation with the ongoing Lok Sabha election, the

Narendra Modi government's decisive action, including the special permission reportedly obtained from the Election Commission of India (ECI) to dispatch a central minister to Iran, underscores the paramount importance of this deal for the nation's strategic interests and economic future. In geopolitical dynamics, this deal is a major achievement for India and a testament to Modi's personal diplomacy. It marks our first step into managing overseas ports and serves as a strategic move against the emerging

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Its timing, amid the chaos in West Asia disrupting important trade routes, makes it even more significant.

Furthermore, beyond these tangible benefits, India's diplomatic success shines through the forging of successful ties with conflicted powers. Its diplomatic success is evident in its ability to foster friendly relations with Israel while extending support to Palestine. Simultaneously, New Delhi adeptly navigates deepening ties with the United States and successfully negotiates with Iran, showcasing its diplomatic prowess. Meanwhile, our long-standing partnerships with countries such as Saudi Arabia, Russia, and Japan continue to flourish. India's leadership roles in the G20 forum and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) highlight that its diplomacy is actually working.

Why BJP-led NDA Seems to Have Advantage in Elections

The 2024 Lok Sabha elections have entered midway with the completion of four phases and only three phases remaining. During this election, the centre of discussion has been the low voter turnout — although in the fourth phase, this trend reversed with a marginal increase in turnout percentage compared to 2019. Amid this, the Opposition leaders have started claiming that the BJP's numbers are falling. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the BJP would win 180 seats, but days later he revised the figures to 150. Compared to Rahul, who seems to be very strict regarding the BJP's figures, TMC supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee gave more seats to the BJP — 195, at best. However, AAP supremo and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal seems to be more liberal than

Gandhi and Banerjee when it comes to assigning numbers to the BJP. He projected that the saffron party may get 220 seats. When the Opposition leaders are trying their best to propagate that the BJP is even struggling to cross the 200 mark, this month, in an election rally in Krishnanagar, West Bengal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed that people have decided that the BJP-led NDA is poised to secure not only 370 seats but is looking forward to crossing the 400 mark. Such claims are routine for politicians during the election season to energise their ground-level workers and attract floating voters. But what caught the attention are the claims made by some journalists and political analysts, who are saying that the BJP is unlikely to get a majority on its own — and even the NDA may struggle to get the majority on its own. Psephologist turned political leader and activist Yogendra Yadav has given a loose figure of around 233 seats based on his "ground assessment" to the BJP and around 268 seats to the NDA. Before analysing the current election, first let's revisit the 2019 Lok Sabha election, which is being cited nowadays often by many journalists and political commentators.

According to this section, this year's election has no dominant narrative unlike the 2019 election, which, according to them, was won by the BJP-led NDA with a big mandate because of the nationalist wave generated by the Pulwama terror attack followed by the Balakot airstrike. Interestingly, a section during the election campaign then had claimed 2019 as "a waveless election". Nevertheless, post the results, they concluded that Modi came to power for the second time only because of the opportunity provided by the Pulwama terror attack. This argument is faulty, that's why a revisit to the 2019 elections is necessary. According to the Lokniti-CSDS post-poll study, the Pulwama terror attack and Balakot air strike were important issues for only 0.4 per cent of voters while voting. The survey pointed out that development was an important issue for 14.3 per cent of voters. This was followed by unemployment, which was important for 11.3 per cent of voters. Other issues included economic growth, corruption, price rise, water-related problems etc. These figures have been in the public domain for the last five years, still, it is amazing that in this country, we have some eminent journalists and political commentators misinterpreting the 2019 election as mostly decided on the basis of Pulwama and Balakot. Coming to the 2024 elections, Lokniti-CSDS released a pre-poll survey in April where the data pointed out that the satisfaction level towards the Modi government has seen a dip of around 8.1 per cent — a sign of serious concern for the BJP. Increasing unemployment (12.2 per cent), price rise (7.6 per cent) and falling income (4.1 per cent) are some of the crucial issues in the

Briefs

KOCHE

Malayalam actor found dead at home

Malayalam actor Akhil Vishwanath, 30, who starred in the 2019 award-winning film Chola, directed by Sanal Kumar Sasidharan, passed away on December 11.

PATNA

Mob lynch man to death in Bihar dist

A 40-year-old man was lynched to death by a mob after ascertaining his religious identity in Bihar's Nawada district. The victim identified as Mohammad Athar Hussain died on Friday night during treatment.

— Dheeraj Kumar

CHANDIGARH

Law-and-order: BJP blasts AAP

The Punjab BJP on Saturday tore into the ruling AAP government alleging that the law-and-order situation had collapsed with criminals moving fearlessly and the government acting as a mere spectator. — Rajesh Moudgil — Rajesh Moudgil

CHANDIGARH

Rural polls: Mann slams Cong, SAD

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann hit out at Congress and SAD over their charges against the ruling AAP government in the December 14 Zila Parishad and Panchayat Samiti elections and held that they had already accepted their defeat. — Rajesh Moudgil

JAIPUR

Ramsar honour for Alwar lake

The historic Siliserh Lake, one of the major tourist destinations in Alwar has been declared a Ramsar site by the Convention on Wetlands. — Manish Godha

NEW DELHI

Delhi govt's orders for schools

Delhi has directed all government and private schools to hold classes until Class 11 (except Class 10) in hybrid mode - both physical and online - as stricter pollution norms under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) Stage 4 came into effect on Saturday. Fifty per cent of staff in government and private offices have also been asked to work from home. A similar order was issued on November 24, after GRAP-3 measures came into force, but was withdrawn after the measures were revoked later that month.

BJP CHEERS | Saffron party terms win in Thiruvananthapuram and Thirunithura corporations as 'epoch-making'

Kerala for change: PM

NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Saturday termed its victory in the Thiruvananthapuram and Thirunithura municipal corporations of Left-ruled Kerala as "epoch-making and a far-reaching national indication for the national politics" even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it showed that "Kerala is fed up of UDF and LDF".

In his post on "X" on the election result, which means a lot to the BJP since the saffron party has yet not been able to make much headway in the two southern states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Modi wrote: "My gratitude to the people across Kerala who voted for BJP and NDA candidates in the local body polls in the state. Kerala is fed up of UDF and LDF. They see NDA as the only option that can deliver on good governance and build a #VikasitaKeralam with opportunities for all."

