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

NATIONAL ENGLISH DAILY

Briefs

NEW DELHI

MEA trashes Pak remarks on minorities

India on Monday said Pakistan's "horrific and systemic victimisation" of minorities of various faiths is a well established fact and no amount of "finger pointing" will "obfuscate" it. New Delhi said this while strongly trashing Pakistan's comments on condition of minorities in India. "We reject the reported remarks from a country whose abysmal record on this front speaks for itself," external affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "Pak's horrific and systemic victimisation of minorities of various faiths is a well established fact," he said.

CHANDIGARH Campaign by Cong to save MGNREGA

Punjab Congress will launch a mass movement across the state to, what it held, save the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) from Gurdaspur on January 8, 2026. Briefing newsmen in the context on Monday, the party state president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring alleged that the new scheme replacing the MGNREGA is also like a black law. He said the BJP was trying to snatch the livelihood of lakhs of rural poor and the marginalised by scrapping the MGNREGA, which had otherwise transformed the rural employment and economy.

KOCHI NCB charges darknet drug cartel

The NCB has filed a chargesheet before a court here in a case against members of the "Ketamol" cartel accused of ordering drugs through the darknet, officials said on Monday. A Narcotics Control Bureau official said the chargesheet was filed before the Ernakulam Additional District and Sessions Court on December 23. According to officials, the chargesheet names Muvattupuzha native Edison Babu, Arun Thomas, Sandeep Sajeev of North Paravoor, who is currently based in the UK, and Harikrishnan Aji Nawas, who is located in Australia.

Parl panel discusses ways to adopt G RAM G smoothly

NEW DELHI

A parliamentary panel on Monday examined various aspects of the UPA-era rural job guarantee law MGNREGA, which has now been replaced by the Narendra Modi government's VB-G RAM G Act, and how to move ahead in the next six months for a smooth transition to the new legislation.

Sources said most members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj talked about ways to be

UNNAO RAPE CASE | Supreme Court stays High Court order suspending Kuldeep Singh Sengar's life sentence

No respite for convict

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed the Delhi High Court order suspending the life sentence of expelled BJP leader Kuldeep Singh Sengar in the 2017 Unnao rape case and said he shall not be released from custody.

A vacation bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices J K Maheshwari and Augustine George Masih, which was hearing the CBI's plea challenging the high court order, said that substantial questions of law have arisen in the matter that require consideration. The apex court also issued notice to Sengar seeking his response within four weeks on the CBI's plea.

The bench said it was conscious of the fact that ordinarily when a convict or an under-trial was released on bail pursuant to an order passed by a trial court or the high court, such order shall not be stayed by it without hearing such person.

It noted that Sengar was also convicted and sentenced in a separate case and was still in custody in that matter.

"In the peculiar circumstances of the case, we stay the



Security officials keep vigil outside the Supreme Court, in New Delhi, on Monday

operation of the impugned order dated December 23, 2025, passed by the high court. Consequently, the respondent (Sengar) shall not be released from custody pursuant to the said order," the bench said.

The top court said various substantial questions of law have arisen for its consideration in the matter.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the CBI, urged the bench to stay the high court order, saying it was a "horrific rape" of a minor child.

"This is an occasion where I would really urge your lordships' conscience to stay this order. We are answerable to the child who was (aged) 15 years and 10 months," the top law officer said. He also referred to the respect of "public servant" and said Sengar was then a very powerful MLA of the area at the relevant time.

Won't rest until he's hanged: Rape survivor

The Unnao rape case survivor on Monday said "I am very happy with this decision. I have got justice from the Supreme Court. I have been raising my voice for justice from the very beginning." She further said, "I will not rest until he is hanged. I will keep fighting. Only then will my family and I get justice."

I am tired and scared: Sengar's daughter

LUCKNOW

Eight years after the Unnao rape case shook the country, Ishita Sengar, the younger daughter of former BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar, has spoken publicly about her pain, saying she is exhausted, frightened and gradually losing faith after years of silence and abuse.

In an emotional open letter posted on social media on Monday, Ishita said she had waited for eight years before sharing her feelings with the country. She wrote that the prolonged ordeal had taken a heavy toll on her mental health, forcing her to speak out now.

Ishita alleged that she had been repeatedly targeted on social media over the years, facing extreme and disturbing comments. She claimed that users had told her she should be raped and killed, leaving her traumatised and fearful.

Shah to people of Assam: Elect govt that will evict infiltrators

GUWAHATI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday appealed to the people of Assam to support the BJP in the upcoming March-April Assembly elections, saying continued public backing was essential for sustaining the peace, prosperity and development that, according to him, began in the state 11 years ago.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah arrives to inaugurate the newly constructed Batadrava Cultural Project, in Nagaon district, Assam, on Monday

new Guwahati Police Commissionerate building and the Intelligence City Surveillance System.

Soon after his arrival, Shah travelled to Batadrava in Nagaon to inaugurate the Mahapurush Srimanta Sankaradeva Abhirbhab Kshetra at Borduwa, the birthplace of the 16th-century Vaishnavite saint who shaped Assam's spiritual and cultural identity. The visit underscored the Centre's emphasis on cultural revival alongside development.

After returning to Guwahati in a Border Security Force helicopter around mid-afternoon, Shah continued with a series of inaugurations, including the

new criminal laws and the reforms introduced under them.

One of the highlights of the visit was the inauguration of the Rs 291-crore Jyoti-Bishnu Antarjati Kala Mandir at Khanapara. Named after cultural icons Rupkonwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala and Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha, the massive cultural complex features a 5,000-seat auditorium and modern facilities, making it one of the largest of its kind in eastern India.

In his address at the kala mandir, Shah described the complex as a symbol of Assam's cultural resurgence and changing times.

Gehlot accuses Centre of misleading on Aravalli

JAIPUR



Former chief minister of Rajasthan Ashok Gehlot, while welcoming the Supreme Court's stay order on the Aravalli range, has accused the central government of misleading the public on the issue.

"The Supreme Court's stay order is welcome. The central government and the environment minister were trying to mislead the public regarding the Aravalli range," said Gehlot to the media in Jaipur after the SC's order on Monday.

Talking about the central government on the issue, Gehlot said that it is not clear why the central government and the union environment minister were so stubborn. Public sentiment was against it. Everyone understood the consequences, but the central government and the environment minister remained adamant.

Gehlot flagged the formation of CEC (Central Empowered Committee) and said that the previous CEC reported directly to the Supreme Court. "The minister should explain why it was disbanded. After disbanding it, they created a committee

within their department, also called the CEC. The previous committee had significance as it was reporting directly to the Supreme Court," he said.

"That committee included judges, activists and experts. It was constituted by the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court monitored it. Re-establish that committee, and half the problem will be solved," suggested Gehlot.

Talking about the public agitation on the Aravalli issue, Gehlot said, public outrage that arose earlier, with people taking to the streets and protesting, sent a message that we will not tolerate this. This is also an opportunity for the central government and the environment minister to act on the issue with a changed perspective."

Notably, the new definition of the Aravali Range had become a major issue in Rajasthan, as a large part of the Aravali Range passes through the state. There were protests in almost all the districts where the Aravali exists.

Tripura youth's murder: Cong slams delay in FIR

Party also calls for educating people about 'One India' by explaining its diversity

NEW DELHI

Police "did not show promptness they should have" and it took almost 12 days to register the FIR, Gogoi said



'A national disgrace'

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Friday condemned the killing of a student from Tripura in Dehradun, calling it a "national disgrace" and warning that such incidents reflect a disturbing rise in racism and social prejudice in parts of the country.

Calling Angel a "proud Indian," the Congress leader said the attack highlighted how people from the Northeast continue to face discrimination and violence based on their appearance.

Angel Chakma murder sparks political storm

DEHRADUN

The murder of Tripura student Angel Chakma in Uttarakhand's capital Dehradun has triggered a sharp political backlash, with opposition leaders accusing the Centre and BJP of remaining silent on what they have described as a hate crime.

