

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

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

Briefs

BHUBANESWAR
2 die in rock collapse in stone quarry
At least two persons were killed after rocks collapsed at an unauthorised stone quarry in Odisha's Dhenkanal district, officials said on Sunday. The incident took place on Saturday evening when some workers were engaged in drilling and exploration of stone from the quarry located near Gopalpur village under Motanga police station limits in the district, they said. The exact cause behind the incident is not yet clear. Teams of local fire service, Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF), along with dog squad were engaged in rescue operations, an officer said.

GREATER NOIDA
Woman stabs S Korean beau to death

A South Korean man was allegedly killed by his live-in partner, a woman from Manipur, following an argument in Greater Noida. The woman has been taken into custody. The Knowledge Park police station was alerted by GIMS Hospital after the victim, identified as Duck Hee Yuh, was brought in by his partner. Doctors informed the police that he was dead on arrival. The accused, identified as Lunjeana Pamai, told investigators during questioning that Duck Hee frequently assaulted her after consuming alcohol and that she acted out of frustration.

NEW DELHI
Army chief embarks on UAE, SL visit

Army Chief Gen Uppendra Dwivedi on Sunday embarked on a four-day visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Sri Lanka to explore ways to shore up bilateral military cooperation. In the first leg of his two-nation tour, Gen Dwivedi is visiting the UAE to hold wide-ranging talks with the top military brass of the influential Gulf nation. He will also visit key military establishments including the UAE National Defence College and interact with officers and troops. "These engagements are aimed at further enhancing bilateral defence cooperation, professional military exchanges and strategic understanding between the two armed forces," the Army said.

NEW DELHI
Bank staff threaten Jan 27 strike

Bank employees' unions under the aegis of the United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) have threatened to go on a nationwide strike on January 27, demanding implementation of a 5-day week. If the strike materialises, it would have a significant impact primarily on the operations of public sector banks for three days in a row, as January 25 and 26 are holidays.

BATTLE FOR TN | **DMK govt announces the festival dole would be in addition to rice, sugar and other food items through PDS**

Stalin's Pongal gift: ₹3k for 2.2 cr ahead of polls

CHENNAI

In a major election year festive announcement ahead of Pongal, the MK Stalin Government in Tamil Nadu on Sunday said it would provide a cash component of Rs 3,000 as gift to nearly 2.23 crore rice ration card holders in the state and to families residing in Sri Lankan Tamil rehabilitation camps.

The Tamil Nadu Assembly elections is due this summer.

The cash component will be provided in addition to the Pongal gift hamper that the State government had already announced earlier. The hamper includes one kilogram of raw rice, one kilogram of sugar and one full-length sugarcane, and will be distributed through Fair Price Shops across Tamil Nadu.

According to an official press release, the total expenditure towards the Pongal gift hamper and the cash assistance is estimated at Rs 6,936.17 crore.

Pongal, one of the most important festivals of Tamils, is traditionally celebrated as a thanksgiving to nature, farmers and cattle for sustain-



(L to R) DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi, Tamil Nadu Congress President K Selvaraj, AICC state in-charge Girish Chodankar and others during a Pongal festival celebration in Chennai on Sunday

DMK most corrupt regime; 20% 'commission' rules: Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday launched a scathing attack against the DMK regime in Tamil Nadu, calling it the most corrupt in the country where a "20 per cent cut money," norm prevailed. He expressed confidence that NDA would emerge victorious in the Assembly polls due this year in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Addressing a mega rally here, Shah listed out BJP-NDA's wins since 2024 including a third consecutive victory in Haryana and wins in Delhi and Bihar, and said it was now turn of Tamil Nadu and West Bengal to join the list.

ing agriculture and food production. The state government said the assistance was intended to help families celebrate the festival in a "special

and meaningful manner".

Officials said that all Pongal gift items have already been dispatched to all districts. The Chief Minister has instructed

officials to ensure that the cash assistance, gift hampers and tokens are distributed before Pongal through all Fair Price Shops, and that necessary logistical arrangements are put in place to avoid inconvenience to the public.

The Rs 3,000 cash assistance is expected to provide additional financial relief to households amid rising living costs and to help families meet festival-related expenses. The state government described the initiative as part of its commitment to social welfare and inclusive development.

Earlier on Saturday, Chief Minister Stalin also launched the DMK Election Manifesto Portal 2026 at the party headquarters, Anna Arivalayam, in Chennai. The portal allows people from various sections of society, including farmers, traders, professionals, government employees and youth, to submit suggestions for the party's upcoming election manifesto. DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi said the initiative reflects the party's intention to prepare a "people's manifesto" by actively seeking public participation.

Priyanka to head panel to pick Cong's Assam candidates

GUWAHATI/NEW DELHI

Congress leader **Priyanka Gandhi Vadra** has been appointed chairperson of the screening committee for selection of candidates for the upcoming Assam assembly elections.

All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal on Saturday night announced the formation of screening committees for the five states and Union territories going to polls in the first half of this year.

The four-member committees were formed for Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry to finalise candidate lists to contest the forthcoming state elections, a statement issued by the party said. Vadra, AICC general secretary and parliamentarian, has been named the chairperson of the committee for Assam, where the Congress is looking to contest the elections in an alliance with other opposition parties and wrest power from the BJP.

Her close aides Imran Masood and Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka, both Lok Sabha MPs, along with Sirivella Prasad have been made the members of the Assam screening committee, the statement added.

While veteran Congress



leader Madhusudan Mistry will head the screening committee for Kerala, former Chhattisgarh deputy chief minister T S Singh Deo will head the panel for Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

Senior party leader BK Hariprasad will head the screening committee for West Bengal assembly polls. Other members of the West Bengal panel include Mohammad Jawed, Mamata Devi and BP Singh. Rajya Sabha MPs Syed Naseer Hussain and Neeraj Dangi will be members of the screening committee for Kerala along with Abhishek Dutt. Party leaders Yashomati Thakur, G C Chandrashekhar and Anil Kumar Yadav will be the members of the screening panel for Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

The statement also said that general secretaries/in-charges, PCC presidents, CLP leaders and AICC secretaries attached to the general secretaries for respective states will also be ex-officio members of the screening committees of their respective states.

US attack on Venezuela violation of UN charter: Left

NEW DELHI

The US attack on Venezuela is a blatant violation of the UN Charter, the Left parties said on Sunday, while raising concerns over statements from President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

The Left parties also held a protest at the Jantar Mantar here against the US action.

In a statement, the parties said they "strongly denounce and condemn the US aggression against Venezuela and the kidnapping of President Nicolas Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores".

The statement, jointly issued by the CPI(M), CPI, CPI(ML) Liberation, AIFB and RSP, said it was an attack carried out against a sovereign country in blatant violation of the United Nations Charter.

"US President Donald Trump, in his address, stated that they would capture the oil reserves of Venezuela, laying bare the real intentions behind this aggression. The US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, went a step further and warned that Cuba and Mexico would be their next target," the Left parties said.

'Ghost' SIMs used to contact Pak handlers

SRINAGAR/NEW DELHI

Investigations into the "white-collar" terror module linked to the blast near Delhi's Red Fort on November 10 last year show that highly educated doctors used a sophisticated web of "ghost" SIM cards and encrypted apps to coordinate with Pakistani handlers, officials claimed on Sunday.

The outcome of the investigations essentially formed the basis for the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to issue a sweeping directive on November 28 last year, mandating that app-based communication services like WhatsApp, Telegram and Signal must be continuously linked to an active, physical SIM card within the device.

The officials said the probe into the "white-collar" terror module and the blast led to a web of "ghost" SIM cards being used by the arrested doctors, including Muzammil Ganaie, Adeel Rather and others, as part of a tactical "dual-phone" protocol to evade security

agencies.

Each accused, including Dr Umar-un-Nabi, who was killed while driving the explosives-laden vehicle near the Red Fort, carried two to three mobile handsets, they said.

The accused carried one "clean" phone registered in their own names for routine personal and professional use to avoid suspicion and one was the "terror phone" used exclusively for WhatsApp and Telegram communication

RED FORT BLAST

with their handlers in Pakistan (identified by codenames 'Ukasa', 'Faizan', and 'Hashmi').

The SIM cards for these secondary devices were issued in the names of unsuspecting civilians whose Aadhaar details were misused, the officials said. J&K Police further unearthed a separate racket where SIMs were issued using fake Aadhaar cards, they added. The security agencies noted a disturbing trend where these compromised SIMs remained active on messaging platforms across in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) or Pakistan.

Cong acts against 43 leaders in Bihar for anti-party activities

PATNA

Reeling from its humiliating defeat in the recently concluded Bihar Assembly elections, the Congress has initiated disciplinary action against 43 party leaders in the state for alleged anti-party activities and indiscipline.

The Congress managed to win only six of the 70 seats it contested in the elections. A majority of the leaders facing action are those who had openly revolted against senior party leadership, including Bihar Congress president Rajesh Kumar and AICC in-charge for the state, Krishna Allavaru. They had also accused the leadership of distributing election tickets in exchange for money.

Following the declaration of the election results on November 14, the state Congress president constituted a state-level disciplinary committee within two days. The committee, headed by senior leader Kapil Dev Prasad Yadav, has so far expelled seven leaders from the party



State Congress president Rajesh Kumar (centre) has constituted a state-level disciplinary committee

and issued show-cause notices to 36 others.

Those expelled include former Bihar Congress vice-presidents Rajkumar Rajan and Shakeelur Rahman, and Banka district Congress chief Kanchana Singh. Among the 36 leaders who have been served show-cause notices are former Khagaria MLAs Chhatrapati Yadav and Gajandhan Shahi, former Bihar minister Veena Shahi, and former Congress MLC Ajay Kumar Singh.

Names of six of the 43 leaders have been forwarded to the All India Congress

Committee's (AICC) disciplinary action committee for further action. These include former MLA Sudhir Kumar alias Bunty Chaudhary, former Bihar Congress spokesperson Anand Madhav, former Bihar Youth Congress president Nagendra Paswan Vikal, AICC member Madhurendra Singh, former MLA Chhatrapati Yadav, and former Bihar minister Afaq Alam. A few days before polling, a group of Congress leaders had held a press conference alleging that the state leadership indulged in favouritism and bribery while distributing tickets.

Woman was gang-raped inside ambulance: Police

FARIDABAD

A new revelation has emerged in the gang rape of the 25-year-old woman, who was sexually assaulted by two men in a moving vehicle and later thrown onto the road earlier this week, that the accused committed the crime in a private hospital's ambulance and not a van.

A senior investigating officer on Sunday said that the accused used to work as a driver and helper on the ambulance of a private hospital.

The two accused, one from Mathura in Uttar Pradesh and the other from Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh, have since been arrested and sent to judicial custody. Six days after the incident, the woman remains hospitalised.

A purported video of the victim, presumably recorded after the incident, has surfaced in which she explains that after giving her the lift, one of the accused had deposited Rs 600 into her account.

"I did not know them before. As soon as I sat in the car, one of them transferred Rs 600 to my PayTM account, and then they locked the car and snatched my mobile. There was dense fog at night. I cried out loud, but there was no help," she said in the video. PTI couldn't verify the authenticity of the video.

Once the woman gets better, an identification parade of the accused will be held before a magistrate. They will then take on a production warrant from the jail for further questioning, the officer added.