Meanwhile, BJP spokesperson



Kerala BJP President Rajeev Chandrasekhar being offered sweets by senior party leader V Muraleedharan

son Sudhanshu Trivedi while addressing a press conference at the party headquarters here said, "the results are epoch-making and a far-reaching national indication for the national politics."

Then referring to how the Left parties and the Congress have alternately shared power in the state, he said, "The people have become wise enough to understand that

they are not going to be hoodwinked by your politics in which you are joining hands in Delhi and giving a 'friendly' fight in Thiruvananthapuram.

I also want to ask Congress who stole your vote wherever the BJP did not win? And who stole CPI(M)'s vote?"

For the BJP the win in the two municipal bodies is a sign of acceptance in the southern state. The party's IT Cell head

For the BJP, the victory in the two municipal bodies is a sign of acceptance in the southern state

Amit Malviya noted how while the BJP won 50 out of the 100 seats that went to polls in Thiruvananthapuram, the remaining seats were split between the LDF (29), UDF (19), and Independents (2).

He said this was "a clear shift in the political landscape" and that "Thiruvananthapuram sends a strong message."

Malviya also noted that apart from Thiruvananthapuram, "the BJP has scripted history in Kerala once again" by winning the Thirunithura Municipality by dislodging the Left. He said the party also came second in Kasaragod, pushing the Left to third place. "The rise of the BJP in Kerala continues unabated."

SIR-castic: BJP mocks at startling data of 'voters'

Party says EC scrutinising if progeny mapping was used and also notes how 85 lakh voters got facts awry

NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Saturday highlighted a number of startling facts that have emerged from the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in West Bengal saying "1.6 crore voters have given dates which, on the face of it, are logically improbable."

The party's national information and technology department in-charge Amit Malviya in a detailed note said that the electoral data has revealed that "around 12 lakh voters in West Bengal -- around 1.5 percent of total electors -- became parents when they were only 15."

Similarly, he said, as per it "8.7 lakh became parents when they were 50, and 3.2 lakh voters became grandparents when they were 40."

Moreover, Malviya said, "a whopping 85 lakh voters

have got their father's name wrong while filing the enumeration form, according to EC data." Also, "13.4 lakh Bengal voters have got their own gender wrong."

However, EC officials said this could be due to wrong selection in the form."

Malviya also shared a chart which stated that there many discrepancies were found in the electoral rolls. <

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frowning on all these submissions", Malviya said, adding that it wants these voters to either prove their claims now or appear for formal hearings after December 16. After re-verification, the BLOs would ascertain if there was a genuine wrong entry by the voters.

The BJP leader said the EC is also checking "if bogus voters are trying to make an entry using the progeny mapping". He said the EC officials found that with one person, there was progeny mapping by at least six voters, and their figure is 24.2 lakh.

"These cases are being scrutinised," he added.

He also pointed out that the EC is also referring to the 2002 SIR to streamline the data and "so far, the EC has found 20.7 lakh voters whose names were not there in the 2002 SIR."

SIT names ex-BJP MLA in charge sheet

BENGALURU

The SIT formed by the Karnataka government to investigate into the "Vote Chori" allegations in Aland constituency, Kalburgi district has filed a

VOTE CHORI

charge sheet, naming former BJP MLA Subhash Guttadar, his children in Aland and Kalburgi and also the call centre and seized laptops and mobile phones.

In the 22,000-page charge sheet, the SIT headed by ADGP B K Singh has said that Guttadar had used a call centre in Aland to delete 5,994 votes from the voter list and paid money to the call centre owner.

The call centre owner Akram Pasha, his brother Aslam Pasha and relative Mohammed Ashfaq had received Rs4.6 lakh from Guttadar family to delete the names from voter list. They had paid Rs10 per OTP to a person called Adyage Basha of Nadia district, West Bengal to file online applications for deleting

MLA bats for separate North Karnataka state

BENGALURU

Congress MLA from Kagwad Raju Kage demanding a separate North Karnataka State, which he claims has been neglected for long.

This is not the first time the MLA has raised the issue. Earlier, he had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Droupadi Murmu, seeking a separate North Karnataka state.

During the ongoing winter legislature session, Raju Kage raked up issue in the Assembly and declared that he would continue to press for a separate statehood, alleging long-standing discrimination and neglect by the successive governments.

"Some media houses and pro-Kannada organisations have criticised me for my demands. Those who want to criticise, let them continue doing so. I will remain firm and continue to raise the issue," Kage said.

Goa: Two nightclubs sealed; safety crackdown intensifies

PANAJI

Authorities have sealed at least two nightclubs as part of a statewide crackdown following the death of 25 people in a devastating fire at the Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub on December 6, officials said.

Cafe CO2 Goa, a prominent nightclub located on a cliff overlooking the Arabian Sea at Vagator beach in North Goa, was sealed on Saturday. The move came two days after Goya Club, also in Vagator, was shut down for alleged violations. An inspection of Cafe CO2 Goa at Ozrant Cliff by a state government-appointed team revealed that the club, which has a seating capacity of 250, did not possess a no-objection certificate (NOC) from the Fire and Emergency Services Department.

"There are also some issues with its structural stability. Additionally, the club had extended its construction beyond the permissible limits,

Deportation proceedings for Luthra brothers begin

BANGKOK: Thai Immigration authorities have initiated deportation proceedings against the Luthra brothers following their arrest in the country. The individuals were detained after being flagged as subjects of an INTERPOL Blue Notice, requested by Indian law enforcement agencies to gather information concerning a criminal investigation. According to Thai Immigration officials, Luthras were arrested under Section 127 of the Thai Immigration Act. Subsequently, officials at Phuket Immigration formally revoked their VISA permission to stay in Thailand, effectively cancelling their legal status in the kingdom.

due to which it was shut down", a state government official said.

Police investigating the Birch by Romeo Lane fire tragedy have arrested six people so far, including managers and staff members of the nightclub.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has warned that establishments failing to comply with the new norms will face cancellation of licences and sealing of premises.

The regulations focus on

strict enforcement of existing safety rules and the introduction of additional measures ahead of the Christmas and New Year season.