In a post on X, Rahul Gandhi termed Angel Chakma's murder a horrific hate crime and alleged that hatred has been normalised under the BJP's rule. He said the attack on Angel and his brother Michael reflected years of systematic encouragement of hatred, especially among the youth, through toxic content and irresponsible narratives.

Gandhi said India was built on respect and unity, not fear and abuse, and warned against remaining silent when fellow citizens are targeted. He expressed solidarity with the Chakma family and the people of Tripura and the North East, saying the country should be proud to call them fellow

Akhilesh Yadav said the killing was the result of an extremely hateful mindset nurtured by divisive forces. He alleged that such elements were thriving under government patronage. He urged peace-loving people to unite, identify anti-social elements and socially boycott them, and also appealed to the Supreme Court to take suo motu cognisance of the case.

According to police, the incident occurred on December 9 at the Selukai market in Dehradun, where Angel Chakma, a resident of Tripura's Unakoti district, and his brother Michael were attacked with a knife and brass knuckles following an altercation. The 24-year-old succumbed to his injuries on December 26.

Angel's father, Tarun Chakma of the Border Security Force, alleged racial slurs were used, a claim denied so far by the police. Five accused, including two juveniles, have been arrested, while the main accused is absconding.

After Kerala CM rap, K'taka to allot houses to Kogilu encroachers

BENGALURU

General Secretary KC Venugopal spoke to Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, forcing him to allot the encroachers alternate houses.

Housing Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan said that 180 alternative houses would be allotted to Kogilu layout and for remaining people, the government would allot alternative lands.

Meanwhile, the government decision has evoked sharp reaction from opposition BJP, who have questioned whether KC Venugopal was super chief minister of Karnataka and wanted Siddaramaiah to clarify if the

Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah and Dy CM Shivkumar action to 'Bulldozer Justice'.

Kunhalikutty said that he had spoken to Karnataka Chief Minister, who had assured to help the land losers. "It is not right on the part of Karnataka Chief Minister to issue such statements just because there is a Congress government

ment in Karnataka. It is not true that only minority community people have lost houses, the victims include other religious faiths also," he said.

The saga started after Dec 20, when GBA demolished over 200 houses built on two illegal layouts -- Fakir Colony and Wasim layout. The land was earmarked for the dumping yard of the Solid Waste Management division of the GBA. Meanwhile, after losing minority votes in the Kerala local body elections, the Kerala government compared demolition to the 'Bulldozer Justice' against the minorities followed by the Uttar Pradesh



The demand was raised at the annual convention of the All India Shia Personal Law Board held in Lucknow

A probe into alleged corruption and illegal sale of properties by Shia Wakf Boards across the country, particularly the

Uttar Pradesh Shia Central Waqf Board. They demanded strict action against those found guilty and called for a special law to ensure proper management and protection of Shia religious endowments.

The convention reiterated a long-pending demand for the reconstruction of tombs at the Jannat al-Baqi cemetery in Medina, which belong to members of the Prophet

Muhammad's family. It urged the Government of India to use diplomatic channels to press Saudi Arabia to allow reconstruction of the shrines, which were demolished after the fall of Ottoman Empire.

The meeting also called for strict laws against mob lynching, a review of plans to introduce a Uniform Civil Code, and adequate political representation for Shias. The Board

Shias seek socio-economic panel on lines of Sachar Committee

MUMBAI

The country's Shia community has urged the government to set up a high-level panel on the lines of the Sachar Committee to study the social, economic and educational status of Shias in India and recommend measures for their upliftment, including reservation in employment.

Magh Mela 2025: Saints' Plight Reaches its Peak, Facing Hardship Over Land and Facilities, Serious Allegations of Corruption and Insensitivity

● Saints wandering for months for land and facilities? ● The saint community facing humiliation and neglect? ● Allegations of a young man being beaten at the Mela Authority office? ● Serious allegations of land being given in exchange for money? ● Poor local people also being ignored

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Amit Pandey

Magh Mela 2025: Saints' Plight Reaches its Peak, Facing Hardship Over Land and Facilities, Serious Allegations of Corruption and Insensitivity

Amit Pandey? Saints wandering for months for land and facilities? The saint community facing humiliation and neglect? Allegations of a young man being beaten at the Mela Authority office? Serious allegations of land being given in exchange for money? Poor local people also being ignored? Prayagraj. The Magh Mela 2025 is considered a great festival of devotion, penance, and faith, but in this sacred event, the condition of the sadhus, saints, and the general public is becoming extremely pathetic. For a month, saints have been forced to wander day and night



around the Mela Authority office for land allocation and basic facilities. The situation has become so bad that after wandering for 16 hours, exhausted sadhus are being forced to lie down under the Mela officer's vehicles to plead for justice. The saint community, which is considered a symbol of renunciation, penance, and self-control, is today fac-

ing humiliation and neglect in the Mela area. The saints say that their grievances are not being heard and they are being repeatedly given assurances and then ignored. Many saints' eyes fill with tears while narrating their plight, but the system remains unmoved. On Saturday, another serious incident came to light inside the Mela Authority office. A young



man who had gone to collect a facility slip was allegedly severely beaten by the employees. After this, the young man was handed over to the police. This incident has created an atmosphere of fear and anger in the Mela area, and questions are being raised about the functioning of the administration. It is alleged that in various sectors of the Mela area,

Lekhpals (revenue officers), supervisors, and Naib Tehsildars (deputy revenue officers) are providing land and facilities in exchange for money. While sadhus, saints, and common people are being made to wander aimlessly, influential people and those with connections are easily getting land and facilities. It is being said that many officers

are not available in the office during the day and reach the Mela Authority after 11 pm to complete their work. The situation is not limited to the saints alone. Poor local people who earn a meager 100-150 rupees daily through hard labor in and around the fairgrounds are also being reprimanded and chased away by the fair administration. Their pleas are falling on deaf ears, even though many families depend on these earnings for their livelihood. There is a common sentiment in the fair area that the Magh Mela of 2025 has become only for the wealthy and influential, and not for the saints, sages, and ordinary devotees.

If the situation continues like this, people's faith in this sacred fair is bound to diminish. There is still time for the administration to show sensitivity and ensure respect and justice for the saints and the general public.

District Magistrate holds meeting with hotel and restaurant owners and association representatives

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: A meeting was held on Monday at the Sangam Auditorium under the chairmanship of District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma with hotel and restaurant owners and representatives of their associations. In the meeting, the District Magistrate said that Prayagraj is a religious city and the king of pilgrimage sites. All pilgrims come here with devotion, and during the last Kumbh Mela, arrangements for lodging, food, and drink were made with devotion by you all. However, some complaints of overcharging and other issues were received. Our main objective is that the devotees and visitors coming from India and

abroad to the Magh Mela-2026, which is going to be held on the banks of the Ganga-Yamuna-Saraswati, should have a spiritual experience and take back memorable experiences from here. Therefore, no devotee should feel cheated due to unfair treatment, overcharging, or any other reason. Therefore, unanimously decide on the rates, display the rate list in your respective business establishments, and ensure that facilities are provided at those rates. The District Magistrate has directed the Food Safety Officer to take necessary action to ensure the quality and cleanliness of food at all eateries and to ensure that food is sold at reasonable prices. He asked all hotel owners to immediately

report any information regarding online fraud related to hotel bookings. He said that the rates should be kept reasonable and special attention should be paid to the quality and cleanliness of food items. Everyone should get their kitchens inspected at their level to ensure that no expired food items are being used. The District Magistrate said that those interested in homestays should contact the Tourism Department and get themselves registered. He directed the Tourism Department officials to investigate unregistered homestays and register those homestays that comply with the standards. He said that along with business, work should be done with a spirit of service. He told

everyone present at the meeting that they were all educated and responsible individuals, and that no action should be taken that would leave any devotee with a negative experience. He emphasized that visiting devotees should not feel that their vulnerability was being exploited in any way, and therefore, hotels and restaurants should charge only fair and fixed rates for rooms and food. He also sought suggestions from the hotel and restaurant owners and discussed the city's traffic and congestion problems. Present at the meeting were Additional District Magistrate Satyam Mishra, the Food Safety Officer, and representatives from various hotels and restaurants in the district.

