

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Title Code - UPENG04488

NATIONAL ENGLISH DAILY

MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

Thursday, 18 December, 2025

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

The 'Romeo' helicopter will now destroy Pakistani and Chinese submarines at sea

New Delhi

It has now become easier for India to detect and neutralize Pakistani and Chinese submarines at sea, as the Navy commissioned the second squadron of MH-60R 'Romeo' helicopters at INS Hansa in Goa on Wednesday. The commissioning of INAS 335, in the presence of Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, is part of the Indian Navy's continuous efforts to modernize and enhance its maritime capabilities. This will further strengthen India's maritime combat capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region. Navy Chief Admiral Tripathi commissioned the second squadron of the American MH-60R Seahawk multi-role helicopters at INS Hansa in Goa. This squadron will be known as INAS 335, while the first squadron, commissioned in March last year, was formally inducted into the air fleet as INAS 334. These advanced helicopters, part of the second 'Romeo' squadron, are capable of anti-submarine warfare, missile attacks, and surveillance. The multi-role American maritime helicopter MH-60R is designed for anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, search and rescue, and medical evacuation. According to the Ministry of Defence, the commissioning of the second squadron of MH-60R helicopters.

Ordering CBI probe should be the last resort, not routine: SC

NEW DELHI:

Cautioning high courts, and itself, against routinely ordering CBI probes, Supreme Court on Thursday said courts should invoke their power to direct an inquiry by the central agency as a last resort in an exceptional situation. A bench of justices J K Maheshwari and Vijay Bishnoi set aside Allahabad high court's order directing a CBI probe into alleged irregularities in the recruitment process for UP legislative council staff, saying the order was passed by HC on the basis of some doubt and assumptions. The bench also referred the matter back to the high court for a rehearing.

India and Ethiopia share a 2,000-year-old relationship: Modi

"Vande Mataram" echoed in Ethiopia... Prime Minister Modi waved in greeting

Addis Ababa

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that India and Ethiopia share a 2,000-year-old relationship. The two countries have decided to elevate their bilateral relations to a strategic partnership. Prime Minister Modi is in Ethiopia on the second leg of his three-nation tour. Addressing a joint session of the Ethiopian Parliament on Wednesday, Prime Minister Modi said that both India and Ethiopia share warmth in their climate and spirit. He said, "Indian companies are among the largest investors in Ethiopia. They have invested more than five billion dollars in various sectors and created more



than 75,000 jobs. We have decided to elevate India-Ethiopia bilateral relations to a strategic partnership." Referring to the rise of the Global South, Modi sent a message to the world that it is not possible to move forward with systems stuck in the past. He described Ethiopia as a natural friend in the field of regional peace, security and connectivity. Prime Minister Modi described India and Ethiopia as natural

friends in the field of regional peace, security and connectivity. He said that Ethiopia is the gateway to Africa, while India is situated in the heart of the Indian Ocean. In his speech, he specifically mentioned that both the Indian and Ethiopian national anthems refer to the land as a mother. He expressed gratitude for receiving the Great Honour of Ethiopia award. The Prime Minister mentioned that

relations between India and Africa have progressed manifold in the last 11 years. India's digital public infrastructure has completely transformed the way services are delivered to the people. India has supplied medicines and vaccines to more than 150 countries, and it is a matter of pride for us that we have also provided 4 million vaccine doses to Ethiopia. Prime Minister Modi said that ports like Addis Ababa and Dholera were not just trade centers, but bridges between civilizations. In modern times, our relationship entered a new era when, in 1941, Indian soldiers fought alongside the Ethiopian people for Ethiopia's independence.

'The Gandhi family is dishonest and the most corrupt family'



New Delhi

Retaliating against the Congress party's statement regarding the National Herald case, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) called Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi liars and the most corrupt family, stating that this fake Gandhi family has already been charged with fraud and forgery and is currently out on bail. At a press conference held at the BJP headquarters on Wednesday, party spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said that if there is anyone most corrupt in politics, it is the

deceitful Gandhi family. Sonia, Rahul, and Robert Vadra are still roaming free on bail in a case under Section 420. He said that recently, Congress party national president Mallikarjun Kharge held a press conference regarding the National Herald scam. This scam was perpetrated by the fake Gandhi family. Three of its members – Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and Robert Vadra – are out on bail. This is a "bail" vehicle. The fake Gandhi family survives only on deceit, fraud, and propaganda.

The Luthra brothers were taken to Goa by the police

New Delhi

A major update has emerged in the case of the devastating fire that killed 25 people at the Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub in Goa on December 6th. The nightclub owners, brothers Gaurav and Saurabh Luthra, are being taken to Goa by the Goa Police. Gaurav Luthra and Saurabh Luthra were deported from Thailand and brought to India, where they were arrested



at Delhi Airport and are now being taken to Goa by the Goa Police. The court has granted the Goa Police a two-day transit remand for them. Saurabh

Luthra and Gaurav Luthra, the owners of the Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub in Arpora, North Goa, who had fled to Thailand after the fire, were arrested from the IGI Airport around 2:30 PM on Tuesday. Both brothers in police custody. After a medical examination at the Indira Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital in Dwarka and being produced before the Patiala House Court for transit remand.

In Delhi, 50 percent work from home is now mandatory: Kapil

New Delhi

In view of the rising pollution levels in Delhi, GRAP-4 restrictions have been implemented. The Delhi government has also taken two important decisions to provide relief to the most affected sections of society and to reduce congestion in the city.

The government has issued guidelines for providing a compensation of Rs. 10,000 to registered construction workers and limiting attendance in government and private institutions to a maximum of 50 percent. Tourism Minister Kapil Mishra told reporters here on Wednesday that, as per the instructions of the Labour Department, all government and private insti-



tutions in Delhi will be allowed a maximum of 50 percent attendance. The remaining employees will be required to work from home. Offices have also been encouraged to adopt flexible and staggered working hours to avoid traffic congestion and its impact on pollution due to simultaneous commuting. He said that daily wage laborers suffered heavy losses due to the 16-day ban on construction work during GRAP-3. As a relief measure, the Delhi

government will provide financial assistance of Rs. 10,000 to all registered and verified construction workers through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). This assistance will also be provided during GRAP-4. The Tourism Minister appealed to construction workers to register on the Delhi government portal as soon as possible so that they can receive the assistance after verification. He said that more than 10,000 registrations have already been completed and there is currently no limit on registrations. This amount will be given to all eligible and registered workers. The aim of these is to control pollution and provide financial relief to the affected workers.

Global trade is being weaponized through tariffs: Nirmala Sitharaman

New Delhi

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Wednesday that global trade is increasingly being weaponized through tariffs and other measures, and India will have to proceed cautiously. She added that the overall strength of the economy will give the country an added advantage.



tage. Addressing an event in New Delhi, the Union Finance Minister said that it is now abundantly clear globally that trade is

not free and fair. Nirmala Sitharaman said, "Trade is being weaponized through tariffs and various other measures." She

further added, "Therefore, India will have to negotiate carefully, and just dealing with tariffs will not be enough, but I think our overall economic strength will give us that added advantage." She said, "India might be lectured, saying you (India) are very inward-looking, you are the king of tariffs, etc. However, tariffs have

been misused as a weapon." The Finance Minister said in her address that India has never intended to use tariffs as a weapon. The Finance Minister said that today, the weaponization of trade is happening without any criticism, and some countries say that tariffs are not good and nobody should resort to them.

Courage, discipline, and dedication to duty are the hallmarks of our soldiers: CM Yogi

Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath today, Wednesday, inaugurated the PAC Foundation Day celebrations - 2025 at the 35th Battalion PAC Headquarters in the city. On this occasion, the Chief Minister distributed trophies to officers who had performed outstandingly. In his address, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath congratulated



ed the PAC personnel on their 78-year journey. These 78 years represent a glorious history of discipline, sacrifice, and dedication of the PAC force. The PAC has been working on

the front lines in Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state in the country, to improve internal security, manage disasters, and ensure the peaceful conduct of all important festivals.

Tilak Varma jumps up in T20 rankings

New Delhi

Indian players have made significant gains in the latest update of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's T20I Player Rankings. India's explosive batsman Tilak Varma has jumped two places to reach fourth position in the batsmen's list, while spinner Varun Chakravarthy has further strengthened his top spot in the bowlers' rankings. Tilak Varma had a stellar performance in the recent T20I series against South Africa.

The Bangladeshi ambassador was summoned, and concerns were expressed regarding the security of the mission

New Delhi

Bangladesh's High Commissioner to India, Riaz Hamidullah, was summoned to the Ministry of External Affairs on Wednesday and conveyed India's deep concern over the deteriorating security situation in the country. India expressed its expectation that the interim government would ensure the security of missions and embassies in



Bangladesh, in accordance with its diplomatic obligations. The High Commissioner's attention was drawn specifically to the activities of certain extremist elements who have

announced plans to create an atmosphere of insecurity around the Indian High Commission in Dhaka. The Ministry of External Affairs stated that India completely

rejects the false narrative being spread by extremist elements regarding recent incidents in Bangladesh. It is unfortunate that the interim government has neither conducted a thorough investigation nor shared any meaningful evidence with India regarding these incidents. India is a proponent of peace and stability in Bangladesh and has consistently called for holding free, fair, and credible elections.

Will ordinary citizens in India get access to atomic equipment?

New Delhi

The central government has proposed amendments to the Civil Nuclear Law in the Lok Sabha. Through this, the government is preparing to end its



monopoly on nuclear

energy. If the bill introduced to amend the existing law is accepted, private companies and even individuals in India could be involved in activities such as the construction and operation of nuclear power

plants in the coming days. Minister of State for Science and Technology, Jitendra Singh, introduced the bill in the Lok Sabha. Discussion on it began on Wednesday. It has been stated that by

enacting this bill into law, the government is trying to achieve its target of generating a total of 100 gigawatts of nuclear energy by 2047. What are the proposed changes to the Civil Nuclear Law?

During the hearing on the pollution crisis, the Supreme Court remarked, "Lawyers themselves become experts"

New Delhi

The Supreme Court heard a case on Wednesday regarding the deepening air pollution crisis in Delhi-NCR. During

the hearing, the issue of school closures in Delhi was raised. Advocate Menaka Guruswamy argued that poor children suffer the most whenever schools are

closed, as they are deprived of facilities like mid-day meals. Chief Justice of India Surya Kant responded that the matter should be left to experts.

Briefs

JAIPUR

Drones to transport organs

Human organs will now be transported by drones in Jaipur. Mahatma Gandhi University of Medical Sciences and Technology has come up with the initiative. The varsity's COO Sukant Das said drones will help overcome the obstacles of traffic, distance, and time and ensure safe transport and save time. Das said it will be a free service.

PATNA

Microfin banks: Cong plans stir

Bihar Congress on Wednesday announced to launch an agitation against "arbitrary practices" of microfinance banks after a person along with three daughters allegedly died by suicide in Muzaffarpur district after they fell in debt trap and became victims of harassment.

CHANDIGARH

Athlete's murder: Cops kill accused

The key accused involved in Kabaddi promoter's murder case was neutralised in a retaliatory fire by a Punjab police team, while two police personnel also sustained injuries in the encounter that took place in Lalru town area, near here Wednesday afternoon.

GUWAHATI

ED attaches ₹2.40 crore in DA case

The ED has provisionally attached assets worth ₹2.40 crore in connection with a disproportionate assets case against Karun Jyoti Baruah, former Superintendent Engineer (Civil) of Oil India Limited (OIL) at Duliagan in Assam's Dibrugarh district.

VARANASI

Two-day tourism expo from today

Varanasi will host the IIA International Tourism and Hospitality Expo 2025 on December 18 and 19 at Hotel Taj Ganges, bringing together global stakeholders from the tourism and hospitality sector. The event is being jointly organised by Indian Industries Association and Invest UP, Govt of Uttar Pradesh. The expo aims to position India, with a focus on Uttar Pradesh and Varanasi.