Under the new guidelines, all establishments must maintain valid fire safety certifications and obtain necessary NOCs from the Fire Department. Functional smoke detectors, sprinklers, fire hydrants and fire extinguishers have been made mandatory.

Bihar bid to check illegal sand mining

PATNA

With an objective to tighten the noose around the members of the sand mafia, the new NDA government in Bihar has formed a special task force and has also taken a number of other initiatives to take action against them.

Deputy chief minister Samrat Choudhary, who is also holding the portfolio of home department, has adopted a tough approach against the illegal mining and sand mafia as the state government has prepared a comprehensive action plan against them.

The special task force has been created in Bihar police's Economic Offences Unit (EOU) to check illegal sand mining, activities of land mafias and also seize the assets amassed illegally. The task force is being led by DIG Manaveet Singh Dhillon.

The task force will be responsible for taking tough legal action against illegal land mining, identify people engaged in illegal mining and also seize their illegal properties. It will launch a drive against sand and land mafias in coordination with the specialised agencies, government departments concerned and district level administration, sources added.

Meanwhile, state mines and geology minister Vijay Kumar Sinha has also taken initiatives for increasing people's participation in the drive against illegal sand mining. He has announced "Bihar Yodha Puraskar", under which any person would be awarded a cash prize of Rs 5000 if his initiative leads to the seizure of a sand-laden tractor and Rs 10,000 in case a sand-laden truck is seized.

UP BJP prez: Pankaj Chaudhary 'all set'

LUCKNOW

Union Minister of State for Finance and seven-time Maharajganj MP Pankaj Chaudhary on Saturday filed his nomination for the post of Uttar Pradesh BJP president, signalling an imminent change in the party's state leadership.

Chaudhary submitted his nomination at the BJP state headquarters in Lucknow in the presence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who proposed his name. Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak, along with several senior party leaders, were also present. With no rival candidate emerging so far, his election is considered

almost certain.

The move has triggered fresh political activity within the party, with the BJP seen as placing a strong organisational bet on Chaudhary ahead of upcoming electoral challenges. Party leaders believe his influence among backward communities will help the BJP consolidate its traditional support base and counter the opposition's PDA narrative.

His elevation is also being viewed as a strategic effort to strengthen the party's social outreach in the state.

Born in 1964 in Gorakhpur, Chaudhary completed his education up to graduation at Gorakhpur University. He entered politics in 1989 as a councillor in the Gorakhpur Municipal Corporation

and later served as deputy mayor. After Maharajganj was carved out as a separate district, he made it the centre of his political activities and gradually emerged as a key leader in the region.

Chaudhary built a strong reputation in district panchayat politics in Maharajganj. His family has played a prominent role in local governance. His elder brother, the late industrialist Pradeep Chaudhary, became the first district panchayat chairman of Maharajganj, followed by two consecutive terms by his mother Ujjwal Chaudhary. Party leaders say that even while in opposition, Chaudhary managed to retain influence over the district panchayat through organisational strength and political strategy.

I-T department sends SMS/emails for bogus political donation claims

The Income Tax department has started sending SMS and email advisories to taxpayers for wrongful deduction claims related to unrecognised political parties or charitable institutions, the finance ministry said on Saturday.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said through data analysis it has observed that huge amount of bogus claims have been made on account of donation to Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs) or Charitable Institutions and reduced their tax obligations and have also claimed bogus refunds.

"A targeted NUDGE campaign has been launched as a taxpayer-friendly

measure, providing them opportunity to update their ITRs and withdraw wrong claims, if any. SMSs and Email advisories are being issued from 12th December 2025 to such taxpayers on their registered mobile numbers and emails," the finance ministry said in a statement.

The CBDT said that evidence gathered from enforcement actions indicated that RUPPs, many of which were non-filers, non-operational at their registered addresses, and are not engaged in any political activity, were being used as conduits for routing funds, hawala transactions, cross border remittances, and issuing bogus receipts for donations.

IndiGo restores full network operations

MUMBAI

IndiGo showed signs of nearing operational normalcy as the carrier aimed to operate over 2,050 flights on Saturday, after more than 10 days of disruptions.

This marked the second consecutive day of sustained stability as the airline operated more than 2,000 flights to all the destinations on its network.

IndiGo went through a

India engages Mexico over up to 50% tariff hike

NEW DELHI

India is engaged with Mexico over the South American nation's decision to unilaterally raise tariffs on a number of products to find mutually beneficial solutions, even as New Delhi reserves the right to take appropriate measures to safeguard the interests of its exporters, an official said on Saturday.

These duties are announced against countries that do not have FTAs with Mexico, including India, China, South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia.

The official said that India, in fact, was engaged with Mexico during the initial tabling of a bill in this regard.

I-T Dept cautions taxpayers against rise in fake emails, SMS scams

The Income Tax Department has issued a public advisory cautioning taxpayers, especially senior citizens, against fraudulent emails, SMS messages, and websites impersonating the Department to steal personal and financial information. In an official awareness message shared by the Income Tax Department on X, taxpayers have been urged to remain vigilant and verify the authenticity of all communications claiming to be from tax authorities.

Agentic AI transforms banks frontline sales, boosts revenue

Agentic artificial intelligence (AI) systems are rapidly reshaping how banks manage frontline sales, offering a potential breakthrough for relationship managers long burdened by inefficient systems, weak leads, and heavy administrative workloads, noted a McKinsey report.

Geopolitical risks top boardroom concerns for Indian cos: Report

Geopolitical instability has emerged as the biggest future risk for India Inc., with nearly 50% of CXOs ranking it as the most severe threat, according to a report, 'The Global Risk Atlas - New Realities' by MGCI Global Risk Advisory. The report, based on insights from over 125 CXOs across 45 economies found

Briefs

IS man kills 2 US soldiers and civilian

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

Belarus frees Nobel laureate

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

Ex-president jailed for graft

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

Indian envoy falls ill

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

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

Int'l troops deployment in Gaza early next year

TEL AVIV



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DISPLACED GAZANS FACE FLOODS

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

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

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

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

'Legal' status to 19 West Bank settlements

Israel's cabinet has decided to give "legal" status to 19 settlements in the occupied West Bank, including two that were vacated 20 years ago under a pullout aimed at boosting the country's security and the economy, Israeli media reported.

All Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal under international law, but the settlements which Israel claims are now "legal" were built unilaterally by Israeli settlers without state authorisation.

The Palestinian Authority on Friday condemned the move, announced late on Thursday. Some settlements are newly established, while others are older, Israeli media said.

The move to legalise the settlements in the West Bank—Palestinian territory occupied by Israel in 1967—was proposed by extremist Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz.

Numerous UN Security Council resolutions have called on Israel to halt all settlement activity.

Trump leans towards Warsh or Hassett to lead Federal Reserve

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

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

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

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

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



To curb consumption, smuggling...

Iran raises fuel prices 1st time since 2019 stirs

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

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

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

That has made the cost of having some of the world's cheapest gasoline at a few pennies per gallon that much more expensive. The government's hesitant move towards increasing prices likely signals it wants to avoid any confrontation with the exhausted Iranians following the 12-day war with Israel in June. "Our discontent has no result," fumed Saeed Mohammadi, a teacher who works as a taxi driver in spare time to make ends meet. "The government does whatever it likes. They don't ask people if they agree."

NEW RATE IS STILL PENNIES PER GALLON

The new pricing system adds a third pricing level to the country's long-running subsidy system. The revised structure allows motorists to continue receiving 60 litres (15 gallons)/month at the subsidised 15,000 rials/ltr, or 1.25 US cents, and the next 100 litres (26 gallons) will remain at 30,000 rials/litre, or 2.5 cents.

Anything beyond falls under the new scheme of 50,000 rials/ltr, 4 cents. Iran introduced fuel rationing in 2007, but that has yet to ease demand for the ultra-cheap petrol.

Ready to deal with threats, Pak CDF Munir

ISLAMABAD

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

Munir visited Gujranwala and Sialkot garrisons, and was briefed on the formation's operational readiness and initiatives for strengthening combat preparedness, an army statement said.

"Pakistan Army remains fully focused on both internal and external challenges, including hostile hybrid campaigns, extremist ideologies, and divisive elements seeking to undermine national stability," he said.

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

The UN Special Rapporteur on torture Alice Jill Edwards said prolonged or indefinite solitary confinement is prohibited under international human rights law.

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

'No big deal': Trump on new Epstein pics

BALLROOM PROJECT: DON FACES LAWSUIT

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

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a privately funded group, is asking the US District Court to block Trump's White House ballroom addition, which already has involved razing the East Wing, until it goes through comprehensive design reviews, environmental assessments, public comments and congressional debate and ratification.

"No president is allowed to tear down portions of the White House without any review whatsoever," the lawsuit said.

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

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

Security clampdown as fresh unrest grips B'desh

DHALKA

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

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

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

initiated his election campaign at central Dhaka's Bijoynagar area—from where he stood as an independent candidate. Doctors stated his condition to be critical.

Adviser Chowdhury announced a reward of Taka 50 lakh (US \$40,985.81) for information leading to the arrest of one of the suspects who shot Hadi, while his picture has also been released.

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

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

The government first launched the Operation Devil

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

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

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

Pak univs launch Sanskrit courses

LAHORE

heritage and plan to teach Gita and Mahabharat in future.

The University of Punjab Lahore (public) and The Lahore University of Management Sciences (private) have launched short courses in Sanskrit citing shared

classical language.

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

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

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

Charles reveals 'good news' in cancer fight

LONDON

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

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

milestone



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

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

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

Rumours about replacing UP PM overlook poll detail

A PM who led a party to win 412 seats in a poll 18 months ago might be expected to have the full support of his party and the public throughout the term of government. Yet rumours continue to swirl about Keir Starmer's position.

The next general election isn't scheduled until 2029.

It's well known in Westminster there's an optimum majority size—big enough to pass legislation easily, but not so big you can't keep everyone happy. Having 404 MPs me-

LONDON

The House of Lords in London played host to a special reception in honour of the 200th birth anniversary of Dadabhai Naoroji, the nationalist leader who became the first

Indian to win a popular election to the British Parliament during the colonial era.

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

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

UK," said Bilmoria, founder of Cobra Beer. "He was also an academic as a professor at Elphinstone College and, of course, he was a politician—the first Indian, first ethnic minority ever to be elected to this Parliament," he noted.

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

—PTI

Kunal shines in breezy take on single parenting

TITLE: *Single Papa*

DIRECTORS: Shashank Kaithan and Hitesh Kewalya

CAST: Kunal Kemmu, Prajaka Koli, Manoj Pahwa, Neha Dhupia, Ayesha Raza Mishra, Ankur Rathore, Ishu Talwar, Dayanand Shetty, Hami Ali, and Suhail Nayyar

WHERE: Netflix

RATING: ★★★

gently reminds us that parenting is not a one-person sport and that biology is hardly the only glue that binds a family. The series brims with staples of a classic *masala* entertainer, and while some of the story turns feel a little too convenient, the show remains engaging, affectionate and sincere.

Actors' performance

Kunal Kemmu slips into the role of Gaurav with disarming ease, oscillating between clueless man-child and unexpectedly tender caregiver. The rest of the cast are a riot in



Single Papa is a six-episode dramedy that treats single parenting with the same gravity one might reserve for choosing between *pav bhaji* and *misal* for dinner. Directed by Shashank Khaitan and Hitesh Kewalya, the series follows newly divorced Gaurav Gehlot, played by Kunal Kemmu, who is cheerfully reclaiming his bachelorhood until fate gifts him a baby abandoned in the back seat of his car. Instead of raising sensible questions like "Whose child is this?" or "Is this even legal to abandon?", the narrative joyfully vaults into a universe where Gaurav decides to raise the infant himself, much to his family's horror and disbelief.

The result is a warm, pleasantly chaotic, sometimes melancholic, sometimes hopeful ride that draws its charm from the age-old revelation that single dads, like the rest of us, learn on the job. The writing never leans too hard into preachiness, though the show

their own right. Prajakta Koli, as Gaurav's sister Namrata, delivers that exasperated sibling energy with impeccable timing. Manoj Pahwa and Ayesha Raza Mishra make for a believably parental duo, forever torn between frustration and affection as they watch their son dive headfirst into fatherhood.

