

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

Wednesday, 31 December, 2025

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

## Briefs



DHRUV-NG, the next-generation civil helicopter, receives a cannon water salute during its inauguration at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), in Bengaluru on Tuesday.

### PATNA Minister's appointment as asst prof stalled

Bihar rural works minister Ashok Choudhary's appointment as assistant lecturer at Patliputra University has been stalled after he allegedly used two names in the papers submitted to the competent authorities. The 56-year-old minister was one of the 274 candidates shortlisted last year for the appointment as assistant professor in political science. Bihar State University Service Commission (BSUSC) conducted the interview for appointment of the assistant professors. In a press conference, Bihar education minister Sunil Kumar stated that the department had received his recommendation, but during a thorough verification process, serious discrepancies and shortcomings were found in some of his certificates. According to the department's sources, the main reason for the delay in appointment is the discrepancy in Choudhary's name. He used the name "Ashok Kumar" in his academic documents, while his name is recorded as "Ashok Choudhary" in his election affidavit.

### CHANDIGARH 7 held with 4 kg heroin, 1 kg ICE, pistol

Punjab police on Tuesday claimed to have busted a cross-border drug smuggling cartel with links to Pakistan-based handlers with the arrest of seven accused persons and recovered 4,075 kg heroin, 1 kg Methamphetamine — commonly known as ICE, and one 9 mm Glock pistol from their possession. Director General of Police (DGP), Punjab, Gaurav Yadav said those arrested have been identified as Judgebir Singh alias Judge, 21, Jaspal Singh alias Jass, 22, Anmolpreet Singh, 19, Harpinder Singh alias Bhinda, 32, Tarunpreet Singh, 20, Dawinder Singh alias Baw, 33, and Mandeep Singh, 24. Stating that preliminary investigation has revealed that the contraband was smuggled from Pakistan and distributed across the state through local modules guided via social media, he said that further investigation is underway.

**POLL PITCH** | Union home minister says BJP will win two-thirds majority in West Bengal, Trinamool scoffs

## CM abetting infiltration, says Shah, Didi hits back

KOLKATA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah during his three-day visit to Kolkata, expressed confidence in forming a government in West Bengal.

Addressing a press meet on Tuesday, Shah said that people of Bengal have to face trouble due to infiltration.

"The TMC government is in favor of infiltrators. If BJP forms the government, the problem of infiltration will be stopped. For the last 15 years people of Bengal have seen corruption, misgovernance and fear of TMC. Bengal is ready for the change," said Shah.

He also mentioned that till the elections are over in April it is a very crucial time for the state. "This time we will get two-third majority and will form the government. At least seven letters had been sent to Mamata Banerjee over the land issue near the border but land wasn't given by the state government. Union Home secretary visited Bengal at least thrice but to no avail," he further said.

Speaking on SIR, Shah added that Matuas should not be worried. "Those Matuas who came to India as refugees are citizens of this country. BJP pledges to give them citizenship. Nobody can harm them."

Meanwhile, without taking any names, CM Mamata Banerjee slammed Shah and also questioned his credibility for the Pahalgam attack.

Mamata also equated Shah with Mahabharata characters Duryodhana and Dushasana.

"The Union Home Minister should resign," added the West Bengal Chief Minister.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the Bengal government has not allotted land near border even after the Central government sent seven letters

## Cong's Adhir meets PM over attacks on Bengali migrants

NEW DELHI

Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Tuesday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to sensitize all the state governments in the country to stop the discrimination, violence and persecution of migrant labourers, especially from his state of West Bengal, in various parts of the country due to the inability of the masses as also the police and local administration to differentiate between "Banglabhasi (Bangla speaking) and Bangladeshi" people.

Chowdhury, who met

Modi to raise the issue, said he had also submitted a letter to draw his attention to the alleged discrimination being faced by migrant workers from West Bengal in various states, particularly the BJP-ruled ones.

Stating that these migrant workers have been putting in their sweat and skill to eke out a living while also keeping the cogs of the economic wheel of the country rotating, the Congress Working Committee member lamented that they were still being "subjected to violence, hatred, abuse and even beaten to death" in their own country. "Their only offence," the

former Leader of Congress in Lok Sabha said, was that "they speak Bengali language" and are therefore "often misunderstood by the concerned administration as persons belonging to Bangladesh and are therefore treated as infiltrators."

In this regard, the Congress leader recalled the attack on Jewel Rana from his Mursidabad district who was attacked and bludgeoned to death in Sambalpur in Odisha where he was suspected to be an infiltrator. The 30-year-old migrant worker was allegedly killed last Wednesday over an altercation over a 'bidi'.

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## B'desh-linked jihadi module busted, 11 held in Northeast

GUWAHATI

intelligence inputs under Operation Protighat, launched after earlier counter-terror efforts under Operation Prophat.

Those arrested include Nasim Uddin alias Najimuddin alias Tamim of Barpeta Road, Junab Ali of Chirang, Afrahim Hussain of Darrang, Mianur Rehman, Sultan Mahmud, Md Siddique Ali, Rasidul Alam, Mahibul Khan, Sharuk Hussain, Md Dilbar Razak and Jagir Miah of Tripura.

Police said the module, known as Imam Mahmud Kafila (IMK), was operating as an offshoot of JMB and was actively involved in radicalisation, recruitment and fund mobilisation in the region. The arrests were made following sustained surveillance and

Following political developments in Bangladesh in 2024, senior leaders of JMB, Ansarullah Bangla Team and Al-Qaeda in the Indian sub-continent allegedly directed the group to activate and expand its network in India.

"Nasim Uddin alias Tamim headed the Assam module. The group operated through encrypted social media platforms, particularly a group called 'Purba Akash', which was used for communication, recruitment and ideological indoctrination," Mahanta said.

Investigations revealed that the group propagated extremist ideology centred on "Ghazwatul Hind" and circulated radical literature.

The Dehradun Police has constituted an SIT to investigate the killing of Anjel Chakma, a student from Tripura, even as they said the probe so far has found no evidence of racial abuse. Police said he was assaulted after tempers flared up when he objected to some "banters" among the attackers who had come in a group to a liquor shop.

Dehradun SSP Ajay Singh said police are very close to apprehending in Nepal the man who allegedly stabbed Chakma. "The complete truth behind the incident will only be known after the arrest of the main accused (Yagyraj) Awasthi, who stabbed Angel," he said. Singh said the police

had taken note of social media posts attributing a racial motive to the incident. "Our investigation so far has found no evidence of racial discrimination or violence," he said.

The police action came



A delegation of students meets Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha to demand justice for Angel Chakma and ex gratia aid to his family, in Agartala on Tuesday

**'Harsh penalty'**  
The family of Anjel Chakma on Tuesday demanded capital punishment or life imprisonment for all the accused. Tripura CM Manik Saha said his Uttarakhand counterpart Pushkar Singh Dhami has assured him of stringent steps against Chakma's killers.

**PIL in SC**  
Against the backdrop of Anjel Chakma's murder, a PIL was filed in the Supreme Court seeking judicial intervention to address the "continuing constitutional failure" to prevent racial bias and violence against citizens from northeastern states.

## Row kills Sunny Leone Mathura trip

MATHURA

agement decided to cancel the booking.

Dinesh Phalhari Maharaj had written to the district magistrate demanding an immediate ban on the event. In his letter and public statements, he said Mathura is a sacred city, and any programme promoting obscenity or vulgarity would not be tolerated. He stated that Mathura, being the land of Lord Krishna, should not host events that go against its spiritual and cultural ethos. He

also alleged that such programmes were part of a conspiracy to malign the image of the holy city in the name of New Year celebrations.

Phalhari Maharaj further said that New Year celebrations in Mathura should

strictly follow traditional values and respect religious sentiments. He warned that any attempt to introduce indecent performances in the name of entertainment would be strongly opposed.

As opposition mounted, event organiser Mitul Pathak released a video message on social media announcing the cancellation of the New Year programme. He said the decision was taken to avoid controversy and to maintain peace in the city.



## Gaushalas aiding vulture conservation programme

MUMBAI

population of the birds classified as 'critically endangered' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The population of Long-billed vulture (*Gyps indicus*), called Jatayu has collapsed by 99% largely due to the veterinary use of Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) given to cattle. When the cattle die and vultures feed on the carion, the drug residue affects the birds' liver and kid-

neys, leading to kidney failure (visceral gout). The near-decimation of India's vultures has also affected the functioning of Parsi dakhmas or 'Tower of Silence', including the one in Mumbai, that for centuries

relied on carion birds and the sun to dispose of bodies.

BNHS said that most gaushala in Rajasthan have stopped using vulture-toxic veterinary drugs and also stopped burying dead cattle so that vultures can feed on the carcasses.

BNHS director Kishor Ritha stated that many gaushalas in Rajasthan have stopped using vulture-toxic veterinary drugs like diclofenac, aceclofenac,

ketoprofen and nimesulide and adopted the vulture-safe veterinary drugs like meloxicam and tolferamic acid. They have also stopped burying dead cattle to feed the Jatayu's and today the Jatayu population in Rajasthan have ample food available around the gaushala's.

For instance, the huge Apna Ghar Gaushala at Lohagarh near Bharatpur, housing more than 5000 cattle, has stopped

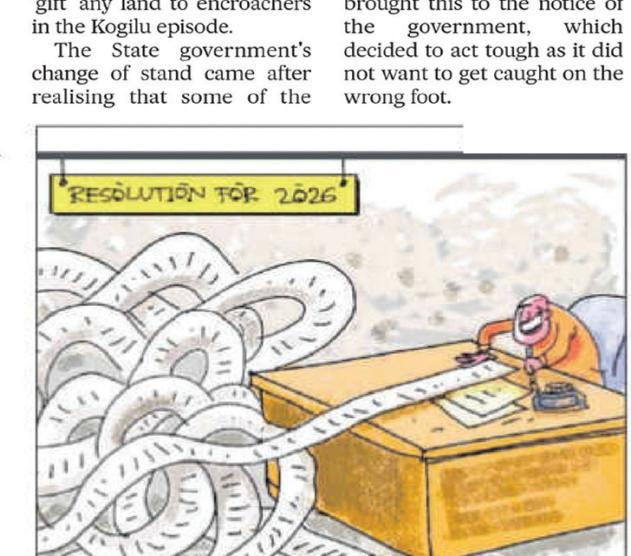
using the toxic drugs. P K Saini, a volunteer at the gaushala has been quoted by BNHS as saying that they have been using traditional ways of treating cows since the beginning. "We avoid vulture-toxic drugs that could harm vultures," Saini said. BNHS said that a large number of cow shelters in Rajasthan have also been adopting nature-friendly methods of disposing of dead cattle.

BENGALURU

After succumbing to pressure from the Kerala government over demolition of illegally constructed houses at Kogilu in the land earmarked for solid waste management project, the Karnataka government made a U-turn and said it will not entertain encroach-

ments on government lands.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who is in charge of Bengaluru city, has affirmed that the government will not condone any type of encroachments and will not 'gift' any land to encroachers. The officials, after preliminary inquiry, brought this to the notice of the government, which decided to act tough as it did not want to get caught on the wrong foot.



## Meja Urja Nigam Private Limited Declares First Interim Dividend for FY 2025–26

**Akhand Bharat Sandesh**

**Meja:** Meja Urja Nigam Private Limited (MUNPL), a Joint Venture of NTPC Limited and Uttar Pradesh Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited, has declared an Interim Dividend of Rs.0.55 per equity share for the financial year 2025–26.

The decision was approved by the Board of Directors through circulation on 29 December 2025. The total interim dividend pay-out aggregates to Rs.200.90 crore, which will be paid out of the profits for the period.

Commenting on the dividend declaration, the Amit Rautela Chief Financial Officer,

MUNPL, stated “The timely declaration and remittance of the interim dividend reflects MUNPL's strong cash generation, sound financial controls, and commitment to disciplined capital allocation. MUNPL operates the 2x660 MW Meja Thermal Power Station in Uttar Pradesh, a strategically important asset contributing to regional grid stability and energy security and has optimistic plans for Capacity addition of 5600 MW in near future in state of Uttar Pradesh. Asesh Kumar Chattopadhyay, Chief Executive Officer of the Company, stated with the technical expertise and opera-

tional excellence of NTPC Limited, Meja Urja Nigam Private Limited has surpassed the expectations of its promoters. During the current year itself, the Company has paid a total dividend of Rs.351.65 crore, including this interim payout. With the stabilization of both 660 MW units, the Company is well positioned to generate impressive revenues in line with stakeholder expectations. At the same time, the Company remains deeply committed to inclusive growth by supporting livelihood enhancement, infrastructure development, and skill development in the surrounding areas through its various CSR initiatives.

