

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Title Code - UPENG04488

NATIONAL ENGLISH DAILY

MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

Monday, 26 January, 2026

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



## गणतंत्र दिवस की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं



गणतंत्र दिवस को सच्चे सूप में मनाने पर मनुष्य को अनुभव होता है।  
सभी अवतारों, अज्ञानता से मुक्त ग्रन्थियों व मुनियों ने एक ही शिक्षा दिया है कि

**केवल सत्य व अहिंसा का अस्तित्व है**

तथा असत्य, हिंसा, मृत्यु, मृत्युलोक की अनुभूति यह सब अज्ञानता के कारण है।  
अणु-परमाणु की उपस्थिति ही अविद्या है।

सत्य व अहिंसा की अनुभूति में अणु-परमाणु का अस्तित्व ज्ञानसूप होता है। सत्य व अहिंसा के हटते ही अणु-परमाणु मात्रा व द्रव्यमान के सूप में प्रकट हो जाते हैं।



**-स्वामी श्री योगी सत्यम्**

**वर्तमान समय आरोह द्वापर का 326 वाँ वर्ष है। कलियुग 1600 हैं में बीत गया है।**

## Minister Kapil Dev Inaugurates Uttar Pradesh Day Program by Lighting the Lamp

Muzaffarnagar

A grand program was organized today at the auditorium and campus of the Government Industrial Training Institute (ITI), Muzaffarnagar. The program was inaugurated by the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Vocational Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Kapil Dev Aggarwal, by lighting the ceremonial lamp and cutting the ribbon. During the event, students from various schools presented impressive cultural performances, which were highly appreciated by the audience. On this occasion, the live telecast of the main Uttar Pradesh Day 2026 program held in Lucknow was shown on LED screens, where citizens watched the addresses of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. A short film highlighting development works carried out in the districts of Saharanpur Division—Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar and Shamli—was also screened through the LED display. Addressing the gathering, Minister Kapil Dev Aggarwal said that Uttar Pradesh is continuously moving forward on the path of development under the leadership of the Central Government and the Yogi Government. He stated that the benefits of various public welfare schemes are reaching the last person in society and the state is achieving new milestones in every sector. On the occasion of Uttar Pradesh Day, exhibition stalls were set up at the ITI campus by various departments including Agriculture, Health, Sugarcane, Industrial Training Institute, Panchayati Raj, District Industries Center, Social



Welfare, Solar Energy, Basic Education, Irrigation, Police, Minority Welfare, Fisheries, National Livelihood Mission Self Help Groups, Ayurvedic and Unani, Horticulture and other departments. The Minister inaugurated the stalls by cutting the ribbon and inspected each stall, gathered information about the products and schemes on display and issued necessary directions. Through these stalls, citizens were provided detailed information about government welfare schemes. During the program, five progressive farmers were honoured with shawls and certificates. Seven entrepreneurs were honoured for excellence in industry and entrepreneurship. Under the Basic Education Department's Clean and Green School Award Scheme, Composite School Saidpur Kala and Primary School Adampur were awarded mementos and shawls. Under the Chief Minister Youth Entrepreneur Development Scheme and Chief Minister Youth Self Employment Scheme, cheques were distributed to two beneficiaries. Under the One District One Product Scheme and the Vishwakarma Labour Honour Scheme, two beneficiaries were provided with toolkits. Under the

Chief Minister Mati Kala Employment Scheme, dummy cheques were distributed to three beneficiaries. Under the Computer Training Scheme, five students were honoured with certificates. In addition, individuals who achieved notable accomplishments in social service, sports, education and other fields were honoured with shawls and mementos. During the event, guests also took selfies at the Selfie Point established under the Nari Shakti Mission. Citizens present at the program were administered an oath to support a child-marriage-free India. On this occasion, District Panchayat Chairperson Veerpal Nirwal, Member of Legislative Council Vandana Verma and Budhna MLA Rajpal Balyan also expressed their views on Uttar Pradesh Day. The program was attended by Municipal Council Chairperson Meenakshi Srawoop, BJP District President Sudhir Saini, former MLA Umesh Malik, District Magistrate Umesh Mishra, Senior Superintendent of Police Sanjay Kumar Verma, Chief Development Officer Kandarkar Kamal Kishore Deshbhushan, Additional District Magistrate (Finance and Revenue) Gajendra Kumar, along with other public representatives.

## Green Energy Essential for Uttar Pradesh Progress: Brajesh Pathak

Lucknow

The Lucknow Management Association organized the IGB Conference titled "Transforming Real Estate in Uttar Pradesh Through Green Buildings." Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak said that working on green energy is essential for the progress of Uttar Pradesh. He emphasized that building heights should follow standard norms and buildings should have enough windows to allow natural light and ventilation, reducing the need for lights, air conditioners and fans during the daytime. He advocated for installing 100 percent solar panels in private buildings. Addressing the conference on Saturday, Pathak said that earlier, houses were built with greater height, large windows and



tall doors. However, modern large buildings now have very few windows. As a result, doors and windows remain closed throughout the day, forcing people to use artificial lighting and air conditioning. He warned that the hot air released by air conditioners is harmful to the environment. He also stressed the need to prevent water wastage. He suggested the installation of urinals in toilets and the reuse of bathing water for irrigation and gardening purposes.

**Solar Energy Must Be Given Priority** The Deputy Chief Minister said that solar energy should be promoted. The government has already made it mandatory to install 100 percent solar panels in government buildings and this should also be implemented in private buildings to save electricity. He added that public transport should be encouraged. He explained that green

buildings, recognized for their low environmental footprint, energy efficiency and use of sustainable materials, offer a strong solution. Such buildings can reduce energy consumption by 30 to 50 percent and water usage by 20 to 30 percent. They also improve the health of residents, reduce greenhouse gas impact and help mitigate climate change. Pathak further said that large-scale construction is taking place across cities in Uttar Pradesh at both government and private levels. Promoting green building practices can bring significant environmental and economic benefits. Since nearly 70 percent of India buildings for 2030 are yet to be constructed, encouraging green buildings will directly support India's target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2070.

## SSB 42nd Battalion strengthens security at India-Nepal border, 24/7 surveillance with face detection cameras

Bahraich

The 42nd Battalion of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), deployed at the Rupaidha border post on the India-Nepal border, has taken a significant technological step to further strengthen border security. Under the leadership of Commandant Ganga Singh Udwat, the battalion has installed face detection cameras in the border area. This will allow for close monitoring of the identity and activities of individuals crossing the border. According to SSB officials, these state-of-the-art cameras will enable effective monitoring of illegal infiltration, smuggling and other suspicious activities. This will increase real-time vigilance and allow for quick action in any suspicious situation. In a conversation with the media,



Commandant Ganga Singh Udwat said that this technological upgrade modernizes border security and assures safe and smooth movement for ordinary citizens. He said that the SSB objective is to ensure the safety of every person crossing the border so that everyone can reach their destination peacefully. He informed that additional security arrangements have been made in the border area and the SSB is fully alert and prepared to handle any emergency situation. Senior officers Ritu Raj and Yashwant Singh were also present on this occasion.

## Controversy Over UGC New Equity Rules, Discontent Among General Category Students, Protests From Social Media to Campuses

Delhi A Controversy is rapidly deepening across colleges and universities nationwide over the "Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions Regulations, 2026", implemented by the University Grants Commission (UGC) from January 13. While the UGC describes these regulations as a major step toward ensuring equality and social justice in higher education campuses, students from the General Category are viewing them as biased and fraught with the potential for misuse.