Neha Dhupia goes full throttle as Mrs Nehra, the formidable, rules-obsessed authority figure who would probably issue parking tickets

in her sleep. Dayanand Shetty is a delightful revelation as Manny Parbat Singh, the gentle giant who softens the room every time he appears. Suhail Nayyar's Pawan and Ankur Rathore's Goldie both add texture and humour, rounding off a cast that seems to be genuinely enjoying itself. *Single Papa* sparkles with bright colours, polished sets and camera work that flatters its every mood. The production design leans into a cheerful urban palette that suits the story's tone. Nothing feels gloomy even when the characters do. The music is pleasant, the pacing zippy, and the visual energy never dips. The series clearly knows it wants to be a feel-good watch, and it commits to that identity with full sincerity.

Single Papa is not groundbreaking, but it is undoubtedly heartwarming. It offers a fresh Indian twist on single-parenting stories, blending melodrama with humour and emotion in equal measure. The writing occasionally wanders into cliché territory, yet the sincerity of its performances and the warmth of its message keep it afloat. It is the kind of show you watch with a smile, knowing it will not change your life but will certainly brighten your evening. A wholesome, entertaining weekend binge.

OTT REVIEWS

Chaos and charm in a joyfully crowded house

While the plotting sometimes feels like a stage play with meticulously timed entrances and exits, the execution remains breezy. The narrative softly touches upon the anxieties the Muslim community carries in everyday life, never sermonising, but never hiding either.

Bani, played with steady grace by Kritika Kamra, has twelve hours to submit a crucial US job application. Naturally, this is the moment when her entire extended clan decides to treat her home as the arrival terminal of the Shamsuddin International Airport.

What follows is a dense medley of secrets, aspirations, sudden *Umrah* plans, misplaced *sajjada* (praying mats), cash deposits, and an unexpected marriage plan. The film revels in the noisy charm of a joint family where privacy is a myth. Yet beneath their interactions lies a thoughtfully woven undercurrent. The narrative softly touches upon the anxieties the Muslim community carries in everyday life, never sermonising, but never hiding either.

Actors' performance

Kritika Kamra anchors the film with admirable subtlety. She plays Bani as a woman constantly ricocheting between duty and ambition, frus-

TITLE: *Saali Mohabbat*

DIRECTOR: Tisca Chopra

CAST: Radhika Apte, Divyendu, Anurag Kashyap, Anshuman Pushkar, Sauraseni Maitra, Sharad Saxena

WHERE: ZEE 5

RATING: ★★★

By now, whenever there is a mere mention of Radhika Apte, rest assured that the screen will be on fire with her performance. The film *Saali Mohabbat* is no different. It starts off with Smita (Radhika Apte) sitting alone at a railway station, followed by a flashback mode that mirrors her life... in her own words as she tells a story to a bunch of her husband's friends at a party. It's also the same party in which she sees her husband secretly flirting with another woman.

Under the pretext of telling a story, she recalls her life with her drunkard and habitual gambler husband Pankaj Tiwari. There enters her sister Shalini Saxena (Sauraseni Maitra) who two-times Smita's husband with Pankaj Tiwari (Anshuman Pushkar) and Police Inspector Ratan Pandit (Divyendu). Despite knowing about her sister and her flirtatious ways, Smita keeps quiet.

One fine day, Smita finds the blood stained dead bodies of her husband Pankaj Tiwari and her sister Shalini Saxena. Investigations by Inspector Ratan lead to Gajendra Bhaiya (Anurag Kashyap), the



Radhika Apte retains her superstar shine

owner of a gambling den in which Pankaj was a regular client. It also comes to light that Pankaj owed Gajendra a huge amount of money as mounting debts since he was on a losing spree at the gambling den.

Who is/are the killers of Pankaj and Shalini, what is the motive behind their murders and what ultimately happens to Smita is what forms the rest of the film.

Actors' performance

As stated above, the name of Radhika Apte simply assures on-screen fireworks in the form of her performance. With this film, she has yet

again proved as to why she is one of the most 'versa-style' actors of today. Right from the word go, she not just owns the screen, but also sets the film on fire with her effortless performance. Her smooth oscillation between the varied shades of emotions will surely make you drop your jaws!

Following a close second is Divyendu who comes up with a restrained but convincing performance. Veteran actors Anurag Kashyap and Sharad Saxena deliver strong performances within their available screen time. Other actors like Anshuman Pushkar and Sauraseni Maitra ably carry the film forward.

As for the film's direction, kudos to Tisca Chopra for having chosen to step into direction with such an unconventional film. Tisca's directorial abilities find a perfect muse in Radhika Apte who seamlessly blends herself into the character. Here's looking forward to more films at the hands of Tisca.

The film's writing (Tisca Chopra, Sanjay Chopra) is simple yet appealing. Cinematography (Vidushi Tiwari) is taut. The film's editing (Sanyukta Kaza) is commendable. The film's music is decent and so is its background music (Karan Kulkarni).

The film may not be appealing to everyone as it has got its section of audiences who love such kinds of whodunit thrillers. But, since it's an OTT release, word of mouth will form the keyword for the film to be declared as a hit or a flop!

lies in visual monotony. Occasionally, one wishes the camera would escape the apartment to offer a breather. Still, the controlled environment heightens the sense of pressure on Bani and mirrors the claustrophobia of her situation.

Overall, this culturally rooted entertainer celebrates the madness of big Indian families while acknowledging their burdens. It might not push cinematic boundaries, but it delivers an honest, heartfelt portrait of love wrapped in clutter. It is a perfect pick for viewers who enjoy stories of togetherness, generational tussles, and the bittersweet bonds that make families both impossible and indispensable.

'We use them to promote our films...'

Actress Huma Qureshi recently spoke about paparazzi culture, days after Jaya Bachchan's controversial remark about paps wearing 'drainpipe tight, *gandi pant*'. Huma said that the paparazzi are important and that everyone is simply doing their job. Calling it an ecosystem, she added that if people view the media and audience from one perspective, then they all share the responsibility to communicate respectfully, even when some disagree or want to know something from them.