## Awareness Drive Conducted in Rijor Area Under ‘Child Marriage Free India Campaign’



community level and ensuring the safety and welfare of children. The 100-day “Child Marriage Free India Campaign” is being conducted from December 4, 2025 to March 8, 2026. Under the direction of Senior Superintendent of Police Etah Shyam Narayan Singh and the supervision of Additional Superintendent of Police (Crime) and Nodal Officer

AHT Yogendra Singh the campaign was led by Circle Officer Sadar Sankaldeep Singh Kushwaha. A joint team of AHT/SJPU conducted the awareness programme at SRS Institute, Rijor Road, Etah, where students were informed about the harmful consequences of child marriage. During the programme, detailed information was shared with all present

regarding the legal, social and health-related impacts of child marriage. Participants were also administered an oath to oppose and prevent child marriage. The team highlighted that the legal age of marriage in India is 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys and any marriage conducted below the prescribed age is a punishable offence. The team further informed the public about government-issued toll-free helpline numbers for emergency assistance, including 1098, 108, 112, 1076 and 181 encouraging citizens to report any instances or suspicion of child marriage and seek timely help.

### Etah

Under the directions of the Uttar Pradesh Government, the AHT/SJPU team carried out an awareness campaign in the Rijor police station area as part of the “Child Marriage Free India Campaign,” aiming to sensitize the general public against the social evil of child marriage. The campaign was organized on Tuesday in compliance with the orders of the Women and Child Safety Organization, Uttar Pradesh Lucknow. The initiative focused on effectively preventing incidents of child marriage, fostering a zero-tolerance environment at the

## 5 kg of Chital Meat, Weapons and Ammunition Recovered in Abdullahganj Range: Seven Poachers Arrested

### Bahraich

The Bahraich Forest Division has achieved a major success in a special campaign launched to control illegal hunting and forest crimes. A team from the Forest Department raided the Abdullahganj range area and arrested seven poachers red-handed. Approximately 5 kilograms of meat from the protected wild animal, the chital, along with weapons and ammunition, were recovered from the scene. Under the direction of Divisional Forest Officer Ram Singh Yadav and Sub-Divisional Forest Officer Nanpara Rashid Jameel, a

special campaign is being conducted under the leadership of Forest Range Officer Pankaj Kumar Sahu to control illegal logging and poaching during the winter season. In the operation conducted in Beat No. 7 of the Abdullahganj forest, the arrested poachers were identified as Raju son of Chaudhary, Khalil son of Zahir, Qayyum son of Jumai, Pradhan son of Chaudhary, all from Sonpur Baghora village, Shravasti district, Guddu son of Banshilal, Mishrilal son of Banshilal and Dhonge son of Ramphar, all from Adbadwa village, Nawabganj police station. A case was registered against them and all the accused were presented before the court from where they were sent to judicial custody. Forest Range Officer Pankaj Kumar Sahu said that 5 kg of chital meat, severed legs and head, 3 axes, 1 knife, 1 slingshot, and 47 live cartridges were recovered from the arrested poachers. The arrest team included Suresh Kumar, Forest Sub-Inspector, Shubham Inspector, Manoj Kumar Tiwari, Forest Guard, Suresh Kumar Verma, Forest Guard, Dev Kumar Verma, Forest Guard, Avnish Kumar, Forest Guard and Ambuj Pandey, Forest Guard, among others.

## Notice given to Lippan Tiraha building owners without concrete plan is not fair: Rohit Gupta

### Bhadohi

A meeting of the District Level Development Work Monitoring Committee was organized in the headquarters auditorium located at Sarpatan. Which was presided over by former minister and Aurai MLA Dinanath Bhaskar. In the meeting, on behalf of Lippan Tiraha residents, State Award awarded journalist Rohit Gupta raised the issue of the notice sent by PWD and also handed over a leaflet. Rohit Gupta told the Speaker that notice has been given to some people without any concrete plan, which is not fair. PWD has given notice to the people living around Lippan Tiraha to vacate the land, in which it has been said that if the land is not vacated then the administration will itself take action and recover damages. Local people say that during the construction of Ghazia 31B overpass, everyone was given compensation, but now the people in the same line and next to it are being told that they have encroached on government land. Even before this, Lippan Tiraha



residents, under the leadership of journalist Rohit Gupta, had complained to District Magistrate Shailendra Kumar in Tehsil Day Bhadohi and demanded compensation. The District Magistrate had assured to take appropriate action after investigation and had said that if compensation has been received earlier, then a committee has been formed and investigation report has been sought. Dinanath Bhaskar, MLA Aurai and Chairman of District Level Development Work Monitoring Committee, Chairman of the Joint Committee of Scheduled Caste/Tribe, Vimukt Jat Legislative Party of Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, and an active member of the Public Accounts Committee of Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, said that in the government of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath through the District Magistrate of Etah demanding transparency and corruption-free operations in vehicle fitness centres. In the memorandum, the trade body raised concerns over alleged irregularities and malpractices prevailing in vehicle fitness centres and urged the government to put an effective check on such activities. The delegation emphasized the need for implementing a transparent monitoring mechanism to ensure fair and efficient services for vehicle owners. The office-bearers appealed to the Chief Minister to continue the operation of government-run fitness centres along with private centres, stating that healthy competition would improve service quality and prevent monopolistic practices. They further demanded continuous surveillance of fitness centres to curb any form of corruption or procedural irregularities. Highlighting public grievances, the memorandum stressed the need for establishing a dedicated helpline number or an online portal to address complaints and provide assistance to vehicle owners. The traders also sought immediate resolution of alleged irregularities related to driving licence issuance and other procedures at private fitness centres. Additionally, the Vyapar Mandal proposed the formation of a district-level inspection committee comprising representatives from the district administration, transport department and local public representatives associated with the transport sector, to ensure regular oversight and accountability. Prominent among those present during the submission of the memorandum were Ashok Saraf, Sanjeev Kumar Varshney ‘Bunty Babu’, Kallu Miyan, Pradeep Gupta (Aliganj), Rakesh Varshney (Chikori Wale), Rakesh Varshney (R.K. Jewellers), Atul Rathi, David Jain, Kailash Jain, Amit Gupta, Aadesh Kumar Gupta, Virendra Varshney, Rahul Varshney ‘Bobby’, Sanjeev Jain, Sanjeev Varshney, Prasoon Varshney, Umesh Pratap Singh Chauhan, Ganesh Varshney (Awagarh), S. Kumar, Javed Alam, Asrat Ahmad (journalist), Anuj Pratap Singh ‘Bobby’, Hradesh, Amit Chauhan, Anil Chauhan, Raghvendra Singh Yadav, Sonu, along with several other office-bearers and trader members.

## Gayatri Parivar to Launch Public Awareness Campaign Against Superstitions and Social Evils in the New Year

### Bahraich

A crucial meeting of members of the Gayatri Parivar, social workers and people associated with Sanatan Dharma was held on Tuesday at the Gayatri Chetna Kendra, Maidan Baba Ashram, Dighiha premises. In the meeting, it was decided to launch a multi-faceted public awareness campaign to eradicate superstitions, illiteracy, social evils and caste-based discrimination prevalent in Hindu society on the occasion of the New Year. A detailed action plan was also prepared to make the environmental protection, water conservation and anti-drug campaigns more effective. Addressing the meeting, RPN Srivastava, founder and manager of Gayatri Chetna Kendra said that untouchability, social inequality and casteism are continuously increasing in society, leading to the disintegration of Sanatan society. In such a situation, it is the responsibility of all of us to send a strong message of social harmony and integrity through



a public awareness campaign so that society can be made strong and united. Sanjeev Srivastava, Advocate, patron of the Chetna Samiti and president of Malviya Mission Awadh, said that a special campaign is being conducted under the auspices of the organization regarding environment, water conservation and drug eradication. An effective action plan has been prepared to connect every person with this campaign, in which the cooperation of social and religious organizations associated with Sanatan Dharma, along with the Gayatri Parivar, is being sought. The program was conducted by Vice President Anil Mishra, Advocate while the vote of thanks was presented by Gayatri Parivar mem-

ber Jagdish Prasad Mishra. The meeting was presided over by Engineer Radheshyam Srivastava. Prominent among those present were Radheshyam Srivastava, Premchand Srivastava, Shivpujan Verma, Ramgopal Verma, Captain Singh, Mahesh Mishra, B.D. Srivastava, Abhishek Dwivedi, legal expert Anil Tripathi, Advocate, Durgesh Mishra, Kanti Mishra, Nageshwar Verma, Neelam Chaudhary, General Secretary P.R. Dwivedi, Omprakash Saxena, spokesperson Dr. Pankaj Srivastava and many others. At the conclusion of the meeting, all those present took a collective pledge to make the campaigns run by the organization successful and effective.

## Workshop on PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana Held at Collectorate



### Etah

On the directions of District Magistrate Prem Ranjan Singh, a workshop was organized at the NIC Auditorium, Collectorate Etah, by the NEDA Office, Etah, to promote the installation of solar rooftop plants under the Prime Minister Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. The workshop was attended by all employees of the Etah Collectorate along with vendors associated with the scheme. Sub-Divisional Magistrate and In-charge Officer, NEDA, Piyush Rawat provided detailed information about the complete process of installing solar rooftop plants and elaborated on the benefits available under the scheme. He informed that the Prime Minister Surya Ghar Yojana is an ambitious initiative of the Central and State Governments aimed at promoting clean and renewable energy. Under the scheme, beneficiaries are being provided a subsidy of up to ₹1,08,000 for solar connections up to 3 kilowatts. The remaining cost of approximately ₹72,000 can be recovered within one and a half to two years through savings on electricity bills. During the workshop, vendors addressed the queries raised by participants and shared detailed information regarding subsidy provisions, reduction in electricity bills and the availability of loan facilities through nationalized banks for solar plant installation. The participants were also encouraged to register themselves under the scheme to avail its benefits. On the occasion, comprehensive information regarding the benefits available to eligible beneficiaries under the Prime Minister Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana was shared and contact numbers of authorized vendors were also provided for convenience. The primary objective of the workshop was to encourage maximum participation in the adoption of clean energy and to reduce electricity expenditure by linking households with the Prime Minister Surya Ghar scheme.

## Huge Turnout at Tehsil for Pradhani Elections, Activity Peaks on Final Day

### Etah

The final day of the Pradhani elections on Tuesday witnessed a massive turnout at the Tehsil Auditorium in Aliganj. From early morning, candidates, their supporters and villagers thronged the venue to submit suggestions, proposals and objections related to their respective candidates, creating a bustling atmosphere throughout the day. In view of the growing crowd, the Tehsil administration strengthened arrangements to ensure smooth proceedings. SDM Aliganj, Jagmohan Gupta, stated that four additional teams had been deployed at four separate counters to facilitate candidates and the public, ensuring speedy pro-



cessing of applications and objections. He noted that since December 30 marked the final date for submissions, a large number of people arrived at the Tehsil. To manage the crowd efficiently, four extra counters were set up each in the Aliganj and Jaitra development blocks, enabling people to complete their procedures with minimal waiting time. Tehsil offi-

cials and staff were actively guiding visitors throughout the day with special attention paid to crowd management. Adequate police deployment ensured security and maintained discipline within the premises. Authorities appealed to the public to remain patient and follow the prescribed procedures while submitting their documents and objections on time.