Women commission in Hry takes cognisance

The Haryana state commission for women on Sunday has taken cognisance of the gang rape of a 25-year-old woman in Faridabad, officials said. The commission chairperson, Renu Bhatia, asked the Faridabad police commissioner, Satender Kumar Gupta, about a detailed report on the incident and action taken till now by the police, they said.

Raje finds faults with Raj babus, backs BJP workers

JAIPUR

Former Rajasthan Chief Minister **Vasundhara Raje** on Saturday flagged concerns over the functioning of the state bureaucracy, warning officials of consequences if they fail to respond to party workers.

Addressing a state-level BJP organisational workshop in Jaipur, Raje, in the presence of Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma and BJP National Organisation General Secretary BL Santosh,



strongly backed party workers, calling them the backbone and ambassadors of the party.

"Without workers, the BJP is lifeless. Booth presidents in villages, mandal presidents in blocks and district presidents are our ambassadors. Public works should be carried out on their recommendations.

Officials must answer their calls immediately and get the work done, or be prepared to face the consequences," she said. Raje added that the voice of a party worker is the voice of the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister, and that ignoring it would not be tolerated.

Commending BJP workers for the party's nationwide expansion, Raje said that while the Congress once dominated the political landscape, today the BJP is visible across the country due to the dedication and sacrifices of its workers.

'May hand over Ballari firing case to CID'

BENGALURU

The Karnataka government is mulling handing over the probe into the recent violent clashes in Ballari, in which one person was killed, to the CID, Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Sunday.

The clashes were triggered by a dispute over tying a banner near BJP MLA G Janardhana Reddy's residence and violence broke out between the supporters of the BJP legislator and Congress MLA Nara Bharath Reddy on January 1. A Congress worker was killed.



The incident involved firing, raising questions over the use of private firearms.

"I had said this before, the guns of the gunmen hired for private security have been seized. Now the ballistic expert's report will reveal

Police arrest 26
Police on Sunday said they had arrested 26 people in connection with the violence. 10 Congress workers and 11 BJP workers were among those arrested, all of whom were taken into custody after undergoing medical examinations, it added.

MLA demands Z security
BJP MLA G Janardhan Reddy has written separate letters to Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, demanding immediate Z-category security for him, alleging there was a "pre-planned assassination attempt" on him.

Legouillon finds her calling in Assam's Sattriya dance

NEW DELHI

When Perrine Legouillon speaks about the Sattriya art form, her voice carries the conviction of someone who has not merely learnt a dance form, but entered a living tradition. A French national who has spent the last seven to eight years in India, Perrine's journey from Paris to under-

standing the Sattriya tradition of Assam reflects the growing global resonance of one of India's classical dance forms.

Perrine was first introduced to Sattriya far from its birth-place.

Living in Paris at the time, she attended a performance by renowned Sattriya exponent Adhyapak Bhabananda Borbayan.

"I first saw the Sattriya per-



formance when I was living in Paris. It was a performance by Adhyapak Bhabananda

Borbayan. And that's when I first got exposed to Sattriya and got interested in learning

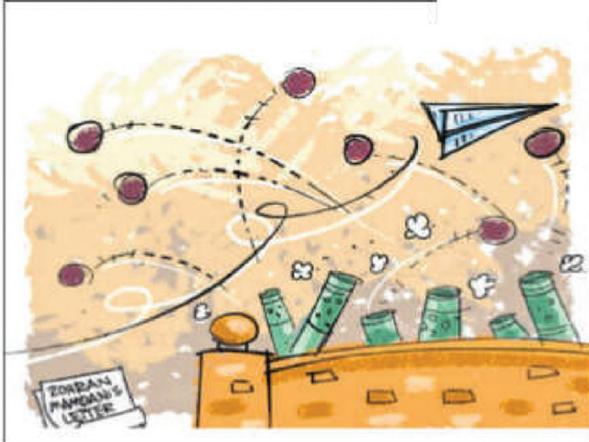
about the art form," she recalls, talking to ANI.

Already trained in Odissi, another Indian classical dance form, Perrine moved to India in 2018 after completing her Master's degree, determined to immerse herself further in Indian classical dance.

Delhi became her base, where she began formal training in Sattriya under Adhyapika Meenakshi Medhi.

"I moved to Delhi in 2018, and I started learning with Adhyapika Meenakshi Medhi and completed my Guni with her," she says.

Explaining the essence of Sattriya, Perrine describes it as both classical and ritualistic. "So, Sattriya is a classical dance form from Assam, which was the latest one to get that recognition in the year 2000," she explains.



Review Meeting on Booth Adjustment and SIR Process Held at Tehsil Auditorium

Ghazipur. A meeting was held at the Mohammadabad Tehsil auditorium in the district, chaired by Sub-Divisional Magistrate Dr. Harshita Tiwari. A crucial review meeting was organized in the local Tehsil auditorium regarding booth adjustment, with the objective of conducting the upcoming elections in an orderly and impartial manner. Representatives of various political parties, public representatives, and concerned officials were present at the meeting. During the meeting, SDM Dr. Harshita Tiwari elaborated on the booth adjustment process, stating that after the adjustment, the formation of newly created booths, the demarcation of their areas, and the updating of the voter list will be done with complete transparency. She clarified that the main objective of this process is to enhance voter convenience and make the voting system more efficient. She also provided detailed information regarding the upcoming SIR (Special Intensive Revision)



process. Dr. Tiwari explained that the purpose of SIR is to make the voter list pure, accurate, and up-to-date, so that no eligible voter is deprived of their right and ineligible names can be removed from the list. The SDM appealed to the public representatives and representatives of political parties to create awareness among voters in their respective areas. She said that maximum use should be made of the prescribed Form-6 and Form-8 for adding, deleting, or modifying names in the voter list. On this occasion, Form-6 and Form-8 were made available in sufficient quantities to all political parties and representatives present. During the meeting, the representatives present raised various questions related to the voter list,

booth demarcation, and the process, which were satisfactorily answered and resolved by SDM Dr. Harshita Tiwari. She assured that all the work related to booth adjustment and SIR will be completed with impartiality, transparency, and within the stipulated time frame. Finally, the SDM said that the success of the election depends on the mutual coordination between the administration and political parties. Only with everyone's cooperation can the work related to the voter list be completed effectively. The main objective of the meeting was to establish better coordination between the administration and political parties, in order to strengthen and ensure the credibility of the upcoming election process.

In view of upcoming festivals, intensive checking campaign launched against those selling Chinese Manja



Chandauli

In view of the upcoming festivals, under the direction of Superintendent of Police Chandauli Aditya Langhe and under the leadership of Area Officer Sadar Devendra Kumar, a special checking campaign was conducted by the Chandauli police station team against the sellers of Chinese Manja in Chandauli town. During the campaign, Area Officer Sadar conducted a thorough search of the shops selling Manja in the town area. Police clarified that strict legal action will

be taken against any shopkeeper who is found selling banned Chinese Manja surreptitiously for the purpose of earning profit or who is found in possession of Chinese Manja. The police administration has appealed to the general public to make their family members and friends aware about the dangers of Chinese Manja. Use only safe and legal floats to fly kites. The Chinese manja is extremely sharp, which poses a risk of serious injury and is also extremely harmful for the environment. If information is received about the sale of

Chinese Manja in any market or shop, citizens can inform their nearest police station. The name of the person giving information will be kept completely confidential. Checking of 15 shops, 120 bundles of Chinese Manja recovered. During the operation, a total of 15 shops were checked by the police team, in which 120 bundles/loaches of banned Chinese Manja were recovered. Necessary legal action is being taken regarding material. Police have appealed to the general public to stay away from Chinese Manja and stay safe.

Awartika Secures Second Place in State Competition

Ghazipur

Students of the Government Homeopathic Medical College and Hospital have brought laurels to the institution by showcasing their talent. Under the guidance of Principal Professor Dr. Rajendra Rajput, fourth-year BHMS students secured second place at the all-India level in poster and paper presentations at the Indian Science Congress held at IIT Shillong, bringing pride to the state and district. Meanwhile, second-year student Awartika Srivastava secured second place in the state-level "Viksit Bharat Challenge" competition, part of the "Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2025-26," organized by the Youth Welfare Department of Lucknow University. Awartika Srivastava's journey doesn't end here, she will now present her work at the all-India level before Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. Similarly, Shreya Singh has also made the college proud by reaching this stage in the Youth Parliament program. Professor Dr. Subodh Tripathi, Professor D.P. Singh, Professor Dr. Sengar, Dr. Pranesh, Dr. Srivastava, Dr. Awadhesh and all the staff members congratulated the students on their outstanding performance and wished them continued success.

State Women's Commission Member to Hold Public Hearing on January 7th

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: Ms. Geeta Vishwakarma, a member of the Uttar Pradesh State Women's Commission, will review the progress of cases related to women's harassment and hold a public hearing at Circuit House, Prayagraj, on January 7, 2026, at 11:00 AM. Following this, she will also inspect an Anganwadi center.

DM, SP offered prayers at Baba Semradhanath Dham and prayed for the welfare of Bhadohi residents

Bhadohi

On the auspicious occasion of the 31st year of Kalpvas at Mahatirth Semradhanath Dham, the great confluence of Kashi-Vindhya-Prayag, District Magistrate Shailesh Kumar and Superintendent of Police Abhimanyu Manglik inaugurated Shri Kalpvas Makar Magh Mela by worshipping Mother Ganga, chanting Vedic mantras, doing Bhoomi Pujan and installing the religious flag. First of all, District Magistrate Shailesh Kumar and Superintendent of Police Abhimanyu Manglik prayed for the welfare of the people of Bhadohi at Baba Semradhanath Dham. Thereafter, while giving good wishes for the New Year to the visitors who had come for darshan and worship on the New Year, he inquired about their well-being in a



heartfelt spirit. On the most auspicious occasion of the 31st year of Kalpvas at Mahatirth Semradhanath Dham, the great confluence of Kashi-Vindhya-Prayag, worship was done by chanting Vedic mantras for the pure and continuous flow of Mother Ganga on the banks of Ganga. He symbolically inaugurated Indian Sanatan Dharma and faith by hoisting the religious flag on the banks of Maa Ganga as a

symbol of Magh Mela Kalpvas. After the darshan puja, the District Magistrate said that in the new year 2026, I feel proud to participate in this sacred program with the respected public, public and scholars. It is a matter of pride for the district that Kalpvas is being organized in Magh Mela on the banks of Ganga for the last 31 years. Seeing the grandeur of Shri Kalpvas Makar Magh Mela, the District

Magistrate made a proposal to declare it as a provincial fair and assured to send it to the government. Emphasis was laid on the availability of toilets, drinking water and hospitals in the entire temple and fair area.