Speaking to India Today, Huma said that she has a very healthy relationship with the paparazzi. "I think they are also important. I won't lie, but we use them when we need to promote our films or bring a certain aspect of our lives into the public eye. There have been times when we needed to promote our films, so we invited them to premieres. When we want to be spotted somewhere, we call them. I don't want to put all the blame on them," she added.

Further, she stated that sometimes when she doesn't look her best, she requests them not to post her pictures, and the paparazzi agree to it as well. She added that she has been working for 10-12 years, and over time, her relation-

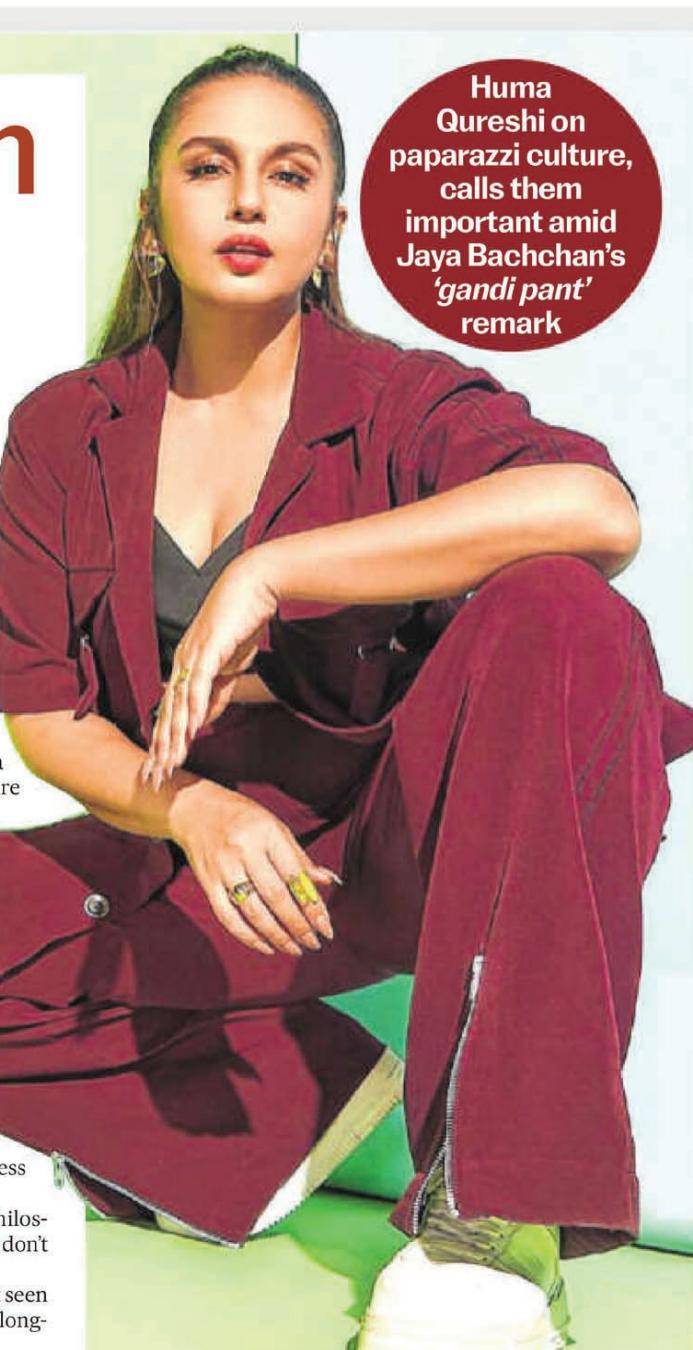
ships with them have developed in this way.

"Maybe it hasn't been the same for others. There have been times when they've taken pictures of me from bad angles. But now I stop them and tell them not to do that," she added.

Huma added, "If you want to intrude on my privacy, you will ask questions that I won't find appropriate. Or I might be wearing a certain dress, and you'll try to capture it from a particular angle, which isn't right. There's a limit, which I think people should never cross. But we do cross that line, that's the reality. I'm not saying anything new. As a female actress, I have experienced all of this. Someone asked me a very inappropriate question during a press conference."

The actress further said, "My philosophy is simple: don't misbehave and don't let others misbehave."

On the work front, Huma was last seen in the series *Delhi Crime Season 3*, alongside Shefali Shah in the lead.



Huma Qureshi on paparazzi culture, calls them important amid Jaya Bachchan's 'gandi pant' remark

Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Honey Trehan explore realism

Actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Honey Trehan reunite for *Raat Akeli Hai: The Bansal Murders*, an investigative drama woven around a cop character that they say is very close to real life. The crime thriller franchise began with the 2020 acclaimed movie, *Raat Akeli Hai*, in which the actor plays an honest police officer, Jatil Yadav.

Siddiqui, whose last big screen outing saw him playing a vampire in *Thamna*, said he finds immense satisfaction in bringing real-life narratives to the screen. "I like Honey's films because that character, that world exists around us. We make fantasy or larger-than-life films but what I like the most is the real-life stories," the actor told PTI.

Working with Trehan, Siddiqui

Actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui and director Honey Trehan have teamed up again for *Raat Akeli Hai: The Bansal Murders*, an investigative drama woven around a cop character that they say is very close to real life. The crime thriller franchise began with the 2020 acclaimed movie, *Raat Akeli Hai*, in which the actor plays an honest police officer, Jatil Yadav.

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Working with Trehan, Siddiqui

said, gives him a distinct viewpoint that is connected to reality. "When you work with such experienced and talented directors, they have their own perspective, and that perspective is very close to

real life. Like, Honey said, 'I'll have those characters that exist in real life' in all my films. I like it a lot when we see those characters that are around us," he said, adding that it's essential to share real-life stories with audiences.

Trehan, a casting director who crossed over to moving making with *Raat Akeli Hai* and then made his yet-unreleased *Punjab 95* with Diljit Dosanjh, said real life stories wove around the world of cops and crime fascinate him. "When I read Smita's (Singh) script, I liked it. I immediately dropped the three-four ideas that I had without wasting any time and said, 'let's make this'. She trusted me with it and that's how *Raat Akeli Hai* happened. *Raat Akeli Hai* has its own universe, it's a cop universe created by Jatil," he said.