## Trade Body Demands Transparency in Vehicle Fitness Centres, Submits Memorandum

### Etah

On Tuesday, the Etah Udyog Vyapar Mandal, led by its City President Atul Rathi submitted an important memorandum addressed to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath through the District Magistrate of Etah demanding transparency and corruption-free operations in vehicle fitness centres. In the memorandum, the trade body raised concerns over alleged irregularities and malpractices prevailing in vehicle fitness centres and urged the government to put an effective check on such activities. The delegation emphasized the need for implementing a transparent monitoring mechanism to ensure fair and efficient services for vehicle owners. The office-bearers appealed to the Chief Minister to continue the operation of government-run fitness centres along with private centres, stating that healthy competition would improve service quality and prevent monopolistic practices. They further demanded continuous surveillance of fitness centres to curb any form of corruption or procedural irregularities. Highlighting public grievances, the memorandum stressed the need for establishing a dedicated helpline number or an online portal to address complaints and provide assistance to vehicle owners. The traders also sought immediate resolution of alleged irregularities related to driving licence issuance and other procedures at private fitness centres. Additionally, the Vyapar Mandal proposed the formation of a district-level inspection committee comprising representatives from the district administration, transport department and local public representatives associated with the transport sector, to ensure regular oversight and accountability. Prominent among those present during the submission of the memorandum were Ashok Saraf, Sanjeev Kumar Varshney ‘Bunty Babu’, Kallu Miyan, Pradeep Gupta (Aliganj), Rakesh Varshney (Chikori Wale), Rakesh Varshney (R.K. Jewellers), Atul Rathi, David Jain, Kailash Jain, Amit Gupta, Aadesh Kumar Gupta, Virendra Varshney, Rahul Varshney ‘Bobby’, Sanjeev Jain, Sanjeev Varshney, Prasoon Varshney, Umesh Pratap Singh Chauhan, Ganesh Varshney (Awagarh), S. Kumar, Javed Alam, Asrat Ahmad (journalist), Anuj Pratap Singh ‘Bobby’, Hradesh, Amit Chauhan, Anil Chauhan, Raghvendra Singh Yadav, Sonu, along with several other office-bearers and trader members.



# Deputy Chief Minister Inspects Progress of Six-Lane Bridge Under Construction on Ganga River

The Deputy Chief Minister expressed displeasure over the slow progress of the bridge construction and instructed that the work be expedited

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj:** Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Tuesday inspected the six-lane bridge under construction on the Ganga River from Malak Harhar to Beli Chowk. On this occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister inquired about the progress of the bridge construction from the executing agency, SPS Construction India Pvt. Ltd., and officials of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

The Deputy Chief Minister expressed dis-



pleasure over the slow progress of the bridge construction and instructed that the work be expedited. Officials of the executing agency, SPS Construction India Pvt.

Ltd., stated that the bridge construction work would be completed by May 2026. The Deputy Chief Minister instructed the executing agency to complete the work

with full quality and directed the officials of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India, to continuously monitor the quality and

progress of the work. Speaking to the media, the Deputy Chief Minister said that an inner ring road is also being constructed in Prayagraj. Its completion will accelerate development in Prayagraj and improve traffic flow. He said that several bridges are also being built on the Ganga and Yamuna rivers, along with several road overbridges (ROBs) and flyovers. He added that road widening work has also been done. On this occasion, MP Phulpur Praveen Patel, MLA Phaphamau Guru Prasad Maurya, BJP Metropolitan President

Sanjay Gupta, Gangapur President Nirmala Paswan, and other public representatives, along with officials from the concerned departments, were present. Thereafter, the Deputy Chief Minister, along with Cabinet Minister Dr. Sanjay Kumar Nishad, participated in a felicitation ceremony for Asian Miss Martial Arts gold medalist Khushboo Nishad at the District Panchayat Auditorium. The Deputy Chief Minister honored gold medalist Khushboo Nishad by presenting her with a bouquet and a shawl.

## Principal Secretary P. Guruprasad visited the fair area and reviewed the preparations being made for the Magh Mela 2026

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Planning and Urban Development Department, P. Guruprasad, along with Mela Officer Rishiraj and Municipal Commissioner Sai Teja, visited the fair area on Tuesday to review the preparations being made for the Magh Mela 2026 and provided necessary guidelines to all concerned officials. He first reached Sangam Nose and inspected the fair area from the watch tower. He also observed the progress of the ghats being constructed at Sangam Nose and Sector 4 from the watch tower. He also obtained detailed information from the Mela Officer about the location of all sectors, the river water level, and the ghats. The Principal Secretary then inspected the work being done on the circulating area being expanded to accommodate the large bathing ghats near the



Mahavir Bridge in Sector 4. He inquired from the Executive Engineer, Irrigation, about the work being done to expand the circulating area with mud pumps.

When asked when the work would be completed, he was told that the work was progressing rapidly and soon the

expansion of the circulating area would be completed and a large bathing ghat would be prepared, ensuring that devotees would not face any inconvenience during major bathing festivals. The Principal Secretary then spoke with the saints and inquired about the arrangements for the fair area.

He toured the area, inspected the laying of checkered plates, the sprinkling of water on the roads, the water supply lines, and the sanitation arrangements, and provided necessary guidance. He visited the newly established camps in Sector 6, inspected the water supply, and inquired from the residents

about when they received their water connections and whether they were experiencing any problems. During the inspection, the Executive Engineer stated that water lines have been laid in all sectors, and most connections have been made in Sectors 4 and 5. In Sector 6, as the boundaries of the camps are being erected, water supply is being started in each camp, and points are being added as needed. He added that connections have been provided to 67 camps today.

The Principal Secretary stated that there should be no complaints from anywhere, and that clean water should be supplied to everyone as needed and on time. He visited Sectors 1, 4, 5, 6, and Sector 2, respectively, to formally inspect the preparations.

During the visit, he also gathered information about the facilities provided to the

Kalpvasis and inspected them. He also inspected the fire station built in Sector-6. In order to ensure cleanliness and purity of water in view of Magh Mela, the Principal Secretary inspected the work of purification of drain water through geo tube near Nagvasuki and took detailed information about water purification through process flow diagram and gave instructions to ensure that only clean water goes to Ganga ji after purification. On this occasion, Special Secretary Satya Prakash Patel, Mela Officer Rishiraj, Municipal Commissioner Selam Sai Teja, Secretary Prayagraj Development Authority Ajit Singh, Chief Engineer Jal Nigam Urban Sanjay Kumar Gautam, Superintending Engineer Sanjay Kumar Ranjan, Executive Engineer Ashutosh and Amitraj along with other concerned officers were present.

## Deputy Chief Minister welcomed at the Government Printing Press sports ground



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj:** Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya arrived at the sports ground of the Government Printing Press. Upon his arrival, the Joint

Director of the printing press, Shyam Narayan Gupta, welcomed him with a bouquet of flowers, along with the office bearers of both organizations of the printing press. Those who welcomed him included Ajay

Kumar, President of the Employees' Association, and Vice Presidents Zia Ullah and Ram Milan Yadav, as well as Vinod Shukla, patron of the Workers' Union, and other employees.

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj:** On Tuesday, Vice-Chancellor Professor Satyakam performed the groundbreaking ceremony for the distance education awareness camp of Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University, Prayagraj, located on Lal Sadak Marg, Sector 3, in the Magh Mela area. Professor Satyakam, along with his wife, performed the Bhoomi Pujan (groundbreaking ceremony) on the banks of the Ganges, chanting Vedic mantras for the development of the university and the success of the camp. On this occasion, Professor Satyakam said that distance education is for everyone. The very purpose of the university's camp is to provide information about distance education to the devotees who come from all corners of the country to the Magh Mela. The Open University was successful in achieving this objective during Kumbh 2025 and, while serving humanity, not only organized



several awareness programs at its camp but also provided free accommodation to research teams from various educational institutions. Professor Satyakam said that this time too, the responsibility of managing the camp at Magh Mela has been entrusted to Dr. Anil Kumar Singh Bhaduria, Registrar Colonel Vinay Kumar,

Deputy Chief Minister addresses 'Atal: A Personality – An Ideology' program

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Prayagraj:** Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad



Maurya addressed the 'Atal: A Personality – An Ideology' program organized on the occasion of the birth centenary celebrations of Bharat Ratna and former Prime Minister, the revered Atal Bihari Vajpayee, at the District Panchayat Auditorium in Prayagraj on Tuesday. Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said that the revered Atal Bihari Vajpayee made good governance, nationalism, and democratic values ??the guiding principles of his life. His visionary leadership, development-oriented ideology, and decisions that prioritized national interest continue to guide the creation of a strong and self-reliant India. Present on this occasion were District Panchayat Chairman Dr. V.K. Singh, Mayor Umesh Chandra Ganesh Kesarwani, MLAs Guru Prasad Maurya and Harshvardhan Vajpayee, BJP Metropolitan President Sanjay Gupta, BJP Gangapur President Nirmala Paswan, former Cabinet Minister Dr. Narendra Singh Gaur, and other dignitaries.

Professor Satyakam Tiwari, Professor P.K. Stalin, Professor S. Kumar, Professor A.K. Malik, Professor Anand Anand Tripathi, Professor Devesh Ranjan Tripathi, and other faculty members were present on this occasion. The vote of thanks was given by Dr. Prabhat Chandra Mishra.

## Editorial

Priyanka to Sharmila, Kanimozhi to Misa—KCR's daughter Kavitha

is fighting a bigger battle

**KKavitha**, daughter of former Telangana chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, is hurting. She began her 72-hour hunger strike Monday, demanding 42 per cent reservation for backward classes in jobs, educational institutions and local bodies. Her party, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi, is staying away from it. While she is being trolled and ridiculed by political rivals as also party colleagues, nobody has come to her defense. Even her brother and the party's working president, KT Rama Rao, hasn't said a word. To make matters worse, she was dropped as honorary president of the Telangana Boggu Ghani Karmika Sangham (TBGKS), a BRS-affiliated trade union. Kavitha, a BRS legislator, has accused "party insiders" of encouraging those attacking her and also questioned the silence of BRS "brothers". So, what's happening in the BRS' 'first family'? In August last year when she came out of Tihar jail on bail in the alleged liquor scam, her family was waiting for her outside. With tears in her eyes, she kissed her brother KT Rama Rao's hand. A year later, she is looking isolated and abandoned by the family. The controversy surrounding her 'letter bomb' refuses to die down. Not because her father is upset about the letter, in which she expressed disagreement with his way of functioning, but because of how her party has reacted — by virtually abandoning her. Party insiders tell me that while the father did call the daughter "three or four times", the brother has cut off all communication with her. These developments are being interpreted in political circles as a full-blown succession war between Kavitha and KTR, with cousin Harish Rao keeping his ambitions in abeyance and pledging allegiance to KTR. But it's not as simple as that. Party insiders close to the BRS first family tell me that the man behind Kavitha's current woes is not her brother. The one who triggered this storm is someone party circles are calling the 'VK Pandian of Telangana' — a reference to the former IAS officer in Odisha whose "control" over ex-CM Naveen Patnaik alienated Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leaders and eventually led to Patnaik's fall from power. In the case of the BRS' family feud, it's not an ex-IAS officer. It's a close relative and KCR's trusted confidant who, insiders say, has gained 'control' over the former CM. And it's this person that Kavitha has taken up the cudgels against. She has been hurting ever since her letter to KCR was "leaked" — a letter in which she questioned her father for being soft on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during his speech marking the BRS' 25th anniversary. She said this gave the impression that the BRS and BJP could work together in the future. The letter also flagged other concerns about the way her party leadership was functioning. It was 'leaked' while she was in the US visiting her elder son. Though she had sent the letter before leaving, many might find it strange that she chose to write rather than speak to her father, possibly a sign of a rift. The fact, however, is that she has been writing hand-written letters — not emails, which KCR doesn't use — for years. The usual practice was that she would hand over a letter during a meeting, which he would read and respond to later. This time, Kavitha sent the letter through her mother, as she was sick and didn't want to risk infecting her elderly father. But when the letter surfaced just before her return to India, she was furious.

She apparently saw a pattern — and a familiar hand, someone she always suspected of working against her. Party insiders say she suspects her cousin Joginapally Santhosh Kumar to be behind the leak. Santhosh is her mother Shobha's sister's son, who is like KCR's "nurse and PA" who stays with him 24x7, taking care of him — much like Pandian did with Patnaik. KCR has given him untrammelled clout.