He said that to ensure successful completion of this Kalpvas Magh Mela, ground work is being done by holding regular meetings with the government administration. In view of the convenience of the devotees in Kalpvas Magh Mela, checkered plates for the road are provided by the Public Works Department, smooth arrangement of lighting, cleanliness, sanitation, drinking water arrangement by the Electricity Department, sound arrangement, tents, toilets, barricading in the fair premises by the District Panchayat Department, bonfire by the Forest

Department. For the arrangement of wood, peace and security, work is being done at a fast pace with the mutual coordination of all the concerned departments including police administration, traffic police. He visited the pilgrimage site and observed the Kalpavriksha, Vanshi tree, Sindoor tree, Lotus lake etc. in the natural environment there and made people aware by throwing light on the importance of trees, plants and environment. Superintendent of Police Abhimanyu Manglik toured the entire Kalpvas fair area and took stock of peace and law and order and gave necessary guidelines. He said that the fair will be completed safely with adequate police arrangements. Water police and divers have also been deployed in view of the Ganga river. The District Magistrate and Superintendent of

Police inaugurated the health camp organized by the National Medicos Organization by cutting the ribbon. On this occasion, Additional District Magistrate Kunwar Virendra Maurya, Fair Incharge/Deputy District Magistrate Gyanpur Bhan Singh, Police Area Officer Gyanpur Prabhat Rai, Executive Engineer PWD Sandeep Saroj, DPRO Sanjay Mishra, AMA Anil Tyagi, BDO Diwakar Singh, EO Gopiganj RB Yadav, Junior Engineer Electrical, District Information Officer Dr. Pankaj Kumar, Mahant Karunashankar Das, Village Head Semradh Alok Kumar Singh, President Magh Mela Committee Rambali Singh, Ajit Pratap Singh, Narendra Shukla, Sherbahadur, Dinesh Singh along with saints, Kalpvasis and devotees were present.

Confluence of reverence and faith on the inauguration of Magh Mela, Prince Gupta congratulated the people of the state

Bhadohi

A wonderful confluence of devotion, faith and Sanatan tradition is being seen in Tirtharaj Prayagraj on the occasion of the inauguration of Magh Mela and the holy Paush Purnima. On this auspicious occasion, former city president BJP Bhadohi Prince Gupta sent hearty congratulations and best wishes to all the devotees, Kalpvasis and people of the state. Prince Gupta said that Magh Mela is not just a religious event, but a living symbol of Indian culture, spirituality and unity. He heartily welcomed and congratulated all the revered saints, religious leaders, various Akharas and Kalpvasis who had come to Tirtharaj Prayag to



take a dip of faith in the holy Sangam. While praying to Mother Ganga, Mother Yamuna and Mother Saraswati, he said that by the grace of Triveni, the wishes of all the devotees should be fulfilled and there should be happiness,

peace and prosperity in the state and the country. Prince Gupta expressed confidence that Magh Mela will become a powerful medium to convey Sanatan culture to the new generation and will further strengthen social harmony.

Mother Savitribai Phule's birthday was celebrated with great pomp in Samyak Buddha Vihar

Chandauli

The birthday of the country first teacher Mata Savitribai Phule was celebrated with enthusiasm at Samyak Buddha Vihar complex located in Dabriya village under Dhanapur development block of Chandauli district at 2 pm on Saturday afternoon. On this occasion, the speakers remembered the struggles of Savitribai Phule and Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and highlighted the importance of education in detail. While addressing the program, Hemant Kushwaha paid tribute to Mata Savitribai Phule. He said that with the construction of Buddha Vihar at every place, people will celebrate the birthday of Savitribai Phule there. He stressed that only when the society moves towards education, people will be



able to demand their rights and entitlements. Referring to Gautam Buddha Vihar, New Sarnath, located in Chandauli district near Ramnagar, Hemant Kushwaha said that 7.5 bighas of land situated on the banks of Ganga, which was bought by the people with mutual cooperation, is being forcibly acquired by the Uttar Pradesh government and an attempt

is being made to sell it to Adani. He told that 50 people are continuously sitting on strike every day in protest against this acquisition. He also announced to celebrate the birth anniversary of Jagdev Babu on 8th February at Gautam Buddha Vihar, in which a large number of people from entire Purvanchal are expected to reach. District Panchayat member

Rajesh Yadav said that the biggest need of today is to educate our children by adopting the thoughts of Mata Savitribai Phule. He said that only educated children can bring positive change in the society. On this occasion, District Panchayat members Ganesh Prasad, Rajneesh Yadav, Dr. A large number of men and women including Hanslal Maurya, Paras

Singh Maurya, Sukhraj, Lalit Maurya, Pappu Raja, Dr. Chandrika, Dr. Kashinath, Bhante Mahakashyap, Dr. Sunil Maurya, Rajkumar Maurya, Geeta Devi, Shail Maurya, Mamta Devi were present. The program was presided over by former soldier Munna Singh Dada, while Vijay Kumar conducted it.

Magh Mela: Review of arrangements after Paush Purnima bath; special arrangements for fire safety also discussed

Prayagraj Panchkoshi Parikrama to begin on January 5th

Akhand Bharat Sandesh



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: Following the first bathing ritual of the Magh Mela on Paush Purnima, Divisional Commissioner Soumya Agarwal reviewed the arrangements made in the Mela area today.

??She received detailed information about the difficulties encountered during the first bathing day and the preparations made by various departments to address them. During the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner instructed that improvements be made immediately

wherever necessary in the provision of taps, electricity, toilets, and other essential facilities in the Mela area. She also directed that cleanliness be maintained throughout the Mela area, all toilets be cleaned regularly, and that sanitation workers be deployed 24 hours a



day for odor management and overall cleanliness. Special attention was given to the fire safety arrangements made by the Water Corporation in the Mela area. The Chief Engineer of the Water Corporation informed that additional fire hydrants have been

installed at 23 locations in the Mela area, connected to tube wells. These will allow fire tender vehicles to be filled in just 12 minutes in case of an emergency, ensuring a quick response to any fire incident. The Divisional Commissioner also

instructed the concerned officials to immediately remove individuals illegally camping in tents in the Mela area and to remove shops illegally set up on the roads. After the meeting, she inspected Sangam Nose and various other locations in the Mela area.

Prayagraj. The Prayagraj Panchkoshi Parikrama, organized under the auspices of the Prayagraj Mela Authority, Panchdashnam Juna Akhara, and Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad, will commence on January 5, 2026. Prior to the commencement of the Panchkoshi Parikrama, the General Secretary of Juna Akhara, Hari Giri Ji Maharaj, along with several other saints and sages, met with Divisional Commissioner Soumya Agarwal, District Magistrate Manish Verma, Additional Police Commissioner Ajaypal Sharma, Mela Officer Rishiraj, Mela Police Officer Neeraj Pandey, and other senior administrative officials to invite them to this auspicious event. The saints apprised them of the religious, cultural, and spiritual significance of the pilgrimage and expressed their gratitude for the administration's cooperation. The five-day Panchkoshi Parikrama is being organized as part of the Magh Mela-2026, and will involve visiting and offering prayers at major pilgrimage sites in the Prayagraj district, starting from the Sangam area. The pilgrimage will begin on January 5th with a bath in the Sangam, followed by visits to prominent sites such as Akshayavat, the reclining Hanuman temple, Dattatreya Temple (Juna Akhara), Saraswati Koop, Ramghat, Maujigiri Samadhi, Siddhapeeth Maa Lalita Devi, Maa Kalyani Devi, and Vankhandi Mahadev. On the second day, January 6th, the pilgrimage will include visits to Shultankeshwar Mahadev, Adi Madhav, Chakra Madhav, Someshwar Mahadev in the Arail area, Gada Madhav in Chhivki, and Bhairav ??Baba in the village of Mahewa. On the third day, January 7th, the program includes visits to Mankameshwar Mahadev in Lalapur, Padma Madhav in Beekar, Sujavan Dev Temple in Devaria, Parashar Rishi Ashram in Panasa area, Valmiki Ashram, and Jwala Devi. On January 8th, the pilgrimage will include visits to Shankh Madhav, Durvasa Rishi Ashram in Kakra Dubawal, Sankat Haran Hanuman in Rampur, Pandeshwar Mahadev, Sitakund, Nishadraj Sthali, Nagavaski, Veni Madhav, and Alopi Shankar Mata. On January 9th, after bathing at the Sangam, devotees will visit the Shri Ram Janaki Temple in Juna Akhara and the temple in Krishna Nagar, Kidganj, where a grand community feast will be organized.



Devotees satisfied with the efficient police arrangements at Magh Mela



To control the crowds during the major bathing festivals of the fair, the police have implemented effective barricading, CCTV surveillance, and foot and mobile patrols. A special women's police force has been deployed for the safety of female devotees, which has further strengthened the sense of security among the people

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. This year, the police administration's efficient and commendable arrangements are being witnessed during the Magh Mela. The police are diligently working to ensure

the safety of the large number of devotees, manage traffic, and maintain law and order. To control the crowds during the major bathing festivals of the fair, the police have implemented effective barricading, CCTV surveil-

lance, and foot and mobile patrols. A special women's police force has been deployed for the safety of female devotees, which has further strengthened the sense of security among the people. Police personnel are deployed on

major routes to ensure smooth traffic flow and are assisting devotees by providing directions from time to time. The police are also providing immediate assistance to those in need through lost and found centers and help

desks. In this regard, Colonelganj ACP Rajiv Yadav was also seen giving instructions. Devotees and local citizens have praised the police's work, saying that the security and arrangements at the

Magh Mela this year are far better than before. The police administration has clarified that they will continue to perform their duties with the same vigilance and spirit of service throughout the entire duration of the fair.

Major police operation in Kidganj, prostitution ring busted



Prayagraj. Police in the Kidganj police station area have busted a prostitution ring, arresting five men and four women. The raid was conducted in a house in the Nai Basti area, near a school run by the municipal corporation, following a tip-off about prostitution activities.

According to the police, complaints had been received for several days about illegal activities taking place in the house. After verifying the information, the Kidganj police raided the premises and took those involved in the illicit activities into custody.

The police are questioning all the arrested individuals and gathering information about the entire network. Action is being taken under the relevant sections of the law. Police officials say that the campaign against illegal activities in the area will continue.

Magh Mela 2026: Grand Cultural Evening at Kala Sangam Pavilion



Prayagraj. As part of Magh Mela 2026, the Uttar Pradesh Department of Culture organized a cultural evening at the Kala Sangam cultural pavilion, Sector-3, Fort-Minto Park Road, Parade Ground. The program was inaugurated by the Mayor of Prayagraj, Umesh Chandra Ganesh Kesharwani, along with Padma Shri Malini Awasthi and Additional Director of Culture, Dr. Srishti Dhawan, by lighting the ceremonial lamp. The



program began with a devotional folk song by Udaychand Pardesi (Prayagraj), who was felicitated by Shobhit Nahar and Ghulam Sarwar. Following this, Varun Mishra and his team presented a soulful rendition of "Chalo Man Ganga Yamuna Teere." Kriti Srivastava presented the

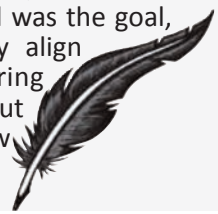
Dhediya folk dance, while Padma Shri Malini Awasthi's folk song "Chalo Ri Guinya, Ganga Nahaye Len" captivated the audience. The conch shell performance by Ram Janam from Varanasi, folk songs by Sangeeta Mishra, classical music by Varun Mishra, and Kathak dance by Neeta Joshi were

highly appreciated by the audience. On this occasion, the Mayor was honored by Dr. Srishti Dhawan, and Padma Shri Malini Awasthi was honored by the Mayor and Divisional Commissioner Saumya Agarwal. The program was conducted by Dr. Abha Madhur.