**Protests From Social Media to Campuses**

At present, student protests are not taking the form of street demonstrations, but are clearly visible on social media and within campuses. Hashtags such as #UGCRollback are trending. Students argue that, in the name of "equity," the new rules establish an extensive surveillance mechanism that could adversely affect the academic environment and lead to innocent students and faculty members being targeted.

**What Are the New UGC Equity**

**Rules?**

Under the new regulations, the following arrangements have been made mandatory in all higher education institutions across the country—Establishment of an Equal Opportunity Centre, Formation of an Equity Committee, A 24x7 helpline, Deployment of Equity Squads. According to the UGC, the objective of these measures is to prevent caste-based discrimination against students belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC), to monitor complaints, and to ensure swift action.

**Strict Provisions as Well**

The UGC has clearly stated that strict action will be taken against institutions that fail to comply with these regulations. Such actions include—Cancellation of UGC recognition, Suspension of government funding.

This strict approach has heightened concerns not only among university administrations but also among students.

**What Are the Students' Objections?**

Students from the General Category argue that the rules lack clear definitions, which could lead to arbitrary use of complaints. They feel that the powers granted to Equity Squads and committees appear to determine guilt even before an investigation is conducted. According to them, this system could turn educational institutions into a "police state," where fear replaces dialogue. Some student organizations also point out that laws and internal grievance redressal mechanisms to address discrimination already exist, raising the question of why parallel structures are being created.

**Tough Questions for the Government and the UGC**

Did the government conduct wide-ranging consultations with all student groups and academics before implementing these rules? Why have clear guidelines not been issued regarding the powers and limitations of Equity Squads? If a complaint is later found to be

false or malicious, who will be held accountable? Will these regulations not have an adverse impact on academic freedom and freedom of expression? How will the UGC ensure that, in the name of equity, no injustice is done to any particular group? Instead of strengthening existing anti-discrimination provisions, why are new punitive structures being introduced?

**Review and a Balanced Solution**

For now, the UGC appears firm on its decision. However, in light of growing discontent, the key question is whether the government and the Commission will move forward without addressing students' concerns, or whether the rules will be reviewed to arrive at a balanced solution. Equality in the country's higher education system is essential—but will the path to equality emerge through consensus and dialogue, or through strictness and fear? This is the question the government must now answer.

## STATE

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### Blackout Mock Drill Held at Police Lines Parade Ground



Bahraich

To further strengthen the internal security system in the district, keep the general public vigilant and alert during emergency situations, provide information on first aid and life-saving techniques and assess the preparedness of various departments in the event of a natural disaster, a blackout mock drill was successfully conducted at the Police Lines Parade Ground late Friday evening. This mock drill was organized under the directions of the Additional Chief Executive Officer, State Disaster Management Authority, Lucknow and under the able guidance of District Magistrate Akshay Tripathi and Superintendent of Police Ramnayak Singh. During the drill, a blackout situation was created at exactly 6 PM. Complete darkness and silence prevailed all around, and then the sirens of the fire service started blaring. Realistic scenarios of a sudden attack were presented at the Police Lines Parade Ground. Ambulances were seen providing first aid to the injured and rushing them to the hospital, while fire tenders promptly took charge to control fires at various locations. The police force effectively demonstrated security arrangements, patrolling, surveillance, information exchange and coordinated action in a disciplined manner. SSB personnel, NCC cadets, police, health department, urban development department, Home Guards, disaster relief volunteers and members of the local disaster management team actively participated in making the mock drill a success. On this occasion, the SSB Commandant, Additional District Magistrate Amit Kumar, Additional Superintendent of Police (Rural) Durga Prasad, City Magistrate Rajesh Prasad and officers from various departments were present.

### Maa Rajeshwari Devi Charitable Trust Celebrates Basant Panchami, Takes Pledge Against Drug Abuse

Bahraich

Basant Panchami was celebrated with devotion and social responsibility by the Maa Rajeshwari Devi Charitable Trust in Kalwari village, under the Nawabganj development block. On this occasion, prayers were offered to Goddess Saraswati with due rituals. After the prayers, the trust members took a pledge against drug abuse and to boycott narcotics. Addressing the gathering, Trust President S.P. Singh said that the menace of drug



addiction is constantly increasing, and the youth are rapidly falling prey to it. He said that mutual coordination, dialogue and collective efforts are needed to save society from this serious problem; otherwise, its consequences could be even more severe. All the members present at the program pledged to build a drug-free society. At the end of the program, the Trust Vice President Durgesh Verma extended Basant Panchami greetings to all those present and emphasized the need for the continuation of such events for Social Awareness.

# Minister A.K. Sharma Highlights Uttar Pradesh Development Journey

Lucknow

A grand program was organized at Lok Bhavan in Gujarat on the occasion of Uttar Pradesh Foundation Day, in which Uttar Pradesh Minister for Urban Development and Energy, A.K. Sharma, participated. Reflecting the spirit of Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat, the event also celebrated the Foundation Day of Assam, Tripura, Manipur, and Meghalaya along with Uttar Pradesh. The program showcased cultural presentations from different states, presenting a beautiful display of unity and mutual harmony. Addressing the gathering, Minister A.K. Sharma extended his greetings on Uttar Pradesh Foundation Day and elaborated on



the state development journey. He stated that Uttar Pradesh is scripting a new chapter of social, cultural and economic progress. Due to the continuous efforts of the state government, Uttar Pradesh is achieving new milestones in every sector. He emphasized that the state is rapidly advancing in the fields of culture, tourism,

education, energy, healthcare, investment, industry and good governance. Improved infrastructure, an investor-friendly environment and transparent governance have placed Uttar Pradesh among the leading states of the country. Today, Uttar Pradesh is building a strong identity not only at the national level but also on the global Stage. In

his address, Minister Sharma mentioned the government zero-tolerance policy, stating that strict action against crime and lawlessness has strengthened law and order in the state. Through the expansion and improvement of healthcare facilities, citizens are receiving better services. He said that Uttar Pradesh, once known

as a "BIMARU state," has now completely left that image behind. Highlighting farmer welfare as a top priority, he added that the government is continuously working doubling farmers income. This transformation has been possible due to the cooperation, trust and participation of the people, which has given new energy and direction to

Governance. On this occasion, Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat also extended his greetings on Uttar Pradesh Foundation Day and praised the state progress. Representatives, officials, and citizens from Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya were present at the event.