Senior BJP Leader Devvrat Chaubey Dies in Train Accident

Ghazipur

Senior BJP leader and former district vice-president Devvrat Chaubey, 65 died in a train accident at Sidhaura Halt on Sunday evening. His post-mortem examination was conducted at the Ghazipur mortuary at 10 AM on Monday. His body was then taken to his ancestral village of Gorkha in the Khanpur police station area, where a large crowd of well-wishers and local residents gathered to pay their last respects to their leader. Devvrat Chaubey had served in various capacities within the party organization, including as district vice-president in the executive committee of former district



president Bhanu Pratap Singh, district general secretary in the executive committee of former district president Krishna Bihari Rai and district media in-charge in the team of former district president Ramtej Pandey. He remained actively involved in party work until his death. BJP leaders draped the party flag over his body and paid their tributes. BJP district president Om Prakash Rai, Bhanu Pratap Singh, Krishna Bihari Rai, Vivek Chaubey, younger son, Vivek Chaubey was also present. The funeral pyre was lit by his elder son, Vivek Chaubey.

Mayor's Cup - 2025 Begins, MP and Mayor Inaugurate the Event by Lighting the Lamp



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj: The Khel Prayagraj Mayor's Cup 2025 Season Two, organized by the Municipal Corporation, incorporates cleanliness and health. From December 28th to January 2nd, 2026. Mayor's Municipal Corporation Friendship Cricket Match on January 1st and 2nd at Khel Gaon (Sports Village). This time, women councilors participated along with

para-athletes under Mission Shakti. The program was inaugurated by Chief Guest Mayor Ganesh Keshwani and MP Praveen Patel by lighting the lamp. Chief Guest Ganesh Keshwani was welcomed by Municipal Commissioner Seelam Teja Sai with a bouquet and a traditional garment. Former Minister Narendra Singh Gaur was welcomed by Mayor Ganesh Keshwani with a tra-



ditional garment. Special Guest MP Praveen Patel was welcomed by the Mayor, and Special Guest E. Harsh Vardhan Bajpai was welcomed by Councilor Ashish Dwivedi with a bouquet and a traditional garment. Sports Officer Prem Kumar and MLA Deepak Patel were also welcomed with traditional garments. The Chief Guest, the Mayor, speaking about the Khel Prayagraj Mayor's Cup, said that Prime Minister Modi

initiated Khelo India, and this event by the Municipal Corporation incorporates cleanliness and health. This event is being organized to motivate children who have almost disappeared from the playgrounds and to focus on their health. More than 2400 players will participate in athletics, para-athletics, badminton, basketball, boxing, chess, cricket, football, handball, hockey, judo, kabaddi, karate, kho kho, lawn tennis, table tennis,

taekwondo, volleyball, rowing, kayaking, canoeing, and skating. This grand festival of 21 sports, the 'Mayor's Cup 2026', will allow sports enthusiasts of Prayagraj Municipal Corporation to showcase their talent in various sports. Children from Khel Gaon Public School presented an inspirational song. The children also presented a march past and a gymnastics display. Additional Municipal Commissioner Deep Shikha gave the vote of

thanks. During this event, the Mayor's wife Savita Kesarwani, Additional Municipal Commissioner Rajiv Shukla, corporators Kiran Jaiswal, Shiv Sevak Singh, Sunita Chopra, Sonika Agarwal, Pankaj Jaiswal, Bablu Raghuvanshi, along with all other respected corporators and coaches Sardar Kuldeep Singh, PK Pandey, Shahit Kamal, Sanjay Yadav, and Manas Nishad were present.



Mathura

Under Operation Jagriti Phase 5, under the leadership of Senior Superintendent of Police, District Mathura, Mission Shakti/Operation Jagriti Abhiyan, Thana Naujheel Police Team conducted a campaign to raise awareness about the safety, respect and self-reliance of women and girls in town Naujheel. Awareness about cyber crime and ways to prevent cyber crime, safe use of social media, not to click on unknown links, not to share your OTP with anyone. At the same time, information was provided on women related crimes and their legal procedures and various government schemes and helpline numbers were provided to be used in case of need, mainly 1090 Women Power Line, 181 Women Helpline, 1076 Chief Minister's Helpline, 112 Emergency Police Helpline, 1098, Chaplain Helpline. Information was provided about 102 health services, 108 ambulance services etc.

Deputy Chief Minister Inspects Magh Mela Area, Offers Prayers at Sangam

Ensure proper arrangements for security, sanitation, traffic, drinking water, medical facilities, and lighting: Keshav Prasad Maurya

Akhand Bharat Sandesh



Prayagraj. Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya conducted a surprise inspection of the preparations for Magh Mela-2026 on Monday. During the inspection, the Deputy Chief Minister reviewed the arrangements in the area and gave necessary instructions to the concerned officials regarding the convenience, security, sanitation, traffic, drinking water, medical facilities, and lighting arrangements for the devotees. He instructed the officials to ensure that devotees visiting the

Magh Mela do not face any inconvenience and that all arrangements are completed in a timely and smooth manner. He said that the Magh Mela is not just an event of faith, but a living example of India's eternal tradition, social

discipline, and administrative efficiency. During this time, he offered prayers at the holy Sangam. The Deputy Chief Minister said that providing a safe, clean, and well-organized environment to the devotees visiting

the Magh Mela is the government's top priority. He instructed the police, administration, and all other departments to work in coordination and complete all tasks in a timely manner. He said that the Magh Mela should be

organized in such a way that it reflects a balanced and effective blend of faith, security, cleanliness, innovation, and sensitive administration. Special attention should be paid to all arrangements during the major bathing festivals, and concrete and effective measures should be taken for the safety of devotees, crowd management, and traffic management. He emphasized the importance of cleanliness and sanitation during the fair. He instructed all concerned officials to work in mission mode and ensure that all preparations are completed on

time. He directed that the bathing ghats be kept organized and that arrangements for bonfires be made at designated and marked locations. He said that devotees visiting the Magh Mela should have a good bathing experience and return home with a divine feeling. On this occasion, Mayor Umesh Chandra Ganesh Kesarwani, MLA Phaphamau Guru Prasad Maurya, BJP District President Gangapar Nirmala Paswan, Yamunapar President Rajesh Shukla, Awadhesh Gupta, and others were present.

Magh Mela-2026: Briefing by Divisional Commissioner and Police Commissioner on Crowd Management under Emergency Plans

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. A briefing program for police officers, zonal/sector magistrates, and staff was organized on Monday at the Teerthraj Auditorium of the Reserve Police Lines in the Magh Mela area, under the joint chairmanship of Divisional Commissioner Soumya Agarwal and Police Commissioner Jogendra Kumar, in view of the preparations for Magh Mela-2026. The briefing program was first addressed by Superintendent of Police, Magh Mela, Neeraj Kumar Pandey. He gave detailed information to all Circle Officers, Station House Officers, and Outpost In-charges regarding all 10 emergency plans implemented for crowd management during Magh Mela-2026 and also obtained necessary feedback from the concerned officers regarding the implementation of emergency plans number 01 to 04 (related to ghats) and plan number 10 (related to boatmen). Following this, Additional Police Commissioner Dr. Ajay Pal Sharma, emphasizing the emergency plans, directed that if any difficulty arises at any level while implementing the plans, the higher



authorities should be informed immediately, and no laxity should be shown in this regard. He stressed the importance of putting the emergency crowd management plans into practice through regular mock drills and rehearsals at the local level. District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma directed all zonal/sector in-charges to maintain better coordination with their respective zonal/sector officers and station house officers, conduct joint patrols, and maintain continuous surveillance in parking, holding areas, and ghat areas. The District Magistrate called all the magistrates on duty at the Mela to the stage, introduced them, and