## India sees the value of US defence ties, but MAGA-style tariffs threaten long-term stability

India's defence relationship with the US has been maturing over the last decade — from cautious engagement to structured partnerships, driven by shared strategic interest. What was once a purely transactional partnership, a buyer/seller relationship involving specific procurement contracts, has now assumed a pivotal role in the global geopolitical calculus. However, this evolving alliance is under stress, especially in light of President Donald Trump's sudden imposition of a 25 percent tariff on Indian exports, with additional as yet unspecified 'penalties' for importing oil from Russia. Yet even as economic ties fray, the depth of security cooperation, and the numerous formal agreements that sustain it, offers India both an opportunity and a challenge. The key question is whether India can deepen its defence cooperation with the US, without ceding its strategic autonomy or aligning it with shifting political agendas. At the heart of India-US defence ties lies an architecture of agreements, joint exercises, and co-development initiatives that extend well beyond symbolism. The signing of foundational accords such as COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement), BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement), and the Industrial Security Annex have facilitated real-time intelligence sharing, logistical interoperability, and protected access to cutting-edge military technology. These treaties, once perceived as



intrusive or incompatible with India's traditional non-alignment posture, are now actively deployed to bolster maritime surveillance, domain awareness, and air defence capabilities. Operational collaboration has also deepened. India's acquisition of MQ-9B Predator drones, MH-60R multi-role naval helicopters, and the proposed co-production of GE-414 engines for indigenous fighter jets signal not just defence modernisation, but also a convergence in regional threat assessments, especially vis-à-vis China's assertive posture in the Indo-Pacific. Initiatives such as INDUS-X and iCET are moving beyond procurement to include co-development, startup incubation, and collaborative research in emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Quantum Computing (QC), and Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS). These engagements point to a long-term strategic partnership rather than short-term expediency. However, there is a fly in the ointment. The July 30 announcement of 25 percent US tariffs on Indian exports, couched vaguely in terms of India's ongoing

defence and energy cooperation with Russia, reveals a recurring dilemma: how stable and reliable is US strategic posture and unconditional support when tested by domestic political imperatives or ideological shifts like MAGA? The tariffs, affecting nearly three-quarters of India's exports, suggest that economic retaliation may be used as a convenient foreign policy tool for strategic coercion. That the current proposed tariffs were triggered not by any rupture in defence ties, but by dissatisfaction over India's continued import of Russian oil and military platforms, underscores the complexity of American reliability. This tension exposes the somewhat hypocritical duality of US diplomacy, in that it seeks convergence on strategic goals while retaining coercive tools to enforce alignment. For India, such moves raise critical questions and strike at the heart of its policy of strategic autonomy. Can the US-India defence partnership flourish in an environment where India's broader economic or foreign policy decisions invite punitive countermeasures? Will access to US platforms and supply chains be withdrawn

or restricted, especially in times of conflict, if India continues to pursue a multi-pronged foreign policy that includes countries like Russia and Iran, which the US views as enemies? The answer probably lies in separating the institutional depth of security cooperation from the dynamic volatility arising out of political posturing. Unlike trade, which is often driven by electoral considerations and domestic imperatives like MAGA, defence collaboration is sustained by bureaucratic processes, institutional memory, and mutual threat recognition. The US Defence and State Departments, and India's Ministries of Defence and External Affairs, operate on longer timelines and are often shielded, though not immune, from the ups and downs arising out of political turnarounds. For example, platforms like the Reciprocal Defence Procurement (RDP), offset clauses, and co-development agreements are more likely to endure and evolve, perhaps with some tweaks, than suffer abrupt reversals. The 2+2 dialogue has endured many political hiccups. The MEA's statement — "This partnership has weathered several transitions and challenges" — reflects the long-term nature of the relationship. India's recent strategic decisions suggest a pragmatic reading of this duality. While defence cooperation with the US has accelerated, India continues to diversify its military suppliers, including France (Rafale jets), Israel (missile defence), and Russia (S-400 systems).

This hedging reflects India's understanding that a strategic partnership does not mean strategic dependence. The refusal to proceed with the proposed F-35 acquisition, despite its symbolic value, signals India's intent to avoid politically sensitive purchases that may jeopardise its diplomatic flexibility or trigger regional escalations. At the same time, India could astutely use its defence commitments as a bargaining tool. By advertising possible future purchases — from Predator drones and GE-414 engines to naval platforms — as strategic inducements, India has levers to secure tariff concessions, obtain market access, and reduce regulatory barriers in trade negotiations with the US. The trade-off is clear. Defence offsets, which require US firms to invest a portion of contract value in India, can be portrayed domestically in the US as job-creating and strategically aligned, softening opposition to trade waivers or procurement reciprocity. Yet this 'carrot' strategy can only go so far. US negotiators remain dissatisfied with India's high tariffs on agriculture, digital localisation policies, and resistance to GM crops, which are seen as barriers to open trade. Even if India were to boost its defence purchases from the US, these unresolved economic grievances will persist. More critically, India's energy and defence ties with Russia and its refusal to adhere to US-driven sanctions create minefields that defence collaboration alone may not be able to navigate.

### Geopolitical forces beyond New Delhi's control are at play in Trump's approach to India

US President Donald Trump reigned in trade tensions with India on 30 July, accusing it of imposing "far too high" tariffs and threatening a 25 per cent levy starting 1 August. Despite ongoing efforts toward a mini trade deal and a \$500 billion trade target by 2030, Trump's obsession with trade reciprocity and a "messianic" zeal to correct any trade imbalance overnight with partner countries, looms large over the relationship. He also criticised India's defense and oil ties with Russia, hinting at potential penalties. Still, in typical Trump fashion, he later softened his stance, saying India was now willing to reduce tariffs "very substantially," adding, "We're talking to India now — we'll see what happens." That Trump is displeased with a number of allies and partners has almost become a constant fixture in his second term, and India does not enjoy any special privilege. So, there are two ways of looking at the current spat and the low point in the India-US partnership. First, there is a broader geopol-

itics reshaping Trump's almost pretzelian foreign policy twists. Second, a painful road awaits as Washington-New Delhi negotiations over a mini trade deal whose terms and conditions will remain uncertain, and even if agreed upon, will remain largely ad hoc and piecemeal. Behind Trump's fresh round of rants and wrath aimed at India lies a broader geopolitical curve in Trump's foreign and national security policy. In Trump's first as well second terms, his positive vibe towards President Vladimir Putin of Russia, otherwise an eyesore for America's western allies, has been relatively more welcomed in India. Compared to the Biden presidency, which was crystal clear on confronting Russia and supporting Ukraine sans conditions, the Trump presidency was more forthcoming on talking to Moscow and more circumscribed in its support for Ukraine. However, of late, amid dwindling prospects of a peace deal with Putin, Trump has taken a U-turn in his approach to the Russia-Ukraine war.

## Do Chola kings represent a culturally united Hindu India? It's a modern fantasy

History has rarely been away from the headlines over the last few weeks, whether through the rewriting of NCERT textbooks or PM Modi's tribute to the Chola dynasty of medieval South India. The coming month will see the millennial celebrations of the 11th-century Chola emperor Rajendra I, specifically of his conquests in Southeast Asia. There is a loud chorus, at least on social media, that the Cholas—and South India in general—haven't gotten their due in the national historical imagina-

tion. But there's more going on than meets the eye. The fact is that celebrating the conquests of the Cholas misses the woods for the trees. Rather than encourage a deeper understanding of regional histories, we are instead forcing a remarkable medieval society into today's culture wars. To understand the recent political bonanza about the Cholas, first we need to understand what they've left behind—and the many ways in which we've understood this over the decades. Most of what we

know about the Cholas derives from donative inscriptions that adorn the walls of medieval Tamil temples. Interestingly, most Chola-period donative inscriptions were not commissioned by the Chola court, but a broad, shifting spectrum of Tamil-speaking society.

Through these inscriptions, we can see broad social trends. As historians Noboru Karashima, Y Subbarayalu, and James Heitzman have shown, most temple affairs—and, by extension, village affairs—

depended on local collectives, rather than royal officials. These might be collectives of Vellala cultivator families, or Brahmin landlords, or merchants. These collectives, as we'll see soon, were not mute recipients of royal commandments. Temple donors were fairly diverse in the early 10th century (when the Chola dynasty was rising), sometimes including shepherds and washer-people. Over time, temple activities were steadily taken over by men of elite martial or landed backgrounds, often linked to the Chola court.

### Trump tariff forces India to shed illusion. Stop conflating status with power

India now faces what can be best described as the Trump pill — a bracing dose of transactional geopolitics and neo-mercantilist tariffs that upset the diplomatic comfort of the past decade. With sweeping 25 per cent tariffs targeting Indian exports, our longstanding belief in strategic autonomy and global goodwill is being challenged by the brutal arithmetic of trade imbalances and national interests. This isn't just a policy shift; it's a call to recalibrate how India positions itself economically and diplomatically in a world now shaped by profit-first diplomacy. The newly announced tariffs by the Trump administration pose a direct threat to India's export competitiveness. Sectors such as electronics, smartphones, automobile parts, and gemstones will be hit hardest. Comparatively, Vietnam faces only 20 per cent tariffs, and economies like Indonesia enjoy relatively lighter penalties. While pharmaceutical products, semiconductors, and critical rare earths remain exempt for now, there is a growing uncertainty about India's continued access to these carve-outs, particularly as Trump intensifies his focus on bilateral trade "wins." Further compounding this threat is the ambiguity around secondary sanctions tied to India's oil imports from Russia. A punitive surcharge, conveyed repeatedly but not yet formalised, could be crippling. As we shall see, this issue is not merely economic — it strikes at the heart of India's strategic alignment. The stakes for India are high. Without a trade deal with the United States, economic ramifications could be severe. Capital flows may dry up, leading to a weakening rupee. Stock markets are already reflecting investor nervousness, and early estimates suggest India's GDP could suffer a 0.2–0.5 per cent contraction. Unlike Brazil,

which enjoys a trade surplus with the US, or China, which retains leverage through its monopoly over rare earth elements, India finds itself in a vulnerable middle. India has little immediate leverage in trade. Brazil, for example, will enjoy strategic concessions from Washington, thanks to the US having a trade surplus with it. China, with its iron grip over rare earth supplies, forced the US to capitulate during past confrontations. Meanwhile, Trump has succeeded in strong-arming traditional allies. He finalised a trade agreement with the EU after imposing 25 per cent tariffs on select sectors and billions of dollars promised in investment. He has also coaxed Japan into signing a deal with 15 per cent tariffs and \$550 billion in investments. Likewise, he has already finalised a deal with Indonesia and Vietnam, both with lesser tariffs than India's. With India, however, talks have hit roadblocks — both economic and geopolitical. The US' objections to India's protectionism in agriculture and dairy are longstanding. But the deeper threat comes from Washington's insistence on penalising Indian oil imports from Russia. Trump's sudden support for the Blumenthal-Graham bill, threatening secondary sanctions on nations buying discounted Russian crude, marks a shift. Initially dismissed due to Trump's own ambivalence toward Ukraine and open admiration for Vladimir Putin, the bill has reemerged as Trump pivots back toward Europe, leaving India exposed. India's rise on the global stage in the past decade owed much to its favorable geopolitical moment. As the Indo-Pacific became the centre of global strategic focus, India was cast as a vital counterweight to China. Western powers embraced New Delhi's role, drawn by its demographic strength, huge market, and democratic credentials.

## The work being done by the Municipality when life is disrupted due to cold is commendable



Bhadohi

Due to the cold wave the wrath of cold is taking a heavy toll on the people as well as the animals and birds while the life has become disrupted. Especially for the lower class, laborers and weavers, cold is no less than a divine disaster. In such a difficult situation, an order was issued by Municipal Corporation Bhadohi Chairman Nargis that as long as the cold continues, arrangements for bonfires should con-

tinue at every intersection. If any kind of negligence is done in this, it will not be forgivable. In compliance with the guidelines, the municipality has made arrangements for bonfires at the city Indramil Square, Rajpura Square, Lippan Tiraha, Azimullah Square, Station Road, Payal Talkies, Bharat Tiraha, Swami Vivekananda Square, New Bazaar, Civil Line, National Inter College Square etc. Chatti intersections so that the poor, weavers along with

the passersby can benefit from the bonfire. Workers can be protected from cold. Chairman Nargis Athar told the people that the cold has increased a lot and in such a situation, they should come out of the house only if there is very important work. Especially when going out in the morning and evening, be safe by covering your body completely. The residents of the city praised Chairman Nargis Athar for arranging the bonfire.