—Biswajeet Banerjee

KOLKATA

SIT visits Salt Lake stadium

The SIT formed by the state government on Wednesday visited Salt Lake stadium to probe the rampage incident during Messi's event. Meanwhile, police following the CCTV footage, arrested another person. LoP Suwendu Adhikari along with other BJP MLAs agitated outside the stadium after they were denied entry.

IN PARLIAMENT | Original timeline was March '24; Gadkari's reply highlights hurdles due to land acquisition challenges**'Delhi-Mumbai e-way delayed by 3 more yrs'**

NEW DELHI

The 1,350-km Delhi-Mumbai Expressway (DME), one of India's largest highway projects, is now likely to be fully completed by 2027-28, Union minister for road transport and highways Nitin Gadkari told the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. The project was originally scheduled for completion in 2024.

Responding to another question on the status of projects awarded under Bharatmala Pariyojana (Phase I), Gadkari said the remaining projects were scheduled to be completed in a phased manner by 2028-29.

The minister also shared



Union Minister Nitin Gadkari addresses the Rajya Sabha during the Winter session of Parliament on Wednesday

data on national highway construction during the current financial year. In the first six months of the fiscal, 3,468 km of national highways were constructed, compared to a full-year target of 10,000 km.

Gadkari's reply highlighted delays across several highway projects due to issues such as litigation and delays in land acquisition. Of the 1,208 national highway projects currently under construction,

649 are facing delays. Among these, 301 projects have been delayed by more than one year, 263 projects by one to three years, and 85 projects by more than three years.

'Satellite-based toll collection from 2026-end'
The satellite-based toll collection system will be operational across the country by 2026-end, which will eliminate the waiting time at toll plazas for commuters and bring more revenue for the government, Gadkari informed the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

Responding to supplementaries during Question Hour, the road transport and highways minister said the new technology will be satellite- and AI-based.

SIDELIGHTS

Left parties protest Bill on rural jobs scheme

Left parties on Wednesday demanded the government to withdraw the rural employment Bill that seeks to replace the existing law MGNREGA, and gave a call for a joint protest against it on December 22.

TMC seeks video proof of e-smoking charge
TMC's Lok Sabha leader Abhishek Banerjee on Wednesday said the party would take appropriate action only if credible and complete video evidence emerges to substantiate allegations that a party MP smoked an e-cigarette inside Parliament.

—Aritra Singha

No cases of drug-laced vapes, says govt
Asserting that electronic cigarettes remain completely banned under Indian law, the government on Wednesday informed Parliament that no case related to the seizure of e-cigarettes and vape devices with narcotic substances has been investigated by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).

PT Usha seeks aid for Wayanad coffee growers

Legendary athlete and nominated Rajya Sabha member PT Usha on Wednesday raised serious concerns over the deepening crisis facing coffee growers and labourers in Kerala's Wayanad district during the Zero Hour proceedings in the Upper House. Wayanad, a key region contributing significantly to India's coffee production and rural employment, is grappling with multiple challenges that threaten the livelihoods of thousands of planters, Usha emphasised.

NATIONAL HERALD CASE

PM, Shah must resign: Cong

NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

The Congress on Wednesday demanded Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah's resignation after a Delhi court refused to take cognisance of the ED's money laundering charge against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in the National Herald case.

The opposition party also vowed to expose the "vendetta politics" against its leadership, asserting that the Congress cadre is agitated and is going to show its strength against the "misuse of agencies."

"We will keep fighting them both inside and outside Parliament and teach them a lesson," party president Mallikarjun Kharge said at a press conference.

In a relief to Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and five others,



Uttar Pradesh Congress President Ajay Rai at a protest over National Herald case, in Lucknow on Wednesday

a Delhi court on Tuesday refused to take cognisance of the Enforcement Directorate's money laundering charge against them in the National Herald case, holding that the agency's probe stemmed from a private complaint and not an FIR.

Meanwhile, the Haryana Congress workers staged a

protest against, what they alleged "political malafide intent of the BJP-led Central government" at Panchkula, near here, on Wednesday.

Party state president Rao Narendra Singh and leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda held that the verdict exposed the BJP's political malafide intent.

Women scheme 'gaffe': Men not returning bounty

PATNA

"Dashazari" scheme, which played its significant role in tilting the balance in favour of NDA in the recently-concluded Bihar assembly election, continues to make ripples even after the polls as an amount of Rs 10,000 meant for women has been credited into the accounts of some men in Darbhanga district.

But officials' problems compounded when the male recipients of the money received under Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana refused to return it. Male recipients of the money have either spent the money, some during Chhath Puja and Diwali, while others purchased ducks and goats and are now unwilling or unable to return the amount.

Pak-based gangster threatens Nitish, UP min stirs new row

PATNA / LUCKNOW

A Pakistan-based underworld don has allegedly threatened Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar for pulling down a woman's hijab at an official function held on Monday in the state capital.

In a purported video message circulated on social media, the underworld don, Shahzad Bhatti, asked how a man "at the helm of affairs" could behave in such a manner with a Muslim woman at a public function.

"He should immediately tender his apology for his action," Shahzad said, adding that he should not be blamed if anything "untoward happened to the offender". The video message is being viewed as an alleged threat to the chief minister.

Shahzad, a native of Pakistan's Punjab province, has been involved in alleged anti-India campaigns on social media. He is also reportedly associated with terrorist organisations operating from Pakistan. Bihar police officials are tight-lipped over the video message. The controversy erupted after Nitish removed the hijab



HIJAB CONTROVERSY

Suspense over doc joining service

Patna: Speculation is rife whether a newly appointed AYUSH doctor, Nusrat Parveen, whose hijab was pulled down by Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar would join government service. "She is determined not to join the service. However, all family members, including me, are trying to convince her otherwise. We are telling her that it is the fault of the other person, so why should she feel bad or suffer because of it," Parveen's brother told eNewsroom.

—Dheeraj Kumar

of a woman doctor while distributing appointment letters to newly recruited AYUSH doctors at a function in Patna.

Mfg declining in India, need to build good ecosystems: Rahul

NEW DELHI

Manufacturing is the backbone of strong economies, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said on Wednesday while asserting that manufacturing is declining in India.

The country needs to build meaningful manufacturing ecosystems for accelerating growth, Gandhi said in a social media post after a guided tour of BMW Welt and the BMW Plant in Munich.

The leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, who is on a visit to Germany, said the highlight of the BMW tour was seeing TVS's 450cc motorcycle, developed in partnership with BMW.

"Had the chance to experience BMW's world in Munich, Germany, with a guided tour of BMW Welt and the BMW Plant - an incredible look at world-class manufacturing up close," Gandhi said in an Instagram post.

A highlight was seeing TVS's 450cc motorcycle, developed in partnership with BMW, he said, adding that it was a proud moment to see Indian engineering on



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during his visit to BMW Welt, in Munich, Germany

display.

"Manufacturing is the backbone of strong economies. Sadly, in India, manufacturing is declining. For us to accelerate growth, we need to produce more - build meaningful manufacturing ecosystems, and create high-quality jobs at scale," Gandhi said.

Gandhi is visiting Germany at the invitation of the Progressive Alliance, a key group of 117 progressive parties from across the world.

During his visit, Gandhi will engage with the Indian diaspora as well as meet German government ministers.

PoK woman crosses LoC after tiff with dad, held

MENDHAR/JAMM

Security forces have apprehended a Pakistani woman who crossed into Jammu and Kashmir's (J&K) Poonch district along the Line of Control (LoC), news agency PTI reported.

The woman was identified as Shehnaz Akhtar, a resident of the Gimma area of Kotli district in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). She crossed into the Indian territory following an argument with her father.

"A 35-year-old Pakistani national, identified as Shehnaz Akhtar of the Gimma area of Kotli district in PoK, was apprehended by Army troops from the Dabbi forward area in the Balakote sector on Tuesday," PTI reported, quoting officials on Wednesday.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the Pakistani woman had an argument with her father and fled from her home towards the LoC area before being held by the Indian Army unit. She is yet to be handed over to the local police, the officials said.

Odisha man taken hostage in Sudan returns

Bhubaneswar: After remaining hostage for 45 days in Sudan, 36-year-old Adarsh Behera from Odisha returned to the state on Wednesday, bringing relief and cheer to his family and well-wishers.

Behera had gone missing from Al-Fashir city in Sudan's North Darfur state. The Indian government secured his release with the help of international interlocutors, a senior official said. "I was not expecting to remain alive after being abducted by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia in Sudan. They tortured me a lot, denied food for days and put in a jail and forced to walk in jungle."

new book by ex-PM's aide**Before Kalam, Vajpayee's name floated for prez post**

NEW DELHI

Before APJ Abdul Kalam was considered for the candidacy for the post of President of India, there were suggestions from within the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for elevating the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to the country's top constitutional post and making Lal Krishna Advani his suc-

cessor. However, Vajpayee refused, stating that his becoming President by virtue of his majority would set a wrong precedent.

Ashok Tandon, who served as Vajpayee's media advisor, related the episode in his book 'Atal Sansmaran', published by Prabhat Prakashan.

Kalam was elected the 11th President in 2002 with the support of both the then ruling

National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the Opposition. He served in this position until 2007.

Tandon, who served as the ex-prime minister's media advisor from 1998 to 2004, writes that Vajpayee, on the other hand, flatly rejected the suggestion that he should move to Rashtrapati Bhavan and hand over the prime ministership to Advani, his second-in-com-

mand.

According to Tandon, "Vajpayee was not ready for this. He believed that for any popular prime minister, becoming President by virtue of majority would not be a good sign for Indian parliamentary democracy. It would set a very wrong precedent, and he would be the last person to support such a move."

Tandon writes that Vajpayee

invited leaders of the main opposition party, the Congress, so that a consensus could be built for the post of President.

"I remember that Sonia Gandhi, Pranab Mukherjee, and Dr. Manmohan Singh came to meet him. Vajpayee officially revealed for the first time that the NDA had decided to nominate Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam as their candidate for the presidential election... There was a

moment of silence in the meeting. Then Sonia Gandhi broke the silence and said that they were surprised by his choice, and that they had no option but to support him, but they would discuss his proposal and then make a decision," he says.

Tandon relates many other events that took place during Vajpayee's tenure as prime minister and about Vajpayee's relationships with several leaders.



Annual Day and Prize Distribution Ceremony Held at Government Girls Inter College

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: On Tuesday, the annual day and prize distribution ceremony was held at Government Girls Inter College, Civil Lines, Prayagraj, under the patronage and guidance of the District School Inspector, Prayagraj, P.N. Singh, and coordinated by Principal Neelam Mishra. The chief guest at the event was Umesh Chandra Ganesh Kesarwani, Mayor of Prayagraj, and the special guests were Divyakant Shukla, former Secretary of the Secondary Education Council, Uttar Pradesh and President of Vidya Bharati (Eastern Uttar Pradesh), R.N. Vishwakarma, Joint Director of Education, Prayagraj Division, and Jitendra Pratap Singh, Assistant District School Inspector, Prayagraj. The program began with the honored guests offering garlands and lighting lamps before the idol of Goddess Saraswati. Following this, Principal



Neelam Mishra, Lata Kumari, and Kiran Rai welcomed the guests with bouquets, shawls, and mementos. The students welcomed the guests with vermilion and rice grains, and Dr. Akanksha Kesari (Scout In-charge) presented them with badges. District School Inspector Prayagraj, P.N. Singh, in his welcome address, said that education is a means of the all-round development of children. The students of Government Girls Inter College, Prayagraj, have consistently performed excellently in academics as well as in sports and other activities. Following this, the students of the school presented captivating performances of Saraswati Vandana, Ganesh



Vandana, welcome songs, folk dances from various states including Uttar Pradesh, awareness-raising plays, and various cultural and colorful programs. In the program, students who secured first place in each class from 6th to 12th grade in both Hindi and English medium in the last academic session at Government Girls Inter College Prayagraj, students who participated in the state-level science exhibition, Rani Yadav

who was selected for the state-level cricket team and Ritu Patel who was selected for karate, students selected for the divisional-level Kabaddi team, and other students who performed excellently in extracurricular activities were honored and encouraged with awards and certificates by the chief guest. On this occasion, as part of the voter awareness campaign, Form 6 was filled out by female students who

would complete 18 years of age on or before January 1, 2026, and all students and their parents were made aware of the process. The special guest at the program, Joint Director of Education, Prayagraj Division, R.N. Vishwakarma, boosted the morale of the students through his address and emphasized the importance of discipline, self-confidence, and perseverance as the keys to success. Former Secretary of the Secondary Education Council and President of Vidya Bharati Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Divyakant Shukla, highlighted the role of the school as a center of social consciousness along with education and stressed the importance of values such as affection and

unity in society, as well as the preservation of Indian culture and traditions. The chief guest, Umesh Chandra Ganesh Kesarwani, Mayor of Prayagraj, praised the students and teachers and announced the donation of a submersible pump, a hand pump, and an RO water cooler to the school as a gift. ADIOS Jitendra Pratap Singh enlightened and motivated the students through an inspiring poem and a short story. At the end of the program, Prgya Mishra delivered the vote of thanks. The program was successfully conducted by Vandana Anand. Dr. Prabhakar Tripathi, Irshad Masuri, Ravindra Mishra, and Dr. Parul Yadav were present on this occasion. Rashmi Singh, Dr. Ranjana Yadav, Kanika Yadav, Iffat Zia, Vandana, Anita Uttam, Rekha Ram, Manju Srivastava, Sandhya Sailani, Pallavi, Rupali, Pushpa Shukla, Jyoti Agarwal, Manisha, and Vandana Pandey, along with all the teachers, provided their support for the program.