reviewed the progress of their work. On this occasion, Police Commissioner, Prayagraj Commissionerate, Jogendra Kumar, addressing the police force, said that the swift, coordinated, and effective implementation of crowd management and emergency plans during Magh Mela-2026 is extremely essential. She directed that preparations be made at all levels to significantly increase evacuation capacity in the shortest possible time in case of an emergency, that sufficient police force be deployed at every intersection/junction and all duty points, and that emergency plans be implemented without any delay



upon receiving instructions from the control room. She also instructed that continuous patrolling and checking be carried out at entry points and ghats to remove encroachments and prevent disorder, to prevent devotees from stopping or sleeping at the ghats, and to direct them to designated rest areas/camps if needed. Addressing the officers present, Divisional Commissioner Soumya Agarwal said that the safety, convenience, and orderly bathing arrangements for the devotees are the administration's top priority. She asked all concerned departments to work with mutual coordination, continuous communication, and active

presence on the ground so that Magh Mela-2026 can be conducted safely, peacefully, and successfully. After the meeting, Divisional Commissioner Soumya Agarwal, along with all senior officers, inspected Sangam Nose and other areas in view of the approaching Magh Mela 2026, reviewed the ongoing preparations, and gave necessary instructions to all concerned officers. She instructed the concerned officers to complete the remaining work as soon as possible.

Addressing the media, the Divisional Commissioner said that the entire fair area is being continuously monitored with the help of

CCTV cameras. Crowd management will be done with the help of CCTV and AI.

She said that all necessary arrangements are being made for the convenience of the devotees coming to the fair, and there will be no shortage of any kind. She said that all sector magistrates and departmental officers in the fair area have been instructed to continuously tour their respective areas and keep track of the progress of the work. He has directed that all necessary arrangements be made at all bathing ghats, taking into account the depth of the water, to prevent any untoward incidents. Present at this briefing were Deputy Commissioner of Police (City) Manish Kumar, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Yamunapar) Vivek Kumar, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Gangapar) Kuldeep Gunawat, Additional District Magistrate (Protocol), Assistant Commissioner of Police Rajkumar Meena, Assistant Nodal Police Officer for Magh Mela Vijay Anand, along with other gazetted officers and officials/employees from the concerned departments involved in the Magh Mela arrangements.

Road accident causes chaos in the village, angry villagers block the

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Meja. In a tragic road accident in the Meja police station area on Monday evening, a young man walking on the road was hit by an out-of-control trailer and died on the spot. The incident caused panic in the area, and angry villagers blocked the road. According to the information received, Ajit Kumar Nishad (43), son of the late Pyare Lal, a resident of Maidan village, was walking on the road to buy some goods from his house around 7 pm on Monday. At that moment, an out-of-control trailer coming from the opposite direction at high speed hit him. Ajit Kumar died tragically on the spot after being hit by the trail-



er. Upon receiving information about the accident, ACP Meja Sant Prakash Upadhyay and Inspector-in-Charge Deendayal Singh reached the spot with the police force. The police seized the trailer. Meanwhile, angry villagers blocked the road with stones, disrupting traffic for some time. Seeing the situation worsening, the

A lecture on the topic of "Healthy Human Beings and Environment through Green Plants" and a detailed discussion on the use of green herbs were held at the District Jail



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. On Monday, a lecture and detailed discussion on the topic of "Healthy Humans and Environment through Green Plants" was held at the District Jail, Prayagraj, with Dr. K.N. Singh, Director of Police Planning, as the chief guest and Senior Jail Superintendent Amita Dubey presiding. The discussion also included the use of green herbs and a detailed scientific explanation of the Nabho Mudra described in the Vedas. This yoga technique, which was taught by Ashtavakra to King Janaka, involves turning the tongue 135 degrees towards the throat and lightly touching the palate. The analysis presented showed that this independent yoga practice can be performed

in any position, sitting or walking, and that swallowing the saliva produced eliminates all diseases in the body, opens all the chakras from the Muladhara to the Sahasrara, and grants knowledge of the past, present, and future. This independent mudra activates and energizes all the chakras, and negative thoughts, criminal tendencies, and other vices are burned away in the yogic fire, transforming the person into a saintly figure, just as Angulimala was transformed by Maharsi Valmiki through this yoga practice. The benefits of consuming 4-5 peepal leaves and its fruits were also discussed, including relief from joint pain, improved eyesight, elimination of the need for glasses, and destruction of all viral diseases, as described in detail in research



papers on the peepal tree, which can be found through a Google search. White Calotropis was described as an antiseptic, health-promoting, digestive aid, and effective against obesity, viruses, bacteria, and all skin diseases. It was stated that consuming a leaf the size of a finger can cure Hepatitis A, B, C, D, and jaundice within a week. The uses of other plants such as Latjira, Makoi, Bhringraj, Harsingar, Durva grass, and Navagraha herbs were also explained in detail, along with the benefits of using Navagraha plants to generate positive energy in the surroundings. Dr. Singh also provided detailed answers to questions from prisoners and jail staff regarding the diagnosis of various diseases, including the treat-

ment of kidney stones, diabetes, asthma, and vision problems using medicinal plants. Dr. Singh's lecture was organized for the inmates in the multipurpose hall of the prison, under the chairmanship of the Senior Jail Superintendent, Mrs. Amita Dubey. Jailer Shailendra Pratap Singh, Jailer Alok Kumar, Medical Officer Dr. Sunil Kumar, Deputy Jailer Abhilasha, Deputy Jailer Vijay Prasad, Deputy Jailer Sushila Devi, Deputy Jailer Simran Soni, and Deputy Jailer Amar Singh, along with other prison officers and staff, were present on this occasion. Most of the inmates benefited from attending this lecture. Dr. Singh also provided the prison administration with a list of plants for the Dhanvantari and Navagraha gardens for planting.

Editorial

Kharagpur wants students to run to mommy

At a time when gender equity discussions are taking centre stage, IIT Kharagpur's reductive framing of women through the 'Campus Mothers' initiative as default caregivers is tragically regressive. Reinforcing outdated gender norms under the guise of support, it sidelines efforts for gender parity and ultimately does a disservice to all genders. The urgent need to expand mental health support on college campuses and create multiple avenues of care and intervention is not under debate here. What merits scathing scrutiny is the blatant gender stereotyping disguised as an innovative initiative. The core idea of community-based health-care initiatives like 'Campus Mothers' is not new. One of the earliest examples is Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), developed in the US in the 1970s, which includes Peer Support Specialists to provide mental health support. From India, Atmiyata is a community-based mental health initiative that has shown evidence-based success in Maharashtra and Gujarat. Similar community mental health models in Japan and other countries have also shown encouraging rates of success. However, in their decades-long global history, community mental health support has never been the exclusive domain or responsibility of women. Framing caregiving as inherently feminine erases the contributions of others and reinforces regressive gender norms that hinder gender equitable participation in both caregiving and mental health advocacy. By soliciting the active participation of women as 'Campus Mothers', the initiative is likely to exclude other genders, especially men from this important mental health initiative, undermining the very equity that such programmes should strive to promote. "Many of these women have experienced motherhood themselves—some have grown up children who may now be living abroad or otherwise independent. Having gone through motherhood, they understand the unique challenges children face," said the director of IIT Kharagpur, Suman Chakraborty. We find this quote especially problematic.