## Bhadohi

With the aim of providing relief to the needy in view of the severe cold and cold wave, a commendable work of distribution of two thousand blankets was done in the city area with the courtesy of Uttar Pradesh Industry Trade Delegation, Gopiganj. Blankets were distributed by Additional District Magistrate Kunwar Virendra Maurya in the program organized under this social and humanitarian initiative. On this occasion, City President Shrikant Jaiswal said that this noble work has been accomplished with the cooperation and participation of the traders of Gopiganj Business Board. He said that providing relief from cold to the poor, helpless, deprived and destitute sections of the society is the priority of the trade board and such public welfare works will be carried out continuously in future also. Additional District Magistrate

## Blankets distributed among the poor, helpless and needy by Gopiganj Trade Board



Kunwar Virendra Maurya highly praised this humanitarian and exemplary work being done by the Uttar Pradesh Industry Trade Delegation Gopiganj during the cold season. He said that such efforts by social organizations, institutions and social workers strengthen the work of government and administration. He also appealed to other organizations and social workers to come forward and help the needy and participate in charitable works. In order to carry out the blanket distribution in an organized and transparent manner, coupons were distributed to the eligible beneficiaries in

advance, so that assistance could be provided only to the truly needy. During the program, blankets were distributed while maintaining peace and order, due to which a feeling of satisfaction and relief was seen among the beneficiaries. On this occasion, Chairman Ghanshyam Das Gupta, senior carpet exporter Brijesh Gupta, Priyanka Jaiswal, trade board officials, members, local public representatives and a large number of beneficiaries were present. The successful organization of the program further strengthened the feeling of social harmony and cooperation in the city area.

## Bhadohi Bar Association President Mahendra Bind was given a grand welcome in Municipality Bhadohi



Bhadohi

Mahendra Bind Advocate has achieved a historic victory in the Bhadohi Bar Association elections. Newly elected President Mahendra Bind reached Municipal Council Bhadohi on Tuesday, where the Municipal President husband Dr. Mohd. Athar Ansari and all the councilors gave a grand welcome and congratulations by garlanding each other and feeding each other sweets. During this, Dr. Mohd. Athar Ansari said that the election of Mahendra Bind as the President of Bhadohi Bar Association is a big deal. Said Mahendra Bind is a sharp advocate. After his election as president, the issue of advocate interests will rise rapidly. The harassment that the advocates faced till now will stop. Dr. Mohd. Athar Ansari gave a grand welcome to Mahendra Bind by garlanding him with flowers on his election as the President of Bhadohi Bar Association. He also congratulated him and said that if he ever needs me, he is always ready to support him. At the same time, President Advocate Mahendra Bind also gave credit to Dr. Mohd. Athar Ansari for the victory by garlanding him with flowers and said that Mr. Ansari's affection and love has always been with us and will remain so. On this occasion, senior councilors Haseeb Khan, Anas Ansari, Abrar Ansari, Lal Mohammad Khan, Lolarkh Saroj, Pradeep Yadav, Arvind Maurya, Israr Ansari, Girdhari Jaiswal, Seraj Ansari, Shafiq Raine, Ashraf Ali, Mahendra Yadav, Ansar Siddiqui, Mintu, Pintu etc. were present.

## Cyber Crime Gang Busted, 8 Interstate Accused Arrested

## Barabanki

Police have busted an organized interstate cyber crime gang active in the district and arrested eight notorious accused. In a joint operation by the Cyber Police Station, SWAT team, Surveillance unit and Kotwali Nagar Police, officials recovered 12 mobile phones, one laptop, one tablet and several forged documents including fake agreements and joining letters from the accused. The action was carried out on the directions of Superintendent of Police, Barabanki, Arpit Vijayvargiya. Among the arrested accused, Ankit Kataria (son of Hukum Singh), Deepak Tiwari (son of Rampravesh Tiwari) and Imran Salim (son of Salim Ahmed)



have been identified as the main operators of the gang with Ankit Kataria described by police as the mastermind. (Cyber Network Active Since 2024)

Addressing the media on Tuesday, SP Arpit Vijayvargiya

stated that Ankit Kataria, a resident of village Bannauli in Baghpat district, had come to Barabanki about two years ago. Since 2024, he along with his associates, had established a well-organized cyber fraud network.

The gang used online gaming call centers, OLX, Facebook and Instagram to post fake advertisements related to jobs, investments and betting. (Digital Arrest and Blackmailing Racket)

The accused would impersonate police officers and falsely accuse victims of watching obscene videos, threaten them with "digital arrest" and legal action and extort large sums of money. They also cheated people by luring them with promises of well-paying jobs and high returns on investments in companies. So far, the gang is estimated to have defrauded victims of more than ₹5 to ₹7 lakh.

## (Meenakshi Handled Calling Operations)

Among the arrested accused, Meenakshi Verma, daughter of Raj Singh Verma and a resident of Barabanki district, was responsible for handling calls. According to police, Meenakshi was a close female associate of the main accused

Ankit Kataria and discussions regarding their marriage were also underway.

## (Network Spread Across Multiple States)

Investigations have revealed that money obtained through cyber fraud was transferred into the accused persons' bank accounts from several states, including Delhi, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra. Multiple complaints against these accounts were found registered on the NCRB and Coordination Portal. Police stated that some other associates of the gang have already been arrested earlier in different districts. In this case, Kotwali Nagar Police is now actively searching for other members linked to the gang.

## Grand Yajna on New Year, Gaurikant Dixit in Political Discussions

## Barabanki

On the occasion of the New Year, a Gayatri Mahayajna and a grand community feast (Bhandara) will be organized at the Matam Lal Temple Premises in village Amoli Kala. The event is being organized by social worker and BJP leader Gaurikant Dixit and is being widely viewed as part of his expanding public outreach at the local level. The program will be held on January 1 from 10 a.m. with Vedic chants and rituals. Locals believe that the event is not just a religious ceremony, but also a symbol of social participation and community engagement. People in the area say that ever since Gaurikant Dixit became more active in the region, he has taken part enthusiastically



cally in cultural events, sports competitions and various social programs. He has also played a significant role in supporting local talent through several major competitions and events. His steadily increasing activity and wide public connect have once again fueled political discussions regarding the upcoming Assembly elections. The public is

now beginning to see him not merely as an event organizer or social worker, but as a potential public representative. According to political observers, conveying a positive message through religious and social programs and maintaining direct communication with the people can play a crucial role in shaping electoral equations in the coming elections.

## Ensure Swift Resolution of Entrepreneurs' Issues: District Magistrate

## Barabanki

A joint meeting of the District Udyog Bandhu, District Shram Bandhu and Vanijya Bandhu committees was held at the Collectorate Auditorium under the chairmanship of District Magistrate Shashank Tripathi. The DM emphasized that in order to accelerate industrial and commercial activities in the district, resolving the problems of entrepreneurs and traders must be accorded top priority. He directed officials to ensure time-bound, transparent and quality disposal of applications received through the Nivesh Mitra portal and other platforms, stressing swift action in line with the principles of Ease of Doing Business. During the meeting, the progress of various development works in the UPSIDC industrial area on Kursi



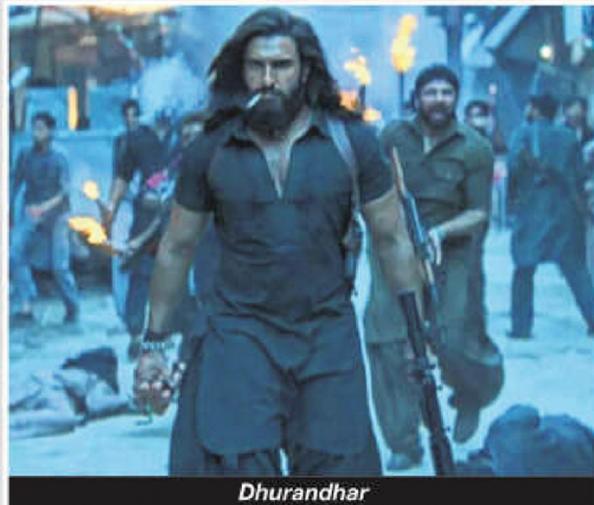
Road was reviewed, including the construction of a fire station and non-residential buildings, relocation of shopkeepers, construction of drains and remaining roads, establishment of a sewage treatment plant, electrical works at the main entrance gate and administrative building and beautification works. Discussions were also held on road construction and drainage (nala) works in the Mati industrial area. The Divisional Chairman of the Indian Industries Association (IIA), Rajesh Kumar Tiwari raised the issue of a pending case related to a 5 KVA electricity connection for setting up an industrial unit in village Bahrauli, Tehsil Fatehpur, which had been stalled due to objections from the Forest Department. On the DM directions, the issue was resolved the same day, for which the Chairman expressed his gratitude. During the Vanijya Bandhu committee meeting, the DM instructed that weekly markets should be operated only at designated

locations to prevent traffic congestion. The Municipal Council and the Electricity Department were directed to identify and promptly organize or relocate hanging and disorganized electric wires at major intersections and roads, as well as electricity poles located in the middle of roads. Instructions were also issued to all service providers to properly manage dangling wires in residential localities. Taking a strict stance on illegal encroachments, the DM directed the

Executive Officer of the Nawabganj Municipal Council and the Sub-Divisional Magistrate to conduct joint drives to free major intersections and public places from encroachments. Traders were urged to cooperate with the administration in keeping the city clean, well-organized and encroachment-free. Suggestions were also invited from traders regarding traffic management, market regulation and parking arrangements. The meeting was attended by Joint Magistrate/SDM Sirauli Gauspur Tejas K., ASP (North) Vikas Chandra Tripathi, the Deputy Commissioner of Industries, Assistant Labour Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner (Commercial Tax), along with other district-level officers, traders and representatives of entrepreneurs.



Dashavatara



Dhurandhar



Raktabeej 2

# Single-language, massive impact

From *Dhurandhar* to *Raktabeej 2*, here are the top monolingual films that dominated theatres on their own terms

**A**t a time when multilingual releases are often seen as the ultimate marker of success, several monolingual films across languages proved that strong storytelling and cultural rootedness can drive massive box-office numbers on their own. From Gujarat to Bengal, Maharashtra to Punjab, these films became local phenomena, drawing packed theatres and loyal audiences, without relying on nationwide releases.

Hindi cinema saw a content-driven win with *Dhurandhar*,

which continues to perform exceptionally well in global and international markets. Despite not being released in multi-languages, the film's intense narrative, layered performances, flawless casting and gripping subject matter helped it pull audiences to theatres, proving that focused releases can still deliver solid returns.

*Laalo* emerged as a major success in Gujarati cinema, striking a chord with audiences through its emotional depth and relatable storytelling. The film's strong word-of-mouth and cultural connect ensured a steady theatrical run, reaffirming that Gujarati films rooted in local sensibilities continue to thrive at the box office.

In Marathi cinema, *Dashavatara* delivered an impressive theatrical performance. Known for its spiritual and philosophical undertones, the film resonated deeply with Marathi-speaking audiences, turning into a box-office success driven by faith, tradition, and strong storytelling rather than large-scale marketing.

Bengali blockbuster *Raktabeej 2* by Nandita Roy and Shiboprosad Mukherjee, further strengthened

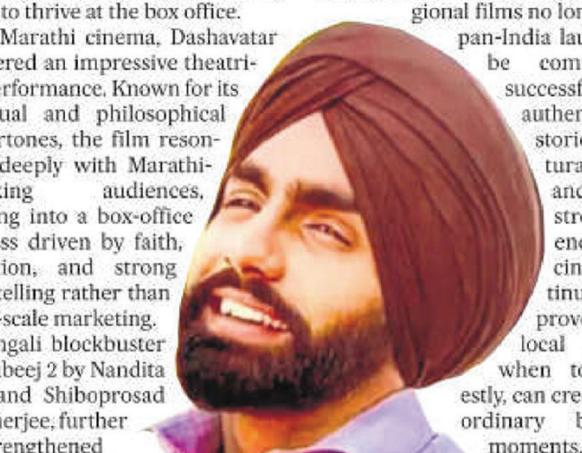
this trend. The film dominated the West Bengal box office with packed houses and sustained collections, showcasing how regional political thrillers can command massive audience interest when rooted in local realities and strong performances.

Punjabi cinema added to the list with the National-award winning, *Godday Godday Cha 2*, which enjoyed a robust theatrical run driven by humour, cultural familiarity, and franchise goodwill. Its success once again highlighted the loyal audience base Punjabi films enjoy within their core markets.