RAIPUR
Bhutia calls Messi chaos disappointing



Former India captain **Bhaichung Bhutia** on Saturday expressed disappointment over the chaos at a stadium in Kolkata during an event attended by Argentine football icon Lionel Messi, and said organisers should ensure that such incidents do not recur as they hurt the country's image. Bhutia was talking to reporters at the airport here after returning from Jagdalpur where he attended the closing ceremony of Bastar Olympic 2025 event. Asked about the incident at Salt Lake stadium in Kolkata, he said, "It is a bit disappointing because I heard that around 80,000 fans turned up. Everybody loves Messi, but genuine fans did not really get to see him, which is very unfortunate." He hoped that organisers learn a lesson and ensure such a situation does not occur."

NEW DELHI
Uthappa flags lack of role clarity



Former India batter **Robin Uthappa** has flagged a lack of role clarity in India's batting approach during a big chase, saying excessive flexibility early in the innings made run-scoring more complicated. India suffered a 51-run loss in the second T20I against South Africa after folding for 162 in 19.1 overs while chasing a target of 214 at Mullanpur on Thursday. Uthappa said the issue was not the loss of early wickets but the strategy adopted after Shubman Gill's dismissal, articulately with a deep batting line-up at India's disposal.

"When Shubman Gill got out, Axar Patel walked in with plenty of batting still to come. At that stage, he had to play the role of a pinch-hitter -- someone you are willing to risk."

KARACHI
PCB miffed after ICC snubs Agha



The Pakistan Cricket Board is unhappy with the International Cricket Council after the global governing body released a promotional poster of next year's T20 World Cup ticket

3RD T20I | A three-match audition starts for beleaguered India vice-captain

Cynosure on Gill in the hill

DHARAMSALA

The countdown to save his place in the playing XI begins for a beleaguered Shubman Gill, who is likely to get three matches against South Africa to prove his worth before the Indian team management switches to a 'Plan B' ahead of the T20 World Cup, starting in six weeks.

As India gear up to play the third T20I against the Proteas on Sunday in sub-10-degree temperatures in the lap of the ice-clad Dhauladhar range, things are suddenly heating up in the Indian dressing room, with the prolonged poor form of skipper Suryakumar Yadav coming under the scanner.

Worse, his deputy Shubman Gill, who was pushed into the XI at the expense of a settled Sanju Samson, is not inspiring much confidence.

The South African pace attack featuring Anrich Nortje, Marco Jansen, Lungi Ngidi, Ottniel Baartman and Lutho Sipamla - has shown how to bowl on Indian tracks, and the HPCA Stadium strip, offering extra bounce and some movement off the surface, will certainly keep them interested.

Among all T20 sides, South Africa, in terms of personnel, appears to have the requisite balance to win the trophy in the Indian subcontinent this time. Quinton de Kock's return, along with the likes of Aiden Markram, Dewald Brevis, Donovan Ferreira, David Miller and all-rounder Jansen, gives their batting an intimidating



India's Shubman Gill during a training session ahead of the third T20I.

look.

With only eight games, starting from the third T20I, left before the start of the T20 World Cup title defence, India's under-fire head coach Gautam Gambhir won't be able to afford, two out-of-form top-order batters in the starting line-up.

Being the skipper of the side, Surya will certainly have immunity going into the T20 World Cup despite being completely out of form for the past one year but same can't be said about Gill, who was-

n't the original choice as an opener.

Gill's entry into the T20 setup was a classic case of trying to fix something that ain't broken and things haven't looked good so far.

In this backdrop, Gill would need to bat out of his skin to prove that Ajit Agarkar-led committee wasn't wrong in throwing Samson under the bus for one bad series against England.

The stylish Indian Test and ODI skipper will have to find his T20 game and at least score in two of the three matches if he doesn't want

Samson to get his rightful place back or for that matter, find Yashasvi Jaiswal, with a fabulous T20I strike-rate of 165, enter the fray during New Zealand series.

Lack of clarity

While head coach Gambhir is too proud a person to admit but sending Axar Patel as a one drop batter during the second T20I was a "tactical brain fade" from the team's think-tank.

The kind misstep that was taken with Axar's promotion is unlikely to be repeated in the third game where skipper is expected to go back to No.3

where he has got a lot of success in his first few years at the international level.

Similarly, Shivam Dube being sent at number eight due to the shuffling of batting order was another poor call which would need course correction in the next game.

Is there a place for Kuldeep Yadav?

Kuldeep Yadav is one bowler who has consistently troubled the Proteas batter but in an Indian team where batting till No.8 is non-negotiable, the left-arm wrist spinner often finds himself getting the rough end of the stick. At Dharamsala too, he might have to sit out as Kuldeep and Varun Chakravarthy, two non-batters can't be clubbed in the same T20 playing eleven as that would lead to compromise in batting depth. While Arshdeep hasn't had a good series so far, it will be interesting to find if team management can find a place for Kuldeep in the playing eleven.

Teams:

India: Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Shubman Gill, Abhishek Sharma, NT Tilak Verma, Axar Patel, Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Varun Chakravarthy, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Sanju Samson (wk), Harsit Rana, Kuldeep Yadav, Washington Sundar.

South Africa: Aiden Markram (captain), Quinton de Kock, Reeza Hendricks, Dewald Brevis, David Miller, Tristan Stubbs, Donovan Ferreira, Marco Jansen, Lutho Sipamla, Ottniel Baartman, Anrich Nortje, Lungi Ngidi, Corbin Bosch, Keshav Maharaj, George Linde.

Tilak bats for flexible batting order in the team

Batter states adaptability has become a key requirement

DHARAMSALA

India batter Tilak Varma on Saturday underlined the team management's push for a flexible batting order, saying most players are ready to bat anywhere depending on match situations.

The hosts eye an edge in the five-match T20I series against South Africa, locked 1-1 ahead of the third game to be played here on Sunday.

With India continuing to experiment in the middle-order in the build-up to next year's T20 World Cup, Tilak said adaptability has become a key requirement in the shortest format.

"Everyone is flexible except the openers. I am up for batting at 3, 4, 5 or 6 - wherever the team prefers for me," Tilak said during the pre-match press conference.

"If the team feels a particular move is tactically best, everyone goes with the team." Drawing parallels with recent examples, Tilak said such decisions are situation-based rather than role-driven.