Villagers reach home by walking along the field embankments



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kaushambi. Hundreds of houses belonging to the villagers of Nathai ka Purwa hamlet in Baripur Shakha village, Sirathu tehsil area, were demolished to make way for the construction of a national highway. Following this, the villagers built new homes in their fields and began living there. However, a proper road to their new homes was not constructed, forcing the villagers to use the narrow field embankments to travel. When someone falls ill, villagers have to carry them on their shoulders to the hospital. Hundreds of families in the village are suffering due to the lack of a proper road. Despite repeated demands for a road, neither the Gram Panchayat nor the local MLA and MP have shown any interest in its construction, leaving the villagers' problems unresolved. Frustrated by the lack of a road and proper access, the villagers staged a protest at the District Magistrate's office on Wednesday, submitting a memorandum demanding the construction of a road. Hundreds of men and women participated in the protest, including Suresh Kumar, Neeraj Kumar, Indra Raj Kumar, Chhangu Lal, Lalita, Niranjan Kumar, Shiv Rani Devi, Rakesh Kumar, Pinki Devi, Alok Kumar, Rajesh Kumar, Priyanka Devi, Shobha Devi, Neelam Devi, Kaila Devi, Alfisa Bano, Sandeep Kumar, Alok Kumar, Manita Devi, Urmila Devi, Sunita Devi, Vimla Devi, Sushila Devi, Rita Devi, Meena Devi, Sushila Kumari, Subhash Kumar, Chandni Devi, Vinod Kumar, Sanod Kumar, Dinesh Kumar, Bahadur, Gomti Devi, Shivrani, Sohni, and Sarita Devi.

Gurugram Police Arrests BJP Leader from Kaushambi for Posting False Information About a Woman's Murder on X

The post was made by Hariom Mishra alias Shaurya Mishra from Charwa police station area

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kaushambi. A BJP leader from the Charwa police station area of the district has been arrested by the Gurugram, Haryana police for posting false information about a woman's murder on X (formerly Twitter). The police had initially warned the BJP leader and asked him to remove the fake and false post, but the BJP leader did not comply, after which the Gurugram police from Haryana arrested him from Kaushambi and presented him before the court after completing the necessary paperwork. The incident took place a week ago on December 9, when a BJP



leader from Kaushambi district posted on the social media platform X about the gang rape and murder of a woman. The incident was claimed to have taken

place in Gurugram, Haryana. The Gurugram police investigated the matter and found the post to be false. The cyber police registered a case and

arrested the accused on Tuesday. Gurugram police identified the accused as Hariom Mishra alias Shaurya Mishra, a resident of the Charwa police station area in Kaushambi district, Uttar Pradesh. The accused is reportedly the district vice-president of the BJP Yuva Morcha (BJP Youth Wing). Police officials said that on December 11, they received information about this post being circulated on Shaurya Mishra's X media handle. Upon investigation, the matter was found to be false. The Cyber Police Station West registered a case against the accused. It was stated that this post was intended

to disrupt social and religious harmony. Police officials said that the accused, 25-year-old Hariom Mishra, holds an LLB degree. He is a resident of Charwa village. During questioning, he stated that he saw a similar post while using social media. He copied it and posted it from his X account. Even knowing that the post was objectionable and would hurt social and religious sentiments, he still shared it on social media. During the investigation, the accused was contacted by phone and warned about this. Despite this, he did not remove the objectionable post, after which he was arrested.

Pensioners Day Organized Under the Chairmanship of the District Magistrate

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: Pensioners Day was organized on Wednesday under the chairmanship of District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma. The program was coordinated by Chief Treasury Officer Pratyush Kumar, Astha Tiwari, Joint/Additional Director Treasury and Pension Prayagraj, Senior Treasury Officer Civil Lines Indira Bhavan Rajendra Singh, and Treasury Officers Nitesh Mishra, Divya Srivastava, and Neetu Singh Yadav, Finance and Accounts Officer Basic Education, along with the Additional Chief Medical Officer/District Accounts Officer, heads of offices/their representatives from the district, office bearers of pensioners organizations, pensioners, and treasury employees. In the meeting, the Chief



Treasury Officer, Prayagraj, informed about the phased resolution of pending pension revisions, medical reimbursements, and other issues raised by the office bearers of the association at the level of the heads of offices. Members of the Pensioners Association expressed their views, primarily suggesting the resolution of medical reimbursement claims, the implementation of cashless medical facilities, and the display of a banner listing hospitals providing cashless facilities at the Chief Medical Officers' office

premises. The District Magistrate directed all heads of offices to handle pension cases with sensitivity, resolve other demands of pensioners in a lawful manner, and conduct monthly monitoring for the resolution of the problems raised during Pensioners Day. He also directed that action be taken according to the rules against those heads of offices/departments or their representatives who were absent from the Pensioners Day event if a satisfactory explanation is not received.

Science and Art Exhibition at Bal Vidya Mandir: Students Talent Garners Praise

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. A science and art exhibition was organized at Bal Vidya Mandir Inter College, Karma, with the aim of developing scientific temperament, innovation, and creative abilities among the students. In the exhibition, students, especially the girls, showcased their talent through attractive and informative models related to science and art. The program was inaugurated by the chief guest, Akash Mishra, a scientist from the Indian Meteorological Department. The exhibition featured models based on various modern topics, including AI robots, electrolysis of water, microscopes, the Indus Valley Civilization, Indian festivals, volcanoes, the human eye, water purification systems, photosynthesis, the solar system, and the circulatory system. The stu-



dents explained the working principles and scientific significance of the models in simple terms, impressing the guests and parents. During his inspection, Chief Guest Akash Mishra said that such activities foster scientific thinking, curiosity, and innovation in children. Model-based education strengthens practical understanding. Amit Pandey, Principal of Smt. Indira Gandhi Inter College, said that today's era is one of science and technology, and Indian scientists have brought glory to the country on

the world stage. The creativity of the students in the science exhibition is commendable. The schools' Principal, Saba Khan, said that science and art activities are essential for the all-round development and confidence of children. The schools' manager, P.K. Tripathi, said that the school is continuously striving for practical and innovative education. Shahida Kirmani, Suman, Vikas Yadav, Soha Afrida, Aamil, Vasudha, S.K. Vind, and other members of the school family were present on the occasion.

Triveni and Garib Rath Trains Cancelled, Vande Bharat Arrives After 3 PM, Bhubaneswar Rajdhani 10.5 Hours Late

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: The Triveni Express, running from Tanakpur in Uttarakhand to Singrauli, and the Garib Rath Express, from Anand Vihar Terminal in Delhi to Bhagalpur, were cancelled on Wednesday. The cancellation of these two important trains caused considerable inconvenience to passengers. Meanwhile, the Vande Bharat Express from New Delhi to Varanasi also arrived three hours late. Train operations have been disrupted for the past few days due to fog. To ensure that trains run on time the following day, the railways have started cancelling trains that are running hours behind schedule. In this series



of cancellations, the 22406 Anand Vihar-Bhagalpur Garib Rath Express was cancelled. The 22405 Garib Rath Express, which was scheduled to arrive at 12:53 AM on Tuesday night, reached Prayagraj Junction around 5:30 PM on Wednesday, 16.5 hours behind schedule. Similarly, the 15074-15075 Tanakpur-Singrauli Triveni Express was also cancelled from both directions on Wednesday. It is reported that the Triveni Express will remain cancelled from both directions on

Thursday as well. However, train operations on the Delhi route showed some improvement on Wednesday. The Prayagraj Express, Rewa Express, Shivganga, Swatantrata Senani, Humsafar Express, and other trains were delayed by 20 minutes to three hours. The 22436 New Delhi-Varanasi Vande Bharat Express reached the junction after 3:30 PM, while its scheduled arrival time is 12:08 PM. The 22824 Rajdhani Express from New Delhi to Bhubaneswar was also 10.5 hours late.

Science Exhibition Participants Honored; School Management Commended for Organizing Educational Exhibition

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Phulpur. Following the conclusion of a fortnight-long science exhibition at Isha RDP School and College in Babuganj, the participants were awarded by the chief guest on

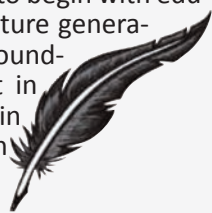


Wednesday. Presenting the awards, Chief Guest Ram Sumer Pal said that talent emerging from villages leaves its mark not only on the country but also on the global stage. Therefore, children should be given opportunities to showcase their skills in various educational exhibitions from time to time. The participants were overjoyed to receive the awards from the chief guest. Successful participants of the science exhibition, including Shivam, Aryan, Sakshi Mishra, Savani Patel, Anamika, Naithik Jaiswal, Raj Kumar, Srishti Vishwakarma, Nida Ansari, Anjali Chaurasia, Muskan Singh, Mahak Singh, Princey Modanwal, Mahi Modanwal, Anjali Yadav, Prince, Amir Ansari, Anuj Bhartiya, Viraj Yadav, Kinjal Jaiswal, Sakshi Dhuriya, along with Intermediate students Mohammad Imran, Nitin Yadav, Abhishek Kumar, Mohammad Faiz, Anmol Mishra, Sandeep Vishwakarma, Priyanshu, Muskan, Neetu Pal, Khushi Rao, Ayushi Yadav, Aarushi Chaurasia, Komal Pal, Sujal Maurya, Sudhir Kumar, Simran and Ayushi, were awarded by the school management and wished a bright future. The school manager, Vijay Pal, and Principal Neelam Pal expressed their gratitude to the chief guest and other dignitaries present. Senior teachers of the school, including Shivakant Shukla, Indu Tripathi, Sangeeta Patel, Mohammad Javed, Sneha, Ragini Singh, Raunak Bano, Pooja Gupta, B. Rai, Vashishth Baghel, Mohammad Kaif, Deepak Pal, and other teachers were also present on the occasion. Photo Caption - Chief Guest and school staff with the participating students of the science exhibition.