Editorial

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

India's crude oil trade has evolved from a purely economic exchange into both a geopolitical test of strategic autonomy and a measure of the constraints in its energy policy. Over the past three years, India has gone from being a marginal buyer of Russian crude to one of its largest importers, carefully balancing ties with the US, Europe, and shifting global energy markets. That balance is now under pressure from Donald Trump's 50 per cent tariff offensive, aimed selectively at India and leaving little ambiguity about his objectives—and in Trump's world, what he wants, he usually gets. Yet the national debate has taken too many assumptions for granted. It is worth applying a deconstruction approach to India's famous oil bargains with Russia—a decision once hailed as tactical brilliance, but one now risking entanglement in overlapping economic and diplomatic challenges. While public commentary has focused heavily on Trump, tariffs, and New Delhi's indignation, the more pressing task is to interrogate the rationale behind these choices. To navigate the road ahead, India must revisit three fundamentals: why it embraced Russian oil, how it misread Trump's European recalibration, and where future India–Russia energy engagement should head. Clarity on these three points may well define the next chapter of India's energy strategy. Despite close political ties and deep defence cooperation, India and Russia were never bound by energy dependence. Even with India's heavy reliance on imports—currently 88 per cent of its daily crude requirement of 5.5 million barrels—its primary suppliers have traditionally been Gulf countries. The earlier chapter of India capitulating to Trump 1.0's sanctions on Iran and Venezuela is well known; today, however, the challenge is starker. Russia entered India's energy equation only after the geopolitical earthquake of President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. That act shattered the European order painstakingly built since the Second World War and crystallised after the Soviet Union's collapse. Central to this upheaval was Putin's weaponization of energy: Europe's decades-long dependence on cheap Russian oil and gas became a vulnerability. In response, Europe diversified away from Russia, while the G7 imposed a \$60 per-barrel price cap on Russian crude in December 2022. The logic was clear: as one of the world's top three oil producers, Russia could not be cut off overnight. The aim was instead to squeeze Moscow's revenues, which were funding its war machine, while keeping prices stable and securing alternative supplies for Europe. India saw opportunity in this upheaval. With vast import needs, it began rerouting Russian oil at supposedly lower prices, rejecting G7 sanctions and arranging direct and indirect deals through intermediaries. Early reports spoke of a “free on board” discount of 30 per cent, though never confirmed. Brent crude fell from \$86.51 in January 2022 to \$80.92 in December, peaking briefly at about \$90 in June 2023 before sliding again. While some credit India's purchases with stabilising prices, Russian oil for India almost always remained way above the \$60 price cap. The critical question is whether India ever bought below that threshold. Reports suggest an average discount of only \$5 per barrel—hardly transformative—and potentially offset by hidden costs and surcharges. Even so, large volumes (peaking at over 2 million barrels per day before dropping to 1.5 million) meant cumulative savings. But if cheap oil was the goal, why not join or informally align with the price cap, securing crude closer to \$60 without the complications of shadow fleets and sanctions risks?



Restoring J&K's statehood won't be enough. Kashmiris need to be treated like other Indians

Late one night in 1978, in a nation illuminated by the end of the Emergency, police dragged Ghulam Nabi Patel out of his home in Srinagar's Batamaloo, and into the city's Central Jail. Leviathan still cast a long shadow in this corner of the republic, it became clear. The head of the Kashmir Motor Drivers Association, it later emerged, had campaigned for the Janata Party in the just-concluded elections. This action enraged then-Prime Minister Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah enough to make the trade union leader the first victim of Kashmir's just-legislated preventive detention law, the Public Safety Act. The High Court ordered Ghulam Nabi's release, but that wasn't quite the end of the story. In 2018, the elderly politician, battling cancer and on a trip home to arrange his daughter's wedding, was shot dead by terrorists. This time, the parties he'd served for decades — the Congress and the People's Democratic Party — denied their association with him, so they would not have to condemn the assassins. A last bit of the story remains. In 2020, Ghulam Nabi's children were served notice by the government, ordering them to vacate the premises they were provided to protect them from terrorist attack. This week, the Supreme Court is scheduled to resume hearing petitions seeking the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, an issue it elided over after 32 paragraphs of elegant prose, in return for a promise from the Solicitor General. The decision to hear



the issue is an important one, but it also evades a critical issue. The demotion of Kashmir to a Union territory isn't the only issue that needs to be discussed, as India moves forward to reimagine its constitutional relationship with the once-was-a-state. Kashmir has never been, in any sense of the world, allowed to be a normal state, with normal politicians and normal citizens. The state might have been the first to get rural radio sets, scholar Navnita Chadha Behera notes, but authorities were careful to disable their tuners with wire, so as to ensure only Radio Kashmir could be heard. There were elections to a constituent Assembly in 1951, true, but politician Syed Mir Qasim observed notices posted on walls, ordering people not to discuss politics. Thus, Kashmir was bound to the republic with terror and blood, not ideas or culture. For this, the long jihad Pakistan unleashed against Kashmir in 1947-1948, and has since continued without interruption, must be held responsible. Like many other regions in India, from the adivasi heartlands in central India to parts of the Northeast, democracy

has struggled to grow in exceptionally harsh conditions. All blame, though, does not lie across the Line of Control. Elections that served to undermine democracy, the state-enabled subversion of the political system through corruption, the use of coercion unconstrained by law: All these, the story of Ghulam Nabi Patel should remind us, were Indian inventions. Today, the challenge isn't just to restore statehood in Kashmir. The task Indians need to embrace is to build a state that is Indian, an unremarkable part of our republic. Eighty years ago, Prime Minister Abdullah had promised that a utopia would be built from the ruins of Partition and war. The Naya Kashmir manifesto — which, Andrew Whitehead reminds us, liberally helped itself to text from the 1936 constitution of the Soviet Union — held out promises to redistribute feudal landholdings to the peasants, to uphold the rights of women, and introduce universal access to healthcare and education. The communist couple Freda Houlston and her husband Baba Pyare Lal Bedi wrote the manifesto with Abdullah's encouragement,

though it is unclear if his commitment to communism was ever serious. To the great Kashmiri poet Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor, it seemed Abdullah was leading the region out of the darkness: “The ranges of the mountains shall yield gold,” he gushed, “Pearls shall emerge out of the Wular lake.” Less than five years after Independence, though, the poet had encountered disillusionment. The reality of ‘New Kashmir’, it turned out, was one-party authoritarianism, electoral malpractice, and communalism. “Freedom being of heavenly birth, can't move from door to door,” he avidly wrote, “You'll find her camping in the homes of a chosen few alone.” How did this come about? The story has something to do with bad luck, scholar Aijaz Ashraf Wani has written, in an excellent survey of the roots of misadministration in Kashmir. Two successive bad harvests, in 1949-1950 and 1950-1951, created enormous rural discontent. Forced levies of crops from farmers, imposed in a desperate effort to stave off famine, sharpened the resentment, while shortages of food in the cities grew to alarming levels. The National Conference succeeded in dominating the Constituent Assembly, winning all 75 seats in the 1951 elections. This was only possible, though, because 45 out of 49 candidates of the Hindu-nationalist Praja Parishad party were barred from contesting, mainly on frivolous technical grounds, Behera has observed. The media was muzzled, and opponents

were intimidated and imprisoned. Less than five years later, though, the relationship between Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Abdullah had begun to break down. The Praja Parishad, denied electoral space, started a mass movement seeking the full integration of Kashmir into India. Abdullah, in a 10 April 1952 speech in RS Pura, suggested it was becoming impossible to “convince the Muslims of Kashmir that India does not intend to swallow them up.” The threat of war with Pakistan was alive, Nehru could not countenance this rebellion. “I am afraid Kashmir is heading in an adverse direction,” Nehru warned in a 28 June 1953 letter. The new regime of Prime Minister Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad came to power on the back of a unanimous vote of confidence from Jammu & Kashmir's Constituent Assembly, many of whose members were released from prison that very day. Early in 1954, the Union government restricted Kashmir's special status by passing constitutional amendments that cut back the state's autonomy. Long before Kashmir's special status ended, 260 of the 395 Articles in the Indian Constitution were already applicable in Jammu & Kashmir; the remaining 135 were identical provisions found in the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir. Like his predecessor and incarcerated friend Abdullah, Bakshi hoped development would subsume the urge for political agency and dialogue.

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

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

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

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

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

damaged houses, roads, and the one bridge connecting Dharali and Hershil, another area affected by the landslide. Satellite images from ISRO now show that deposits of mud and sediments from the floods cover all of the village. Alongside civilian settlements, an Army camp near Hershil too was impacted by the floods, although the number of people missing there hasn't been reported. The IMD had issued warnings of heavy to extremely heavy rainfall in all of Uttarakhand, including the Uttarkashi district, from 1 August onwards. But compared to other districts, Uttarkashi's rainfall during this monsoon was still pretty low. From 1 to 5 August, Uttarkashi's recorded rainfall was 6 per cent lower than the average rainfall it gets during this period. Over the monsoon season so far this year in the state, Uttarkashi has recorded 7 per cent lower rainfall than average. If there was indeed a cloudburst—100 mm of rain falling in one hour in a small area—then the IMD is not aware of it. The closest Automatic Weather System (AWS) station that could record this cloudburst is 7 km from Dharali, and it did not catch a cloudburst. But experts say that even without a cloudburst, the possibility of heavy rainfall, causing this disaster is not unfounded. Dharali's location and slope explain it. “The ‘cloudburst’ may have happened much higher at 12,000 ft above sea level, and Dharali is at 8,000 ft. Even this slope of 4,000 ft makes a huge difference to the intensity of the water flow,” Mahesh Palawat, vice president of meteorology and climate change at SkyMet Weather, told ThePrint. “The canal is very narrow, and a lot of trees and mud could have been uprooted and swept along with the water.” If extremely heavy rainfall can cause such damage without a rare event like a cloudburst, it should leave the system working toward.

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

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

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

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

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

Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the enemy of politics: Brajesh Pathak

Lucknow

Bharat Ratan Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was an enemy of politics. He had no political enemies. They lived in the hearts of the people. He has connections with every household in Lucknow. His memories are inscribed on the psyche of every Indian. This is what the state deputy CM Brajesh Pathak says. He was addressing the Atal Smriti Sammelan at the auditorium of the municipal corporation on Saturday. Speaking at a function organized under the birth centenary celebrations of revered Pandit Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak said that Atal was the pioneer of poor welfare and good governance in Lucknow. Lucknow residents constantly see Atal as the guardian of their family. In politics and social life, Atal has drawn the line, every politician wants to reach there. Atal was an enemy of politics. The opposition also respected his words. Despite having ideo-



logical differences, they maintained social unity. His acceptance was not only in India but also in other countries. The Deputy CM said that Atal was an advocate of Sanatan Dharma. People of other ideologies also took his words easily. He was a poet, journalist and politician. He had no prejudice against anyone. NDA formed and gave the country a better government: Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak said that Atal took the country forward by uniting several parties. The NDA was formed by gathering several parties. Despite various ideological differences, he worked to give the country a better government. Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak said that when Atal was studying with his father in

Gwalior as a teenager, he started writing against the slave culture of the British through poetry. The local police complained to his father. The police said your son was acting against the British rule. His father sent him to Agra. Even after that, Atal did not stop writing. He worked to free the country from English culture and the British. wrote poems. We are all working to move the country and society forward by following his ideals.

The Modi government at the Center is making schemes keeping in mind all sections of the society. Plans being delivered to characters. Plans are being monitored. Mayor Sushma Kharkwal.