"One-off games keep happening. Axar Patel has already done the same thing and he did well there. It depends on the situation," he said, citing examples of similar roles being successfully executed in recent international tournaments. Providing context to the conditions in Dharamsala, the 23-year-old said the surface could still favour batters despite the cold weather.

"I have played an Under-19 India series here before. We are watching the wicket and I feel it will be a high-scoring one," he said. However, he cautioned that low tempera-



India's Tilak Varma during a training session ahead of the third T20I.

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Tilak Varma,
India batter

tures could offer some help to bowlers early on.

With dew expected to play a role as the match begins at 7 pm, Tilak said India are mentally prepared for the challenge.

"We don't have the toss in our hands. We are preparing for the dew and have practised with a slightly wet ball," he said.

Addressing concerns about playing in unfamiliar cold conditions, Tilak said mental strength is key.

"It's very cold here, but we are prepared mentally and physically. Those who are mentally strong succeed everywhere," he said.

AIFF expresses concerns after chaos at the Messi event

The body said it was not involved in the organisation, planning or execution of the event in any capacity

NEW DELHI



The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Saturday expressed concerns after the much-anticipated Lionel Messi event in Kolkata was marred by chaos due to poor crowd management and security lapses.

About 50,000 spectators, many of whom had paid Rs 4,000 to Rs 12,000 -- and in some cases up to Rs 20,000 in the black market -- watched helplessly as a swarm of politicians, VVIPs, security personnel, and assorted hangers more interested in selfies than crowd control surrounded Messi, leaving the fans at the Salt Lake Stadium angry.

The All India Football Federation is deeply concerned by the events that transpired at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan, where thousands of fans gathered to witness world football stars Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez, and Rodrigo de Paul.

"This was a private event organised by a PR agency. Furthermore, the details of the event were neither com-

municated to the AIFF, nor was any clearance sought from the federation," the AIFF said.

"We urge all attendees to extend their full cooperation with the relevant authorities and to maintain order. The safety and security of all individuals involved must remain the paramount priority," the apex body said in the statement. Angry fans started the mayhem by hurling bottles -- banned items in an otherwise sporting venue. It was baffling how they were allowed to enter with these objects, which also included food packets. Chairs were then ripped out and thrown.

Fibreglass seats lay smashed across the pitch and the synthetic track. Two canopies erected for Messi and the chief minister's enclosure were torn apart, with attempts even made to set parts of them on fire before police intervened.

Gates were battered, the players' tunnel roof was hammered, and posters torn down.

Sporting a green colour

Magical Messi mesmerises Hyderabad in great style

GOAT Tour 2nd leg goes off smoothly after the problems in Kolkata

HYDERABAD



Argentina's Lionel Messi during an event as part of his 'G.O.A.T. India Tour 2025', at Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (VYBK), in Kolkata.

crew neck half sleeve T-shirt, a black pant and a pair of sport shoes, the World Cup-winning Argentine captain

entered the stadium to a deafening cheer of the crowd.

Messi arrived in the city around 5:40pm after a chaotic opening leg of his three-day four-city GOAT Tour 2025 in Kolkata and he was received at the Taj Falaknuma Palace by Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Reddy.

"I am very happy to be in

Hyderabad in the midst of all

the love and affection shown

by you all," Messi said through a translator while addressing the crowd.

Messi and his Inter Miami team-mates Luiz Saurez and Rodrigo de Paul took part in a GOAT Cup penalty shootout, with Reddy also turning up in football attire, and conducted football clinics with children before leaving the stadium.

Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi joined the visiting trio of players and Reddy

at the felicitation towards the end of the event, posing for photographs in front of the sponsorship hoardings.

Messi presented the GOAT Cup to the winning team of a 7-a-side exhibition match, Singareni RR 9, which was representing Reddy.

The CM presented a memento to Messi while Gandhi gave one to Saurez.

After reaching the stadium, Messi was seen looking around the photos hung at the walls and had conversations with the officials, waved to the crowd from behind a glass barrier in acknowledgment of their adulation.

Later, he showed his immaculate control of the ball to the great delight of the crowd, juggling the ball with his feet as he kicked around the ball with his Saurez and de Paul, as well as Reddy.

Messi took a tour of the stadium, waving to the crowd.

Earlier in the day, about 50,000 spectators, many of whom had paid Rs 4,000 to Rs 12,000 -- and in some cases up to Rs 20,000 in the black market -- watched helplessly.

Architect of sporting spectacles facing uncertainty

Satadru Dutta



KOLKATA

From a modest upbringing in West Bengal's industrial town of Rishra to becoming one of the top promoters of Kolkata's biggest global football events, Satadru Dutta's rise was swift and ambitious. But that journey took a dramatic nosedive on Saturday. Less than a few hours after crowd trouble and vandalism marred Messi's opening leg of the 'G.O.A.T. India Tour' at the Salt Lake Stadium, Dutta

-- the sole organiser of the programme -- was arrested at the airport while he was leaving for the Hyderabad leg.

The chaos has pushed him into an intense public and media spotlight and left Kolkata, long regarded as the Mecca of Indian football, red-faced globally.

From Rishra to global football

A commerce graduate, Dutta began his professional career in finance, working at Investmart -- later known as

IL&FS Securities -- near Elgin Road in early 2000s.

But sport, especially football, remained central to his identity. In 2011, as Messi made his first trip to the city to lead Argentina against Venezuela in a FIFA friendly, Dutta left the security of corporate finance to pursue sports promotion.

That match 14 years ago, and an earlier visit by Diego Maradona in 2008, helped inspire a new generation of sports event managers. Dutta openly acknowl-

edged the influence of well-known organisers like Bhaswar Goswami of the Celebrity Management Group and slowly carved his own path, and that's how 'A Satadru Dutta Initiative (ASDI) came to existence.

Building ASDI
ASDI's breakthrough came in 2015, when it brought three-time World Cup winner Pelé to Kolkata for the first time since 1977.

Despite his hip surgery, the Brazilian legend attended an Indian Super League match, Sourav Ganguly among others.

Argentine footballer and 2022 FIFA World Cup winning captain Lionel Messi (right) organiser Satadru Dutta (left) and others during the 'G.O.A.T. India Tour 2025' event.