Editorial

Together, these beliefs have created a culture

Our collective disconnect from public cleanliness, even as the country spends massive resources on cleanup efforts, underscores the gap between our pride in ‘Swachh Bharat’ and our behaviour in public spaces. Globally, cultures like Japan’s have woven cleanliness into their social fabric through spiritual and cultural practices. For instance, Japanese fans at the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar gained worldwide admiration for cleaning the stadium after they won the World Cup. This wasn’t a publicity stunt but a practice embedded in Japanese customs through the teachings of Shintoism and Buddhism, which view cleanliness as both a spiritual duty and a social obligation. Buddhist teachings, with their emphasis on purity and respect for the natural world, view cleanliness as essential to honouring the ‘spirit’, believed to inhabit every aspect of nature. Meanwhile, Zen Buddhism teaches mindful cleaning as an act of humility and self-discipline. Together, these beliefs have created a culture where maintaining cleanliness is as much an act of respect as it is of personal discipline. In India, we already practice similar values within the sanctuaries of our religious spaces. Gurudwaras around the world are exemplary in their commitment to cleanliness as a form of service, humility, and communal respect. Inside a gurudwara, volunteers of all backgrounds and ages perform ‘sewa’, including tasks such as washing used plates in the langar (community kitchen), cleaning the floors, and even cleaning the shoes of visitors. This devotion to cleanliness extends to the practice of washing hands and feet before entering the main prayer hall, ensuring both physical and spiritual purity. The ethos of cleanliness at religious places demonstrates that when society connects cleanliness with values of service, humility, and respect, it becomes a powerful practice. The care and respect people show in these spaces reflect values that can and should transcend religious contexts. The reverence with which people approach cleanliness in gurudwaras, where they freely clean for others as a form of humility and selfless service, could also extend to broader public spaces. By bringing these values from religious spaces into daily life, society can foster a shared sense of responsibility and pride in maintaining public cleanliness. In Japan, the commitment to cleanliness is nurtured from a young age, embedded in the education system itself. In Japanese schools, ‘osouji’ or cleaning time, is a daily activity where students, alongside their teachers, clean their classrooms, hallways, and even toilets. This practice, seen as integral to a student’s development, teaches responsibility, respect for shared spaces, and the value of hard work. Unlike in many parts of the world where cleaning is seen as menial labour, in Japan, it is a way to build character and instill pride in maintaining a clean environment. Through ‘osouji’, students learn to respect others and being mindful of one’s surroundings. By actively participating in cleaning from an early age, they understand that keeping spaces clean is everyone’s duty, not just the responsibility of janitorial staff. This daily practice has led to a culture where respecting public spaces becomes second nature, as children grow up viewing cleanliness as part of their civic duty and self-respect. If India’s education system were to adopt similar practices, we could see a generation raised to treat public spaces with the same reverence as private ones, paving the way for a culture that supports the Swachh Bharat mission at every level. For this cultural shift to happen, it’s essential to begin with education. If we want to raise future generations who respect their surroundings, the journey must start in schools. By placing a broom in each child’s hand, schools can cultivate an understanding .



Jammu and Kashmir - A period of transformational change, depending on who is asked

People stood in long queues to cast their vote in an Assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir after a gap of ten long years. PM Modi called it Naya Kashmir as he aimed his dart at the ‘teen khandan’, the three dynasties—Congress, JKNC and PDP. It’s been a long ten years in the Valley. There have been other decades marked by turbulence. But none like the past decade—a period of transformational change, depending on who is asked. The ten years carry a lot of weight and significance. On 18 September, Kashmiris, for the first time, voted not for a state but a Union Territory. The region’s status changed in 2019, following the abrogation of Article 370 by the Modi government. Many other firsts are also taking place during these keenly watched elections: Established political parties being pitched against several Independent candidates, who are backed by organisations like the banned Jamaat-e-Islami; the entry of Engineer Abdul Rashid; and the absence of stalwarts such as Mehbooba Mufti. It led to the political landscape of Jammu and Kashmir becoming fiercely competitive, which is why the Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir is ThePrint’s Newsmaker Of The Week. The main parties in the fray are the INDIA bloc’s National Conference (NC) and Congress, the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and the Bharatiya



Janata Party (BJP). During the last election BJP and PDP had entered into an alliance. This election also has the second-highest number of Independent candidates since 2008. These elections carry a lot of political weight for the BJP, even beyond the region. The Modi government has been showcasing the abrogation of Article 370 as one of its key achievements. After the recent delimitation exercise, Kashmir has 47 seats and Jammu has 43. Twenty-four Assembly seats in seven districts went to polls on Wednesday. Delimitation led to an increase in seats in Hindu-dominated Jammu and nine seats being reserved for the Scheduled Tribe community, the BJP is

hoping to be a formidable force in Jammu even as it continues to face several challenges in the region. When it comes to the Kashmir valley, BJP has very little influence. For the National Conference too, these elections carry a lot of importance. Former CM of Kashmir and chairperson of NC, Omar Abdullah, lost to Engineer Rashid during the Lok Sabha elections. After making several statements about not contesting elections unless statehood is restored to J&K, he has decided to take the plunge. BJP has also brought up statehood multiple times. On 7 March this year, while launching an ‘Integrated Development of Hazratbal Shrine’ in Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister

Narendra Modi made a strong emotional pitch to the people of J&K.

He guaranteed to his “family in J&K” that “under no circumstances would development grind to a halt” in the UT. Modi continued the same rhetoric on Thursday at the rally in support of BJP candidates in Srinagar’s Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium. He spoke about BJP’s promise to restore Jammu and Kashmir’s statehood, empowerment and development. The withdrawal of Article 370 and statehood have emerged as major issues in these elections. Employment is also another significant concern. Quite naturally, the people in the region are divided regarding Article 370. There is deep dissatisfaction in some cir-

cles regarding its abrogation.

And as candidates canvas the region, a sense of fear lingers in the air. Dressed in a beige suit with a floral print and an off-white dupatta around her head, 36-year-old PDP leader Iltija Mufti waves to a group of women in a small village in Anantnag. An old woman holds her hands and tells her she wants to whisper something in her ears—her family member is languishing in jail due to a UAPA charge. Most political parties have promised to look into the issue of ‘innocent Kashmiris’ imprisoned under UAPA and PSA. This air of dissatisfaction has played a significant role in connecting people with the election process. There was a 61.38 per cent turnout of voters in Jammu and Kashmir for the first phase of polling. It overtook the record-breaking turnout for the Lok Sabha elections this year, which was 58.46 per cent. The fact that scores of people are coming out to vote shows how voting itself has become an act of resistance and solidarity. This is in contrast to the last 30 to 40 years. Earlier, such discontent was used to support separatism and extremism, which led to appeals, threats and warnings to boycott the elections. But this time the long queues of voters did not allow that to. But the most important feature of these elections is that they have been quite peace.

Are flight bomb threats pranks or conspiracy? Cost of ‘hoax’ to Indian aviation is real

Indian aviation is going through serious turbulence. In about two weeks, more than 510 domestic and international flights have been hit by hoax bomb threats, causing delays, emergency landings, soaring costs for airlines, and panic in the skies. Indian carriers such as Air India, IndiGo, SpiceJet, and Vistara have taken the brunt, with a peak when over 100 flights were targeted. That’s why these hoax threats on flights are Newsmaker of the Week. Since the threats started in mid-October, the government and law enforcement agencies have been working urgently to identify the perpetrators and to stop further incidents. Despite various leads, a few arrests, and suspicions of Sikh radicals being involved, they have yet to find conclusive answers. In the meantime, airlines are following strict protocols to handle such threats. An airline source said that when a bomb threat is reported, it is immediately relayed to designated security agencies as well as the air-

line’s security team. Following protocol, the aircraft in question is directed to an isolation bay, where security officials take over. “Passengers and crew are evacuated, after which the aircraft undergoes a thorough inspection by their (security agency) teams. These checks are conducted on the aircraft, luggage, and cargo to ensure complete safety,” the source added. Just days after the threats started, central intelligence agencies traced some of them to IP addresses in London and Germany. A few arrests have been made, too. On 16 October, Mumbai Police detained a 17-year-old school dropout from Chhattisgarh who allegedly issued threats to four flights on 14 October to frame a friend over a money dispute. Last week, a 25-year-old unemployed man from Delhi was also arrested for making similar threats. Delhi Police officials claimed the man admitted to making the threats just to draw attention to himself.

Film stars get a headstart like no other when it comes to public

The event attracted nearly three lakh supporters as well as eyeballs—if the large number of TV viewers are considered—and Vijay made it clear he has his eyes set on the 2026 assembly elections. Laying down the contours of his party’s political values, he invoked the likes of Periyar, Ambedkar, Kamaraj, Anjalai Ammal, and Velu Nachiar. He implied that the BJP is his ideological enemy and the DMK, his political adversary. But he tied himself in knots by idolising Periyar, arguably the greatest iconoclast ever in terms of smashing and disfiguring Hindu gods, and in the same breath, swearing by respect for all religions and castes. Be that as it may, film stars get a headstart like no other when it comes to public engagement. Directors allow them the latitude to tailor scripts, accommodating one-liners intended to hint at their views on the ruling dispensation, even if some of these lines are inane or incoherent. A doctor or lawyer, for example, may be equally successful.

Yet, he doesn’t have the kind of mass reach and appeal that an actor enjoys. Indeed, cinema pans out to a very large audience. Karl Marx said religion is the opium of the masses. What he said has over the years come to be extended to cinema and cricket in the Indian context. But then, despite the head start and natural advantage over other wannabes, not all film stars are successful in the rough and tumble of politics. If MGR, and Jayalalitha who inherited his mantle, were successful, Vijay Kant, Kamal Hassan and Rajinikant either turned out to be damp squibs or got cold reception from the masses in the political arena. Which testifies to the fact that politics is a different ball game. Regional parties in India have had a chequered history and record. Only the Trinamool Congress, founded by

the firebrand as a breakaway faction of the Congress party, has enjoyed unalloyed success in West Bengal. Mamata Banerjee hasn’t allowed any other regional party to spring up, much less take roots in West Bengal in the last more than 15 years. In Bihar, the two major regional parties, the JDU and RJD, take turns to rule and sometimes join hands to rule. In Maharashtra, which is going to polls soon, there were two principal regional parties, the NCP and Shiv Sena. Both of them have split amoeba-like, through a process called binary fission, to spawn two more political parties claiming to be the original with the parent being the clone. The point is that having more than one regional political party leads to them fighting each other, thereby yielding space to the mainstream political party. In Tamil Nadu, the DMK and its breakaway group the AIADMK have been ruling the state for more than half a century now.

It is a unique state in that where the Dravidian movement, at loggerheads with the mainstream Hindu worldview, still holds sway over the masses. Rajinikanth, perhaps, saw the writing on the wall and quietly wriggled out of his commitment to enter politics at the appropriate time. Vijay is much younger and maybe made of sterner stuff. He might not adhere to the adage that if you can’t beat them, join them. Time alone will tell. The upcoming 2026 Tamil Nadu assembly elections would see two stormy petrels, Annamalai of the BJP and Vijay, trying to rock the deep-rooted Dravidian parties. To BJP’s credit, it has a distinct economic and social vision for the nation for good or bad, which while making a favourable impact in other parts of the country, falls flat in Tamil Nadu. Vijay is an unknown quantity.

Why India Needs Public-Private Partnerships In Healthcare

FDCs at private healthcare facilities, and patient counselling. However, the PPSA faces challenges in coordination, data management, patient tracking, resistance from private providers, and low uptake of FDCs. Recently, a collaboration between the PPSA and a for-profit organisation showed promise. These companies provide services such as drug delivery, sample collection, patient counselling, and online consultations. For instance, a pilot project, assessed by the Indian School of Business’s Max Institute of Healthcare Management, explored the impact of this collaboration on FDC uptake

in Surat and Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Under the pilot, PPSA services remained intact, while the for-profit partner delivered FDCs directly to patients’ homes. Patients uploaded their prescriptions online and received monthly refills, along with reminder calls. The results were encouraging: patients reported a preference for the convenience and privacy of home delivery, leading to a significant rise in FDC uptake. The willingness of private providers to share e-prescriptions reduced the need for monthly travel to clinics, ensuring continuous medication use. According to a report by the Indian School

of Business, the percentage of patients prescribed FDCs by private providers increased from 42.46 per cent to 55.89 percent during the pilot. Public health workers employed by the PPSA played a critical role in educating patients, ensuring medication adherence, reducing stigma, and coordinating care. This example highlights the importance of generating more evidence on the impact of existing private sector engagement models, while also exploring novel approaches to healthcare delivery. As India undergoes an epidemiological shift from acute, communicable diseases to NCDs and chronic

conditions, new models for private sector engagement are essential. These models should focus on population health management, care continuity, and value-based approaches to healthcare financing and delivery. Moreover, technological advancements in artificial intelligence and data science can enhance the effectiveness and reach of these partnerships.