Digital Crop Survey to Commence from January 5, to be Completed by February 15



Touch With World
Vaibhav Pachauri
Etah

As per the directions of District Magistrate Prem Ranjan Singh, the Digital Crop Survey under the Agri-Stat Scheme will commence in Etah district from January 5 and is scheduled to be completed by February 15, 2026. Under this large-scale survey, a total of 6,38,177 agricultural plots across the district three tehsils will be surveyed, covering 788 villages. Providing details, Deputy Director of Agriculture Sumit Kumar stated that as per the tehsil-wise targets, 3,38,256 plots will be surveyed in Etah tehsil, 1,81,849 plots in Aliganj tehsil and approximately 1,18,072 plots in Jalesar tehsil. He informed that IDs have already been created for all surveyors and plot-wise allocations have been completed. Each surveyor will survey around 3,000 plots and the data collected will be used for agricultural policy formulation and effective implementation of government schemes. Prior to the launch of the digital crop survey, all surveyors are being provided with necessary training. Training sessions have already been conducted in Etah and Aliganj tehsils, while training in Jalesar tehsil will be completed tomorrow. The administration is ensuring that all surveyors are fully trained before January 5. The Deputy

Director of Agriculture further informed that continuous efforts are being made to raise awareness among farmers regarding Farmer Registry. So far 1,91,836 farmers in the district have completed their registration, while as per the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme, a total of 2,38,678 farmers are required to be registered. Thus, registration of approximately 46,842 farmers is still pending. He clarified that Farmer Registry is not limited only to PM Kisan beneficiaries, but is mandatory for all farmers engaged in agricultural activities. Farmers facing issues related to Aadhaar and land record (Khatauni) name mismatches are advised to get their records corrected and complete KYC at Jan Seva Kendras to ensure successful registration. Officials and staff from the Agriculture Department, Revenue Department and Rural Development Department are continuously working in the field to facilitate farmer registration. In case of any inconvenience, farmers may contact agriculture department staff, concerned lekhpal, panchayat assistant or their nearest Jan Seva Kendra. District Magistrate Prem Ranjan Singh is regularly reviewing the progress and has directed all field personnel to ensure that Farmer Registry of all eligible farmers in the district is completed at the earliest.

BJP Leader Meets Ministers in Lucknow to Raise Key Issues of Jalesar Region



Etah

Senior BJP leader and Chairman of the Cooperative Purchase and Sale Committee, Nagendra Pratap Singh Rahul Bana, met senior ministers in the state capital Lucknow to seek solutions to major issues concerning healthcare, higher education, transport and administrative infrastructure in the Jalesar region. During his visit, Rahul Bana met Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya and Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak. He also held discussions with former Deputy Chief Minister Dr. Dinesh Sharma and Transport Minister and BJP General Secretary (Organisation) Dharmapal Singh, submitting memoranda related to issues under their respective departments. While briefing Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, the BJP leader highlighted several pressing problems of the Jalesar Assembly constituency. He demanded that important roads in the region be made pothole-free and urged that the BJP Mandal Headquarters at Nuhkheda be declared a new Development Block of Etah district. In a memorandum submitted to Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, Rahul Bana requested the installation of an ultrasound machine at the Community Health Centre (CHC), Jalesar and the opening of a government hospital in Banbaripur village to strengthen local healthcare facilities. Similarly, in a representation to Transport Minister Dharmapal Singh, he demanded the introduction of electric bus services from Jalesar to Aligarh and Jalesar to Agra, along with the regular operation of Roadways buses on the Jalesar-Etah route to improve public transportation connectivity. The ministers and the BJP General Secretary (Organisation) assured that the issues raised would be addressed at the earliest. This initiative has raised hopes among local residents for significant improvements in healthcare, transport and other basic amenities in the Jalesar region.

Proper arrangements for bedding and bonfires etc. should be ensured in night shelters: Yogi Adityanath

Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath provided relief to people shivering in the severe cold wave at the night shelter set up in the Town Hall, providing them with blankets and food packets and inquiring about their well-being. He gave chocolates to small children and the children were overjoyed. He urged people not to sleep outside on the streets under the open sky during the cold. Night shelter He said that they should never sleep outside on the road under the open sky in the cold. The night shelter has been built for you people only. He inquired about the arrangements from the people taking shelter in the night shel-



ter and asked if there were any shortcomings? Expressing satisfaction with the arrangements made by the administration in the night shelter, the people said that everything is fine. Along with getting bedding to spread and

enough blankets to cover themselves, there is also proper arrangement of bonfire etc. for warmth. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, while instructing the officials present on the spot, said that in view of the extreme cold, it should be

ensured that no one is allowed to stay on the roadside or in the open at night. Such poor and helpless people should be asked to stay in night shelters. In the night shelters, proper arrangements for cleanliness, toilets, lighting, bedding, etc., along with bonfires, should be ensured under all circumstances. During this time, along with the Chief Minister, State Minister (Independent Charge) for Stamp and Court Registration Fee, Ravindra Jaiswal, State Minister (Independent Charge) for AYUSH and Food Security, Dr. Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu', former Minister and MLA Dr. Neelkanth Tiwari, MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma, MLC Dharmendra Rai, MLA Saurabh Srivastava etc.

Unemployed, deprived and humiliated— every class will become the voice of “Employment Do Social Justice Do” march

Lucknow



Aam Aadmi Party will take to the streets to fight for employment and social justice: Sanjay Singh Touch With World Sachin Malik The Aam Aadmi Party has announced a decisive fight against unemployment, paper leaks, reservation scams and increasing social discrimination in Uttar Pradesh. Will do. The march will be taken out on a route of about 90-100 km from Shaheed Udayan in Mirzapur to Samah in Kashi-Varanasi. He said the party has a clear objective—to provide jobs to the youth, constitutional justice to the underprivileged and make the government accountable to the people. Sanjay Singh said that to join the yatra, give a missed call to 7500040004 or call mobile number 8588841358. AAP MP Sanjay Singh said in a press conference that an organized game is going on in the name of employment in Uttar Pradesh. “Sometimes a paper leak, sometimes a stay from the High Court, sometimes the government appeals to the Supreme Court—the result is that the youth is wandering from door to door with

files in hand and dreams in his eyes.” He said that the future of the youth has been ruined by repeatedly causing irregularities in examinations like Lekhpal, Daroga, Sipahi, PCS-J. Sanjay Singh alleged that the constitutional reservation of OBC, SC and ST was weakened in a planned manner in the recruitment processes. “69,000 teacher recruitment, Banda University, Lakhimpur Cooperative Bank or Livestock Department—everywhere the right of reservation was robbed. This reservation is not the gift of the BJP, it is the right of the Constitution and this right is being crushed.” He clarified that the issue of social justice is central because jobs and respect—both are being taken away. He said that the incidents of social humiliation have also increased in the state—sometimes an elderly

person is humiliated by licking urine, sometimes a storyteller is cut off because he belongs to a backward caste and sometimes a CRPF personnel is prevented from mounting a horse. “This has become the picture of Uttar Pradesh and this is the Padyatra to change this picture.” Sanjay Singh said that the voice of the weavers suffering from unemployment, street vendors whose shops were bulldozed, ASHA-Bahus, Anganwadi workers, employment workers, educators, employees struggling for regularization and pension will become the voice of every class who are fighting for their rights. He appealed to the people to join the movement and put pressure on the government to provide jobs. He said that the Aam Aadmi Party works wherever it is in power and wherever it is in opposition, it fights the people fight from the streets to Parliament. “Preparatory meetings have already been held in Kashi province and we are confident that like the first two phases, this third phase will also be historic.” Sanjay Singh said that to join the yatra.

BHU Records Continued Progress in Indigenous Cattle Improvement Through MOET and Sex-Sorted Semen Technology

Mirzapur

Under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), the Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (FVAS), Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Rajiv Gandhi South Campus (RGSC), Barkachha, Mirzapur is implementing a focused project for the conservation and genetic improvement of indigenous Gangatiri and Sahiwal cattle. Marking a noteworthy beginning to the New Year 2026 an indigenous surrogate cow at the FVAS dairy farm delivered a healthy female Sahiwal calf weighing 26.4 kg on January 1, 2026, through embryo transfer using sex-sorted semen. This achievement represents the sixth successful birth of a Sahiwal calf under the project and reflects the steady progress being made in the field of advanced cattle reproductive technologies at BHU. The successful birth of the calf on the very first day of the New Year underscores the effective application of assisted repro-



ductive technologies and the growing scientific capability of the Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences. The newborn calf was visited by the Dean, Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Prof. Amit Raj Gupta and the Professor In-Charge, RGSC, Prof. B. M.N. Kumar, who reviewed farm management practices and encouraged the team involved in the programme. Prof. U.P. Singh, Director of the Institute of Agricultural Sciences also appreciated the faculty continued achievements and commitment towards the conservation of indigenous cattle breeds. The project is being implemented under the leadership of Dr. Manish Kumar (Principal Investigator)

with Dr. Kaustubh Kishor Saraf and Dr. Ajeet Singh serving as Co-Principal Investigators. The faculty is progressively advancing towards the adoption of next-generation reproductive technologies, including ovum pick-up (OPU) and in-vitro embryo production (IVEP) to further accelerate the conservation and genetic enhancement of indigenous cattle breeds. The systematic extension of these technologies to dairy farmers in the Vindhyan region is role in strengthening sustainable dairy farming, improving rural incomes and supporting national objectives of food and nutritional security, in consonance with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Gazipur

The annual festival program "Darpan" of Gramya Bharti PM Shikshalaya, Nandganj, Ghazipur, concluded grandly. The program was inaugurated by chief guest Rajya Sabha MP Dr. Sangeeta Balwant and special guests Additional Superintendent of Police Ambedkar Nagar Shyam Dev, District Panchayat President Sapna Singh, Krishna Bihari Rai and Bhanu Pratap Singh with the lighting of the lamp. The guests offered floral tributes to Goddess Saraswati and the portrait of the school founder, former Member of the Legislative Council, Prof. Babulal Balwant. Students presented various cultural performances. The little children of Nursery class presented a captivating dance on the song "Aha Tamatar Bade



Mazedar" (Oh, Tomatoes are so delicious). The main attractions included a dance performance on Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, a dance performance based on the success of Chandrayaan-3 and a play presented on the birth anniversary of Rajmata Ahilyabai Holkar, which mesmerized the audience. The play "Padmavati ka Jauhar" presented during the annual festival brought tears to the eyes of the audience. In addition, children presented heartfelt programs such as "Grandparents, Welcome

to School," a dowry song, a Holi song and "One day the value of this soil will be gone." Special guest Shyam Dev provided inspirational guidance to the children for building their bright future. The program was conducted by school teacher Anchal Gupta and students Yashvi Rai and Mayank Raj. The guests were welcomed by the school manager Sarojini Devi and Principal Prava Bind. The vote of thanks was given by the school Vice-Principal Vineet Kumar Sharma.