## Transforming UP Through Green Buildings Conference: Dr. Singh says Green Buildings can save 30–40% energy

Lucknow

Sarojini Nagar MLA Dr. Rajeshwar Singh on Saturday participated in a conference on "Transforming Real Estate in Uttar Pradesh Through Green Buildings", organized by the Lucknow Management Association at Hotel Grand JBR, Gomti Nagar. Beginning his address, Dr. Singh said that green energy is no longer an option, but a collective responsibility towards future generations. Expressing deep concern over the environmental crisis, he said that air pollution, depleting groundwater levels and rising AQI are serious warnings for the future. He noted that globally more than 7 million people die prematurely every year due to air pollution, out of which around 2.4 million deaths occur in India alone. Citing Earth Overshoot Day, he said that in 1972 it fell on December 26, whereas now it has shifted to the first week of



August—showing that humanity is consuming far beyond nature's capacity. Emphasizing the importance of green buildings, Dr. Singh said that this should not remain merely a technical solution but must become a mass movement. He stated, "Every citizen should feel proud that their home, their society, their market and their city are green." He explained that green buildings can help save 30–40% energy and 20–30% water. With nearly

70% of the country's buildings yet to be constructed, he said this is the right time to mainstream green construction. He urged the government to further strengthen incentives such as greater tax rebates, low-interest loans, increased FAR and concessions in property tax. Praising the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Dr. Singh said that Uttar Pradesh has taken a leading role in the country by adopting the Green Building Code. He informed that the

state has already achieved 1 gigawatt of solar energy capacity and has set a target of 22,000 megawatts, in line with India's Net Zero 2070 commitment. He added that the government's commitment is clearly visible at the levels of policy, regulation and political will. Highlighting initiatives in his own constituency, Sarojini Nagar, Dr. Singh said that more than 160 Tara Shakti Kendras have been established to empower women self-help groups. These centers have been equipped with over 2,000 sewing machines and more than 30,000 eco-friendly school bags have been produced and distributed in primary schools, helping reduce plastic use. He also shared that a Solar Help Desk is operational at his office and out of Lucknow's total 120 MW solar capacity, more than 60 MW has been installed in Sarojini Nagar alone. Referring to the Shivir Waste-to-Energy plant, he said the facility has the capacity to process around 2100 metric tonnes of waste per day, moving Lucknow towards becoming Uttar Pradesh's first city to convert all its waste into energy. The conference was also addressed by Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, Senior Vice President of LMA A.K. Mathur, Amit Srivastava (Chairman, Indian Green Building Council – Lucknow Chapter), Jai Kumar Gupta (General Manager, SIDBI), Ashok Kumar, Raj Verma, Architect S.K. Saraswat, Praveen Kumar Dwivedi, along with several experts, policy-makers and distinguished guests.

Present. Concluding his address, Dr. Rajeshwar Singh said that the suggestions and ideas emerging from the conference would be taken forward seriously at the policy level, with the objective of making Uttar Pradesh a model state for green, clean and sustainable development.

## Uttar Pradesh Day Celebrated with Grand Ceremony at District Stadium, Kushinagar



A grand and dignified programme was organized at the District Stadium, Kushinagar. The chief guest of the event, the district in-charge minister Dinesh Pratap Singh, inaugurated the programme by lighting the ceremonial lamp along with the present public representatives. Extending his greetings to the gathering, Horticulture Minister Dinesh Pratap Singh said that before visiting Kushinagar as the in-charge minister, he had some apprehensions about this Nepal-border district, but after arriving here, he realized that Kushinagar is extremely rich in cultural, political and religious terms. He added that the efforts of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in promoting the cultural heritage of Uttar Pradesh will always be remembered.

Appreciating the cultural performances presented by school children, the minister said that although folk traditions like Kajri are gradually disappearing, the children's performances

clearly show that our cultural heritage is in safe hands. He called upon everyone to collectively resolve to explore and promote Kushinagar historical and cultural heritage and work together for the district overall development. Addressing the programme, Kushinagar MP Vijay Kumar Dubey said that although Uttar Pradesh was established in 1950, the formal celebration of UP Day began nearly 70 years later. He added that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the state is continuously progressing on the path of development. Raja Sabha MP Kunwar R.P.N. Singh also extended his greetings on Uttar Pradesh Day and said that the

## RPF Takes High Action Before Republic Day, DIG Conducts Surprise Inspection of Shankargarh Railway Station

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Shankargarh.** With the aim of further strengthening security arrangements ahead of Republic Day, RPF Chief Security Commissioner/DIG M. Suresh conducted a surprise night inspection of Shankargarh railway station late Saturday night. This sudden inspection caused a stir in the railway security system. DIG M. Suresh thoroughly inspected the station premises, platforms, waiting rooms, outer areas, and all other security points. He inquired about the security preparations from the officers present and gave strict instructions to avoid any kind of



negligence. During the inspection, necessary instructions regarding security were given to RPF outpost in-charge R.S. Dhyani. The DIG specifically instructed to increase night patrolling, keep a close watch on suspicious persons and activities, and give top priority to the

Higher Education Minister Yogendra Upadhyay emphasized Uttar Pradesh's glorious cultural, spiritual, and historical identity



Mainpuri

A Grand Ceremony was organized at Aman International School, Mainpuri, on the theme "Developed India, Developed Uttar Pradesh". The State Higher Education Minister Yogendra Upadhyay attended the event as the chief guest and addressed the gathering. On this occasion, beneficiaries of various public welfare schemes, students, social workers and individuals who performed outstanding work were honored with certificates of appreciation, mementos and cheques. In his address, Minister Yogendra Upadhyay said that Uttar Pradesh is not merely a state, but the center of India's spiritual consciousness, cultural heritage and historical pride. The land nourished by the Ganga and Yamuna rivers proclaims Indian culture to the world. He stated that Uttar Pradesh is the birthplace of Lord Vishnu, Lord Krishna and Lord Ram. Lord Ram gave the message of unity to society, while Lord Krishna preached the path of duty and righteousness. He added that Uttar Pradesh has also been a center of the manifestation of Lord Shiva and that its Jyotirlingas and Shakti Peeths have spiritually united the nation. The Minister further said that Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon in Sarnath and attained Mahaparinirvana in Kushinagar, while the land of Uttar Pradesh has also been the place of penance for Jain Tirthankaras. Pilgrimage centers such as Kashi, Naimisaranya, Prayagraj, Ayodhya, Mathura and Vrindavan give the state a unique identity. He described Uttar Pradesh as the cradle of literature and culture, where great works such as the Mahabharata, Ramayana, Upanishads and Ramcharitmanas were created. Saints and poets of the Bhakti movement like Surdas, Tulsidas, Kabir, and Ras Khan and modern literary figures such as Premchand, Bharatendu Harishchandra, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi and Rahul Sankrityayan are all gifts of this land. He also highlighted that Uttar Pradesh has been the land of freedom struggle and revolution, where brave heroes like Rani Lakshimbai, Chandrashekhar Azad, Mangal Pandey, Ram Prasad Bismil and Ashfaqullah Khan challenged British rule. He said that under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Uttar Pradesh has become a model of good governance, security and prosperity and is rapidly moving towards becoming a one-trillion-dollar economy. The One District–One Product (ODOP) scheme has given a new identity to traditional industries and the state is playing a leading role in agricultural production. Former Minister and MLA Ram Naresh Agnihotri said that Uttar Pradesh is the soul of India and the best state in the country in terms of culture, religious heritage and climate. District Magistrate Anjani Kumar Singh said that Uttar Pradesh is an inseparable part of India's history and culture.

administration ahead of Republic Day is considered important in further strengthening the security arrangements of the station.