As of today, India’s healthcare system stands at a crossroads; by fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors, it can build a more robust, responsive system that benefits both patients and providers.

Briefs

LUCKNOW
Congress
Protesters
Stopped by
Police

UP Congress President Ajay Rai and party workers were stopped by police while attempting to march towards the BJP headquarters to protest against ED actions targeting Sonia and Rahul Gandhi. A large police force and barricades were deployed. After being stopped, Rai and others sat on the road in protest. Several workers were later detained as police ended the demonstration.

LALITPUR
Dilapidated
Bridge Poses
Accident Risk

A bridge opposite the Birdha block development office is in a dilapidated state, posing a serious risk of collapse. Cracks are visible and concrete is crumbling. Daily commuters, officials, and heavy trucks carrying mid-day meal supplies use the bridge. Villagers allege no action has been taken despite repeated complaints, and demand immediate technical inspection, repair, and a ban on heavy vehicle movement.

BALLIA
DM Holds
Meeting to
Address
Pensioners'
Grievances

A Pensioners' Day meeting was held under District Magistrate Mangala Prasad. The DM assured that all pension-related issues would be resolved in a timely and transparent manner. Problems of two pensioners came up during the meeting, and officials were directed to resolve them swiftly. It was also decided that relevant departmental officers must be present in future meetings.

JAUNPUR
Cold Wave
Alters School
Timings

In view of the intense cold wave and dense fog, the Jaunpur district administration has changed school timings. As per the Basic Education Officer's order, schools—including Basic Education Council, CBSE, ICSE, UP Board, aided schools, and madrasas—will now operate from 10 AM to 3 PM, instead of the earlier 9 AM start. The decision considers children's health and safety.

PRATAPGARH
Market Area
Plagued by
Slush and
Stench

The condition of Rani Gani market has deteriorated severely. The main road, leading to educational institutions and a fair ground, is plagued by slush, waterlogging, and stinking drains. Locals say a drain construction project by the district panchayat has worsened the problem, with filthy water flowing onto narrow lanes due to poor drainage, increasing mosquito menace and public anger.

SAHARANPUR
Gold Medalist
Doctor
Distributes
Blankets to 115

Gold medalist Dr. Sanjeev Miglani, Director of Dayawati Hospital, led a blanket distribution drive in Saharanpur, providing warmth to around 115 needy and destitute people. Dr. Miglani stated the hospital has been conducting this annual winter service for the past 15 years.

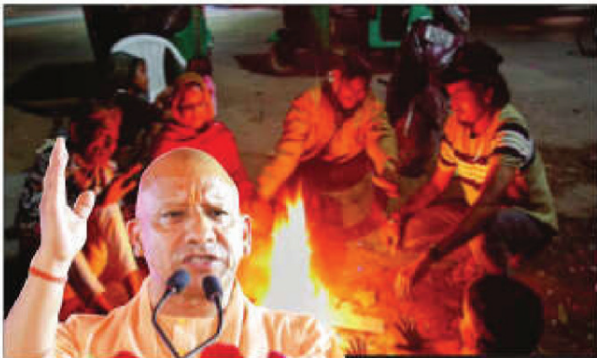
WINTER WAVE | CM alerts officials, orders night shelters, bonfires to run all night

Govt puts administration on high alert to prevent cold related deaths

LUCKNOW

With severe cold and dense fog tightening their grip over Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has placed the state administration on high alert, directing officials to ensure that no person is forced to spend the night in the open. Chairing a video conference with divisional commissioners, district magistrates, police chiefs and urban local body officials, the Chief Minister ordered round-the-clock monitoring of relief arrangements during the cold wave.

The Chief Minister said that homeless people, the elderly, children and those suffering from illness are the most vulnerable during extreme winter conditions. He instructed that night shelters must be fully functional and equipped with essential facilities, including warm blankets, heaters, hot water, food and



Special focus on homeless people, elderly, children and cattle; strict action warned against negligence

basic medical care. Regular inspections of night shelters were made mandatory, with a clear warning that negligence at any level would invite strict action.

Emphasising field-level responsibility, the Chief Minister directed officers to conduct night patrols and personally verify arrangements on the ground. Bonfires must be arranged at public places such as bus stands, railway stations, markets, crossings and other crowded locations. Adequate supply of firewood should be ensured so that bonfires continue throughout the night, he said.

The Chief Minister also instructed local bodies and vil-

Cold wave disrupts life across state

Dense fog has engulfed more than 50 districts of Uttar Pradesh, severely reducing visibility and disrupting normal life. Several road accidents have been reported due to near-zero visibility, resulting in multiple casualties over the past few days. Air traffic has also been affected, with several flights cancelled or diverted, while more than 50 trains are running behind schedule. The meteorological department has warned that cold conditions may intensify further, although stronger winds could gradually reduce fog density in the coming days

lage-level teams to distribute blankets continuously among the needy and to promptly shift people found sleeping in the open to nearby shelters. He stressed that officials should not remain confined to offices but actively monitor implementation in the field to ensure relief measures are effective. Special instructions were issued regarding the protection of cattle during the cold wave. The Chief Minister said that cow shelters across the state must have proper arrangements such as straw bedding, covered sheds and

bonfires to protect cattle from extreme cold. Regular inspections of cow shelters were also ordered.

Referring to the sharp fall in temperatures and persistent fog in several districts, the Chief Minister noted that the weather department has warned of further intensification of cold conditions in the coming days. District magistrates have been directed to send daily status reports to the Chief Secretary and the Chief Minister's Office to ensure close monitoring of the situation.

Kanpur students explore UP assembly



LUCKNOW

A group of students from BSS Education Centre, Kanpur, visited the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly on an educational tour aimed at enhancing their understanding of democratic institutions and governance. During the visit, students were familiarised with the historical traditions of the Assembly, parliamentary procedures, and the functioning of the democratic system.

As part of the tour, the students interacted with Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana, who provided a detailed explanation of the Assembly's working style. He explained the legislative process, including Question Hour, Zero Hour, the role of commit-

Speaker Mahana interacts with students, explains law-making and parliamentary practices

tees, and the stages involved in law-making, using simple and accessible language. He highlighted the Assembly's role as a platform for representing public concerns within the governance framework.

The Speaker also addressed students on the importance of discipline, constitutional values, and responsible citizenship, emphasising the role of youth in shaping the country's future. Students actively participated by asking questions, which were answered during the interaction.

Citing security, court moves Rahul Gandhi citizenship case to Lucknow

LUCKNOW

The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court on Wednesday ordered the transfer of a criminal case against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi from a special court in Rae Bareilly to a special court in Lucknow. The order was passed by a single-judge bench of Justice Brijraj Singh on a transfer petition filed by the complainant in the case, BJP worker S. Vignesh Shishir.

The case pertains to a criminal complaint filed by Shishir, questioning Rahul Gandhi's alleged British citizenship. The proceedings were ongoing in the special court (MP/MLA) in Rae Bareilly. In his petition to the High Court, Shishir sought the transfer on grounds of security concerns and a per-



Single bench of justice Brijraj Singh approves transfer petition after hearing arguments

ceived threat to his life in Rae Bareilly. He also argued that a fair trial was not possible in the local conditions prevailing there.

Accepting the petitioner's plea, the court directed that the case be transferred to a



competent special court in Lucknow for further proceedings. The transfer order effectively changes the venue for the ongoing legal proceedings, though the substantive allegations in the complaint remain unchanged.

This development comes amid ongoing allegations and counter-allegations regarding Rahul Gandhi's citizenship status, with Shishir claiming to have documents and emails from the British government supporting his claims.

LegalEdge Lucknow shines in CLAT 2026

LUCKNOW



LegalEdge Lucknow achieved a major milestone in CLAT 2026, with over 30 students securing top ranks. Notable performers include Shaurya Vardhan Trivedi (AIR 78) and Devansh Verma (AIR 192). Nationally, the institute secured AIR 1, 2, and 3, reaffirming its status as a premier hub for law aspirants.

'Bench or Ballot': Western UP lawyers bring 22 districts to a standstill

LUCKNOW

A complete shutdown was observed across 22 districts of western Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday following a call by the High Court Bench Establishment Central Struggle Committee. The bandh was organised to press for the long-pending demand for setting up a High Court bench in the region, with Meerut emerging as the focal point of the protests.

From early morning, the impact of the shutdown was visible across Meerut, where markets remained closed, schools and colleges suspended classes, and court work came to a halt. Lawyers were seen staging demonstrations at multiple locations, raising slogans such as "Bench nahi to vote nahi." Medical pro-



More than 1,200 organisations back bandh, emergency services remain operational

fessionals cancelled OPD services, though emergency healthcare remained functional. Advocates blocked highways, staged sit-ins at district courts, and submitted memorandums to administrative officials in several districts including Hapur,

Bulandshahr, Bijnor, Baghpat and Sambhal. Traffic movement was disrupted at key junctions, prompting police deployment to manage law and order. The protest received backing from more than 1,200 organisations, including trader bodies, transport associations and sanitation workers' unions, who voluntarily shut down operations in support of the demand. Chaudhary Charan Singh University postponed examinations scheduled for the day due to the bandh.

District9 open pickleball tournament concludes

NOIDA



The District9 Open Pickleball Tournament concluded in Noida with 325 players and a ₹20 lakh prize pool. Monica Menon secured a triple crown, winning the singles, doubles, and mixed titles. Vinay Sethia won the men's advanced singles. Founder Amit Ajwani called the high-voltage event a major milestone for Indian pickleball.

All rounder Shivang joins Sunrisers Hyderabad

MORADABAD

Moradabad's cricket scene celebrates another milestone as 23-year-old Shivang Kumar was signed by Sunrisers Hyderabad for ₹30 lakh in the IPL 2026 auction. A left-arm "chinaman" bowler and capable batsman, Shivang has been making waves in the Madhya Pradesh League (MPL) and the Mushtaq Ali Trophy.

The cricketer's father, Praveen Kumar, a former Ranji player for Bengal and currently a Chief Ticket Inspector for the Railways, shared that Shivang's passion for cricket ignited in the fifth grade. Shivang draws inspiration from elite spinners like Kuldeep Yadav and Piyush Chawla. Based in the Harthala Railway Colony, the family originally hails from Rewa, Madhya Pradesh.



Following in the footsteps of local legends like Mohammed Shami and Mohsin Khan, Shivang is seen as a rising all-rounder. His father hopes this IPL debut will eventually pave the way for a spot in the Indian national team.

Fog spoils fun before India-South Africa clash

LUCKNOW

Ekana witnessed weather-related disruption ahead of the fourth T20 match between India and South Africa as dense fog and dew delayed the toss at the stadium on Wednesday evening. The match, scheduled to begin at 7 pm, was postponed after umpires inspected the field conditions. Then after a last inspection at 9.25 match was cancelled. The city experienced thick fog late Tuesday night and early Wednesday, with visibility dropping to nearly 50 metres in some areas. According to the Meteorological Department, evening visibility during match hours was expected to range between 200 and 800 metres, accompanied by significant dew.

Community support mobilised for Shia personal law board convention



LUCKNOW

A meeting of Matami Anjumans and community organisations of the city was held at Awadh Point, the residence of All India Shia Personal Law Board General Secretary Maulana Yasooob Abbas, to review preparations for the Board's annual national convention scheduled on 28 December 2025. The programme began with recitation of the Holy Quran by Qari Nadeem Najafi.

Addressing the gathering, Maulana Yasooob Abbas said

the Shia Personal Law Board represents the collective voice of the Shia community across India. He stated that the convention aims to bring together representatives from all states, including scholars, speakers, Zakireen, Anjumans and community leaders, to ensure nationwide participation. According to him, confirmations for participation are being received from various parts of the country.