Together, these films underline a crucial shift in Indian cinema, regional films no longer need pan-India launches to be commercially successful. With authentic stories, cultural resonance, and strong audience loyalty, cinema continues to prove that local stories, when told honestly, can create extraordinary box-office moments.



Laalo



Godday Godday Cha 2

## Actress Nandini CM commits suicide



**K**annada and Tamil television actor Nandini CM, 34, died by suicide at her residence in Bengaluru, sending shockwaves across the television fraternity. Her untimely death has sparked controversies within the industry and among viewers, as colleagues and fans struggle to come to terms with the loss.

At the time of her passing, Nandini was playing the lead role in *Gowri*, portraying a demanding dual character - Kanaka and Durga.

Originally from Kottur, Nandini had been living in Bengaluru and had built a steady career in television. She appeared in several well-known Kannada serials in supporting roles, including *Jeeva Hoovagide*, *Sangharsha*, *Madhumagalu*, and *Neenade Na*.

Over the years, she earned a reputation as a committed performer and was respected within the Kannada entertainment industry.

Nandini CM's death has left the television community grieving the loss of a talented actor whose work connected with audiences. As the investigation continues, more clarity is awaited from the authorities.

Meanwhile, attention has turned to Nandini's re-

## Mini Mathur supports delivery workers' strike

Mini Mathur voiced her support for the nationwide strike called by delivery workers on New Year's Eve, lending her voice to growing concerns around working conditions



**A**ctor, television host and former MTV VJ Mini Mathur has voiced her support for the nationwide strike called by delivery workers on New Year's Eve, lending her voice to growing concerns around working conditions in India's gig economy.

Taking to her Instagram stories on Tuesday (December 30), Mini backed the move by delivery workers and urged users to show empathy towards those working under intense pressure.

"Truly in support of this strike. We need more human practices. Transferring your lack of planning and pressure on to an exhausted worker who rushes on

your behalf is unfair & unkind. Their safety and health matter. Go buy your own 10 minute emergency stuff bros," she wrote.

The strike has been called by the Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers to highlight the challenges faced by delivery personnel despite long hours and physically demanding work.

According to the union, workers continue to struggle with low pay, high work pressure, job insecurity, safety risks, and physical and mental health issues, along with the absence of adequate legal protection. Delivery partners associated with major platforms such as Zomato, Swiggy, Blinkit, Zepto and Amazon are expected to participate in the strike on December 31. The timing of the protest is significant, as New Year's Eve traditionally sees one of the highest order volumes of the year.



Veer Pahariya

## PETA slams Kim Kardashian

Kim Kardashian recently gifted her four children, North, Saint, Chicago and Psalm, their own puppies for Christmas



**A**merican media personality, actress, and entrepreneur Kim Kardashian recently gifted her four children, North, 12, Saint, 10, Chicago, 7, and Psalm, 6, their own puppies for Christmas. The Keeping Up With the Kardashians star also shared a photo of the four puppies cuddled together on her Instagram Stories, writing, "Each kid got a puppy."

However, Kim has now been called out by PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) for gifting puppies to her children. In a statement shared with PEOPLE on Sunday, Dec. 28, PETA founder Ingrid Newkirk lashed out at Kim and said, "Puppies are not plushies, and it's a damn shame that Kim missed the chance to be a spokesperson for shelter pups and instead is being rightly slammed on social media for that."

Further, Newkirk said that, just like Kim, her sister Khloe Kardashian also gifted a dog to her family

for Christmas, urging them to "call PETA or a local shelter the next time" they want to add another dog to their family.

"(They can) try to make some amends now by sending their kids to volunteer at a local shelter or paying for a local shelter adopt-a-thon or at least one spay day to help stop the growing homeless puppy crisis," the PETA founder said.

Kim Kardashian, who has been studying law for the last six years, revealed that she failed her California bar exam, which she took on July 29 and July 30.

The SKIMS founder wrote on her Instagram story, "Well...I'm not a lawyer yet, I just play a very well-dressed one on TV. Six years into this law journey, and I'm still all in until I pass the bar. No shortcuts, no giving up - just more studying and even more determination. Thank you to everyone who has supported and encouraged me along the way so far. Failing short isn't failure - it's fuel. I was so close to passing the exam and that only motivated me even more. Let's go!"



AP Dhillon with Tara Sutaria

## Tara Sutaria hits back

Actress Tara Sutaria and boyfriend Veer Pahariya sparked social media chatter after a viral clip from singer AP Dhillon's December 26 Mumbai concert showed Veer looking uncomfortable as Tara appeared flirty with AP during *Thodi Si Daaru* performance

hitting back at them and calling Veer's viral clip an example of 'clever editing.' Sharing a video from the show, the actress wrote, "PS - False narratives, 'clever editing' and paid PR campaigns by folks won't and don't shake us up! In the end, love and the truth always wins. So the joke's on the bullies."

Veer responded in the comments section to his viral concert clip. He wrote, "Not to mention the reaction footage of me was taken during another song not even *Thodi Si Daaru*. Jokers."

Tara also wrote in the caption, "Loud and proud and in it together!!! @apdhillon FAV!!! What a night! Thank you Mumbai for SO much love for our song and here's to more music and memories together."



Veer Pahariya

## Briefs

BEIJING

## Mediated on India-Pak issue: China

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yibo on Tuesday said "tensions between India and Pakistan" were among the list of hotspot issues "mediated" by China this year. "This year, local wars and cross-border conflicts flared up more often than at any time since the end of WWII. Geopolitical turbulence continued to spread", Wang said, speaking at the Symposium on the International Situation and China's Foreign Relations in Beijing.

LONDON

## Power snag: Eurostar stops trains

Power problems and a stuck train hit rail traffic flowing through the undersea tunnel connecting the UK to continental Europe with passenger train operator Eurostar indefinitely suspending its services during the busy holiday period. Passengers were left scrambling on Tuesday to find alternatives after the operator postponed all train travel between London, Paris, Amsterdam and Brussels. The Channel Tunnel's operator, Eurotunnel, said the power supply problem started in part of the tunnel.

UNITED NATIONS

## UN chief's NY message in Hindi, Urdu

In a first, UN chief has issued his New Year's message for the year 2026 in Hindi, among other languages, calling on world leaders to invest in development, not destruction. Antonio Guterres' New Year message has been issued in 11 languages, including in the six official UN languages of Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish as well as Hindi and Urdu. His video message on the occasion has been issued with Hindi subtitles as well.

## BEGUM ZIA | Bangladesh's first woman PM will be remembered for restoration of democracy

# Unplanned political plunge to PM post

DHAKA

Khaleda Zia, Bangladesh's first woman prime minister and one of the most influential leaders in the country's history, died on Tuesday in Dhaka after a prolonged illness. She was 80.

Born on August 15, 1946, in Dinajpur district in undivided India, Khaleda Zia was the daughter of Taiyaba and Iskandar Majumdar. Her family later migrated from Jalpaiguri to East Pakistan after Partition. As a teenager, she married Ziaur Rahman, a young army officer who emerged as a key figure in Bangladesh's 1971 independence struggle and later became president in 1977.

Until the age of 35, Zia lived largely outside public life, known mainly as the wife of a general and later First Lady. Her entry into politics was unplanned and followed the assassination of her husband in an abortive army coup in May 1981. Widowed suddenly, she was drawn into the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP),



Bangladeshis mourn the demise of BNP leader Khaleda Zia on Tuesday (L); BNP workers and supporters offer prayers for the departed leader

founded by Ziaur Rahman in 1978.

She formally joined the BNP in January 1982, the same year military ruler H M Ershad seized power. Zia rose rapidly within the party, becoming its chairperson in 1984, a position she retained until her death. After the fall of the Ershad regime in 1990, elections were held under a caretaker government. The BNP won a surprise victory in February

1991, and Zia became Bangladesh's first woman prime minister and the second elected woman leader in the Muslim world after Benazir Bhutto. Her government restored the parliamentary system and introduced key reforms, including free and compulsory primary education.

Zia served three terms as prime minister—1991–1996, briefly in 1996, and again from 2001 to 2006.



BNP workers and supporters offer prayers for the departed leader

## Yunus mourns

**Dhaka:** Bangladesh interim government Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus on Tuesday said the nation has lost one of its great guardians with the passing of Zia, The Daily Star newspaper reported. "I am deeply shocked and saddened by her death," he said.

## Tributes pour in

**Dhaka/Beijing:** Countries across the globe, including the US, China on Tuesday recalled Khaleda Zia's decades-long role in shaping Bangladesh's politics. In a condolence message, Chinese Premier Li Qiang described Zia as a "veteran politician and an 'old friend' of the Chinese people who played an important role in advancing relations

## One more Hindu man shot dead in Bangladesh

DHAKA

An Ansar member named Bajendra Biswas (40) was killed after being shot by a colleague in Bhaluka upazila of Mymensingh. The accused Ansar member, Noman Mia, has been arrested, RTV Online reported.

"Yes, the incident is confirmed", Monindra Nath, Acting Secretary General of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council told ANI over the phone.

"The incident took place on Monday (29 December) at around 6:30 pm at Sultana Sweaters Limited factory in the Mehrabari area of the upazila", the report said.

"According to police and local sources, at the time of the incident, Ansar members Noman Mia and Bajendra Das were sitting together. During that time, a shot was fired from the shotgun in Noman Mia's possession, seriously injuring Bajendra Das in his left thigh", the report said.

Later, his colleagues took him to the Upazila Health Complex, where the on-duty doctor declared him dead.

## Saudi hits Yemen port over weapons

DUBAI



KYIV

Saudi Arabia bombed Yemen's port city of Mukalla on Tuesday after a weapons shipment from the United Arab Emirates arrived for separatist forces in the war-torn country, and warned that it viewed Emirati actions as "extremely dangerous."

The bombing followed days of tensions over the advance of the separatist forces known as the Southern Transitional Council, which are backed by the Emirates. Despite the warning, the Council and its allies issued a statement supporting the UAE's presence, even as others allied with Saudi Arabia demanded Emirati forces withdraw from Yemen in 24 hours' time.

The UAE separately called for "restraint and wisdom" while disputing Riyadh's allegations against it. It did not say it would withdraw from Yemen as demanded.

The confrontation threatened to open a new front in Yemen's decade-long war, with forces allied against the Iranian-backed Houthis possibly turning their sights on each other in the Arab world's poorest nation long stalked by famine and disease.

President Volodymyr Zelensky has denied allegations by Russia that Ukraine launched a drone attack on one of President Vladimir Putin's residences, and accused Moscow of trying to derail peace talks.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov claimed Kyiv had launched an attack over Sunday night using 91 long-range unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) on Putin's state residence in Russia's northwestern Novgorod region.

Russia said it would now review its position in peace negotiations. It is not yet clear where Putin was at the time of the alleged attack.

## Ukraine denies strike on Putin home, Russia threatens talks

## Modi expresses concern

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday expressed his deep concern over reports regarding the targeting of the residence of the Russian President Vladimir Putin in the Novgorod Region, which Moscow claims had been launched by Ukraine as the conflict between the two nations continues amid peace talks. In a post on X, PM Modi urged all parties to prioritise diplomatic efforts to resolve the ongoing conflict and to avoid any actions that could undermine them.

## Don't like it, says Trump

**Washington:** US President Donald Trump on Monday said Russian President Vladimir Putin told him Ukraine tried to attack Putin's residence in northern Russia. "I don't like it. It's not good," Trump told reporters. "I learned about it from President Putin today. I was very angry about it." "It's a delicate period of time. This is not the right time. It's one thing to be offensive, because they're offensive. It's another thing to attack his house. It's not the right time to do any of that," he said.

## Russia showcases its new N-missile

MOSCOW

Russia's nuclear-capable Oreshnik missile system has entered active service in Belarus. Russia's Defence Ministry said Tuesday, as the US efforts to broker a deal to end the nearly four-year war in Ukraine have entered a pivotal stage.

The ministry released a video showing combat vehicles that are part of the mobile intermediate range ballistic missile system driving across a forest as part of combat training.

The ministry's announcement followed a statement from Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, who said earlier this month that the Oreshnik had arrived in

the country. Lukashenko said that up to 10 such missile systems will be stationed in Belarus.