Police Personnel Trained for Effective Functioning of Mission Shakti Centres

Etah

Under the directions of Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Etah, Shyam Narayan Singh a training programme was organised on Saturday at the multipurpose hall of the Police Lines to ensure the successful and effective functioning of Mission Shakti Centres. As part of the programme, all officers and staff deployed at Mission Shakti Centres of the Nagar Circle, Sadar Circle and Saket Circle were shown 21 training videos uploaded on the i-GOT portal, covering the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). The training focused on the objectives and operational framework of Mission Shakti, along with key aspects related to women and child safety with the aim of making the functioning of the centres more efficient, sensitive and responsive. During the session, detailed guidance was provided on the roles and responsibilities of personnel, coordination mechanisms and best practices to ensure timely assistance and protection for women and children. The programme was attended by Additional Superintendent of Police (Crime) Etah Yogendra Singh, Traffic Circle Officer Sanjay Singh, Mission Shakti Centre in-charges, staff of the Women and Child Safety Organisation, and other police officers and personnel. The training programme was described as a significant step towards achieving the objectives of the Mission Shakti campaign and strengthening institutional support for women safety in the district.



K-drama comebacks that didn't click

2025 turned out to be an eventful year for K-drama fans, delivering a mix of bold storytelling and standout performances from both seasoned Hallyu stars and rising talent. Veterans like IU and Park Bo-gum dominated conversations with the bittersweet *When Life Gives You Tangerine*, while Kim You-jung sent the fandom into a frenzy with her chilling, applause-worthy turn as a sociopath in *Dear X*.

Yet, despite the highs, the year wasn't without disappointments. As someone who has watched over 100 K-dramas, I couldn't help but feel let down when several much-anticipated comebacks by my favourite Hallyu stars failed to live up to expectations. As we get ready to say goodbye to 2025, here's a look at the K-drama comebacks that struggled to win hearts.

As someone who has watched over 100 K-dramas, I was utterly underwhelmed despite the hype

Park Min-young in *Confidence Queen*

The *What's Wrong With Secretary Kim* actor has had more misses than hits in the past few years. In 2024, respite came in the form of *Marry My Husband* when Min-young succeeded in breaking a streak of flops. Thus, expectations were high from *Confidence Queen*, which was one of the most talked-about comeback projects of the year. On paper, it had all the right ingredients — style, intrigue, and a strong central performance. However, despite its polished look and moments of flair, the series struggled to fully deliver. The storytelling felt uneven, with predictable twists and pacing issues that dulled the impact of what should have been sharp, high-stakes drama. What could have been a smart, fun ride ended up feeling more surface-level than satisfying, making *Confidence Queen* a comeback that generated buzz but failed to leave a lasting impression.

Lee Dong-wook in *The Divorce Insurance*

Lee Dong-wook's return with *The Divorce Insurance* promised a refreshing spin on relationships, blending romance with social commentary. While he brings his trademark elegance and emotional restraint to the role, the drama struggles to fully capitalise on its quirky premise. The writing feels uneven, wavering between satire and sentiment without

committing strongly to either. As a result, his performance, though sincere, never truly takes flight. For an actor known for elevating complex characters, this comeback felt conceptually interesting but emotionally thin. However, he turned the tide in his favour with the gangster drama, *The Nice Guys*, which released after this.

Jun Ji-hyun in *Tempest*

Jun Ji-hyun's return with *Tempest* was one of the most anticipated K-drama comebacks of the year, especially given the scale and ambition of the project. While she remains commanding on screen and brings gravitas to her role, the spy thriller struggles to keep pace with her presence. The plot feels too slow and bland, making it hard to fully invest despite the high-stakes setting. For a star known for effortlessly blending strength and vulnerability, *Tempest* felt more cold and controlled than compelling.

Kim Woo-bin and Bae Suzy in *Genie, Make a Wish*

The reunion of Kim Woo-bin and Bae Suzy in *Genie, Make a Wish* was designed to be a nostalgia-fuelled event, banking heavily on their undeniable chemistry and star appeal. While the pair still look effortlessly good together and share moments of warmth, the magic doesn't quite translate into sustained emotional depth. The fantasy-romance premise feels undercooked and the narrative fails to engage. Despite flashes of charm, this highly anticipated comeback of two major K-drama actors felt underwhelming.

Lee Min-ho in *When the Stars Gossip*

We last saw Lee Min-ho in the historical blockbuster K-drama *Pachinko*. Hence, his return to the small screen with *When the Stars Gossip* came with sky-high expectations, but the series struggled to match the weight of his star power. While he brings his usual charm and screen presence, the writing lets him down. The narrative feels scattered, and the emotional beats never quite land, making his performance feel restrained rather than impactful. For an actor known for commanding roles and memorable characters, this comeback felt surprisingly muted.

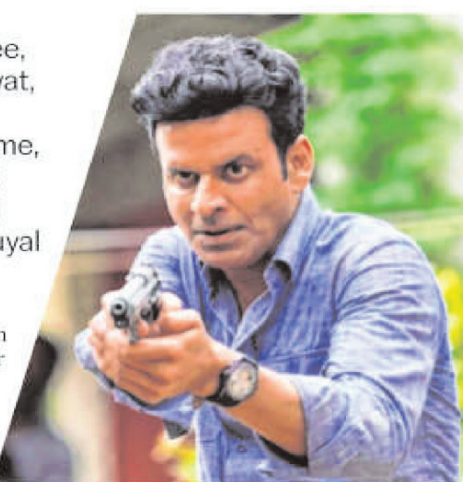
Park Seo-joon in *Surely Tomorrow*

After last year's *Gyeongseong Creature*, Park Seo-joon's comeback with *Surely Tomorrow* carried high expectations, especially given his track record of choosing crowd-pleasing, emotionally engaging roles. While he remains effortlessly watchable and sincere in his performance, the drama itself feels oddly flat. The narrative leans heavily on familiar tropes without offering fresh emotional depth, and the pacing often drags, muting the impact of key moments. For an actor known for bringing warmth to his characters, the K-drama feels like a safe but forgettable outing — pleasant in parts, but far from memorable.

7 actors who made '25 unforgettable on OTT

Featuring Manoj Bajpayee, Jaideep Ahlawat, Sayani Gupta, Tillotama Shome, Zahan Kapoor, Huma Qureshi and Raghav Juyal

2025 has been a landmark year for Indian OTT content, with streaming platforms delivering some of the most compelling narratives and unforgettable performances. From gripping crime thrillers to politically charged dramas, the year saw actors pushing boundaries and breathing life into complex characters, keeping audiences glued to their screens. These seven performers inhabited their roles with such authenticity and depth that they set new benchmarks for excellence in digital storytelling. Here are the actors who gave us performances we won't soon forget.



MANOJ BAJPAYEE *The Family Man Season 3*

The wait for Manoj Bajpayee's return as Srikant Tiwari in *The Family Man Season 3* ended in November 2025. Bajpayee once again proved why he is considered one of India's finest actors, masterfully balancing the dual life of a middle-class family man and a high-stakes intelligence officer. His performance captured the vulnerability, wit, and determination of a man caught between protecting his nation and preserving his family, making it one of the most talked-about performances of the year.



HUMA QURESHI *Maharani Season 4*

Huma Qureshi returned with ferocity as Rani Bharti in *Maharani Season 4*, which premiered on November 7, 2025. Her transformation from a rural housewife to Bihar's powerful Chief Minister—now taking on national politics—remains one of OTT's most compelling character arcs. This season saw Rani's ambitions reach Delhi as she confronted the Prime Minister himself, with Huma delivering a commanding performance that balanced vulnerability with steely resolve.



JAIDEEP AHLAWAT *Paatal Lok Season 2*

Jaideep Ahlawat reprised his career-defining role as Inspector Hathiram Chaudhary in *Paatal Lok Season 2*, delivering what critics called a lesson in powerful acting. Released on January 17, 2025, the second season saw Ahlawat build on the character's journey with even greater depth and introspection. His nuanced portrayal of a Delhi cop pursuing justice while battling systemic apathy earned him the Best Actor award at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne 2025.



RAGHAV JUJAL *The Ba***ds of Bollywood*

Raghav Juyal took a bold leap with *The Ba***ds of Bollywood*, which premiered on Netflix in September 2025. The series marked a significant departure from his dancing and hosting background, allowing him to showcase his dramatic acting abilities. His performance in this edgy show demonstrated his versatility and willingness to take risks, proving he is far more than just a talented dancer and entertainer.



TILLOTAMA SHOME *Paatal Lok Season 2*

Tillotama Shome made a powerful addition to the *Paatal Lok* universe in Season 2. Known for her nuanced performances, she brought depth and gravitas to the critically acclaimed series that explores the dark underbelly of Indian society. Her character added fresh layers to the show's examination of crime, corruption, and socio-political realities, complementing Jaideep Ahlawat's iconic Inspector Hathiram Chaudhary.



ZAHAN KAPOOR – *Black Warrant*

Zahan Kapoor emerged as a revelation in *Black Warrant*, which released on January 10, 2025. Based on the memoir of a Tihar Jail superintendent, the series saw the actor deliver a breakout performance that showcased his range and intensity. His portrayal brought authenticity to the dark and brutal world of prison life and the moral complexities faced by those within the system, firmly marking Zahan as a talent to watch.

These seven actors didn't just deliver standout performances in 2025 — they created characters that will be remembered for years to come.

Briefs

6 IS militants, 3 cops die in Turkiye clash

Islamic State militants clashed with police in Turkiye on Monday, leaving three police officers and six militants dead, Turkiye's interior minister said. At least eight other police officers and a night guard were wounded. The shooting occurred in Elmali district in Yalova province, south of Istanbul, as police stormed a house where the militants were hiding. Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said the operation in Yalova was one of over a hundred simultaneous raids carried out against IS suspects in 15 provinces in the country.

Boy, 5, dies as arm trapped in travelator

A boy has died after becoming trapped in a moving travelator at a ski resort in northern Japan, media said. Hinata Goto, 5, died on Sunday after his right arm became trapped in the walkway's winding mechanism during a family skiing trip to Otaru, a city on Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido. Firefighters had freed the unconscious boy, who was wearing ski wear and boots, from the mechanism about 40 minutes after receiving an emergency call from his mother, the Asahi Shimbun said, adding, he was pronounced dead after being taken to hospital.

Midair copter collision kills both pilots

A midair collision between two helicopters in New Jersey, US, on Sunday left both the pilots dead, prompting a probe into the cause of the crash, CNN reported. The incident occurred around late morning near Hammonton Municipal Airport, where two Enstrom helicopters were flying at the time.

Strip activist of citizenship, says UK oppn

Political opposition leaders in the UK have called for a human rights activist to be stripped of his citizenship over past social media posts allegedly containing violent and antisemitic language within days of the dual national returning to Britain after years in Egyptian prisons. Conservative and Reform parties leaders sought the deportation of Alaa Abd el-Fattah following the discovery of tweets from over a decade ago in which he allegedly endorsed killing "Zionists" and police".

South Korean Prez returns to palace

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung on Monday commuted to Cheong Wa Dae, country's traditional presidential palace, for the first time since taking office in June, over 3 years after his ousted predecessor Yoon Suk Yeol moved the presidential office to the Defence Ministry compound. It was the first time a president had commuted to Cheong Wa Dae since May 9, 2022. Yoon opened Cheong Wa Dae to public as a tourist site, which drew millions of visitors.

North Korea tests missiles

North Korea said on Monday it fired long-range strategic cruise missiles into the sea to test the country's nuclear deterrence, days after it showed apparent progress in the construction of its first nuclear-powered submarine.