## Editorial

## Op Sindoor setting the tone for Bihar polls

In October 2016, addressing the national council of the Janata Dal (United), Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party for 'politicising' the surgical strike. The entire nation stands with you [Narendra Modi] as you are the Prime Minister, but what about those BJP leaders who have repeatedly used the strike to play politics?" Kumar said. A couple of months earlier, as the BJP was organising Tiranga Yatras ahead of the 70th Independence Day, Kumar had taken a dig at it. Those who "never recognised the tricolour as national flag", he said, were taking out Tiranga Yatras. Much water has flowed under the Gandhi Setu since then. As the BJP took out Tiranga Yatras across Bihar for 10 days to celebrate Operation Sindoor's success, Kumar watched them silently—and warily, perhaps. The operation has brought springs to BJP leaders' feet. The 2024 Lok Sabha poll blow is a thing of the past. PM Modi has started taking his own name again—Modi's cool mind and the hot sindoor in his veins, Modi's chest, et al. It was in his first public rally after the Pahalgam terror attack in Bihar's Madhubani, when PM Modi had vowed to punish the perpetrators "beyond their imagination". The vow fulfilled, he will be back in Bihar on 29 and 30 May. The BJP's preparations for Modi's roadshow in Patna are in full swing. People standing on both sides of the road would be showering flower petals on him. That's how a victor is welcomed. How will Operation Sindoor impact the Bihar elections? Let's first look at where the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) stood before the strikes on Pakistan's terror infrastructure and military installations. DesignBoxed, a political digital campaign management company, conducted a survey in Bihar last month. I got access to its report, which has great news for the NDA: Overall, the DesignBoxed survey indicated a clear edge for the NDA. Mind you, it was conducted before Operation Sindoor. Nitish Kumar's principal challenger, Tejashwi Yadav, also has some positive takeaways from the survey. If elections were to be held tomorrow, 46.7 percent of respondents said they would vote for the NDA, against 35.6 percent who favour the INDIA-N bloc, with 13.8 percent 'undecided'. If Tejashwi were to swing the 'undecided', the game would be on. For 43.8 percent respondents, unemployment and migration are the most important issues in the upcoming elections—Tejashwi's key plank in 2020. What would make him even happier is the survey finding that 63.76 percent people want the current government to be replaced. This sounds incongruous, as a majority of respondents were satisfied with Kumar's performance. Those involved in the DesignBoxed survey, however, claim that it's no surprise. One of them told me: "You come across many respondents who are ok with Nitish Kumar but still want his government changed. It's vice versa, too. It's a lot to do with people's castes becoming the main determinant." Kumar has been the chief minister since 2005, except for a short interlude of nine months in 2014-15. The yearning for change is understandable. How much of it can Tejashwi exploit? Can he beat the caste arithmetic that seems to be in the NDA's favour today? We will find out in November. Union home minister and the BJP's chief strategist Amit Shah once told journalists: "People in Bihar are so political. They sit at tea stalls and read the entire newspaper—from the first to the last page."

Five months is obviously a long time for such political people to change their mind. But it's not just Tejashwi that CM Kumar would be worried about. The BJP says that the next election will be fought under his leadership, but it's evasive on the question of Kumar becoming the CM again if the NDA wins. Kumar wouldn't forget the big celebrations at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi after the 2020 poll results. The NDA had barely managed to cross the majority mark, securing 125 seats in the 243-member Assembly.



## AIADMK led the way on caste census

In the intricate fabric of Indian democracy, few questions strike at the heart of equality and representation like that of caste. The recent announcement by the Union government to conduct a comprehensive caste census is a landmark moment—one that promises to reshape the contours of social justice policy in India. As the Leader of the Opposition in Tamil Nadu, I welcome this move with conviction and pride, for it affirms a demand the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam first articulated with clarity and foresight. This moment did not emerge overnight. The call for a caste-based census, now

accepted at the national level, has its roots in the firm ideological soil of Tamil Nadu's social justice movement. And in that journey, it was the AIADMK, under the visionary leadership of Puratchi Thalaivi Amma J. Jayalalithaa, that laid the foundation for genuine representational equity. As early as 2021, during my tenure as chief minister, our government was among the first to demand a fresh caste census. We argued vociferously that welfare policies cannot be built on outdated data from 1931. We recognised then, as we follow now, that progress requires not just empathy but evidence. Tamil Nadu has long stood as a bea-

con of affirmative action, with its unique 69 per cent reservation policy. That achievement was not accidental but was made possible by AIADMK's political resolve and constitutional acumen. When the Supreme Court's Indra Sawhney (Mandal) judgment in 1992 imposed a 50 per cent cap on reservations, the very framework of Tamil Nadu's policy was threatened. But Amma Jayalalithaa rose to the challenge. In 1993, she convened a special assembly session, passed a unanimous resolution, and led an all-party delegation to Delhi. Her persistent persuasion ensured the Tamil Nadu Reservation Act was placed in

the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution, protecting it from judicial review. That was not just governance; it was transformative leadership. Our 2021 demand for a caste census was not political posturing. It was a reflection of AIADMK's long-standing understanding of Tamil Nadu's evolving social realities. We recognised the urgent need to reassess the representation and well-being of Backward Classes (BC), Most Backward Classes (MBC), Scheduled Castes (SC), and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in education, employment, and welfare. This demand, when initially raised, was met with silence from the ruling DMK.

## PMFBY is failing. It has the same flaws of earlier schemes

India's farmers steward the country's food security, yet they live in chronic distress and policy indifference. Though their contribution is crucial, they continue to be vulnerable and voiceless. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar who comes from a farming family, has repeatedly expressed discontent by consistently bringing up farmers' grievances into the public limelight, stressing that "it is the government's foremost responsibility to take care of the farmers". Agriculture, despite accounting for only 18.2 per cent of India's GDP, remains the primary source of livelihood for nearly 42.3 per cent of the population. However, over the last decade, India has witnessed a significant decadal drop in agricultural employment, underlining the sector's declining viability. Agrarian distress is now endemic, driven by crop failures, falling prices, and a broken promise of security through insurance. As per the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2015 data, 80 per cent of suicides among farmers were due to debt and bankruptcy. The crisis has also exhibited a steady trend upward, with more than 1,12,000 people who work in the agricultural sector having died by suicide over the last ten years, according to NCRB data released in December 2023. The figures indicate that no fewer than one farmer died by suicide every hour in India. A 2018 survey conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO) found that over 50 per cent of farm households in India had debt. Launched in 2016, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) assured crop



insurance and restored farmers' confidence. On paper, it addressed many of the earlier shortcomings. But a closer look reveals that this ambitious insurance service ends up replicating several flaws of earlier schemes. It not only fails short of meeting the expectations of the farming community but alienates the very people it was meant to safeguard. A fundamental flaw resides in the impenetrable, convoluted, and overly technical process of settling claims. The use of satellite imaging and averaging data across vast units has created a mechanism highly disconnected from ground realities. Importantly, satellite inspections are limited in scope: they can only identify the presence or absence of crops. They cannot, and do not, determine the health or yield capacity of the crop, nor can they tell one type of crop from another. This technological weakness, when used as the basis for compensation, results in miscalculations that cost real livelihoods. A farmer who suffers heavy losses due to pest damage or loss of nutrients might be deprived of compensation just because their crops appear green from above. Even more appalling is the inherent inequity of the existing model. While farmers pay premiums on an

