

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Title Code - UPENG04488

MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

Friday, 23 January, 2026

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

Briefs

NEW DELHI

Modi invites Brazil's Lula to India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Thursday and asserted that close cooperation was vital for advancing the shared interests of the Global South. Modi also said he was looking forward to welcoming the Brazilian president to India soon. "Our close cooperation is vital for advancing the shared interests of the Global South. I look forward to welcoming him to India soon," he added.

KOLKATA

Mamata pens a book on agony of SIR

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee on Thursday inaugurated the 49th Kolkata International book fair. Speaking at the inauguration, the West Bengal Chief Minister said that she had penned a book of poems on agony faced by people due to SIR. "My 162nd book, a compilation of 26 poems on the agony faced by people due to the SIR will come out in this fair," said Mamata.

NEW DELHI

India mission in Croatia vandalised

India on Thursday condemned an incident of trespassing and vandalism at its embassy in Croatia by some Khalistani elements and demanded action against the perpetrators. The incident in the European nation took place days before the India-EU summit in New Delhi.

CHENNAI

Vijay's party gets 'whistle' poll symbol

Tamil cinema star Vijay's political party, TVK, has been allotted 'whistle' as its symbol, drawing cheers from the top actor who dubbed it as a "victory sign" that was reflective of the common man and his aspirations. The 50-year-old Tamilaga Vetti Kazhagam (TVK) founder said that with the allocation of the symbol, his party's first chapter of its successful journey has begun.

HOUSE ON FIRE | Gehlot refuses to read out the state-prepared speech, finishes his address in 3 lines; Centre's puppet, says CM

Guv-govt standoff in K'taka escalates

BENGALURU

In a high drama in Karnataka Assembly, Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot on Thursday refused to read the state-prepared address to a joint session of the state legislature and concluded his customary speech in just three lines, evoking a sharp reaction from Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who accused him of being a "puppet" of the Centre.

This is the third governor vs government face-off in two days in three non-BJP-ruled southern states, the others being Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

The Governor began the speech by greeting the Chief Minister, Assembly Speaker UT Khader, Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti, Leaders of the Opposition, ministers, and members.

"I extend a warm welcome to all of you to the joint



Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Governor Thaawar Chand Gehlot and others arrive to attend the joint session of the Karnataka legislature, at Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru on Thursday

session of the State legislature. I am extremely pleased to address one more joint session of the Karnataka legislature. My government is firmly committed to doubling the pace of the state's economic, social, and physical development. Jai Hind. Jai Karnataka," he said in Hindi. Jai Karnataka," he said in Hindi, before walking out.

The Treasury Benches, including ministers such as HK Patil (Law and Parliamentary Affairs), stood up and requested Gehlot to complete the speech. As the Governor proceeded towards the exit door, some ruling legislators, including MLC BK Hariprasad, tried to gherao him by shouting slogans.

They were removed by the security staff. The legislators then shouted 'shame shame' and "Dhikkara-Dhikkara, Rajyapalarige Dhikkara" (Reproach to the Governor) in Kannada.

While seemingly defending the Governor, BJP members shouted "Bharat Mata ki Jai".

CM: Might approach SC

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday strongly criticised Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot for refusing to deliver the customary address to the Assembly, calling the move a "violation of the Constitution" and stating that the government is examining whether to approach the Supreme Court over the matter.

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Top Maoist with ₹1 cr bounty among 15 killed in Jharkhand

RANCHI

operation in Saranda forest's Kumudi under Kiriburu police station limits.

"We have recovered the bodies of 15 Maoists, including their top leader Patiram Majhi alias Anal Da. A huge cache of arms and ammunition has also been recovered. The encounter, which began at 6 am, is still on," a statement from the police headquarters here said.

The anti-Maoist operation has been going on in the Saranda forest since Tuesday.

but the exchange of fire began on Thursday morning, it added.

Inspector General of Police (Operations) Michael Raj S said that the operation was launched after the police received intelligence inputs about the presence of Anal Da, along with his squad, in Saranda forest. A resident of Pirtand in Giridih district, Anal Da had been active since 1987.

Police have been searching for him for years.