The notion that experiencing motherhood inherently grants women a magical capacity for empathy is both reductive and exclusionary. By that logic, men—having never experienced motherhood—are naturally disqualified from being empathetic. But empathy is not biologically bestowed through motherhood; it is cultivated through a range of life experiences, self-awareness, and emotional engagement. The best counsellors and therapists, or psychiatrists are not defined by their gender or parental status. A nurturing environment requires participation from all genders. Since 'Campus Mothers' involves training, why not train all genders? This initiative deliberately propagates the surrogate maternal figure, reinforcing the "run-to-mommy-when-hurt" stereotype. Equally troubling is the assumption that older women, having completed their primary caregiving roles, now need something to "fill their time". And 'Campus Mothers' is supposed to be a productive way to keep them occupied. This framing is deeply patriarchal and condescending, reducing women's identities to domestic roles and positioning them as permanent caregivers for other people's children once their own have left home. Audaciously enough, the 'Campus Mothers' initiative has also been called a leadership opportunity for women. "By involving women as key emotional anchors on campus, the initiative also promotes women's participation and leadership in the academic community," reads an article on The Bridge Chronicle. What kind of leadership opportunity is envisaged for women who participate in this programme? Do they get visibility for leadership roles traditionally held by men in the administrative .



One answer could be low educational attainment among EBCs and their limited ability



One answer could be low educational attainment among EBCs and their limited ability to benefit from reservation policies. Across North Indian states, EBCs have demanded a sub-categorisation within OBC reservations, arguing that they are unable to compete with politically dominant OBC groups such as Yadavs and Kurmis. The BJP responded by appointing the Justice Rohini Committee to examine this demand. At the same time, welfare schemes introduced by the Narendra Modi government have also reached these communities. Because of its alliance with the BJP, the JDU has benefited from both strategies—ticket splitting and policy response—while opposition parties like the RJD have remained stuck on the former. This could partly explain the aversion of EBCs toward the RJD. In the upcoming election, RJD's Tejashwi Yadav is promising to extend the limit of reservation, along with the introduction of a domicile policy for government jobs. However, none of these policies are specifically targeted to address the grievances of EBCs. Unless the party does that, it would be a herculean task to break the aversion. To sum up, the RJD's attempt to expand its social coalition

by adding EBCs to its MY base did not deliver encouraging results in the last election. Relying on ticket-splitting alone to mobilise these communities hasn't worked. The party now needs to explore mechanisms beyond candidate nomination. Offering specific welfare schemes could be one of them. Otherwise, it may just be staring at a repeat of 2020. As Bihar gears up for the assembly elections later this year, the opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal has appointed Mangani Lal Mandal as its new state president—the first time it has chosen someone who belongs to the Extremely Backward Classes, or EBCs, a voting bloc that comprises 113 castes and makes up 36 per cent of the state's population. So far, though, EBCs have shown an aversion toward the RJD. Instead, they have gravitated toward the JDU, now in alliance with the BJP, which mobilised its election machinery in Bihar immediately after

winning the Delhi assembly election. The question now arises whether the RJD will succeed in its efforts to attract EBCs through the appointment of Mandal. Based on an analysis of caste-wise candidate nominations by the RJD and JDU, and their respective victories in the 2020 Bihar assembly election, I argue that the RJD needs to move beyond political appointments for the mobilisation of such communities. It also needs to focus on exclusive policies intended to empower EBCs. Otherwise, it will be extremely difficult to break the scepticism of the EBCs. Bihar is well known for caste-based political mobilisation. The caste background of candidates is an important indicator of how parties build their social coalitions. It also helps us to understand the support of different castes for various political parties. Let's take a look at the caste-wise candidate nominations and wins of the RJD and JDU in the 2020 Bihar

assembly election. This analysis examines the caste composition of nominees and elected representatives from the RJD and JDU in the 2020 Bihar Assembly election, based on candidate data from media reports. The graph below shows that the RJD's highest number of candidates came from the Yadav community (58). After them, only three other groups—EBCs (19), Scheduled Castes (19), and Muslims (18)—had candidates in double digits. Seen as a whole, the RJD focused primarily on its traditional MY (Muslim-Yadav) base, followed by an attempt to bring in EBCs. However, its EBC candidates performed badly. Out of 19 nominated, only four won. In contrast, JDU's EBC candidates performed impressively. It nominated 17 EBC candidates, out of which 12 won. The party's overall ticket distribution was also not concentrated on any one social group. Seven social groups—Yadav (18), EBC (17), SC (16), Kurmi (15), Kushwaha (15), Muslim (11), and Bhumihar (10)—had candidates in double digits. It's worth noting, though, that the highest number of JDU candidates also came from the Yadavs. This nomination profile might be symbolic, but it also conveys a message that the party is not against the legitimate rep-

resentation of any particular social group. Here, the RJD did not appear as above board, as it had nominated only one candidate from the Kurmi caste, which is the support base of the JDU. In short, the above comparative analysis reveals EBCs have largely steered clear of the RJD.

Despite nominating a larger number of candidates from the group, only four of its 19 EBC candidates won, compared to 12 of JDU's 17. It is often stated that Nitish Kumar has created a constituency of women, MBCs, and Mahadalits, and these social groups have gradually become a strong support base of the JDU. To break the social base of any political party, a rival typically deploys two strategies: ticket splitting and policy changes. The former means nominating candidates from those castes and communities, while the latter involves promising policies that benefit them. The RJD relied on the first strategy, nominating a high number of EBC candidates in the 2020 election. One may counter that the RJD also adopted the strategy of policy change by promising 10 lakh government jobs, from which EBCs would also potentially benefit. So why did EBCs not respond to such promises?

Bombay HC has left women advocates without a PoSH shield

The Bombay High Court recently rejected a petition asking it to order the Maharashtra-Goa Bar Council and the Bar Council of India to set up permanent committees for handling sexual harassment complaints under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013. Every woman advocate in India is now outside the PoSH net. The Division Bench of the Bombay High Court concluded that no employer-employee relationship exists between advocates and Bar Councils. That nexus is the linchpin of the PoSH Act. The Act's architecture presupposes an employer capable of setting up an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), enforcing penalties, and supervising compliance. Since Bar Councils are not "employers" and advocates are not "employees", the judges held, PoSH's machinery simply has nothing to attach itself to. Hence, there is no obligation to set up ICCs at state or national Bar Councils. The Court noted that victims of sexual harassment could

instead use the avenue of filing a complaint of misconduct under the Advocates Act. The Bombay High Court order reopens the faultline that has shadowed the PoSH Act since its birth. The Act traces back to the 1992 gang rape of Bhanwari Devi, a government field worker who was attacked by dominant-caste men while campaigning against child marriage. Although the Supreme Court invoked constitutional guarantees to establish guidelines on redressing sexual harassment at work, it confined those safeguards to a model that required a formal employer. When Parliament finally codified PoSH in 2013, that structure was embedded in the Act. The duty to constitute ICCs, train staff and committee members, and create a safe working environment was placed wholly on an identifiable employer. The Bombay High Court Bench relied squarely on that design architecture to reject the current plea.