Maulana Ejaz Athar thanked the attending Anjumans and organisations for their continued role in community initiatives.

Assembly winter session begins December 19

LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Assembly is gearing up for a high-stakes winter session starting this Friday, December 19. It is a relatively short window, running until December 24, but the agenda is packed. The first day will likely be brief, adjourning shortly after a tribute to the late SP MLA Sudhakar Singh.

After the weekend break, the real work begins on Monday, December 22, when the government presents its supplementary budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year. Lawmakers will spend the following days debating financial proposals and voting on eight significant bills.

Ahaan Panday, Aneet Padda spill chemistry secret

LUCKNOW

Actors Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda, the lead stars of the film Saiyaara, have shared insights into the genuine friendship that underpins their acclaimed on-screen chemistry. Regarded as one of the most electric pairings in recent romantic cinema, the duo revealed that their connection was not manufactured but grew naturally during the pre-production phase.

Ahaan Panday emphasized that when a real friendship exists, chemistry on screen



becomes effortless and "happens naturally." Aneet Padda echoed this, recalling her initial meeting with Ahaan and director Mohit Suri. Despite her early nervousness, she found Ahaan's presence "disarming" and supportive. The pair spent months bonding before the shoot—singing, playing the guitar, and discussing their personal doubts and fears.

Briefs

Legislators in Mexico come to blows

Mexican lawmakers got into a physical altercation on the floor of the Congress, with videos showing female legislators pushing and pulling each other's hair. Video clip showed a group of female legislators from both the right-wing National Action Party and the ruling left-leaning Morena Party exchanging blows, elbowing, and pushing. The fight started after PAN representatives, at the podium, refused to move while Morena Party members tried to force them away. One woman grabbed another's hand, prompting the second to pull her hand back and strike her in the stomach with her elbow. The first woman hit her from behind and then grabbed her hair.

Louvre workers vote to extend stir

Employees at the Louvre Museum voted to extend a strike that has disrupted operations at the world's most visited museum in Paris. Union workers were protesting chronic understaffing, building deterioration and recent management decisions – pressures intensified by a brazen crown jewels heist in October. The decision came during a morning general assembly.

Pak Navy 4th Hangor class sub in China

The fourth submarine in Pakistan Navy's Hangor-class series, named Ghazi, was launched at Shuangliu Base in China, the Inter-Services Public Relations said. The 4th Hangor-class submarine has been built by all-weather ally China for the Pakistan Navy under an agreement for the transfer of technology, ISPR, media wing of the military, said.

China sees international pupils' return

China is facing a surge of returning overseas students as visa and jobs shrink abroad, prompting the government to start a special platform to help them find jobs and start businesses. About 4.95 lakh students returned to China after studying abroad in 2024, a 19.1% rise from the previous year, the ministry of education said recently.

Sexist slur: Macron's wife faces lawsuit

Brigitte Macron is facing a complaint from several organisations, including women's rights groups, after she was filmed saying feminist protesters at a theatre show in Paris were "stupid bitches". Over 300 women – specifically 343, a historically symbolic number in French feminism – this week filed the complaint against the French first lady for public insult. A video filmed last week showed Macron in discussion backstage at the Folies Bergère theatre with Ary Abittan, a French actor and comedian previously accused of rape.

BAR EXTENDED | President Trump's decision takes total tally to 20 countries; restrictions to come into force from January 1

US widens travel ban, 5 more nations on list

NEW YORK / WASHINGTON

President **Donald Trump** has expanded a US travel ban, barring nationals of five additional countries and people travelling on Palestinian Authority-issued documents from entering the United States. The decision took the total tally to 20.

The White House said on Tuesday the restrictions were intended "to protect the security of the US" and will come into force on January 1.

Full-entry restrictions will be imposed on people from Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, South Sudan and Syria as well as Palestinian Authority passport holders.

The administration also moved Laos and Sierra Leone, which were previously subject



to partial restrictions, to the full ban list and put partial restrictions on 15 other countries, including Nigeria, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

President Trump, who has tightened immigration controls since returning to the White House in January, said the expanded travel ban was necessary because of what his administration described as failures in screening and vet-

ting systems overseas.

Officials cited high visa overstay rates, unreliable civil records, corruption, terrorist activity and a lack of cooperation in accepting deported nationals.

The announcement followed the arrest of an Afghan national suspected of shooting two National Guard troops over the Thanksgiving weekend, an incident the White House pointed to in highlighting its security concerns.

A number of exceptions apply and the ban will not affect lawful permanent residents, many existing visa holders, diplomats, or athletes travelling for major sporting events. Officials said case-by-case waivers would also be available where travel is deemed to be in the national interest. —PTI

NO ENTRY

Countries with full restrictions:

Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Myanmar, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Laos, Libya, Mali, Niger, Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Yemen and individuals travelling on Palestinian Authority issued or endorsed travel documents

Partial bar:

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Benin, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Dominica, Gabon, The Gambia, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Tonga, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Special case:

Turkmenistan (non-immigrants exempted)



goodbye to Bondi victims

A family bids farewell to Rabbi Eli Schlanger, a victim of the mass shooting, during his funeral at a synagogue at Bondi in Sydney, Australia, on Wednesday.

Plans for attack in New Orleans thwarted; ex-marine arrested

BATON ROUGE

Plans to "carry out an attack" in New Orleans were thwarted after an ex-Marine was arrested while on the way to the Louisiana city with guns and body armour in the car, according to court documents the news agency obtained on Tuesday.

Micah James Legnon, 28, was charged with threats in

interstate commerce.

Federal authorities said they had been surveilling Legnon due to ties to an extremist anti-capitalist and anti-government group.

Four members of the group were arrested on Friday in the Mojave Desert, east of Los Angeles, as they were rehearsing a foiled plot to set off bombs in Southern California on New Year's Eve, authorities said.

Plans of an attack in New Orleans began to intensify after several hundred immigration agents were deployed to southeast Louisiana, authorities said. The enforcement operation, dubbed "Catahoula Crunch", has a goal of 5,000 arrests. The crackdown is the latest in a series of enforcement operations that have also unfolded in Los Angeles, Chicago and Charlotte, North Carolina.

EAM, Bibi discuss ways to boost ties

JERUSALEM

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu and discussed ways to enhance cooperation in technology, economy, connectivity and security, expressing confidence that the bilateral strategic partnership will "grow from strength to strength".

Jaishankar arrived in Israel on Tuesday on a two-day visit during which he called on President Isaac Herzog and held discussions with his Israeli counterpart Gideon Sa'ar and Minister of Economy and Industry Nir Barkat. He met Netanyahu later in the day. "Deeply appreciate the call on PM Israel



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem. —PTI

Netanyahu in Jerusalem this evening. Extended warm wishes of PM Narendra Modi. Discussed deepening cooperation in technology, economy, skills and talent, connectivity and security," Jaishankar said on X. "Valued his perspectives

on regional and global developments. Confident that our strategic partnership will grow from strength to strength," he added.

Netanyahu acknowledged the meeting in a social media post, sharing pictures from

the meeting. Jaishankar's visit comes as preparations are on for Netanyahu's proposed trip to India. Netanyahu and Modi spoke recently over the phone, after which the Israeli leader said the two would be "meeting very soon".

Jaishankar arrived in Tel Aviv from Abu Dhabi, where he took part in the high-profile Sir Bani Yas Forum. He also attended the 16th India-UAE Joint Commission Meeting and the 5th round of the India-UAE Strategic Dialogue held on Dec 15.

LATE-NIGHT BREAK: Putin calls European leaders 'little pigs', insists Russia will achieve its goals in Ukraine by diplomacy or force

Nick charged with murder of parents

Prosecutors in Los Angeles have filed murder charges against Nick Reiner over the deaths of his parents Hollywood director Rob Reiner and his wife Michele, reports said.

Nick Reiner is facing two counts of first-degree murder with a special circumstance alleging multiple murders, District Attorney Nathan Hochman said.

He could be sentenced to life without the possibility of parole or the death penalty if found guilty. He will be brought to court to face charges and enter a plea after he is medically cleared by prison officials, Hochman said.

The charges came two days after the couple were found dead in their home in Brentwood, California, with multiple stab wounds. The charges also include a

"special allegation" Reiner used a knife.

During a news conference, Hochman said no decision had been made about whether prosecutors would seek the death penalty. The suspect, 32, was also accused of using a "dangerous and deadly weapon, that being a knife".

He was expected to appear before a judge later on Tuesday for an arraignment hearing, where he would have been formally charged. The district attorney later said it would be scheduled for a later date.

Rob Reiner directed a handful of iconic films in a variety of genres, including This Is Spinal Tap, Misery and A Few Good Men.

Michele Singer Reiner was an actress, photographer and producer, and the founder of Reiner Light, a photography agency and production company.

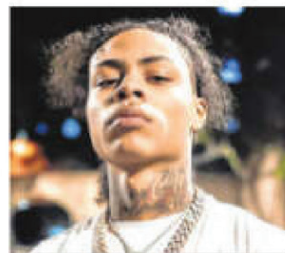
Rapper Kay Flock jailed for shootings

NEW YORK

Rapper Kay Flock, 22, was sentenced on Tuesday to 30 years in prison for a series of shootings in his Bronx neighbourhood, derailing a music career that was just taking off before his 2021 arrest.

The rapper, whose real name is Kevin Perez, was sentenced by US District Judge Lewis J Liman, who criticised Perez for sending the wrong message to his young peers by glorifying violence during a less-than-18-month stretch from 2020 to 2021 that prosecutors said left dozens of people on Bronx streets shot at, injured or killed.

"You taunted, you celebrated and you helped create a cycle of violence," Liman said, noting that Perez bragged on social media he was exonerated on the top count and wrote "KILL ALL RATS" on Instagram after a trial in which gang members



Judge called Perez a "man of promise" but said a lengthy jail term sentence was must for four separate shootings

testified against him.

The judge called Perez a "man of promise" but said a lengthy prison sentence was necessary for four separate shootings that injured multiple people while he led a gang known as "Sev Side/DOA".

Perez was convicted in March of charges including racketeering conspiracy and attempted murder.

Popular South African DJ shot dead

A popular South African radio and club DJ has been shot dead in the country's largest city, Johannesburg, sending shockwaves across the nation grappling with entrenched crime.

Warrick Stock, popularly known as DJ Warras, was gunned down in the city centre on Tuesday afternoon, BBC reported.

Police said the 40-year-old media personality was approached by three suspects, one of whom opened fire on him before fleeing on foot.

The motive of the shooting is unknown and no arrests



have been made, police said.

Stock was a well-known radio and TV presenter and a podcaster in South Africa.

Fred Kekana, a local police chief, said Stock was attacked outside Zambesi House near Carlton Centre.

Stock spent several hours at the building overseeing the installation of security systems at the premises, which had been controversially occupied by unknown people, reports the state-run SABC.

"It is alleged the victim was approached by three unknown suspects after parking his vehicle, and they opened fire at him before fleeing the scene on foot," the South African Police Service (SAPS) said. CCTV footage showed a man with dreadlocks and dressed in what looked like a security uniform opening fire on Stock before fleeing.

stripped of crown

Miss Finland's viral 'slanted-eyes' pic stirs race row

Finland's delegate to last month's Miss Universe pageant held in Thailand has sparked controversy and outrage after a photo of her pulling the corners of her eyes went viral, BBC reported.

Sarah Dzafee, who has been stripped of her Miss Finland crown, uploaded the photo with the caption "eating with a Chinese". The slanted-eyes pose is often seen as disrespectful to East Asians.

The post drew backlash in Japan, South Korea and China against the 22-year-old and even against her country's flag



carrier, Finnair.

Even Finland's PM weighed in on Monday, saying making such gestures was "thoughtless

and stupid" and the controversy that ensued was "damaging" to the country. Dzafee claimed the gesture was her

reaction to a headache during dinner. She said a friend added the offensive caption to the December 11 post without her consent, according to local tabloid 'Ilta-Sanomat'. Dzafee has apologised for the photo, noting it has "caused ill will in many people".