First 'Made in India' C-295 aircraft to roll out by Sept'

MUMBAI

The first 'Made in India' C-295 military aircraft is expected to roll out of a factory before September, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday (January 21, 2026) as he underlined New Delhi's commitment to build resilient manufacturing capabilities.

In his remarks at a meeting with Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares, Jaishankar asserted that the world must display "zero tolerance" towards terrorism.

The world order is clearly

undergoing a profound change. It is more imperative than ever before for nations to collaborate on shared challenges," he said.

The incident occurred at the Real Ispat and Power Ltd in Bakulahi village in the Bhatarapura rural area, District Collector Deepak Soni said.

As per preliminary information, the explosion took place in the Dust Settling Chamber (DSC) of the unit

in a major relief for the 50 students affected by the revocation of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence, the Jammu and Kashmir Board of Professional Entrance Examinations has set January 24 as the fresh date for their counselling to adjust them in seven government-run colleges across the Union Territory.

Chief Minister **Omar Abdullah** said the government has resolved the college allocation issue for the selected MBBS candidates of the medical college.

"With BOPEE now issuing the counselling schedule, the selected candidates can move ahead with their studies," the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said on X.

According to a notification issued by the controller of examinations of the BOPEE, Prof Gurvinder Raj Verma, the 50 supernumerary seats shall be distributed strictly based on the NEET-UG merit of the can-



A view of the site following an explosion at an iron plant in Balodabazar, Chhattisgarh, on Thursday

didates concerned and their preferences among the seven newly established government medical colleges.

The notification said eight students would be allotted seats in GMC Anantnag and seven each in GMC Baramulla, Doda, Handwara, Kathua,

Rajouri and Udhampur.

"Pursuant to Health and Medical Education Department communication of January 21, it is hereby notified that the concerned candidates who were provisionally allotted seats in different rounds of counselling by the Board for admission to the MBBS course in SMVDIME, Katra... the Board shall conduct the physical round of counselling to accommodate the students to GMC within JK against the supernumerary seats so created," it said.

and hot dust fell on the workers, causing them serious burns. Six workers died on the spot while five others sustained serious burns, he said.

Relief for 50 Jammu medical college students CM Omar says issue resolved as fresh counselling scheduled for Jan 24

JAMMU

in a major relief for the 50 students affected by the revocation of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence, the Jammu and Kashmir Board of Professional Entrance Examinations has set January 24 as the fresh date for their counselling to adjust them in seven government-run colleges across the Union Territory.

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Noida techie death: Two more builders arrested

NOIDA

The Noida police on Thursday arrested two more builders in connection with the death of a software engineer who drowned after his car plunged into a waterlogged trench near a construction site in Sector 150 here, officials said.

Police said the arrests were made by the Knowledge Park police station team.

"It is noteworthy that on the intervening night of Jan 16 and 17, a car driver, Yuvraj Mehta (27), died after drowning in a waterlogged plot due to alleged negligence on the part of the builder and its associates at a construction site of Lotus Greens," the police said in a statement on Thursday.

"The arrested accused have been identified as Ravi Bansal, a resident of Faridabad, and Sachin Karnwal, a resident of Ghaziabad," a police official told PTI.

The official said both the arrested persons are associ-

Andhra mulls Australia-style social media ban for U-16s

MUMBAI

law, and yes, I believe we need to create a strong legal enactment," he said.

In 2024, Australia had announced plans to prohibit children under 16 from accessing social media platforms. The move followed mounting evidence linking excessive social media use among children to anxiety, depression, and self-harm.

Under the proposed framework, social media companies would be legally responsible for enforcing age restrictions through robust age-verification mechanisms.

Within three days of the UAE

the UAE's 54th National Day — Eid Al Etihad, celebrated annually on December 2 — marks one of the largest such clemency exercises involving Indian prisoners in recent years.

Mass pardons during major national and religious occasions are a long-standing tradition in the UAE, rooted in the values of forgiveness and second chances. This year's initiative, however, stands out not just for its scale, but for the extraordinary relief measures accompanying it.