Paradox of India's S-400 deal—key asset delayed when country needs it most

On the sidelines of the otherwise contentious Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Qingdao, a quiet yet significant development unfolded. India was once again assured by Russia of the timely delivery of the remaining two S-400 Triumf air defence systems. Russian defence minister Andrei Belousov himself communicated this to his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh, offering some comfort to New Delhi's strategic planners. Indian media outlets covered the commitment with cautious relief. The S-400 systems, which form the outermost layer of India's integrated air defence shield, have proven particularly effective during Operation Sindoora. They successfully integrated with domestically developed platforms like the Akash surface-to-air missiles, L-70 anti-aircraft guns, and indigenous drones. Unsurprisingly, there is a growing consensus within India's strategic community that New Delhi must not only complete the current S-400 procurement but also explore future acquisitions, possibly including the more advanced S-500 systems. However, this optimism belies the long and complicated journey of the S-400 deal. Signed in 2018 at a value of \$5.43 billion, the agreement was initially hailed as a bold assertion of India's strategic autonomy, especially during the Trump administration. In 2020, NATO ally Turkey faced sanctions under CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) for pursuing the same system. India had escaped US sanctions, a testament to its rising importance in the evolving Indo-Pacific calculus. Yet, what was once a symbol of defiance and diplomatic balance has now become a victim of President Putin's protracted war in Ukraine. Originally scheduled for delivery between 2021 and 2023, the first three S-400 systems did arrive by late 2021. The remaining two, however, remain undelivered as Russia's war in Ukraine enters its fourth year, with no clear end in sight. The timeline has repeatedly slipped. There are at least four critical factors behind these delays, which highlight both vulnerabilities and priorities of the Russian defence sector, as well as the geopolitical complexities surrounding Moscow's partnerships. Russia has suffered significant material losses in Ukraine. While propaganda from both sides makes verification difficult, independent monitoring groups like Oryx have documented that at least 12 S-400 systems have been partially or completely destroyed. This is significant, given the S-400's role as the backbone of Russia's long-range air defence, with more than 30 regiments reportedly in service. The S-400 is vital for safeguarding Russia's expansive territory—particularly as its military posture faces new threats from NATO's rejuvenated eastern flank. If Russia is short on operational systems, it is far more likely to divert new production toward replenishing its own arsenals than fulfilling export obligations. To understand how important the S-400 programme is for Russia, we must look back at its roots. Revitalised around 2000 under President Putin, the programme was part of a broader effort to restore Russia's defence industrial base and resuscitate its economy. A state-backed investment drive led to the expansion of three major production hubs: Obukhov Plant in St Petersburg, the Avitek Plant in Kirov, and the NMP Plant in Nizhny Novgorod. These efforts bore fruit by 2016, enabling large-scale production of the S-400 as well as newer systems like the S-300V4 and S-500. In January 2023, Putin even visited the Obukhovsky Plant, publicly claiming that Russia's

Can Musk And His American Party Rely On 'Vibes'?

The American Party. Is it the birth of a new political force of disruption and even hope in the United States, or just another Independence Day startup with a flag? While most Americans were busy enjoying fireworks and patriotic ballads on July 4, Elon Musk was hunched over his phone, obsessing not over liberty but over the results of a poll he posted on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, now moonlighting as his personal megaphone and emotional weather vane. The question was, should he launch a new political party? The answer, to his delight, was a resounding yes, with nearly two-thirds of

1.2 million respondents cheering him on. Musk took this as nothing short of divine instruction, promptly declaring the birth of the America Party. Until recently, billionaires busied themselves buying sports teams or building vanity rockets. But that looks old-school. Starting your own political party? That's the new superyacht. Musk insists this isn't just a passing whim but a much-needed emancipation from what he calls the "Uniparty", his term for the interchangeable swamp monsters that allegedly populate both the Republican and Democratic machines. "Do you want independence from the two-party

system?" he asked his followers. Over 1.2 million users clicked "yes", which in Musk-land is basically a constitutional convention. But before we light any more sparklers in celebration of the claim of American democracy's rebirth, let's step back. Is this really a new political force or just Musk rage-quitting the Republican Party in full view of his followers? After all, just weeks ago, he was Donald Trump's golden boy, literally. Musk was chairing the Department of Government Efficiency (aka 'Doge'), a symbolic nod to his uncanny ability to combine governance with meme stock aesthetics. Trump praised

Musk as a genius who would revolutionise Washington. Their once sealed with Tesla stock and campaign turned into an electrified divorce. Musk denounced Trump's new tax-and-spend 'orgy' as fiscal lunacy. Trump, in return, called Musk a "train wreck" trying to force electric cars down America's throat. To which Musk replied, essentially: "Fine. I'm starting my own party. With blackjack. And freedom." At first glance, this seems like classic Silicon Valley hubris - another tech mogul who believes that because he can colonise Mars, he can also fix swing states.

District Administration on High Alert to Provide Relief from Cold Wave

Barabanki

Acting on the directions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the district administration is fully active to protect destitute, helpless and poor families from the severe cold wave, chilling weather and frost. District Magistrate Shashank Tripathi is personally reviewing and continuously monitoring the relief measures to ensure timely assistance to those in need. Additional District Magistrate (Finance & Revenue) Nirankar Singh visited various locations across the district to inspect night shelters, bonfire arrangements and other facilities and instructed officials to keep all arrangements in proper order. He stated that, in accordance with government directions, all relief measures are being implemented effectively through inter-departmental coordination.



Relief through 24 Night Shelters

During the cold wave, a total of 24 night shelters are operational in the district—5 managed by the Revenue Department, 6 by the Municipal Council and 13 by Nagar Panchayats. These shelters have a combined capacity of 388 persons. So far, more than 150 destitute individuals have been provided safe shelter.

(Bonfires and Blanket Distribution)

To protect people from the cold, bonfires are being lit regularly at 483 locations across the district, against 318 originally identified

sites.

The Municipal Council has arranged both wooden and Petromax bonfires for more effective relief. Meanwhile, out of approximately 10,500 blankets received from the Relief Commissioner Office, details of 5400 beneficiaries have been completed and blankets distributed, while the remaining process is underway. Administrative officials said that these relief efforts, driven by humanitarian concern are providing strong support to the needy during the cold wave and will continue with full commitment in the coming days.

Four-Day Dharma Jagran Foot March Concludes, Memorandum Submitted to Deputy CM

Barabanki: A four-day foot march organized by Dharma Jagran

Barabanki Dham, Uttar Pradesh from December 26 to December 29 concluded on Monday. The march began from the banks of the Saryu (Ghaghra) River at Ramnagar, Barabanki and culminated in Lucknow. Led by convenor Amit Awasthi, Advocate and coordinator Suresh Gautam, the participants submitted a five-point memorandum to Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak. Convenor Amit Awasthi stated that through the memorandum, demands were forwarded to the Prime Minister via the Deputy Chief Minister. These included the early implementation of a strict population control law, ending casteism by mandating the inclusion of parents' names along with an individual's name, prioritizing Ayushman Card benefits for families with fewer members and the operation of local train serv-



ices. Coordinator Suresh Gautam (former District President, BSP) ensured the peaceful completion of the foot march, with no obstructions reported throughout the route. During the march, participants paid floral tributes at temples and statues of great personalities along the way. Near BBD, tea-stall operator Dheeraj Mandal provided free tea and refreshments to the marchers, a gesture that deeply moved everyone present. The program saw participation and support from Bajrang Rawat, Chairman of the Uttar

Pradesh Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Commission, former MLA Sharad Awasthi, along with Ajay Trivedi, Narendra Tripathi, Bhante Deekshandan, Pravesh Shukla "Nanmoor," Pulkit Trivedi, Dr. Rajeev Awasthi, Ram Sajeevan Baba, Shivnath Tripathi, Balak Ram Sharma, Dr. Tej Narayan Verma, Shivam Shukla, Sushil Pandey, Manoj Singh, Manju Yadav, Ranjit Verma, Rakesh Tiwari and a large number of Dharma Jagran workers and foot march participants.

Administration on Alert as Cold Wave Hits, Bonfires Lit at 17 Locations and Night Shelters Strengthened

Etah

Following government directives and under the guidance of District Magistrate Prem Ranjan Singh, the administration in Etah has stepped up measures to provide relief to citizens, travelers and the needy amid the ongoing cold wave. Seventeen designated public spots across Tehsil Sadar, Etah have been regularly lit with bonfires to help pedestrians, destitute individuals and the homeless cope with the severe cold. Key locations include the Tehsil campus, District Hospital, Ganj Dundwara and Roadways bus stands, Maya Palace Chowk, Nannugal Chowk, Shikohabad Road, Shikohabad bus stand, Prem Nagar Chowk, Sabzi Mandi Tiraha, police chowki, Hanuman Chowk Marhara, Hospital Chowk Marhara and other prominent areas. In addition, night shelters have been established and are being operated at District Hospital campus, Roadways bus stand, Nagar Panchayat Sakit and Nagar Panchayat Mirchihi to provide temporary accommodation to travelers and the homeless. Deputy Magistrate Etah conducted surprise inspections of these shelters, interacted with occupants and issued necessary instructions to ensure smooth functioning. Furthermore, blankets were distributed at Pipal Adda, Roadways bus stand and other locations to assist those in need.