FLORIDA MEET | US offered 15 years: Ukrainian leader

Zelenskyy seeks 50-yr security guarantees

WASHINGTON

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday said US President Donald Trump had informed him of a 20-point peace proposal for Ukraine that Trump had discussed with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

During the meeting with Trump in Florida, Zelenskyy said he pressed for long-term security guarantees extending over the next 50 years (the US offered 15 years), and clarified that any engagement with Russia would only be possible if Trump and European leaders reached consensus on formalised documents.

Outlining Kyiv's position on the proposed peace framework, Zelenskyy said Ukraine wants national security advisers from Ukraine, the US and Europe to meet in the coming days. He added Ukraine hopes security guarantees would be delivered at the moment the peace plan is formally signed.

He said the peace plan should be signed by Ukraine, the US, Russia and Europe.

**'Russia wants to see Ukraine succeed': Zelenskyy reacts to Trump's claim**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy appeared to raise an eyebrow during a peace summit in Florida when his host Donald Trump remarked Russia wanted Ukraine to succeed. Zelenskyy smiled and nodded when the US president acknowledged the claim sounded 'a little strange'. Trump said a draft agreement to end the Russia-Ukraine war was nearly '95% done' and the leaders signalled progress towards a US-Ukraine security agreement, but they acknowledged lingering disagreements on territorial disputes. Zelenskyy did not expressly comment on Trump's assessment of Vladimir Putin's intentions. During the press conference, he repeatedly thanked Trump and paid tribute to his US team.

noting a technical group may be required to carry out its implementation. Zelenskyy said Ukraine remains open to all formats of communication with Russia and proposed that the peace plan be put to a referendum in Ukraine.

To facilitate such a referen-

dum, Zelenskyy said a ceasefire of at least 60 days would be necessary, adding, details of ceasefire monitoring would be outlined within the security guarantees. He said discussions would take place on establishing a free economic zone in the Donbas region.

90% of the 20-point peace plan has been agreed.

US security guarantees for Ukraine are 100% agreed, these are key to lasting peace.

Any decision on territory must be approved by the Ukrainian people, possibly through a referendum or parliamentary process, in line with Ukraine's constitution.

The future of the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant remains a sticking point, with no clear agreement announced.

US and Ukrainian teams could meet again as early as next week to finalise remaining points.

16 older residents perish in blaze in retirement home

MANADO

A fire at an Indonesian retirement home killed 16 older people on Sunday evening, police said. The fire in the single-storey house in Manado, Indonesia's North Sulawesi Province, started while the residents were asleep, police said.

"The team on the ground has confirmed that the death toll currently is 16," North Sulawesi police spokesperson Alamsyah Hasibuan said. "Fifteen of them were burned to death, while one victim's body remains intact."

There were 15 survivors who were treated at two hospitals in Manado, Hasibuan said.

Iran cent bank guv quits after protests over currency drop

Tehran: The head of Iran's Central Bank resigned on Monday as protests erupted in Tehran and other cities after the country's currency plummeted to a new record low against the US dollar.

The resignation of Mohammad Reza Farzin was reported by state TV, as hundreds of traders and shopkeepers rallied in Saadi Street in downtown Tehran as well as in the Shush neighbourhood near Tehran's main Grand Bazaar.

Merchants at the market played a crucial role in the 1979 Islamic Revolution that ousted the monarchy and brought Islamists to power.

The official IRNA news agency confirmed protests. Witnesses reported similar rallies in Isfahan in central Iran, Shiraz in the south and Mashhad in the northeast. In Tehran, police fired tear gas to quell the crowd. Witnesses told AP traders shut shops and asked others to do so. The semi-official ILNA news agency said businesses stopped trading even though some kept shops open. Iran's rial on Sunday fell to 1.42 million to the dollar. On Monday, it traded at 1.38 million rials.

China begins drills in Taiwan Strait

BEIJING

The Chinese military on Monday started new major drills in the "middle areas" of the Taiwan Strait amid rising diplomatic tensions with Japan over Taiwan that Beijing claims as its territory.

"The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Eastern Theatre Command is employing fighters, bombers and unmanned aerial vehicles in coordination with long-range rocket fires to conduct drills in the waters and airspace in the middle areas of the Taiwan Strait on Monday," state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Focusing on striking mobile ground targets, the drills intend to test the troops' capabilities of precision strikes on key targets, it said. China

claims the self-governing Taiwan as part of its mainland and vows to integrate it.

Taiwan condemned China's joint military drills around the island, disregarding international norms and using military intimidation to threaten neighbouring countries.

Taiwan's Defence Ministry said on X rapid response exercises were underway, with forces on high alert to defend the island.

In a separate statement, it said it had deployed appropriate forces in response, conducting combat readiness drills. "The Chinese Communist Party's targeted military exercises further confirm its nature as an aggressor and the biggest destroyer of peace," it said.

Further, Taiwan's aviation authority said over 100,000 air travellers will be hit.

Hadi's party gives 24-day ultimatum to Yunus regime

Sharif Osman Bin Hadi's party, Inqilab Moncho, has given a "24-day ultimatum" to the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government to complete the trial in the murder of 32-year-old youth leaders and bring the guilty to justice.

With the situation still tense in Dhaka, Abdullah Al Jaber, member secretary of Inqilab Moncho, on Facebook said, "The trial of the entire killing squad, including the killer, the mastermind, the accomplices, those who aided the escape, and those who provided shelter, must be completed within 24 days."

The party also asked the Yunus regime to suspend the work permits of Indians

**BNP leader Tarique Rahman files his nomination for the upcoming election in Segunbagicha on Monday.**

residing in Bangladesh, 'The Daily Star' said. "To protect the independence and sovereignty of Bangladesh, the work permits of Indians must be suspended," Jaber said.

The party also asked the government to file a case

against New Delhi in an international court if it refuses to return the convicted asylum seekers, including former premier Sheikh Hasina, as well as identifying "collaborators of fascists" within the civil and military intelligence.

Mexico train derails, kills 13, hurts dozens

MEXICO CITY

Officials said a train accident in Mexico killed at least 13 people and injured dozens, halting traffic along a rail line connecting the Pacific Ocean with the Gulf of Mexico.

The Interoceanic Train linking the states of Oaxaca and Veracruz went off the rails on Sunday as it passed a

curve near the town of Nizanda. "The Mexican Navy has informed me that, tragically, 13 people died in the Interoceanic Train accident," Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said in a post on X, adding, 98 people sustained injuries, five of them were critical.

Officials said 241 passengers and nine crew members were on the train at the times.

T'gana women die in US crash

WASHINGTON

Two women from Telangana were killed in a road accident in US's California. Pulakhandam Meghana Rani, 25, was from Garla in Mahbubabad and Kadiyala Bhavana, 24, from Mulkanoor.

Reports said the accident took place on Sunday at 4pm. Meghana and Bhavana were travelling with friends for sightseeing to Alabama Hills. Eight friends were touring in separate cars. While taking a curve, Meghana and Bhavana's car lost control, went off the road, and plunged into a valley. Bhavana and Meghana moved to the US 3 years ago for higher studies. They completed Master's recently, and were looking for a job.

China, Cambodia and Thailand envoys meet

Beijing seeks stronger role in feud

HONG KONG

Foreign ministers from Cambodia and Thailand convened with their Chinese counterpart on Monday as the Beijing government, building on its expanding presence in global diplomacy, sought to play a stronger mediating role in the violent border dispute between the two Southeast Asian countries. "We haven't resolved everything, but we are making progress in the right direction, and we have to keep up the momentum," Thai Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuanketkeow said after the meeting in Yunnan. He said the chief priorities are to ensure a sustained ceasefire and continue rebuilding trust.

The meetings represented China's latest efforts to strengthen its role as an international mediator and, in particular, its influence in Asian regional crises. As China grows into an economic and political force globally, Beijing has spent the past decade and more working in various ways to increase its voice as a third



party in diplomatic matters.

China's Wang Yi called for joint efforts to promote regional peace, stability and development, language typical for China in such situations. "Allowing the flames of war to be reignited is absolutely not what the people of the two nations want and not what China, as your friend, wants to see. So, we should resolutely look ahead and move forward," Wang said.

Cambodian minister Prak Sokhonn said he believed the ceasefire would last and create an environment for both nations to resume previously agreed-upon ways to settle differences. Sihasak also expressed hopes for peace with neighbouring countries.

My target was just to take gun: Hero

Ahmed al-Ahmed, who disarmed one of the Bondi gunmen before being shot five times, says he knows his bravery saved many lives but is sad for those who were killed in the attack.

In an interview with CBS News, Ahmed said he "didn't worry about anything" except for the lives he could save as he disarmed Sajid Akram on December 14. The act was

**BONDI SHOOTING**

caught on camera and shared around the world.

"My target was just to take the gun from him, and to stop him from killing a human

being's life and not killing innocent people," he said.

"I know I saved lots, but I feel sorry for the lost."

Akram was shot dead by police during the attack on a Hanukah event where 15 people were killed. His son, Naveed Akram, was wounded by police, and he was later charged with 59 offences.

Footage from the attack shows Ahmed leaping from

behind a parked car to grapple with Sajid Akram, whose gun was knocked to the ground in the struggle. Ahmed picked it up and pointed it at the gunman, who retreated to his son on a nearby footbridge. "I jumped in his back, hit him. I hold him with my right hand and start saying a word, you know, like to warn him, 'drop your gun, stop doing what you're doing'."

Ship's long detour to deliver cranes

An 800-foot cargo vessel travelled 19,700 nautical miles to deliver just 5 giant ship-to-shore cranes. The ship, Zhen Hua 29, departed Shanghai on June 20, heading west through the South China Sea before crossing the Indian Ocean.

After over three months at sea and crossing three oceans, the vessel docked at the Port of Kingston in Jamaica in October. The cranes it carried, built in China, were destined for ports in Jamaica and the US Gulf Coast.

For decades, such long jour-

neys have been a routine part of global trade. As heavy machinery is manufactured in one part of the world and shipped across continents and installed thousands of kilometres away, Zhen Hua 29's voyage made it worry about the ultra-long shipping routes. "The Washington Post" said.

Both Republican and Democratic governments in the US have raised concerns about relying on cranes made in China, saying it could be risky to depend on them, hinting they may be a threat to national security. US officials say around 80% of the ship-to-

**3 MONTHS, 37K KM**

shore cranes at American ports are made by China.

The White House is now seeking US ports to source cranes from countries other than China and revive domestic crane manufacturing. However, that change is not easy. For almost 20 years,

Chinese cranes have been the cheapest and easiest option.

In fact, the fastest way from Shanghai to Mississippi would normally take about a month, sailing across the Pacific Ocean and through the Panama Canal. But the cargo it was carrying made it impossible to pass through the canal.

But the cranes' long arms, known as booms, stick out from the ship's sides, and canal authorities do not allow overhanging cargo that could damage locks and other infrastructure. As a result, the ship had to take the long route.

Pak YouTuber attacked inside court premises in Karachi

Karachi: A famous Pakistani YouTuber was attacked on Monday inside a court in Karachi. Rajab Butt appeared at the Karachi Sessions Court to get bail in a case filed against him for allegedly hurting religious sentiments.

According to his lawyer, Butt was physically manhandled in the court building premises, and his shirt was also torn off. Butt was

attacked by lawyers who kept on beating him despite pleas to stop their attack. Butt has 8 million subscribers. In recent days, he has been facing legal proceedings in many cases.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's former PM Imran Khan and wife Bushra Bibi on Monday filed separate pleas in a high court, challenging their 17-year jail term in Toshakhana-2 case.