individual level, compensation is calculated by generalised averaging within village clusters or vaguely defined large patches aggregating both large and small landholdings without any equity-based method in delineating the units. This results in discriminatory denials of claims—most importantly, for those experiencing localised or complete loss of crops. The ongoing application of area-based measurement models exacerbates these issues. Localised weather conditions like a flash flood in a corner of a village can destroy a small farmer's crop, while that of his neighbour remains intact. However, both are measured using the same parameter. It is deeply unfair that individual agony and suffering are erased by collective statistics. The programme also does not cover those most at risk: tenant farmers, sharecroppers, female cultivators, and non-loanee farmers. These are systematically and indirectly excluded by land title requirements, archaic tenancy laws, and bureaucratic obstacles such as Aadhaar-linked bank accounts. Women who increasingly become the main cultivators because of male migration are not accounted for in this system through absence of formal landholding. These omissions are not accidental; they are manifestations of a design that does not see the true face of Indian agriculture in the present day. On-ground realities expose serious flaws in crop insurance delivery. Forced enrollment, delayed or denied claims, and faulty surveys have left farmers uncompensated and in debt. In Tamil Nadu's Mayiladuthurai district, a mere 68 villages among 277 were covered in the 2024 crop insurance settlements—and compensation was paid in just 16 of them. Similar cases were found in other districts too. D Arogyam, a 55-year-old Tamil Nadu farmer who was not a loanee, was compelled by officials to sign up for PMFBY. Despite paying his premiums on time, he got no claims for two successive years of crop failure due to drought, pushing him into debt. S. Velu, a loanee cultivator from Sivagangai near Kiliyur, availed Rs 70,000 for his 15-acre field. Even though he was in the surveyed and insured area, he faced claim settlement problems as liabilities piled up. In Thoothukudi, farmers demonstrated against one-sided compensation. Villages that were affected by floods were not considered, while those with equal damage were compensated. Farmers accused the faulty surveys and demanded accountability. In Haryana, as reported by Down to Earth, Ramesh Lal from Sonipat was forced to pay a premium under threat of losing his interest subsidy on a loan, even though he never consented to the insurance coverage. When his crop failed, no claim was paid due to "tech-

nical issues" with the policy documentation he was never shown. In Rajasthan, many farmers lost their claims because the State Bank of India delayed crediting their premiums. Consequently, they went into the subsequent cropping season without anticipated reimbursement. Even when the Centre and states subsidise 80-85 percent of premium charges, private insurance companies consistently make profits while farmers do not gain much. Claims get delayed, disputed, or rejected, even as companies collect risk-free premiums. Meanwhile, crop-cutting experiments are done by inadequate manning, delayed rolling out, and poor-quality control, and the technological solutions like drones and AI-based analytics remain underutilised due to infrastructural gaps and lack of field-level training. Most alarmingly, a 2022 CAG report says that only 37 per cent of farmers surveyed had any real awareness of PMFBY's benefits, premium structures, or claim processes. On-ground realities expose serious flaws in crop insurance delivery. Forced enrollment, delayed or denied claims, and faulty surveys have left farmers uncompensated and in debt. In Tamil Nadu's Mayiladuthurai district, a mere 68 villages among 277 were covered in the 2024 crop insurance settlements—and compensation was paid in just 16 of them. Similar cases were found in other districts too. D Arogyam, a 55-year-old Tamil Nadu farmer who was not a loanee, was compelled by officials to sign up for PMFBY.

## Threats to India are not over. Why it must build fortress-like defences

The Sindhudurg Fort, located on an islet in the Arabian Sea near Maharashtra's Malvan town, is one of the most significant sea forts. It was built between 1664-1667 by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the founder of the Maratha Empire, for the purpose of strategic maritime defense and protection against foreign naval threats. The fort was central to Shivaji's plan to build a strong navy and protect the Konkan coastline, and marked the beginning of India's maritime defense strategy. In a similar vein, having demonstrated its military prowess in Operation Sindoor, India should now transform itself into Sindo Durg, an impenetrable fortress, safe from multi-domain threats emanating from land, sea, air or cyberspace. It will also mark the beginning of India's new doctrine against terrorism, as outlined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to the nation earlier this month—"Terror and trade cannot go together, water and blood cannot flow together". The

military strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan under Operation Sindoor have only been paused. Pakistan, still smarting from the costs imposed on it, both reputational and on its military, will be thirsting for revenge. The brief skirmish has only served as a distraction for Pakistan from its domestic issues, especially its dire internal economic conditions, and has predictably unitied the country, even if temporarily, against a traditional foe. Buoyed by the grant of the IMF bailout, and by promoting Asim Munir to the rank of Field Marshal, Pakistan's politico-military leadership hopes to retain their tenuous hold on power. Since another misadventure cannot be ruled out, we have to guard against even more varied and audacious threats.

The first purpose of a fort is to provide for its own security and that of its inhabitants. India has demonstrated quite forcibly its capability to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

## India must look beyond Bangladesh

The political turmoil in Bangladesh has made it more urgent for India to complete the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Project, or KMTTP, which links Mizoram to Kolkata via Sittwe port in Myanmar. If fully operationalised, ideally with a rail link to Sittwe Port, it could offer a more resilient corridor for movement of goods to the Northeast, while also opening up longer-term trade possibilities with Southeast Asia. India's role as the pivot in South Asia extends beyond dominant power to that of a regional integrator. Intra-regional development is primarily a function of mutual friendship, interdependent trade, economic ties, and joint ventures. The goal may be to advance national interest, but the net effect is regional prosperity, which acts as a force multiplier for India's own development. South and Southeast Asian countries, joined together through bilateral and multilateral frameworks like the BBIN and BIMSTEC, have therefore started looking beyond the region—in line with India's Act East Policy. Apart from economic commitments, physical connectivity—especially in infrastructure and energy—has assumed unparalleled significance. Railways, highways, civil aviation, and inland waterways are now crossing borders for mutual growth and development. The East South Asia region is on the cusp of unprecedented intra-regional physical connectivity. It is the only way forward for the 21st century. For instance, Nepal and Bhutan, both landlocked nations, have gained access to Indian markets and ports. Newer cross-border rail links have been operationalised between India and Bangladesh, and several projects to connect Bhutan and Myanmar were put in place during the last 10 years. India-Bangladesh bilateral relations, in particular, had never been this strong and comprehensive—until last year. On 5 August 2024, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned following a massive uprising. An interim government headed by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has since been formed. This civil strife in Bangladesh has come with ripple effects. It's brought with it a certain straining of relations, causing collateral damage to trade and commerce. There have also been instances of cross-border movements and joint project developments coming to a halt. Existing trade corridors have been impacted and ongoing rail/road projects to provide shorter transit corridors across Bangladesh to and from India's Northeastern states are on hold. It's time now to look at alternative possibilities for northeastern states in addition to the Siliguri corridor. The Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Project requires revisiting and a fresh reassessment. During his visit to China in late March, Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Mohammad Yunus made remarks that were considered provocative, to say the least. "The seven states of India, the eastern part of India, are called seven sisters....

They are a landlocked country, a landlocked region of India. They have no way to reach out to the ocean," he said. "We are the only guardian of the ocean for all this region." Shortly thereafter, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the BIMSTEC conference in Thailand. He met Yunus on the sidelines and reiterated his support for a democratic, progressive, and inclusive Bangladesh, according to a Ministry of External Affairs release. He also underlined India's desire to forge a constructive relationship with Bangladesh. More importantly,

## Delhi disbands school management committees

**Delhi:** The Directorate of Education (DoE) in Delhi has ordered the immediate dissolution of all school management committees (SMC) in government and government-aided schools. A circular states that committees would be reconstituted on May 9 through new elections. A school-level election committee managed by the head of school and supported by a teacher convener would elect new SMCs in each school, according to the circular. Due to an apparent cost hike, parents are frustrated and protesting. When SMCs should have addressed such concerns, many parents blamed mismanagement.