"That was not my intention in any way... One of the most important things for me is respect for people, their backgrounds and differences," she wrote on an Instagram post.

The apology still drew criticism, with some calling it "insincere" given it was written

in Finnish. One person wrote: "That was uncalled for, Asian people didn't do anything to you... We [are] still disappointed in (with) you."

Two right-wing MPs in Finland, Juho Eerola and Kaisa Garedeu, posted photos of themselves mimicking Dzafee's gesture to show their support for the beauty queen.

The posts were taken down after backlash. Eerola apologised adding he felt Dzafee was given "disproportionately harsh punishment".

Finnish PM Petteri Orpo condemned the MPs' actions

as "childish", adding, lawmakers should set an example of proper conduct.

The Finns Party is deliberating whether the MPs should face any sanctions for their actions, media reported.

Finnair told public broadcaster Yle the controversy had affected the company, and there had been calls for tourists to boycott Finland.

"The statements or posts mentioned by some Finnish members of parliament do not represent the values of Finnair," the airline wrote on its Japanese X account.

Warner Bros rejects Paramount's bid

NEW YORK

Warner Bros Discovery on Wednesday rejected a hostile takeover bid from Paramount, launched last week, which was aimed at derailing plans by streaming giant Netflix to acquire the Hollywood studio and owner of CNN.

In a statement, Warner Bros said the terms of the Netflix merger were better, while the Paramount offer "once again fails to address

key concerns that we have consistently communicated... throughout our extensive engagement and review of their six previous proposals".

"We are confident our merger with Netflix represents superior, more certain value for our shareholders," it read. Netflix announced on Dec 5 it had sealed a pact with Warner Bros to buy the film and TV studio for nearly \$83 billion, the entertainment industry's biggest consolidation deal this decade.

Sreeleela urges fans not to abuse AI

Telugu actress Sreeleela urges fans to avoid misusing AI technology after viral fake videos, highlighting respect and safety for women online

Indian actors, as well as content creators, are facing a lot of issues because of the AI-generated fake videos that are being made and going viral on social media. Recently, a private video went viral on social media, and netizens claimed that it features YouTube and content creator Payal Gaming. Some people have been claiming that the video is AI-generated. Now, Telugu star Sreeleela has shared a long post about AI-generated viral posts, and has requested fans not to abuse the technology.

She posted, "I put my hands together and request every social media user not to support AI-generated nonsense. There is a difference between using and abusing technology. Advancements in technology are meant to simplify life, not complicate it, in my opinion. Every girl out there is a daughter, granddaughter, sister, friend, or colleague, even if she chooses art as one of her professions. We wish to be part of an industry that spreads joy, with the confidence that we are in a protected environment."

The actress further wrote, "I have been unaware of many things happening online due to my schedule, and I thank my well-wishers for bringing this to my notice. I have always taken things with a pinch of salt and lived in my own world, but this is deeply disturbing and devastating. I also see my fellow colleagues going through the same and am reaching out on behalf of everyone."

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With grace and dignity, and with trust in my audience, I ask you to please stand by us. The authorities will be taking it over from here.

-Sreeleela

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With grace and dignity, and with trust in my audience, I ask you to please stand by us. The authorities will be taking it over from here (sic)."

Sreeleela has also become the victim of fake AI-generated videos, which have gone viral

on social media. It is good to see that an actress has finally opened up about it. While she wrote such a long post, the actress in the comments also posted, "I'll be honest makes me uncomfortable talking like this. But I hope it serves its purpose (sic)." Sreeleela has some interesting films lined up like Parasakthi, Anurag Basu's next with Kartik Aaryan, and Ustaad Bhagat Singh.



Ananya Pandey teaches Gen Z slang to Big B

The upcoming episode of *Kaun Banega Crorepati* promises a perfect blend of laughter, charm, and lively banter as Bollywood's OG boy Kartik Aaryan and Gen Z's style icon Ananya Pandey join host Amitabh Bachchan on the hot seat.

In a light-hearted exchange, Ananya embraces her Gen Z roots and gives Big B a playful crash course in Gen Z slang. From "OOTD" and "Drip" to "No Cap," the terms leave the legendary actor both confused and curious, sparking laughter across the set.

The fun reaches a peak when Ananya calls Amitabh Bachchan "Drip," meaning stylish and cool. The veteran actor jokes that, to him, "drip" simply means water falling from the ceiling, leaving the audience in splits. Adding warmth to the

humorous exchange, Ananya also remarks, "Amitabh Bachchan is the greatest in the world, No Cap," explaining the Gen Z phrase means "truly the greatest."

Big B further engages with the young star, asking how it feels to be on the hot seat for the first time. With her signature humour, Ananya replies, "Bahut garam lag raha hai. Mujhe pata tha hot seat hoga, par itna hot hoga, yeh nahi socha tha."

The entertainment doesn't stop there. Kartik Aaryan teaches Amitabh Bachchan a few trendy gestures, including the Korean heart sign, culminating in an energetic dance moment to the hit song "Chumma Chumma," creating yet another unforgettable *KBC* moment.

Dino Morea pens emotional note

Actor mourns father Ronnie, shares emotional Insta tribute celebrating memories, life lessons and love



Ronnie Morea

Bollywood actor Dino Morea penned a heartfelt and emotional note mourning the loss of his father, Ronnie Morea. While he chose not to share details about his father's demise, the actor opened up about some of their most cherished memories together and expressed how deeply he is missing him.

Dino shared a series of throwback photos and videos of his father on Instagram and wrote, "Live life to the fullest everyday, laugh everyday, be passionate in what you do, exercise, spend time out in Nature, get some Sun, eat well, climb a mountain, swim in the Sea, trek thru a forest, work hard, be nice, be kind and be loving and do all this on your own terms!! This list goes on. One person for me who embodies all this - my mentor, my hero, my father, DAD!! Thank you for the life lessons Dad." The *Raaz* actor added, "We will all miss you. I'm pretty sure you've already got the party started somewhere and you have a bunch of souls around you dancing & having a good laugh!! Until we meet again, stay cool!!! Love you." In one of the videos, Dino's father is seen grooving at what looks like a house party. In another, he is seen working out.



A still from the film

Taskaree unveils smuggling drama

Filmmaker Neeraj Pandey and Emraan Hashmi team up for *Taskaree: The Smuggler's Web*, a high-stakes crime drama on Netflix

Filmmaker Neeraj Pandey, known for *Special 26* and *Baby*, is set to join forces with Emraan Hashmi to explore the high-stakes world of Indian customs in his next. The teaser for Emraan Hashmi starrer *Taskaree: The Smuggler's Web* has been unveiled, giving a glimpse into the world of smuggling set against one of the busiest airports in the world - the Mumbai International Airport.

A fictional crime entertainer, the Netflix series "opens the gates to a world where every suitcase could hide a secret and every passenger could be a suspect. At the heart of this operation is Superintendent Arjun Meena (Emraan Hashmi), a razor-sharp,

calm, and calculating officer. With his team, he cracks down on airport smuggling -- from luxury goods hidden in plain sight to organised international syndicates," the makers said, as per the press release.

17th December - Attention all units: prepare for clearance. *Taskaree: The Smuggler's Web*, produced by Friday Storytellers, created by Neeraj Pandey and directed by Raghav Jairath, touches down on Netflix January 14, 2026.

Created by Neeraj Pandey and directed by Raghav Jairath, *Taskaree* marks the filmmaker's fourth collaboration with the streaming giant and a first with Emraan Hashmi. The teaser opens to offer a glimpse into how the world of travel and businesses has been on the target of smugglers, with customs officers taking centre stage.

Emraan Hashmi, in a refreshing new avatar, portrays a leader with "lethal" instinct and intelligence.



Emraan Hashmi

Filmmaker Neeraj Pandey

'I was like a child in the theatre'

Filmmaker SS Rajamouli praises James Cameron for *Avatar: Fire and Ash*



First look of the film

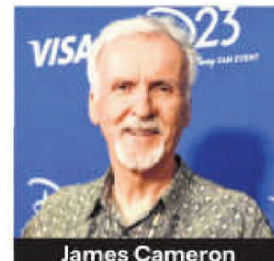
Reflecting on his viewing of *Avatar: Fire and Ash*, SS Rajamouli said he felt "like a child in the theatre," lauding Cameron for his film.

Rajamouli said, "I would like to thank you because you made me the first person, or probably the only person, amongst 1.45 billion Indians

to watch *Avatar: Fire and Ash*. That feels very special." SS Rajamouli even shared that *Avatar* ran for a year in IMAX in Hyderabad. The filmmaker highlighted how the *Avatar* franchise remains a benchmark for immersive, big-screen experiences.

He then praised the film, saying, "Watching *Fire and Ash* was an absolute pleasure. Hats off to you for creating those complex sequences, visuals and characters. I can go on and on. I was like a child in the theatre watching the Wind Traders, the Ash People, the new characters."

James Cameron also expressed his admiration for SS Rajamouli's cinematic vision and shared his desire to visit his film set. *Avatar: Fire and Ash* from 20th Century Studios releases in India on December 19 in 6 languages English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada.



James Cameron

Filmmaker SS Rajamouli recently joined James Cameron in a virtual conversation to discuss the world's biggest franchise, *Avatar* and its upcoming instalment, *Avatar: Fire and Ash*. The two legends talked about the intricacies of storytelling, their unique creative processes, and the shared anxiety that comes with releasing films on such magnitude.



SS Rajamouli

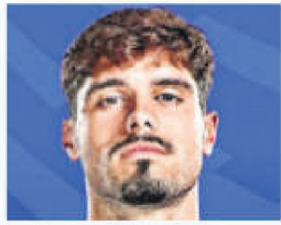
Briefs

NEW DELHI
Messi backs football development

Lionel Messi hoped that football has a "bright future" in India and expressed gratitude for the "generous hospitality" that he got here during a whirlwind three-day tour, which had thousands of fans jostling to catch a glimpse of the Argentine genius in four different cities. Messi, after extending his stay by a day to visit the Anant Ambani-founded Vantara wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and conservation centre in Jamnagar, left for his base in Miami on Wednesday. Taking to Instagram, the 38-year-old posted a one-minute highlights clip of the tour, featuring his interactions with Indian cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar, Bollywood actor Kareena Kapoor Khan and several young footballers. "I hope that football has a bright future in India" he wrote in the video.

MADRID
Christensen, Rashford give Barca win

Barcelona needed late goals by Andreas Christensen and Marcus Rashford to defeat third-division club Guadalajara 2-0 on Tuesday in the round of 32 of the Copa del Rey in a game delayed because of problems with the stadium's temporary grandstand. Kickoff was delayed by half an hour because local authorities did not initially allow fans access to the newly built grandstand at the Pedro Escartín stadium in the city of Guadalajara near Madrid. Barcelona was in control from the start but struggled to create significant scoring chances against its opponent. Christensen finally broke the deadlock in the 76th minute with a header off a cross by Frankie De Jong.

CARDIFF
Chelsea in League Cup semifinals

Chelsea's substitutes made the difference Tuesday as wingers Alejandro Garnacho and Pedro Neto scored second-half goals to secure a 3-1 win at third-tier Cardiff City and a place in

T20I SERIES | Precautionary measures are being taken to ensure his recovery

Gill sustains toe injury, likely to miss last tie

LUCKNOW

Out-of-form India vice-captain Shubman Gill has been ruled out of the last T20I game against South Africa with a toe injury, sources close to the team told PTI.

It is learnt that Gill has sustained the injury during training session and all precautionary measures are being taken to ensure his speedy recovery.

"Shubman had an extended batting session at the nets on the eve of the fourth T20 International. Towards the end of the session, he was hit on the toe while batting in the nets. He was in pain and was hobbling. It would have been difficult for him to play on Wednesday. Hence he didn't accompany the team as there was little chance of him playing this game.

"At this point it is difficult to say if he will play in Ahmedabad," a BCCI source told PTI on condi-

tions of anonymity.