US vows \$2b for UN humanitarian aid

Geneva: The US on Monday announced a \$2 billion pledge for UN humanitarian aid as President Trump's govt continues to slash US foreign aid and warns UN agencies to "adapt, shrink or die" in a time of new financial realities.

Briefs

VADODARA

Syndrela, Divyanshi eke out wins



Defending champion Syndrela Das, top seed **Divyanshi Bhowmick** and Japan's Miku Matsushima began their girls U-19 singles campaign with impressive wins in the WTT Youth Contender 2026 here on Sunday. Syndrela, who clinched the U-17 title on Saturday, defeated Archismita Mahato 11-7, 11-7, 11-8 in Group 3 while Divyanshi defeated Shrestha Kontham 11-4, 11-3, 11-7 in Group 1. In Group 2, Miku began with a 11-3, 11-6, 11-4 win over Gunjan Kumar. The top seeds in boys U-19 were also assured of a spot in the knockout out stage as they registered two wins each in their respective groups. The U-15 top seeds also advanced to the knockout stage with comfortable wins in their groups.

RANCHI

Shrachi Bengal Tigers beat Royals



Agustina Gorzelany (37th) scored the winner as Shrachi Bengal Tigers recorded a 1-0 win over Ranchi Royals in the Women's Hockey India League here on Sunday. With this win, the Bengal Tigers moved to the second position in the points table. The Ranchi Royals came into this contest high on confidence with two consecutive wins and started the game with their midfield controlling the tempo in the opening exchanges. They had five penalty corners and seven circle penetrations in the first quarter, but couldn't find a way past Jennifer Rizzo in goal for the Tigers.

MILAN

Roma falls to Atalanta by solitary goal



Gian Piero Gasperini's return to Bergamo ended in defeat as his Roma lost at Atalanta 1-0 in Serie A. **Giorgio Scalvini** claimed

T20 WC DRAMA | Mustafizur's dramatic ouster from the IPL prompted BCB to call a meeting

BCB wants games to be shifted

DHAKA

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Sunday decided against sending its national team to India for the T20 World Cup next month citing security concerns and government advice, following IPL franchise KKR's decision to release pacer Mustafizur Rahman on BCCI's instruction.

Although the BCCI did not explicitly cite the current relations between the two countries for its decision to seek Rahman's release on Saturday, it did say that the move was triggered by what's been happening all around.

Rahman's dramatic ouster from the IPL prompted the BCB to call an emergency meeting on Saturday night and a day later, it announced the Board of Directors met again and decided that the national team will not travel to India for the T20 World Cup beginning February 7.

"The Board reviewed the situation in detail, taking into account developments over the last 24 hours and expressed deep concern over the overall circumstances surrounding the participation of the Bangladesh National Team in matches scheduled to be played in India," said the BCB in a statement.

"Following a thorough assessment of the prevailing situation and the growing concerns regarding the safety and security of the Bangladesh contingent in India and considering the advice from the Bangladesh Government, the Board of Directors resolved that the Bangladesh National Team will not travel to India for the tournament under the current conditions."

The International Cricket Council (ICC) will need to address the issue as Bangladesh is sched-



uled to play all four of their leagues games in India.

Like the arrangement with Pakistan, Bangladesh wants all of their matches to be shifted to Sri Lanka, the co-host of the tournament.

"In light of this decision, the BCB has formally requested the International Cricket Council (ICC), as the event authority, to consider relocating all of Bangladesh matches to a venue outside India (co host Sri Lanka)," read the statement further.

"The Bangladesh Cricket Board looks forward to the ICC's understanding of the situation and an urgent response on this matter."

Even before the BCB issued a statement, government advisor Asif Nazrul declared in a Facebook post that the board has taken the call not send its team to India.

"Bangladesh will not go to India to play World Cup. Bangladesh Cricket Board has taken this decision today. We welcome this decision taken in the context of the violent

communal policy of the Cricket Board of India," read a translated version of his post in Bengali.

Following the BCB emergency meeting, Nazrul instructed the board to ask Jay Shah-led ICC to shift Bangladesh's four league games -- three in Kolkata and one in Mumbai -- to Sri Lanka.

"As the adviser in charge of the Ministry of Sports, I have instructed the Cricket Control



The Board reviewed the situation in detail, taking into account developments over the last 24 hours and expressed deep concern over the overall circumstances surrounding the participation of the Bangladesh National Team in matches scheduled to be played in India

BCB statement

Bangladesh names 15-member squad for T20 WC

DHAKA

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Sunday announced a 15-member squad with Litton Das as captain for the T20 World Cup next month, hours after it was instructed by the country's sports ministry to seek shifting of the team's league games from India to Sri Lanka.

The BCB has been told by

its sports ministry to seek shifting of the country's T20 World Cup league games from India to Sri Lanka as there are "concerns about players' safety" following Mustafizur Rahman's ouster from the IPL on BCCI instructions.

Bangladesh's four league games are -- against West Indies (February 7), Italy (February 9), England (February 14) in Kolkata fol-

lowed by their last match against Nepal (February 17) in Mumbai.

The T20 showpiece is to be jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka from February 7 to March 8. Das stayed as captain while pacer Taskin Ahmed returned to the side after missing the recent Ireland series. Ahmed will team up with Rahman, who was also expectedly named in the squad, in the pace depart-

ment. "The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has announced the national squad for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, to be jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka from 7 February to 8 March," the BCB said on X.

Following BCCI's diktat, Shah Rukh Khan co-owned IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) on Saturday released Rahman, who was bought for Rs 9.20 crore.

Doctors optimistic about Martyn moving out of ICU

Former Aus cricketer had a 'miraculous turnaround'

MELBOURNE

Doctors are optimistic that former Australian batter Damien Martyn could be moved out of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) soon, after waking up from the induced coma he was placed in when he was diagnosed with a bout of meningitis on Boxing Day.

Martyn, a 54-year-old and two-time World Cup winner with Australia, is now able to talk as he woke up from the coma after being placed into it last week in the hospital at Gold Coast, as per ESPNcricinfo.

Martyn's long-time teammate and close friend, Adam Gilchrist, who has been actively giving health updates on the flashy stroke player, said that over the last 48 hours, it has been an "unbelievable turn of events" for Martyn's health.

"It has been an unbelievable turn of events in the last 48 hours. He is now able to talk and respond to treatment. He has responded extraordinarily well since coming out of the coma to the point



Adam Gilchrist, former Australia keeper-batter

where his family feels it is like some sort of miracle," said Gilchrist as quoted by ESPNcricinfo in a statement issued on behalf of the batter's family.

"It has been so positive that they are hopeful he will be able to move out of the ICU into another part of the hospital, which is representative of what a great recovery it has been and how quickly it has flipped around. He is in good spirits and overwhelmed by the support. There is still some treatment and monitor-

ing to go but it is looking positive," added Gilchrist.

The legendary wicket-keeper-batter said that Martyn's wife Amanda feels that outpouring of love from everyone around him, "helped" Martyn.

"They just feel blessed so many people have wanted to support him in his time in need.

He will remain in the hospital and continue to receive treatment, but the turnaround has been miraculous," he concluded.

Root, Brook guide England to position of strength

Bad light stops play in the final Ashes Test in Sydney

SYDNEY

Joe Root and Harry Brook shared a 154-run partnership to guide England to 211-3 before bad light stopped play on Day 1 of the final Ashes test, which featured an emotional on-field tribute for the Bondi terror victims and first responders.

Root and Brook joined when the tourists were at a perilous 57-3 on Sunday and rallied England through the middle session before bad light and rain stopped play just before tea and prevented the match from resuming after the interval.

At stumps Root was unbeaten on 72 and Brook was 78 not out, sharing England's best partnership of the five-test series. Australia has already retained the Ashes with wins in the first three tests.

The duo raised their half-centuries within the same over that their stand hit triple figures as England took control on a pitch that didn't appear to offer too much



England's Joe Root bats during play on day one of the fifth Test.

AP

assistance for Australia's bowlers.

Root made his 67th test fifty off 65 balls with seven boundaries, while Brook completed his 15th half-century from 63 balls in more streaky fashion, with some big shots narrowly avoiding the catching fielders and frustrating the hosts.

"I've just got to be a little bit more patient and take my ones here and there," Brook said.

"It's just about staying in my own bubble really and not getting too far ahead."

Triple strike

England lost three wickets in quick succession midway through the morning session after Ben Duckett and Zak Crawley had got the tourists away to a swift start after England captain Ben Stokes won the toss and chose to bat.

Mitchell Starc ended their partnership at 35 when he teased an edge from Duckett (27) through to wicketkeeper Alex Carey for his 27th wicket of the series.

Australia then got two wickets in eight balls with

Michael Neser trapping Crawley (16) lbw and then Scott Boland sending Jacob Bethell (10) on his way with a trademark ball that nipped off the seam and caught the edge through to Carey.

Heavy security and emotions

In a rarity at a sporting event in Australia, police with long-arm rifles, mounted police and riot squad officers were on patrol as part of heightened security measures at the sold-out match following the antisemitic terror attack which killed 15 people at nearby Bondi Beach three weeks ago.

Before play commenced, victims of the shootings, first responders and community members were honored with an on-field tribute, including a guard of honor and a standing ovation from the capacity crowd. In strong emotional scenes, the largest roar of the morning was for Ahmed al Ahmed, the shop owner who helped put an end to the rampage of one of the two shooters.

feather in the cap

Stasya wins silver at Equestrian Junior Nationals



MUMBAI

Young equestrian talent **Stasya Pandya** from Mumbai delivered a commendable performance at the Junior National Equestrian Championship (JNEC) 2025, clinching the Silver Medal in the Dressage Team Event (Children 1 category). The prestigious national championship was conducted across two premier venues — the Embassy International Riding School,

Bengaluru, and the Army Polo and Riding Club, New Delhi from the 18th of December 2025 upto the 6th of January 2026.

Stasya trains and rides at the Amateur Riders Club, Mumbai, under the mentorship of Coach Bobin Tshering. Competing astride Kirrhi Taonga from Surge Stables, Bengaluru, she scored 67.463, playing a key role in her team's podium finish.

The silver-winning team delivered a strong collective

performance with Haripriya Singh astride Fritz scoring 71.243 and Amara Singh astride Count Me In D' Grading scoring 68.581, both representing Sea Horse Equestrian, Gujarat. Dev Harish Kapoor, riding Serrano from Modi Equestrian, Meerut, added 65.934 to the tally. The team secured the Silver Medal with an impressive total score of 207.287.

Speaking on her achievement, Stasya said, "I am really grateful to the

faith and trust my coach Bobin sir has put in me, along with my club, The Amateur Riders Club, for providing world-class training facilities for my training and development. I also thank my school, Billabong High International School, and my parents for being constantly supportive throughout."

Her coach, Bobin Tshering, praised her journey and dedication, saying,

"Stasya's growth as a rider has been phenomenal. Since

joining Amateur Riders Club in 2023, she's embraced both Show Jumping and Dressage, and her dedication has paid off spectacularly — a standout performance at her first JNEC Dressage and gold in the FEI Jumping Children's Classic. Her ability to master multiple disciplines has made her a well-rounded competitor. I'm incredibly proud of her hard work and commitment." Stasya's performance at the Junior Nationals marks an important milestone.