"The responsible authority dissolved all school management committees for government and government-aided schools of the Directorate of Education, GNCT of Delhi, immediately. The circular states

## Capital sees the debut of Dola and Rahul's archery academy.

**Delhi:** The archery ground of the Sports Authority of India, which is part of the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium complex, was inaugurated by the Banerjee brothers, Dola and Rahul, who are Indian Olympians. The siblings intend to continue their fight to overcome India's Olympic medal drought in recurve archery even when they retire, and their academy will be the first of its type in the nation's capital. Archers Atanu Das and Deepika Kumari are moving forward with their goals. As the Indian team prepares to depart for Shanghai for the second stage of the World Cup, which will take place from May 6 to 11, the pair was in attendance for the inauguration. After the Paris Olympics, Deepika and Atanu began training at



Rahul's academy in Kolkata, he announced. No other archery academy here is headed by former Olympians. Learning from their experience is the nicest part of this academy, and it's one of a kind. Their insights, both conceptual and practical, have proven invaluable. Atanu and Deepika are getting ready for the World Championships in Gwangju, South Korea, from September 5 to 12, and Deepika mentioned that both Dola and Rahul are up-to-date on the newest news and bring a fresh perspective to solving technical problems.

## Implications for management education in the creation and validation of a scale measuring student well-being in higher education

**Delhi:** In the increasingly stressful world of higher education, students' physical, mental, and social health are all part of what is known as student well-being (SWB). The higher education sector is confronted with the increasing difficulty of preserving and improving SWB in the face of excessive workloads, unmet expectations, and uncertainty around degree completion and employment. The current tools for evaluating SWB are too narrow in scope to adequately represent its complex character. Our research fills this need by creating and validating a multi-dimensional scale that accurately measures SWB's subtleties using a rigorous multi-study, multi-method, and multi-



### DU teachers raise issues of unoccupied reserved seats

**Delhi:** Teachers from Delhi University brought up issues with professor recruitment in front of a Parliamentary Committee, claiming that the SC/ST populations were marginalized on a systematic level. Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes,

sample strategy. Generation, purification, refinement, validation, and generalizability were the five systematic steps that made up this process. The outcome is a five-factor SWB scale that offers a comprehensive instrument for assessing and enhancing SWB in academic settings. These dimensions include academic, financial, physical, psychological resilience, and relational well-

## All corridors must have fire extinguishers for fire safety

**Delhi:** New heat-reduction measures at schools have been added by the DOE. DOE requires "no classes be conducted in open-air environments" and no afternoon assemblies to protect kids. It ordered schools to cancel outside activities until the weather improves. Schools must always provide clean drinking water to emphasize hydration. The DOE requires planned water breaks and RO system and water cooler maintenance. Schools are required to ventilate and have working fans in classrooms for com-



fort. According to the DOE directive, all corridors must have fire extinguishers for fire safety. It has also advised schools to teach children to cover their heads in the sun, especially while commuting. It further states that "no student, parent, or staff member shall stay or

sit in open or exposed areas under direct sunlight." Health readiness is paramount. Any heat-related disease must be treated immediately. First aid packs should include oral rehydration for sick pupils. It requires reporting all heat-related illnesses to the nearest hospital.

## Global democracy has changed: Rahul

**Delhi:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said democratic politics have changed worldwide and that a decade-old rule no longer applies. The Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition argued that old political techniques are no longer effective against the modern concentration of capital, media, and social media. Gandhi stated the exist-

ing political leadership paradigm is "obsolete" and a new style of leadership must be built. Reclaiming democratic spaces and reinventing priorities like healthcare are the real challenges. "The modern concentration of capital, media, and social media overwhelms old tools. He claimed the traditional political model is anti-

### NTA offers a paper leak reporting portal

**Delhi:** The NTA launched an internet website to report dubious NEET (UG) 2025 medical entrance exam allegations. This campaign follows the 2024 NEET-UG exam fiasco, which included question paper leaks and cheating in various states. NTA advised candidates to avoid fake claims in its publication. The organization cautioned candidates not to be deceived by unscrupulous elements who commit malpractice and make false claims. NTA Director General Pradeep Singh Kharola said candidates can report suspicious activities in three categories unauthorised websites or social media accounts claiming access to NEET question paper.

quated and a new leadership style is needed. He said the Congress felt "trapped and isolated" in a political climate that no longer permitted it to operate freely, which led him to the "Bharat Jodo Yatra". The party felt confined and isolated some years ago. These new, aggressive politics aim to crush the opposition without talking.

## Students to be screened for 21 disabilities



**Delhi:** The Directorate of Education has ordered all schools, including government, aided, private, and those under local bodies like the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and Municipal Council, to screen every student for 21 types of disabilities as defined by the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The Prashast mobile app and checklist instruct teachers to look for overt and subtle symptoms of difficulties in pupils, such as bad handwriting, trouble making eye contact, lack of direction, and being lost in an imaginary world. Early disability identification, support, and inclusive education are the main goals. Teachers will learn how to utilize the app and record observations. Parents must give a no-objection certificate before screening a youngster. Screening-identified disabilities will be evaluated by experts. School-level screening must end by July 25 and district coordinators must receive final reports including class-wise and consolidated data by July 31.

## In order to incorporate AI across all academic streams, the AICTE has formed an expert group

**Delhi:** The formation of an expert committee by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is a major development in the field of technical education in India. The committee's mandate is to help various academic programs, not limited to computer science degrees, incorporate AI and applied AI. Leading AI professionals from IITs and NITs are part of the committee, which is chaired by Anand Deshpande, managing director of Persistent Systems. The goal of the move is to encourage the lateral expansion of AI in several streams, including BBA, BCA, electrical engineering, and others. "We are forming a committee to introduce AI laterally across all programs, especially Applied AI," stated AICTE Chairman Prof. TG Sitharam. "The goal is to integrate AI and related courses into all academic programs so that students from all walks of life can learn the basics of AI and data analytics."

## A professor from IIT Delhi to head up IIM Lucknow

**Delhi:** The directorship of the Indian Institute of Management in Lucknow is anticipated to be assumed by a professor from the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi (IIT-D). (Department of IIM-L). The esteemed management school will likely be led by an IIT professor for the first time. Though the official announcement has not been made yet, it has been learned that the nomination of Prof. MP Gupta has been approved by the board of governors of IIM-L.

"The chairman, board of governors, IIM-



## Doctors want standardization and oppose service bond policy after course completion

### The Delhi government has adopted a one-year bond program for doctors

**Delhi:** Long regarded as a suitable area for doctors to practice in medical institutions and hospitals after MBBS/MS/MD courses, it gave service-bond-free status and other benefits. The Delhi government has adopted a one-year bond program for doctors, who will face significant financial penalties if they fail. Doctors are angry about the government bond notification. Delhi doctors want the policy revoked or regularized.

An anonymous senior health ministry official states, "Health services like bond policy, working hours,

and salary come under the state administration.

Doctor bond measures have been strongly opposed by the NMC advisory. State governments make the final decision."

Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, Goa, West Bengal, Assam, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, and others

have implemented service bond policies with different bond tenures. Dr. BN Gangadhar, Bengaluru NMC chairman, said the NMC can only advise states on bond policy. State governments impose bonds for numerous reasons.

NMC wants to increase the number of doctors in the country so that the healthcare sector, even peripheral states, has enough qualified doctors and states can eliminate the mandatory bond policy.

## NEET-UG on May 4 amid malpractice prevention measures

**Delhi:** The National Testing Agency will hold NEET (Undergraduate) 2025 at 5,500 exam centers in India and abroad, up from 4,750 in 571 cities last year. The test will be held in 552 Indian and 14 overseas cities this year. The education ministry has tasked 180 central entities with checking center readiness. Assam's CM Himanta Biswa Sarma requested that all centers be at government-run institutions. Several cities have expanded due to candidates' first-choice center allocations. NTA officials say 90% of the centers are at government-run Kendriya Vidyalayas, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, and state schools. The datesheet for CUET-UG 2025, starting May 8, is still pending. After paper leak claims and widespread complaints about NEET-UG 2024, NTA organized state- and district-level logistics and security committees. The NTA consulted district magistrates (DMS), superintendents of police (SPs), and senior local officials before choosing exam centers. They and district coordinators will oversee operations to ensure smoothness.