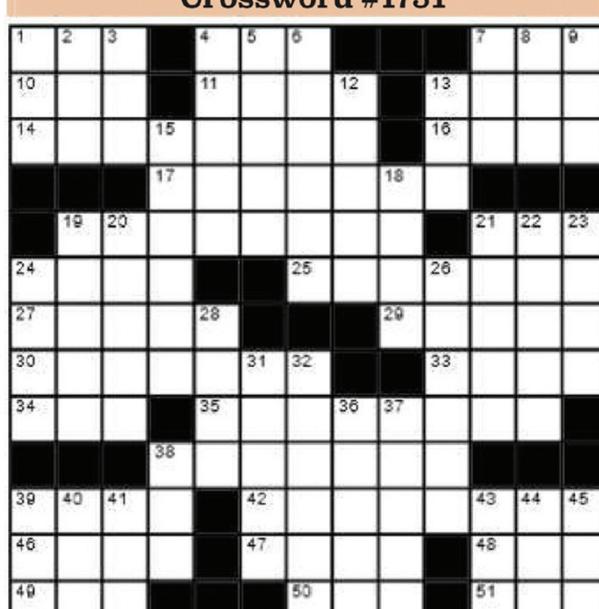
Russian President Vladimir Putin said earlier this month that the Oreshnik would enter combat duty before the year's end. He made the statement at a meeting with top Russian military officers, where he warned that Moscow will seek to extend its gains in Ukraine if Kyiv and its Western allies reject the Kremlin's demands in peace talks.

**KALA GAMANAM**  
Dr S Ainavolu

We, the living, need to have a larger purpose. We utilise the time available for achieving the set goals. Whether it shall happen or not depends on the sincerity of the effort and anugraham. It is said that "shadbhagam manushya yatnam, saptamam daiva chintanam". Thus, six of seven parts we attempt and offer our best efforts. The last and the seventh part is left to the GOD, the Almighty. If the occurrence of it is in our good measure, then the outcome shall manifest; else we miss. The "stipatragya" is one who may take either the achievement or non-achievement of the tried thing as the final good. Only good happens should be the belief. Then any crippling fears do disappear. Having a particular agenda, having a decided timetable, and finally adhering to it in terms of execution shall make us reach the set goals. One day may be the unit for us, and every day well lived shall make the year done so, and it leaves a memorable and fruitful life. We stay blessed.

**Dr. S. Ainavolu is a Mumbai-based teacher of Management and Tradition.**

## Crossword #1731



## Across

1 Comforter or quilt  
4 Dutch commune  
7 de mer or seasickness?  
10 Cry of disgust  
11 Pre-Euro Italian currency  
13 Lure or entice  
14 Interfering types?  
16 Lang Syne : days of long ago?  
17 Gains back  
19 An unmarried woman, an old maid  
21 Debussy heroine  
24 Petty criminal  
25 Loving or cherishing  
27 Held at bay  
29 off : get rid of?  
30 Aural appendage  
33 Small bills  
34 Time To Station, abbr.  
35 Fell like a waterfall?  
38 Winter sport accessory (3-4)  
39 Indian dress  
42 Opulently, outlandishly or profusely  
46 Kind of wildcat  
47 Cut, snicker - "seen" anagram?  
48 Aerospace Industries Assoc.  
49 Affirmative reply  
50 Novelist Rand  
51 Albanian coin

Down

1 Sing wordlessly  
2 A particular period of time  
3 Advanced degree abbr  
4 Talk-show host — DeGeneres  
5 Food plans  
6 Editor's findings of mistakes?  
7 Modular Avionics Unit  
8 Be unwell  
9 Limited, in short  
12 Questioned, inquired or invited  
13 Art graduates, abbr.  
15 Nonsense  
18 Love in Piccadilly Circus?  
19 Small fish  
20 Docks  
21 Tropical vine - "alien" anagram?  
22 Tattooed (informal)  
23 Grows older  
24 Let it stand!  
26 Jonty : One of the best fielders of his time  
28 Drop anchor  
31 Securities; bonds or pledges  
32 Spain of the Spaniards  
36 A flock of birds  
37 Stranger or foreigner  
38 Maximum for the batsman  
39 Wily and cunning  
40 A positive vote  
41 Nucleic acid briefly  
43 Hind. Aeronautics Ltd.  
44 Untruth, fib  
45 Himalayan ox

Down: 1 Hurl, 2 Agre, 3 Phd, 4 Elin, 5 Deltis, 6 Ertalis, 7 MAU, 8 Deltis, 9 Itali, 10 Deltis, 11 Itali, 12 Deltis, 13 Deltis, 14 Deltis, 15 Deltis, 16 Deltis, 17 Deltis, 18 Deltis, 19 Deltis, 20 Deltis, 21 Deltis, 22 Deltis, 23 Deltis, 24 Deltis, 25 Deltis, 26 Deltis, 27 Deltis, 28 Deltis, 29 Deltis, 30 Deltis, 31 Deltis, 32 Deltis, 33 Deltis, 34 Deltis, 35 Deltis, 36 Deltis, 37 Deltis, 38 Deltis, 39 Deltis, 40 Deltis, 41 Deltis, 42 Deltis, 43 Deltis, 44 Deltis, 45 Deltis, 46 Deltis, 47 Deltis, 48 Deltis, 49 Deltis, 50 Deltis, 51 Deltis, 52 Deltis, 53 Deltis, 54 Deltis, 55 Deltis, 56 Deltis, 57 Deltis, 58 Deltis, 59 Deltis, 60 Deltis, 61 Deltis, 62 Deltis, 63 Deltis, 64 Deltis, 65 Deltis, 66 Deltis, 67 Deltis, 68 Deltis, 69 Deltis, 70 Deltis, 71 Deltis, 72 Deltis, 73 Deltis, 74 Deltis, 75 Deltis, 76 Deltis, 77 Deltis, 78 Deltis, 79 Deltis, 80 Deltis, 81 Deltis, 82 Deltis, 83 Deltis, 84 Deltis, 85 Deltis, 86 Deltis, 87 Deltis, 88 Deltis, 89 Deltis, 90 Deltis, 91 Deltis, 92 Deltis, 93 Deltis, 94 Deltis, 95 Deltis, 96 Deltis, 97 Deltis, 98 Deltis, 99 Deltis, 100 Deltis, 101 Deltis, 102 Deltis, 103 Deltis, 104 Deltis, 105 Deltis, 106 Deltis, 107 Deltis, 108 Deltis, 109 Deltis, 110 Deltis, 111 Deltis, 112 Deltis, 113 Deltis, 114 Deltis, 115 Deltis, 116 Deltis, 117 Deltis, 118 Deltis, 119 Deltis, 120 Deltis, 121 Deltis, 122 Deltis, 123 Deltis, 124 Deltis, 125 Deltis, 126 Deltis, 127 Deltis, 128 Deltis, 129 Deltis, 130 Deltis, 131 Deltis, 132 Deltis, 133 Deltis, 134 Deltis, 135 Deltis, 136 Deltis, 137 Deltis, 138 Deltis, 139 Deltis, 140 Deltis, 141 Deltis, 142 Deltis, 143 Deltis, 144 Deltis, 145 Deltis, 146 Deltis, 147 Deltis, 148 Deltis, 149 Deltis, 150 Deltis, 151 Deltis, 152 Deltis, 153 Deltis, 154 Deltis, 155 Deltis, 156 Deltis, 157 Deltis, 158 Deltis, 159 Deltis, 160 Deltis, 161 Deltis, 162 Deltis, 163 Deltis, 164 Deltis, 165 Deltis, 166 Deltis, 167 Deltis, 168 Deltis, 169 Deltis, 170 Deltis, 171 Deltis, 172 Deltis, 173 Deltis, 174 Deltis, 175 Deltis, 176 Deltis, 177 Deltis, 178 Deltis, 179 Deltis, 180 Deltis, 181 Deltis, 182 Deltis, 183 Deltis, 184 Deltis, 185 Deltis, 186 Deltis, 187 Deltis, 188 Deltis, 189 Deltis, 190 Deltis, 191 Deltis, 192 Deltis, 193 Deltis, 194 Deltis, 195 Deltis, 196 Deltis, 197 Deltis, 198 Deltis, 199 Deltis, 200 Deltis, 201 Deltis, 202 Deltis, 203 Deltis, 204 Deltis, 205 Deltis, 206 Deltis, 207 Deltis, 208 Deltis, 209 Deltis, 210 Deltis, 211 Deltis, 212 Deltis, 213 Deltis, 214 Deltis, 215 Deltis, 216 Deltis, 217 Deltis, 218 Deltis, 219 Deltis, 220 Deltis, 221 Deltis, 222 Deltis, 223 Deltis, 224 Deltis, 225 Deltis, 226 Deltis, 227 Deltis, 228 Deltis, 229 Deltis, 230 Deltis, 231 Deltis, 232 Deltis, 233 Deltis, 234 Deltis, 235 Deltis, 236 Deltis, 237 Deltis, 238 Deltis, 239 Deltis, 240 Deltis, 241 Deltis, 242 Deltis, 243 Deltis, 244 Deltis, 245 Deltis, 246 Deltis, 247 Deltis, 248 Deltis, 249 Deltis, 250 Deltis, 251 Deltis, 252 Deltis, 253 Deltis, 254 Deltis, 255 Deltis, 256 Deltis, 257 Deltis, 258 Deltis, 259 Deltis, 260 Deltis, 261 Deltis, 262 Deltis, 263 Deltis, 264 Deltis, 265 Deltis, 266 Deltis, 267 Deltis, 268 Deltis, 269 Deltis, 270 Deltis, 271 Deltis, 272 Deltis, 273 Deltis, 274 Deltis, 275 Deltis, 276 Deltis, 277 Deltis, 278 Deltis, 279 Deltis, 280 Deltis, 281 Deltis, 282 Deltis, 283 Deltis, 284 Deltis, 285 Deltis, 286 Deltis, 287 Deltis, 288 Deltis, 289 Deltis, 290 Deltis, 291 Deltis, 292 Deltis, 293 Deltis, 294 Deltis, 295 Deltis, 296 Deltis, 297 Deltis, 298 Deltis, 299 Deltis, 300 Deltis, 301 Deltis, 302 Deltis, 303 Deltis, 304 Deltis, 305 Deltis, 306 Deltis, 307 Deltis, 308 Deltis, 309 Deltis, 310 Deltis, 311 Deltis, 312 Deltis, 313 Deltis, 314 Deltis, 315 Deltis, 316 Deltis, 317 Deltis, 318 Deltis, 319 Deltis, 320 Deltis, 321 Deltis, 322 Deltis, 323 Deltis, 324 Deltis, 325 Deltis, 326 Deltis, 327 Deltis, 328 Deltis, 329 Deltis, 330 Deltis, 331 Deltis, 332 Deltis, 333 Deltis, 334 Deltis, 335 Deltis, 336 Deltis, 337 Deltis, 338 Deltis, 339 Deltis, 340 Deltis, 341 Deltis, 342 Deltis, 343 Deltis, 344 Deltis, 345 Deltis, 346 Deltis, 347 Deltis, 348 Deltis, 349 Deltis, 350 Deltis, 351 Deltis, 352 Deltis, 353 Deltis, 354 Deltis, 355 Deltis, 356 Deltis, 357 Deltis, 358 Deltis, 359 Deltis, 360 Deltis, 361 Deltis, 362 Deltis, 363 Deltis, 364 Delt

## Briefs

MUMBAI  
Perry,  
Sutherland opt  
out of WPL



Australian all-rounders Elyse Perry of Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Annabel Sutherland of Delhi Capitals on Tuesday withdrew from next month's Women's Premier League, citing personal reasons. The WPL announced in a release that Indian all-rounder Sayali Satghe will join the RCB as a replacement for Perry, while Australian leg-spinner Alana King has been named by Delhi Capitals as the replacement for Sutherland. "Australian all-rounders Elyse Perry (Royal Challengers Bengaluru) and Annabel Sutherland (Delhi Capitals) have withdrawn from the upcoming edition of the league due to personal reasons," WPL stated in a release. "RCB have named Sayali Satghe as a replacement for Perry."