District Magistrate Prem Ranjan Singh has directed all revenue inspectors to survey their respective areas, identify individuals affected by the cold and ensure proper blanket distribution. He emphasized that all cold-wave relief measures must be implemented continuously and diligently, ensuring no citizen suffers due to the harsh weather conditions.

Banaras Hindu University Alumnus Anurag Arya, IPS Honored with the "Chief Minister Excellent Service Police Medal"



Varanasi

Banaras Hindu University proudly congratulates its esteemed alumnus Anurag Arya IPS Senior Superintendent of Police Bareilly on being honored with the prestigious "Chief Minister Excellent Service Police Medal" for his extraordinary work in solving several cases. This recognition reflects his exceptional dedication, perseverance and profound sense of duty towards ensuring public safety and justice. Arya completed his Bachelor of Science (Honors) in Physics from Banaras Hindu University in 2009. Hailing from Baghpat Anurag Arya a 2013 batch IPS

officer was a student of Physics (Honors) in the Faculty of Science at BHU from June 2006 to May 2009. During his time at BHU Arya resided in Room No.199 of Brocha Hostel. Having served as the Superintendent of Police in Amethi, Balrampur, Mau, Pratapgarh and Azamgarh Arya is currently posted as the Senior Superintendent of Police in

Bareilly. He has been honored with the Director General of Police Silver Disk, Gold Disk and Platinum Disk. On the 78th Independence Day Arya was awarded the Chief Minister Excellent Service Police Medal by the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. During his studies Arya was a promising student with a keen interest in sports. He was an integral part of the university basketball team. Notably, he participated in the All India Inter-University Tournaments during 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 and his team won the bronze medal in the East Zone Inter-University Championship. After his undergraduate studies Arya began his

master degree at Delhi University but was selected by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) where he served briefly. He later qualified for the Indian Police Service through the UPSC examination in 2013. His career in law enforcement has been marked by a strong commitment to justice, public service and upholding the rule of law. Arya's journey is not confined to academics and professional responsibilities. He is also an adventurous individual with a deep passion for outdoor activities. He is a qualified mountaineer from the prestigious Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarakhand and a certified skier from Auli. His

passion for fitness is further demonstrated by his participation in and completion of the Hyderabad Marathon and Delhi Half Marathons. Banaras Hindu University takes pride in having nurtured such an individual, and Anurag Arya's extraordinary achievements serve as an inspiration to the entire BHU community. His exemplary work in uncovering the serial killings and securing justice for the victims is a testament to the values of perseverance, integrity and service that this university holds. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Anurag Arya and wish him continued success in his distinguished service to the nation.

Kotwali Nagar Police Swiftly Rescue 4-Year-Old Girl Under 'Operation Muskaan'



Etah

In a commendable display of prompt action under the ongoing Operation Muskaan initiative, Kotwali Nagar Police successfully rescued a missing 4-year-old girl and safely reunited her with her family on Monday. Around 1:00 PM, a woman from Kidwai Nagar reported to Kotwali Nagar Police Station that her daughter had gone

missing from home. Acting immediately upon the alert, the police force launched a search operation. Thanks to the vigilance and swift action of the officers, the child was located unharmed and handed over to her relieved parents. The family expressed immense gratitude towards the police, praising their prompt and effective response. This successful rescue has

also strengthened public confidence in the police force commitment to safety and security.

The operation was led by Inspector Prempal Singh, with support from Sub-Inspector Nizamuddin, Constable Pawan Kumar, and Constable Rahul Kumar, whose dedication was instrumental in the successful recovery of the child.

Sadar MLA Vipin Verma Remembers Atal Bihari Vajpayee Nationalist Vision and Leadership

Etah

A grand Atal Smriti Legislative Assembly Conference was organized on Monday at Green Garden, Thandi Sadak, under the Atal Jan Shatabdi Celebration 2024-25 for the Etah Assembly constituency. The event witnessed a large gathering of political leaders, party workers and citizens. The program chief guest, State Vice President Braj Bahadur Bhardwaj, highlighted Atal Bihari Vajpayee's enduring contribution to Indian politics. He recalled that in the 1940s, during the freedom struggle, Atal joined the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, which he regarded not merely as an organization but as a way of life—placing the nation above self and politics as service. Braj Bahadur Bhardwaj noted that Atal became a key ideological and



organizational pillar of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, founded by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in 1951. He emphasized that Atal was a thinker who sowed ideas rather than just slogans. Tracing his parliamentary and political journey, Bhardwaj mentioned Atal's first election as MP from Balrampur in 1957 his

tenure as the first BJP National President in 1980, and his terms as Prime Minister in 1996 and 1998. Key achievements such as the 1998 Pokhran nuclear tests, the 1999 Kargil victory, the Prime Minister Gram Sadak Yojana (2000), the Swarnim Chaturbhuj project (2001) and the 1999 New Telecom Policy were highlighted as

milestones in India's development journey. Sadar MLA Vipin Verma David praised Atal's approach, noting that his political journey underscores the importance of organizational strength in sustaining democracy. He emphasized Atal's focus on building workers before pursuing electoral victories. Addressing the chal-

lenges faced when he became Prime Minister in 1998—including international pressure, border tensions and socio-economic changes—Verma highlighted Atal's dictum, "We want peace, but with honor," as emblematic of respect for soldiers and martyrs. He also cited the Kargil War of 1999, the May 11, 1998 nuclear tests and national river-linking initiatives as symbols of India's strategic maturity and long-term development vision.

The program also featured speeches by District President Pramod Gupta, Virendra Varshney, Pankaj Gupta, Dilip Pachauri 'Bittu,' Sandeep Jain and Dinesh Vashisht. Hundreds of party workers, office bearers, block and division leaders and members of the public attended the event.

**Park Min-young in Confidence Queen**

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

Lee Dong-wook in The Divorce Insurance

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

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

K-drama comebacks that didn't click

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

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

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

**Jun Ji-hyun in Tempest**

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

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

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

Lee Min-ho in When the Stars Gossip

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

For an actor known for commanding roles and memorable characters, this comeback felt surprisingly muted.

**Park Seo-joon in Surely Tomorrow**

After last year's *Gyeongseong Creature*, Park Seo-joon's comeback with *Surely Tomorrow* carried high expectations, especially given his track record of choosing crowd-pleasing, emotionally engaging roles. While he remains effortlessly watchable and sincere in his performance, the drama itself feels oddly flat. The narrative leans heavily on familiar tropes without offering fresh emotional depth, and the pacing often drags, muting the impact of key moments.

For an actor known for bringing warmth to his characters, the K-drama feels like a safe but forgettable outing — pleasant in parts, but far from memorable.



7 actors who made '25 unforgettable on OTT

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

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

**MANOJ BAJPAYEE**
The Family Man Season 3

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

**HUMA QURESHI**
Maharanee Season 4

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

**JAIDEEP AHLAWAT**
Paatal Lok Season 2

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

**RAGHAV JUYAL**
The Bads of Bollywood***

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

**SAYANI GUPTA**
Delhi Crime Season 3

Sayani Gupta delivered yet another striking performance in *Delhi Crime Season 3* as Kusum, a character rooted in quiet resilience and moral complexity. She brought a restrained intensity to the role of a victim-turned-survivor navigating systemic violence and social vulnerability within the larger crime narrative. With emotional honesty at its core, Sayani's performance stood out even in a season driven by a powerful ensemble cast. Kusum lingered in viewers' minds long after the episodes ended.

**TILLOTAMA SHOME**
Paatal Lok Season 2

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

**ZAHAN KAPOOR** — ***Black Warrant***

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

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

Briefs

6 IS militants, 3 cops die in Turkiye clash

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

Boy, 5, dies as arm trapped in travelator

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

Midair copter collision kills both pilots

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

Strip activist of citizenship, says UK oppn

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

South Korean Prez returns to palace

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

North Korea tests missiles

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

FLORIDA MEET | US offered 15 years: Ukrainian leader

Zelenskyy seeks 50-yr security guarantees

WASHINGTON



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

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

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

To facilitate such a referen-

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

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

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

Any decision on territory must be approved by the Ukrainian people, possibly through a referendum or parliamentary process, in line with Ukraine's constitution. The future of the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant remains a sticking point, with no clear agreement announced. US and Ukrainian teams could meet again as early as next week to finalise remaining points.