## A survey on cybersecurity activities for curriculum design and education

**Delhi:** As our technological era progresses, cyber attacks have emerged as a major issue. Cybersecurity experts who can identify, stop, react to, or lessen the impact of cyberattacks are in great demand as a result of this problem. Nevertheless, there is a severe lack of trained cybersecurity experts around the globe. Many new cybersecurity education programs have emerged to meet this challenge; for example, computer science graduate programs.

# Shanaya recounts audition struggles

Bollywood actress Shanaya Kapoor recalls her audition journey for *Tu Yaa Main* as the survival thriller's trailer was unveiled in Mumbai

CJ Desk

Shanaya Kapoor spoke candidly about her audition journey for *Tu Yaa Main* at the film's trailer launch, shedding light on how the unconventional project came her way. Fresh off the appreciation for her debut *Aankhon Ki Gustakhiyan*, the actress said the survival thriller stood out instantly due to its unique genre blend.

Recalling the casting process, Shanaya revealed that casting director Mukesh Chhabra initially sent her just two scenes, without a full script. "I read the scenes and knew I had to audition. I recorded them immediately, knowing only that they were for Anand sir," she said, adding that director Anand L Rai's faith in her proved pivotal. "He saw potential in me and stood by me through everything. I'm here because of that belief," she noted.

In *Tu Yaa Main*, Shanaya essays Ms. Vanity, a high-profile influencer fluent in the language of likes, collaborations and curated narratives. Pitted against her is Adarsh Gourav from *Nalasopara*, whose

spills from lived experience rather than polish. What begins as a content-driven collaboration soon



spirals into a survival battle, with a crocodile turning their trip into a fight for existence. Directed by Anand L Rai, the film blends romance, thriller and horror — a combination Shanaya described as "crazy and irresistible."

*Tu Yaa Main* is slated to release on February 13, promising a dark Valentine's Day twist.



Photos: Instagram @\_beingsalmankhan

# Salman shares Maatrubhumi teaser

**D**ays after releasing the teaser for the upcoming action-war drama *Battle of Galwan*, starring Salman Khan, the makers have now unveiled a short glimpse of the film's first song, titled *Maatrubhumi*.

Salman took to Instagram on Friday to share the teaser for his highly anticipated film. The 15-second teaser opens with the sound of a military bugle and shows the Indian flag standing strong. The visuals highlight the courage and sacrifice of Indian soldiers and the love they have for the country.

The full song will be released on January 24, just ahead of Republic Day. *Maatrubhumi* is composed by Himesh Reshammiya, with lyrics written by Sameer Anjaan. The song is sung by Arijit Singh and Shreya Ghoshal. The music and vocals aim to evoke strong patriotic

emotions. The film's teaser was released in December last year and gave a glimpse of Salman's character, who will be seen portraying an Indian Army officer. The teaser shows him with a serious and restrained expression. The visuals depict rough terrain, cold weather, and close combat, offering a glimpse of the challenges soldiers face at high altitudes.

The film is based on the Galwan Valley clash between India and China in 2020, where 20 Indian soldiers lost their lives. Following the clashes, tensions between India and China rose, with the army deploying formations near the Galwan Valley, along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, and undertaking activities such as surveying border areas to prevent possible Chinese aggression.

Actor Chirangoli Singh has been paired opposite Salman in the film. The film will be released on April 17.



A still from *Maatrubhumi*

# Martin accidentally slices Selena's wedding cake

**A**ctor-comedian Martin Short just revealed that he accidentally cut into Selena Gomez's wedding cake and almost spoiled it. The 75-year-old actor shared the hilarious story as a guest on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* on Thursday. According to *PEOPLE*, Short revealed that the mix-up happened at Gomez and Benny Blanco's wedding reception in Santa Barbara, California, last September. "The wedding was perfect, and it was beautiful... So everything was perfect, except the night of the reception," Short told the audience as he began his story.

He went on to share that the party had big tents with small lounge areas in the back. Short was sitting with friends from *Only Murders in the Building*, including Steve Martin and Paul Rudd. "And there was a wedding cake by our section, but it was a small wedding cake. I just assumed



Martin Short

there was a wedding cake for each section in the back," Short said, as the crowd laughed. Short said he had a fork in his hand and thought it would be nice to offer cake. "Maybe I'd had a cocktail, I don't know. So I said, 'Oh Steve, you can't leave' — I had a fork in my hand. You can't leave yet without a piece of wedding cake.' And I cut the wedding cake, one side, cut it the other, and then all the people in our group screamed, 'Marty!'" Short then added, "It was the wedding cake." A photo of the cake appeared on the display during the show as he narrated the story, showing a big slice missing from the side.



Photos: Instagram

# He-Man returns with new avatar

The trailer of *Masters of the Universe* unveils an epic live-action reimagining, set for Indian theatrical release on June 5, 2026

**H**e-Man is set to make a grand return to the big screen with the unveiling of the trailer for *Masters of the Universe*, directed by Travis Knight. The live-action sci-fi action adventure reimagines the iconic franchise for a new generation while staying rooted in its beloved mythology.

The film follows Prince Adam, played by Nicholas Galitzine, who is drawn back to his home planet Eternia after 15 years by the mystical Sword of Power. On his return, he finds the world ravaged under the tyrannical rule of Skeletor, portrayed by Jared Leto. As Eternia faces imminent destruction, Adam reunites with his allies Teela and Man-At-Arms, played by Camila Mendes and Idris Elba respectively, and embraces his destiny as He-Man.

Also starring Alison Brie, James Purefoy, Morena Baccarin, Charlotte Riley and others, the film promises epic scale, high-octane action and emotional depth. *Masters of the Universe* will release in IMAX and premium formats across India in English, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu on June 5, 2026, by Sony Pictures Entertainment India.



Views

# Keerthy shares 9-hour dubbing day studio snap

National Award-winning actress Keerthy Suresh has now shared a behind-the-scenes glimpse from her dubbing session for an upcoming project and disclosed that she had been dubbing for nine hours in the day.

Sharing a picture of herself in the dubbing studio on her Instagram

stories section, she wrote, "Me at the end of a nine-hour long dubbing day. #AboutYesterday." The post, her fans feel, underscores her unwavering dedication to multilingual cinema, where she personally dubs in Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam to infuse authenticity into her roles. Her dubbing has played an important role in elevating her films.

In fact, her dubbing added emotional depth to both the

Tamil and Telugu versions of her film *Mahanati*. It captured Savitri's nuances, contributing to the film's National Award success. In *Kalki 2898 AD*, she voiced the AI character Bujji across five languages — Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Malayalam, and English, earning widespread acclaim. Bujji's humorous and emotional tones caught the attention of audiences, proving her versatility as a voice artiste.