With New Zealand T20Is being the last series before the T20 World Cup and the squad for that bilateral series and the marquee event set to be the same, the national selection committee as well as team management will like to take all necessary precautions with regards to one of their specialist top order batters.

Gill also missed the Test and ODI series against the Proteas due to a neck injury sustained on the second day of the opening game in Kolkata which required two-day hospitalization. He missed the Guwahati Test and the following ODI series where he was supposed to captain the team.

He was declared fit by the Centre of Excellence (COE) ahead of the T20I series even as critics have been questioning his place in the side ahead of Sanju Samson, who had hit three centuries in the preceding season.

Gill's returns for the

series has been low with 4 and 0 in the first two outings followed by a run-a-ball 28 in the third game in Dharamsala, where he didn't look in his elements.

However the entire coaching staff headlined by Gautam Gambhir has firmly backed their star batter to come good at the T20 World Cup starting February, next year.

Gill needs to improve on tackling straight deliveries: Bangar

Gill's vulnerability against straight deliveries has emerged as an area of concern and the India opener needs to improve his footwork to counter the issue, former batting coach Sanjay Bangar said.

Gill has managed 291 runs in 15 innings at a strike rate of 137.3, and Bangar pointed out that the opener's scoring rate drops against deliveries pitched on a straight line.

"In the beginning, his footwork was very positive. But if you remove three or four boundaries over 28 games, the issue has been on straighter lines. Against straight deliveries, his strike rate has fallen quite low," Bangar said, urging the young opener to improve his footwork to counter this weakness," Bangar said on Game Plan on JioStar.

"Outside the off stump, his strike rate is good, but there have been a few edges as well. Overall, he has scored runs, but straight-line play is something he will want to improve.

"In the second (T20) game (against SA), the ball that got him out was a very good delivery. It could have dismissed any batter. His footwork has improved, and if he continues to play with clear footwork, he will be able to hit the same shots consistently, like the three or four boundaries we've seen."

BCCI scheduling under scanner after 4th T20I called off due to dense smog

LUCKNOW

The fourth T20I between India and South Africa was called off on Wednesday owing to poor visibility after a dense layer of smog engulfed the Ekana Stadium raising serious questions about BCCI's scheduling of matches in northern part of India during peak winter month.

The venues allotted for the full series against the Proteas included New Chandigarh, Dharamsala, Lucknow, Ranchi, Raipur, Visakhapatnam, Cuttack, Ahmedabad, Guwahati and Kolkata during November and December.

It is also a period when pollution levels in the host cities like Lucknow, New Chandigarh and Dharamsala are usually at its worst.

The fourth T20I was officially abandoned without a ball being bowled due to "excessive fog", the reality was that a thick blanket of smog enveloped the Ekana Stadium, severely hampering visibility.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) remained in the hazardous range, above 400 in Lucknow on Wednesday, raising serious questions about the BCCI's commitment to players' welfare.

Star all-rounder Hardik Pandya was seen wearing a surgical mask to counter the pollution while the Indian team warmed up ahead of the game.

The match, scheduled to start at 7 pm, was eventually called off at 9:30 pm after the sixth inspection although the players had abandoned their warm-up session by 7:30 pm.

Carey's hometown century, Khawaja's 82 lift Australia

ADELAIDE

Alex Carey posted a hometown hundred and Usman Khawaja scored 82 after a dramatic, last-minute recall to help Australia reach 326 for eight at stumps on a hot opening day of the third Ashes test.

Paceman Joffra Archer (3-29) took three big wickets, including two in three balls immediately after lunch, and spinner Will Jacks (2-105) dismissed Australia's two leading scorers to give England a slight edge Wednesday in conditions that were ideal for batting.

Carey shared partnerships of 91 with Khawaja, who replaced Steve Smith at late notice, 59 with Josh Inglis, 26 with Pat Cummins and 50 with Mitchell Starc to keep Australia's innings moving at around four runs an over. He was out just before stumps for 106, mistiming a slower ball from Jacks.

Mitchell Starc, voted player of the match in the first and second tests, continued his impressive form against England and was unbeaten on 33 at stumps.

The temperature topped 35 Celsius (95 Fahrenheit) on Wednesday and is forecast to get close to 40C (104F) on Day

2, which could make conditions tough on the bowling team. The crowd of 56,298, a record for a test match at the Adelaide Oval, helped Carey thrive.

"A decent day's cricket. The crowd - 56,000 in Adelaide - it's pretty special," Carey said. "To make a hundred here in front of home fans and family, it was a great moment."

Smith sidelined

Smith led Australia to eight-wicket wins in Perth and Brisbane in the absence of Cummins. He hit the winning runs in Brisbane as Australia took a 2-0 lead in the five-match series, leaving England needing a victory in Adelaide to have any chance of reclaiming the Ashes.

But Smith didn't recover in time from dizziness and nausea to start the third test, allowing Khawaja to return the lineup on the eve of his 39th birthday.

Armbands in Bondi tribute

Players on both teams wore black armbands to honor the 15 people killed and dozens injured in an antisemitic attack on Sydney's iconic Bondi Beach on Sunday that targeted the Jewish community celebrating the start of Hannukah.



Australia's Alex Carey plays a shot on Day 1 of the third Test against England in Adelaide on Wednesday. AP

Sachin meets T20 World Cup winning blind women's team

MUMBAI

Legendary Sachin Tendulkar met the T20 World Cup-winning Indian Women's blind cricket team and praised their determination to overcome challenges and bring glory to the country.

The meeting between the former India cricketer and the women's blind cricket team took place here at the MIG Cricket Club on Tuesday.

"The legend reminded the team that success brings with it greater responsibility. He said expectations would rise, and meeting them would demand even harder work and sharper focus," the organisers said in a statement.

"Emphasising that the World Cup victory was not an endpoint, he described it as the beginning of a longer journey, one that now carries the weight of inspiration for countless others," it added.

Deepika TC, the captain of the Indian women's blind cricket team said, "We have always played with passion and belief, but hearing words of encouragement from him has touched our hearts deeply." Sachin gave autographs to all the players.



Indian cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar (C) met the Indian Women's Blind Cricket Team, the newly crowned T20 Blind Cricket World Cup champions, at the MIG Cricket Club in Mumbai on Tuesday.

Iqbal stars again with bat in Physical Disability T20 Series

Mumbai: Wasim Iqbal cracked a 45-ball 85 to help India Seniors to a commanding seven-wicket victory over India A in the second match of the Physical Disability Series here on Wednesday.

India A put on a modest 143 for six batting first with Jitendra VN scoring 35 and Akash Patil making unbeaten 37.

In response, India Seniors chased down the target with more than five

overs to spare, making 144 for three in 14.5 overs here at the Wankhede Stadium on Wednesday.

Brief Scores:
India A: 143/6 in 20 overs (Akash Patil 37 not out, Jitendra VN 35 not out, Vipin 1/15, Vikrant Keni 1/10, Vikas Yadav 1/11, Jaswant Singh 1/20).
India Seniors: 144/3 in 14.5 overs (Wasim Iqbal 85 not out, Vrushant Gunjal 32, Santosh Choubhe 3/24).

FIFA slashes price of some WC tickets to USD 60

GENEVA

FIFA slashed the price of some World Cup tickets for teams' most loyal fans following a global backlash and some will get \$60 seats for the final instead of being asked to pay \$4,185.

It was a rare climbdown by the soccer body and its president Gianni Infantino after soaking up waves of criticism for World Cup strategies, including top-dollar prices and closer political alignment with U.S. President Donald Trump.

FIFA said Tuesday that \$60 tickets will be made available for every game at the tournament in North America, going to the national federations whose teams are playing. Those federations decide how to distribute them to loyal fans who have attended previous games at home and on the road.

The number of \$60 tickets for each game is likely to be from 400 to 750 per team, in what FIFA is now calling a "Supporter Entry Tier" price category.

I couldn't stop crying even when bidding ended: Kartik

Sarfaraz Khan thanks CSK for giving him new life

MUMBAI

Overwhelmed with emotion, 19-year-old Kartik Sharma was left in tears after five-time champions Chennai Super Kings secured him for a record Rs 14.20 crore at the IPL 2026 mini auction, making him the joint-highest paid uncapped player in the league's history.

Coming into the auction at a base price of Rs 30 lakh, Kartik and Uttar Pradesh's Prashant Veer set the record when CSK splurged Rs 14.20 crore on each of them, in the auction at Abu Dhabi on Tuesday.

"When the bidding started, I was scared I might miss out. But as the bid kept going up, I started crying," Kartik was quoted as saying in a JioHotstar release.

"Even after it ended, I couldn't stop. I was overwhelmed with emotion and happiness. I honestly don't know how to put it into words," the teenage keeper-batter from Rajasthan added.

The bidding for Kartik was started by Mumbai Indians and Lucknow Super Giants



Uncapped Kartik Sharma was secured by CSK for Rs 14.20 crore

before Kolkata Knight Riders joined in.

While MI exited the bidding, KKR and LSG took the price to Rs 2.80 crore before CSK entered the fray.

The bidding price surged to Rs 13.20 crore when KKR left the race and Sunrisers Hyderabad entered, before CSK sealed the deal at Rs 14.20 crore.

Kartik said he was exited to play alongside MS Dhoni but remembered the contributions of his family and friends in his journey.

"A special thank you to all my family members & friends, without their sup-

port, I don't think I would have reached this stage," he said.

"My entire family is very happy, everyone is celebrating and dancing. I'm extremely excited to play alongside Mahendra Singh Dhoni and learn from him."

Sarfaraz hopes to win 2026 title for franchise

Out-of-favour India batter Sarfaraz Khan says he has got a "new life" thanks to five-time IPL champions Chennai Super Kings after the team bought him at his base price of Rs 75 lakh in the mini players' auction in Abu Dhabi.

The 28-year-old Sarfaraz, who slammed a 22-ball 73 in a Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy match just hours before the auction on Tuesday, went unsold in the first round but was later picked up by CSK.

"Thank you so much, CSK for giving me new life. I will make sure CSK will lift the 2026 title," the Mumbai batter wrote on his Instagram page.

The hard-hitting middle-order batter last featured in the IPL for the Delhi Capitals in 2023 against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

BWF World Tour Finals

Need to work improve our service and receive: Satwik

HANGZHOU

Indian men's doubles star Satwiksairaj Rankireddy on Wednesday said improving service and receive remains the key focus area for him and partner Chirag Shetty as they look to compete consistently against the world's top pairs.

The world number 3 pair opened their campaign at the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals with a gritty 12-21, 22-20, 21-14 win

over Olympic silver medalists Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang of China in their opening men's doubles Group B match.

"We are practising service and receiving most of the time. It's the main part of the game. If you want to beat pairs from Malaysia, Indonesia or China, you have to handle service situations well," Satwik said after the match.

The former world No. 1 added that while the Indian pair thrives once rallies open

up, they still have ground to cover in the crucial opening exchanges.

"If you are good at receiving and the game opens up, we are strong and we know how to handle those situations. But in service and receive, we are not yet at the level of some of the other top pairs," he said.

Satwik said the duo is aware of the gap and is working to bridge it. "I think we need to ... we are learning that and we are keep trying that and we are

practicing most of that," he added.

Satwik and Chirag, the only Indian representatives at the season-ending showpiece, recovered from an opening-game setback and saved a match point to eventually outwit the world No. 5 Chinese pair. Satwik said they wanted to be aggressive right from the start.

"No matter what, play aggressive game style, that was the game plan from the starting onwards," said the 25-year-old from

Amalapuram.

"But in the first game we couldn't get the rhythm. It's been a while we played, it's not easy to get that rhythm and play with the top players in the first match, first set.

"To adjust to the shuttle as well, it was fast in the first game, but suddenly it became very slow. We weren't 100% ready." The duo almost squandered a 18-12 lead as the Chinese made it 19-19. Satwik handed a match point to their rivals before the apir recovered.



Indian doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy (R) and Chirag Shetty in a file pic. AP