In a rare and significant humanitarian gesture, the

UAE leadership has also undertaken to clear the financial penalties imposed on the released prisoners. Fines and compensation linked to their convictions will be paid by the authorities — a move expected to lift crushing financial burdens off families and smooth the inmates' reintegration into society.

Officials familiar with the decision said the intent was clear: freedom should not come shackled with debt. By wiping out outstanding penalties, the UAE hopes the released prisoners can rebuild their lives with dignity.

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Rural Media Workshop in Meja, Deliberations on 'Developed India - G Ram Ji Law'



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj (Meja). A rural media workshop, 'Vartalap Programme', was organized on Thursday at Pandit Kripashankar Tiwari College in Meja tehsil by the Press Information Bureau (PIB) Lucknow. Discussions were held on the 'Developed India - G Ram Ji Law' enacted by Parliament and the central government's welfare schemes. A large number of local journalists participated in the program. The chief guest, former Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu

University, Prof. Girish Chandra Tripathi, said that this law is based on the concept of service, good governance, and prosperity and is a significant step towards making rural India self-reliant. He informed that under this law, there is a provision for guaranteeing 125 days of employment per year to eligible rural families. Dilip Kumar Shukla, Director of PIB and Central Bureau of Communication, Uttar Pradesh, said that the objective of the 'Developed India - G Ram Ji Law' is to strengthen rural liveli-

hoods and ensure that the benefits of the schemes reach the last person. He informed that a five-day exhibition and seminar on the same subject will be organized from January 24 to 28, 2026. Former Deputy Director of Education Ashok Nath Tiwari, Chairman of the Child Welfare Committee Dr. Akhilesh Mishra, and Deputy Regional Manager of Bank of Baroda Anoop Shukla also shared their views at the program. The speakers said that the dream of a developed India will only be realized when villages are empowered and self-reliant.

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Tharwai / Under the direction of NCC Group Headquarters Prayagraj, the five-day parasailing adventure activity camp organized by 17 UP Battalion NCC, Prayagraj, from January 21st to January 25th, 2026, at the Air Force area, Phaphamau Padila airstrip, successfully completed its second day in accordance with pre-determined standards and complete safety protocols.

Colonel

Praveen Kumar S him-

self took a flight in a parasailing balloon, encouraging the cadets and infusing new energy into the cadets and NCC staff with his inspiring and motivational address. In his address, Colonel Praveen Kumar S high-

ly praised Lieutenant Colonel Arvind Singh, the Administrative Officer of 17 UP Battalion NCC, Prayagraj, for the efficient leadership, robust planning, and excellent management of this five-day special parasailing adventure activity camp and extended his best wishes for the safe and successful completion of the camp. On the second day of the camp, cadets from 15 UP Battalion, 16 UP Battalion, and 17 UP Battalion NCC, Prayagraj, actively participated, demonstrating courage, discipline, and self-confidence. The contribution of Subedar Omkar Singh, Subedar Sundar Singh, Naib Subedar Harinder Singh Yadav, Hariram, BHM

Sanjay Sharma from 17 UP Battalion NCC, Prayagraj, and BHM Niles Sahu from 6 UP Girls Battalion for medical assistance, in the successful organization of this five-day parasailing adventure camp, was highly commendable. In addition, the cooperation of Chief Instructor Shashi Kumar Yadav and his trained team from Chitrakoot Paragliding Adventure organization in safely and effectively conducting the parasailing adventure activity was noteworthy. This adventure camp is proving to be an important initiative in strengthening courage, leadership skills, self-reliance, and a sense of national service among the cadets.