Me at the end of a 9 hour long Dubbing day. #AboutYesterday



# RBI Governor at MPC meet says economy shows strength and stability

● The Reserve Bank of India on Wednesday released the minutes of the MPC meeting held from August 4 to 6, where Malhotra and five other members voted

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian economy presents a picture of strength, stability and opportunity, Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra said at the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting earlier this month, while cautioning that monetary policy must remain vigilant amid evolving uncertainties around US tariffs. The Reserve Bank of India on Wednesday released the minutes of the MPC meeting held from August 4 to 6, where Malhotra and five other members voted to keep the short-term lending rate unchanged at 5.5 per cent, PTI reported. "Overall, our economy



"The uncertainties of tariffs are still evolving"

The uncertainties of tariffs are still evolving," he said, stressing the need for a watchful policy approach. The Governor also noted that the cash reserve ratio (CRR) cut, which will come into effect from next month, would aid monetary transmission.

presents a picture of strength, stability, and opportunity. India's

## She favoured a neutral stance so that future actions remain data-driven

I do not see the scope or rationale for a further policy rate cut at this point." She favoured a neutral stance so that future actions remain data-driven. Executive Director Rajiv Ranjan observed that while growth remains resilient on the back of public capex, rural demand and steady services activity,

ing economic strategy clearly place it in a strong position," Malhotra said, as per the minutes. He added that while growth has been steady, inflation outcomes have turned more benign on the back of food price

industry continues to show uneven performance. "An additional rate cut at the current juncture could also reduce our policy space should global or domestic risks materialise," he said. External members also supported the pause. Ram Singh stressed the importance of policy flexibility in a volatile.

moderation. "Although we are likely to see inflation undershooting the target in the near term, with a likelihood of monthly numbers even crossing the lower tolerance band of 2 per cent, headline inflation.

## Starlink to use Aadhaar for customer verification; UIDAI tie-up



### Synergy

■ "Starlink's onboarding with Aadhaar authentication signifies a powerful synergy"

Authentication for customer verification, which will make the entire process smooth, secure and very easy," the statement said.

According to official estimates, Starlink has the capacity to onboard around 20 lakh customers in India at present.

"Starlink's onboarding with Aadhaar authentication signifies a powerful synergy: India's trusted digital identity joining hands with global satellite technology. Aadhaar e-KYC will facilitate the onboarding of users seamlessly, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements while delivering high-speed internet to households, businesses, and institutions," the statement added. The appointment of Starlink Satellite Communication Pvt Ltd. Starlink will use Aadhaar.

## Shipments up 5.37% in July despite global headwinds; April-July exports rise to \$12.18 bn

### Exports

■ Instructions given to dispose of 89 cases pending at the level of District Steering



**NEW DELHI:** India's textile and apparel sector posted steady growth in July 2025, with exports of major commodities rising 5.37 per cent to \$3.10 billion from \$2.94 billion a year ago, the government said on Wednesday. According to the Textile Ministry, the industry has demonstrated resilience despite global uncertainties, reaffirming its role as a key driver of employment, exports, and economic growth,

PTI reported. As per quick estimates released by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCIIS), cumulative textile exports for April-July 2025 rose 3.87 per cent to \$12.18 billion against \$11.73 billion last year. The six major textile commodity groups together crossed \$3.1 billion in shipments

during July, supported by sustained demand for ready-made garments, jute, carpets, and handicrafts. Ready-made garment exports rose 4.75 per cent year-on-year to \$1.34 billion in July, while cumulative exports for April-July stood at \$5.53 billion, up 7.87 per cent from \$5.13 billion in the same period last year.

The ministry said the



Air Canada strike: Restart plan suspended as union defies return-to-work order; prolonged standoff deepens travel chaos.

## As many as 45 cr people lose about Rs 20,000 cr annually from gaming



### eSports

■ The Bill, which was passed by the Lok Sabha, proposes to promote eSports

mate that 45 crore people lose money every year. The total impact of the loss is estimated to be tentatively around Rs 20,000 crore," the source said, just as the Govt tabled the "Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill 2025" in the Lok Sabha. The Bill, which was passed by the Lok Sabha, proposes to promote eSports and online social gaming while banning money gaming in any form. "Online gaming involving money has become a major problem for society. Every Parliamentarian has raised concerns about its ill effects. Between revenue from one-third of the industry segment and society welfare, the govt has chosen welfare of society," the source said.

**NEW DELHI:** Much against the arguments spelt out by gaming companies against the ban on real-money gaming, Govt estimates that around 45 crore people lose close to Rs 20,000 crore every year in online real-money gaming, according to data provided by an official source on Wednesday. The source said the govt believes that online real-money gaming is turning into a "major problem for the society", and thus it decided to opt for revenue loss in preference to people's welfare. "There is a rough esti-

## China's exports jump 75% in July to 6-month high

China's exports of rare earth magnets bounced back strongly in July, climbing to a six-month high and signalling that trade flows of the critical minerals essential for electric vehicles have returned to levels seen before Beijing tightened export controls. Data released by the General Administration of Customs on showed that exports from the world's supplier.

performance highlights India's diversified product strength.

an increase of Rs 4,244 crore. SBI accounted for 43 per cent of the total earnings, reporting a net profit of Rs 19,160 crore, up 12 per cent over the same quarter last fiscal. Notably, Punjab National Bank was the only state-run lender to post a decline in profit, with net earnings falling 48 per cent to Rs 1,675 crore against Rs 3,252 crore a year earlier. Other major performers included Central Bank of India.

## AU\$90 million penalty: Qantas Airways fined for illegal sackings

**Qantas:** A judge in Australia fined Qantas Airways 90 million Australian dollars (\$59 million) for unlawfully dismissing more than 1,800 ground staff during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. The penalty is in addition to the AU\$120 million (\$78 million) compensation the airline had already agreed to pay dismissed employees. Justice Michael Lee of the Australian Federal Court ruled that the dismissal of 1,820 baggage handlers and cleaners at airports in late 2020 was the most serious breach of Australian labour laws in their 120-year history, according to the Associated Press. After Qantas's appeal was unanimously rejected by seven High Court judges last December, the airline confirmed its wrongdoing and agreed to pay AU\$120 million in compensation. The Transport Workers Union (TWU), which initiated the case, had sought the maximum penalty of AU\$121 million.

The action was taken suo motu by the authority following investigation into the company

## Consumer authority slaps Rs 10 lakh fine on Rapido for misleading ads

**NEW DELHI:** The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed a penalty of Rs 10 lakh on ride-hailing platform Rapido for disseminating misleading advertisements and engaging in unfair trade practices. The action was taken suo motu by the authority following investigation into the company's advertisement claim: "Guaranteed

Auto. Auto in 5 mins or get Rs 50". The CCPA, in its order issued on Wednesday, directed Rapido to immediately discontinue the misleading advertisements and compensate consumers who were not provided the promised cashback. Each affected consumer is to be paid Rs 50, as originally advertised. It also instructed the company to file a compliance report within 15

days. According to CCPA, Rapido's misleading advertisement ran for over 18 months in multiple regional languages and across more than 120 cities. "Therefore, the CCPA finds it necessary to impose a penalty to safeguard the interests of consumers," it said. As per the order, between April 2023 and May 2024, 575 complaints were filed against Rapido on the

National Consumer Helpline and these covered issues such as non-refund of amounts, overcharging, service deficiency, and failure to provide promised benefits. Of these, five complaints were directly related to the misleading "guaranteed auto" claim, which could only be redeemed against bike rides and expired within seven days. The authority found that these terms

were neither clearly stated nor prominently displayed. In its defence, the company submitted that the terms and conditions were clear that customers would be eligible for coins "up to Rs 50 which could be redeemed Bike rides on Rapido platform" and that the validity of such coins was for 7 days from the time it is credited to customer".