LONDON  
Isa Guha  
honoured  
with MBE



Former cricketer Isa Guha, the first woman of South Asian descent to appear for England in any sport, was awarded an MBE in the King's New Year's Honours for services to inclusivity and cricket. A two-time World Cup winner, Guha played eight women's Tests, 83 ODIs and 22 T20Is, taking a combined 148 wickets with her bustling medium pace. Guha bid adieu to international cricket on March 9, 2012, the same day when former Indian skipper Rahul Dravid also retired from top-flight cricket. Guha was just 26 when she decided to end her playing career to focus on a life outside cricket. But not before she played a key role in England's wins.

LAHORE  
PCB parts  
ways with  
Mahmood



Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has parted ways with the national Test team head coach Azhar Mahmood three months before the expiry of his contract, according to sources. The

## Gardner believes Australia best team in the world

Star all-rounder feels setbacks exposed the team to pressure



Star all-rounder Ashleigh Gardner believes Australia remain the "best team in the world" despite no longer being the reigning T20 or ODI champions, and is confident they will bounce back against India when the two teams renew their rivalry in February.

Gardner said Australia's setbacks at the T20 and ODI World Cups exposed the team to pressure it is not accustomed to.

"We've certainly been put under pressure recently. But I can still sit here confidently saying that we're the best team in the world," Gardner told cricket.com.au.

Australia will host the newly-crowned 50-over world champions India for a full series comprising three T20 Internationals, as many ODIs and a Test during February and March next year.

"India's going to come across with a lot of confidence, as they should. They've obviously played some really good cricket recently," Gardner said.

"They challenged us in the ODI series before the World Cup and then had the upper hand in that semi-final."

Gardner said familiarity with home conditions would work in Australia's favour but acknowledged India's growing threat.

"They're also coming over to our conditions, which we know better than them. If they do challenge us, we know what to do in those moments as well."

The series will be the first

meeting between the two sides since India's semifinal win over Australia in last month's ODI World Cup, which ended Australia's title defence.

"Over the last 12 to 18 months, we've only lost about two games, and I think the two games that we lost were both in semi-finals.

"It kind of shows the consistency of the group. It's just about putting those pieces together to hopefully win those trophies," she added.

Australia were also eliminated at the semifinal stage of the 2024 T20 World Cup, losing a low-scoring contest to South Africa.

For the large part of her knock, Harmanpreet kept losing partners which also dented India's hopes for a bigger total but with Amanjot Kaur (21) was equally important.

For the large part of her knock, Harmanpreet kept losing partners which also dented India's hopes for a bigger total but with Amanjot, the Indian skipper ensured her bowlers had a

WT20I SERIES | Harmanpreet's 68 and disciplined bowlers help win by 15 runs

## Clinical India make it 5-0

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Harmanpreet Kaur, Arundhati Reddy starred with the bat while the bowlers put up a disciplined effort as India Women completed a clinical 5-0 whitewash of Sri Lanka Women beating the visitors by 15 runs in the fifth and final T20I in Thiruvananthapuram, here on Tuesday.

Chasing a competitive 176 for a consolation victory, Sri Lanka struggled to keep up with the asking rate wilting under relentless pressure from the Indian bowlers to be restricted to 160/7 in 20 overs.

All six Indian bowlers used claimed a wicket apiece apart from the sole run out of Kaushini Nuthyngana.

Earlier, a resolute knock from skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (68) and a late assault from Arundhati Reddy (27 not out) took India to a competitive 175 for seven against Sri Lanka in the fifth and final women's T20I, here on Tuesday.

India, aiming for a 5-0 whitewash to end a successful year, were left tottering at 77 for five after 10 overs, but Harmanpreet stood tall with her first impactful knock of the series.

Later, Arundhati smacked four fours and a six to make a vital 11-ball 27 not out to push the hosts past the 150-mark.

Harmanpreet struck nine fours and a six in her 43-balls knock and dazzled with some powerful hits on both sides of the wicket, while her 61-run sixth wicket stand with Shafali Mandhana was rested from this match. Coming off three consecutive fifties, Shafali (5) looked to attack from the beginning but she was caught at long-on by Imesha Dulani off Namisha Meepage in the second over.

Having hit a couple of fours in her maiden outing, Kamalini (12) missed connecting on an attempted sweep off Kavisha Dilhari (2/11) and was pinned in front,



India's captain Harmanpreet Kaur plays a shot during the fifth T20I in Thiruvananthapuram.

PTI

### Scoreboard

**India:** S Verma c Dulani b Meepage 5, G Kamalini lbw Dilhari 6, H Deol b Sewwandi 13, H Kaur b Dilhari 68, R Ghosh c Nuthyngana b Athapaththu 5, D Sharma c Meepage b Athapaththu 7, A Kaur c Dilhari b Sewwandi 21, A Reddy (not out) 27, S Rana (not out) 8. **Extras:** 9 (W-8, NB-1). **Total:** (For 7 wkt, 20 overs) 175. **Fall of wickets:** 1-5, 2-27, 3-41, 4-64, 5-77, 6-138, 7-142. **Bowling:** M Madara 4-0-37-0, N Meepage 3-0-25-1, K Dilhari 2-0-11-2, I Ranaweera 4-0-39-0, R Sewwandi 4-0-42-2, C Athapaththu 3-0-

21-2.

**Sri Lanka:** H Perera b S Charani 65, C Athapaththu c Sharma b Reddy 2, I Dulani c S Verma b AB Kaur 50, N Silva lbw Sharma 3, K Dilhari b V Sharma 5, H Samarawickrama c Deol b Rana 8, K Nuthyngana (run out) 1, R Sewwandi (not out) 14, M Madara (not out) 5. **Extras:** 9 (B-4, W-3). **Total:** (For 7 wkt, 20 overs) 160. **Fall of wickets:** 1-7, 2-86, 3-100, 4-107, 5-132, 6-140, 7-140. **Bowling:** D Sharma 4-0-28-1, A Reddy 2-0-16-1, S Rana 4-0-31-1, V Sharma 4-0-33-1, S Charani 4-0-31-1, A Kaur 2-0-17-1

as an attempt to overturn the decision through DRS proved futile.

In need of a partnership, India's hopes were placed on Harleen Deol (13) and Harmanpreet. But having received one lifeline through

a dropped catch, Harleen went for a big heave across the line off Rashmika Sewwandi, only to get an inside edge onto her stumps. The slide persisted for India when Chamari Athapaththu (2/21) snaffled

the fourth wicket of the innings, getting the dangerous Richa Ghosh (5) caught behind to leave India in trouble at 64 for four, and soon 77 for five when Deepthi Sharma (7) also fell to the Lankan captain.

## Archer named in England's provisional squad for T20 WC

Josh Tongue, another pacer, included in the squad



**Squad for T20I series in Sri Lanka:** Harry Brook (Captain), Rehan Ahmed, Tom Banton, Jacob Bethell, Jos Buttler, Brydon Carse, Sam Curran, Liam Dawson, Ben Duckett, Will Jacks, Jamie Overton, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Josh Tongue, Luke Wood.

**Squad for ODI series in Sri Lanka:** Harry Brook (Captain), Rehan Ahmed, Tom Banton, Jacob Bethell, Jos Buttler, Brydon Carse, Zak Crawley, Sam Curran, Liam Dawson, Ben Duckett, Will Jacks, Jamie Overton, Adil Rashid, Joe Root, Luke Wood.

Archer is included in the fourth T20 World Cup squad but will miss the tour of Sri Lanka as he continues his rehabilitation with the England medical team following the left side strain sustained during the third Ashes Test in Adelaide earlier this month, England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said in a statement.

The injury had ruled

Archer out of the fourth Ashes Test in Melbourne which England won by four wickets within two days.

England will open their T20 World Cup campaign against Nepal on February 8 in Mumbai, followed by matches against the West Indies (February 11 in Mumbai), Bangladesh (February 14 in Kolkata) and Italy (February 16 in Kolkata).

Archer was one of England's standout players in the Ashes before he picked up the injury during the third Test in Adelaide, which Australia won to secure the urn. He grabbed nine wickets at 27.11, including 5/53 in the first innings in Adelaide. He also contributed with the bat, striking a maiden half-century in the same game as part of 102 runs.

## Shafali, Renuka rise; Deepthi stays at No 1

DUBAI

Swashbuckling India opener Shafali Verma has climbed to sixth place in the latest ICC Women's T20I Player Rankings following a string of impressive half-centuries.

The 21-year-old, a former top-ranked batter, has moved up four places after scores of 69 not out off 34 balls in the second T20I against Sri Lanka, followed by unbeaten knocks of 79 off 42 deliveries and 79 off 46 balls in the third and fourth matches in Thiruvananthapuram.

Vice-captain Smriti Mandhana, who ended her lean patch with a fluent 80 in the fourth T20I, retained her third position in the rankings, while Jemimah Rodrigues slipped one place to 10th.

Seasoned India all-rounder Deepthi Sharma continues her reign at the top in the bowlers' list with compatriot Renuka Singh Thakur joining her in the top 10. Thakur, who has held a career-high third position in the bowling rankings, gained eight places to

reach joint-sixth position following a match-winning haul of four for 21.

## Erigaisi stuns Carlsen but loses in semis to bag bronze

Eight-time world blitz champion Magnus Carlsen later set up a title showdown with Abdusattarov



DOHA

Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi suffered a shattering semifinal loss to top Uzbek player Nodirbek Abdusattarov as the ace Indian settled for a bronze medal on a day when defending champion Magnus Carlsen stormed into the final from an unviable situation, in the World Blitz Championship here on Tuesday.

Eight-time world blitz champion Carlsen set up a title showdown with Abdusattarov after defeating American Fabiano Caruana 3-1 in the other semifinal.

Carlsen, 22, can take heart in the fact that he will return home with two World bronze medals -- in rapid and blitz -- a feat which very few players in the world have achieved.

The Indian ace was on song on day two of the qualification rounds.

After stunning the likes of global icon Carlsen and his nemesis in the semifinal, Abdusattarov, on the opening

day on Monday to emerge sole leader on 10 points from 13 games, Erigaisi went through the remaining six rounds on day two with a steady resolve.

He won four rounds and drew two to remain sole leader with 15 points and securing a place in the knock-outs.

Erigaisi was drawn against 2021 World Rapid champion Abdusattarov, who secured a place in the last-four by the skin of the teeth, barely managing to nudge Frenchman Maxime Vachier-Lagrave to fifth spot on 'best tie-break' rule after both

ended on 13 points. With Erigaisi in a stunning form and the advantage of beating Abdusattarov on day one of the competition, the Indian was expected to go full steam. But things took a different and difficult turn for Erigaisi who lost the semifinal 2-0.5.

He could not convert the advantage with white in the opening game in the knock-out, losing in 47 moves to be 0-1 down.

A resurgent Abdusattarov turned things decisively his way in the second game by played 'Rc5' on the 75th move, ending the game in 83 moves.

### keepsake

## Bradman's baggy green from India series up for auction

SYDNEY

A rare Baggy Green cap worn by the legendary Sir Donald Bradman during a 1947/48 series against India is set to go under the hammer next month.

Bradman gifted the cap to Indian all-rounder Srinagar Wasudev Sohoni during the series, which marked India's first international cricket tour as an independent nation.

Unlike most surviving Baggy Green caps from Bradman's era,

many of which are preserved in museums or closely held private collections, this cap has never been publicly displayed or offered for sale.

It has remained in uninterrupted family ownership for more than 75 years, according to the Australian Associated Press (AAP).

"This is a genuine piece of cricket history that Sir Donald Bradman personally gifted," Lloyds Auctions Lee Haines said.

"Its uninterrupted family ownership for 75 years and its



direct link to 'The Don' make it one of the most important Bradman-related pieces to come to auction."

The Test cricketers of Bradman's era wore a different cap for each series.

The cap will be offered at a public auction, drawing international interest from private collectors, museums, institutions and fans.

Widely regarded as the greatest batsman the game has known, Bradman amassed 715 runs in six innings at an astonishing average of 178.75 during the 1947/48

Test series, which Australia won 4-0. His tally included three centuries and a double hundred.

Bradman, who died aged 92 in 2001, averaged an astounding 99.94 runs per Test innings.

The bidding for his cap at Lloyds Auctions will open at one Australian dollar.

The process will be closed on January 26.

It's not the first of Bradman's caps to be sold as a baggy green from the same India series fetched a staggering amount of Rs 2.63 crore last year.