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



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

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

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

16 older residents perish in blaze in retirement home

MANADO

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

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

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

Iran cent bank guv quits after protests over currency drop

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

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

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

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

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

China begins drills in Taiwan Strait



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

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

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

In a separate statement, it said it had deployed appropriate forces in response, conducting combat readiness drills.

"The Chinese Communist Party's targeted military exercises further confirm its nature as an aggressor and the biggest destroyer of peace," it said.

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

Mexico train derails, kills 13, hurts dozens



MEXICO CITY

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

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

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

T'gana women die in US crash

WASHINGTON

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

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

Balen allies with RSP to run for Nepal's PM

A popular alliance has been formed between the Rastriya Swatantra Party RSP and Kathmandu Metropolitan City mayor Balendra Shah, which has been approved after a committee meet. The alliance is poised to challenge the older parties in Nepal, which have been in power for 30+ years.

Balendra Shah, a rapping politician and mayor, joined hands with the RSP, which is led by former TV host-turned-politician Rabi Lamichhane, on Sunday, party officials said.

Gen Z protests: 'vandalism, arson planned plot'

Kathmandu: Nepal's former home minister Ramesh Lekhak on Monday claimed the vandalism and arson on the second day of the Gen Z protests was the result of a planned conspiracy against democracy and the nation.

Lekhak, who appeared on Monday before a panel probing the Gen Z protests, said he accepted full moral responsibility for the deaths and losses of Sept 8. He claimed the vandalism and arson on September 9 were not a spontaneous escalation but the result of a planned conspiracy against democracy and the nation.

US vows \$2b for UN humanitarian aid

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

My target was just to take gun: Hero

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

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

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

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

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

Footage from the attack shows Ahmed leaping from

behind a parked car to grapple with Sajid Akram, whose gun was knocked to the ground in the struggle.

Ahmed picked it up and pointed it at the gunman, who retreated to his son on a nearby footbridge. "I jumped in his back, hit him. I hold him with my right hand and start

saying a word, you know, like to warn him, 'drop your gun, stop doing what you're doing.'

Footage from the attack shows Ahmed leaping from

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

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

For decades, such long journeys have been a routine part of global trade.

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

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

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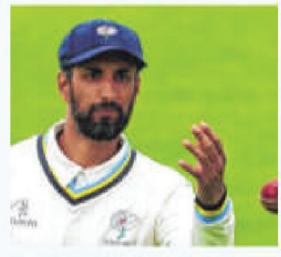
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After over three months at sea and crossing three oceans, the vessel dock

Briefs

KARACHI

Masood scores fastest FC 200 by Pakistani

Test captain **Shan Masood** has scored the fastest double century by a Pakistani in first-class cricket in 177 balls, breaking batting great Inzamam Ul Haq's three-decade old record. Masood set the mark while playing for Sui Northern Gas against Sahar Associates on the first day of the President's Cup departmental tournament. Previously, the record was held by former skipper Inzamam, who had scored a double hundred from 188 balls in a tour match in England in 1992.

Masood was unbeaten on 212 from 185 balls at close on day one of the match on Sunday. The record for the fastest double hundred by a visiting batsman is still held by India's Virender Sehwag who scored a double century from 182 balls in the Lahore Test in 2006.

SYDNEY
Atkinson
ruled out of
final TestEngland pace bowler **Gus Atkinson** has joined the tourists' mounting injury toll after being ruled out for the fifth and final Ashes cricket test in Sydney with a hamstring injury. Atkinson pulled up lame during the second morning of the Boxing Day test and was officially ruled-out after scans on Monday confirmed the injury in his left leg. England have already lost star speedsters Mark Wood (knee) and Jofra Archer (side strain) during the series, with 27-year-old Matthew Potts expected to come into the team for the fifth test starting on Jan. 4 and join Brydon Carse and Josh Tongue in the attack. Carse is now the only pacer remaining from the original four.DUBAI
Kyrgios beats
Sabalenka in
latest battle

Nick Kyrgios won the latest version of the "Battle of the Sexes" in tennis, beating top-ranked women's player Aryna Sabalenka 6-3, 6-3 in an exhibition match that represented light entertainment rather than

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T20I SERIES | The 5-match series has formed a significant part of WC prep

India target series whitewash

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

India will look to continue their aggressive intent and complete a 5-0 series whitewash against a vanquished Sri Lanka in the fifth and final women's T20 International here on Tuesday.

The five-match series has formed a significant part of India's preparation for the T20 World Cup in England in June-July next year. Following Tuesday's game, India will play three T20 Internationals each in Australia and England before the showpiece event.

After a group-stage exit in the 2024 T20 World Cup, India recalibrated their approach, opting for a more aggressive style of play, a shift that has yielded two series wins this year.

"It was a great series for all of us. That's what we discussed after the World Cup - that we have to raise our standards and be more aggressive in T20s," captain **Harmanpreet Kaur** had said after sealing the series against the Islanders.

India's bowlers have been the primary architects of the dominant run, with batters having very little to do in the opening three matches. But the big-hitting Shafali Verma has impressed.

However, fielding remains an area of concern. After a sloppy showing in the series opener, India faltered again in the previous match, missing two catches and a stumping opportunity.

There have been several positives as well. Pacer Renuka Singh Thakur has made a successful return to the format after a year-long absence, while the ever-reliable Deepti Sharma continues to deliver consistently.

Twenty-year-old debutant left-arm spinner Vaishnavi

Match starts
at 7.00 P.M.
Live on Star
Sports

Sharma has also lived up to her promise and is currently the joint-highest wicket-taker of the series with four scalps at an economy rate of 5.73.

With the bat, Shafali has been a constant menace for Sri Lanka, scoring three half-centuries in four matches at a blistering strike rate of 185.82.

Another major boost for the hosts was the return to form of vice-captain Smriti Mandhana after a lean patch. The elegant left-hander will hope her big outing -- 80 off 48 balls -- in the fourth T20I helps her carry the momentum forward.

Shafali and

Teams :

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana (VC), Deepti Sharma, Sneha Rana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Harleen Deol, Amanjot Kaur, Arundhati Reddy, Kranti Gaud, Renuka Singh Thakur, Richa Ghosh (WK), G Kamalini (WK), Sree Charani, Vaishnavi Sharma.**Sri Lanka:** Chamari Athapaththu (C), Hasini Perera, Vishmi Gunaratne, Harshitha Samarawickrama, Nilakshika De Silva, Kavisha Dilhari, Imesha Dulani, Kaushini Nuthyananga, Malsha Shehani, Inoka Ranaweera, Shashini Gimhani, Nimesha Madushani, Kavya Kavindi, Rashmika Sewwandi, Malki Madara.

Mandhana produced a masterclass in aggressive batting in the fourth T20I, putting on 162 runs off just 92 balls - India's highest opening partnership in women's T20 Internationals.

India's decision to promote Richa Ghosh to No.3 also paid rich dividends, with the wicketkeeper batter smashing an unbeaten 40 off just 16

deliveries. After the first three matches were low-scoring affairs, the fourth T20I turned into a run-fest, with both India and Sri Lanka registering their highest-ever totals in the format.

Although India's 221 for 2 proved too much for Sri Lanka, who managed 191 for 6, the Islanders would take confidence from their vastly

improved batting display as they seek a consolation win.

Sri Lanka captain Chamari Athapaththu has often led from the front, and her string of low scores had hurt the side. Athapaththu too broke the rut with a 37-ball 52 in the previous match, and with more support from other batters, SL would hope for stronger showing in finale.

and

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