Major Action in 12 Hours: Two Notorious Criminals Apprehended in Zamania Police Encounter

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Ghazipur. The Zamania police station in the district has achieved a major success by arresting two notorious criminals involved in robbery and snatching incidents within just 12 hours in a police encounter. During the encounter, one criminal was injured by a gunshot and has been sent to the Zamania Community Health Center for treatment. Police recovered two illegal pistols, cartridges, and Rs. 15,000 in cash from the criminals. According to the



Public Hearing on SIR Mapping under the Voter Revision Mega Campaign



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Soraon. A public hearing was organized under the Voter Revision Mega Campaign, chaired by Block Education Officer Soraon, Suman Mishra, regarding SIR (Special Intensive Revision) mapping. During the hearing, complaints were heard from the public regarding the re-inclusion of names removed from the voter list, corrections

to names and addresses, and other issues. Villagers and voters attended and presented their problems. Block Education Officer Suman Mishra informed those present that the objective of the SIR campaign is to prepare an accurate and error-free voter list so that no eligible voter is deprived of their right to vote. She said that voters whose names have been removed from the list can apply with the necessary documents

so that their names can be re-added in a timely manner. The concerned staff were instructed to promptly resolve the applications received and include the names of eligible voters in the list. The public was also appealed to review the voter list and report any errors immediately. The resolution of people's problems through the public hearing brought satisfaction to the voters.

STATE

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Second Day of the Parasailing Adventure Camp Successfully Concluded



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SP listens to Public grievances at Public Hearing

Fatehpur: A Public hearing Program was organized by Superintendent of Police Anoop Kumar Singh at the police office on Wednesday. During the Public hearing, the problems of complainants from various areas of the district were heard attentively and necessary instructions were given to the concerned officers and station house officers for the qualitative, impartial, and timely resolution of each case. The SP of Fatehpur took detailed information on complaints including land disputes, family disputes, assault, fraud and harassment of women during the public hearing. He instructed the officers to ensure the swift resolution of every complaint received under the legal process, so that the victims do not have to repeatedly visit the offices. The Superintendent of Police clearly stated that resolving the problems of the public is the top priority of the Police.

Employment Fair to be held at CRPF Group Center Prayagraj on January 24

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. An employment fair will be organized at the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Group Center, Prayagraj, on January 24, 2026, under the Prime Minister's ambitious employment scheme. This information was given by Deputy Inspector General of Police, Group Center CRPF Prayagraj, Dheeraj Kumar. He said that the employment fair will start at 9 am. During the event, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually present appointment letters to the newly selected candidates through video conferencing. The objective of the event is to provide employment opportunities to the youth and increase their participation in government services.

A Unique Confluence of Justice, Dignity, and Unity, Grand Oath-Taking Ceremony of the Central Bar Association

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Ghazipur. The Mohammadabad Munsif Court complex in the district witnessed a historic moment when the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected office-bearers of the Central Bar Association was held with great grandeur, dignity, and discipline. This ceremony, imbued with judicial decorum, lawyer unity, and a spirit of service, became a symbol of new consciousness, new resolve, and a new direction for the legal community. The dignified presence of judicial officers, administrative representatives, and prominent members of society added to the grandeur of the event. The chief guest of the ceremony was the Honorable Dharmendra Kumar Pandey (District Judge, Ghazipur). His mere presence reflected a profound sense of justice, discipline, and moral values throughout the entire premises. The dignified presence of special guests,



including the Honorable Shakti Singh (Additional District Judge, Ghazipur), the Honorable Nutan Dwivedi (Chief Judicial Magistrate, Ghazipur), the Honorable Ranjit Kumar Jaiswal, the Honorable Manoj Kumar Yadav, the Honorable Hazil Hussain Ansari, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Dr. Harshita Tiwari, Circle Officer Sudhakar Pandey, and social worker Virendra Rai, elevated the ceremony to a special level. The chief guest, the Honorable District Judge, administered the oath of office and secrecy to the newly elected office-bearers of the Central Bar Association. The moments

of the oath-taking were extremely emotional and inspiring. A sense of responsibility was clearly visible on the faces of the lawyers, and an unwavering resolve towards the service of justice shone in their eyes. Those who took the oath included President Dayashankar Dubey, General Secretary Dhananjay Rai, Senior Vice Presidents Hariram Singh Yadav and Govind Narayan Sinha, Junior Vice Presidents Prabhas Pandey and Manish Kumar Rai, Joint Secretary Anand Pradhan, and Treasurer Awadh Bihari Yadav. In his inspiring and guiding address, the chief guest said,



"Lawyers are the soul of the justice system. Their responsibility is not only to resolve cases but also to become the strong voice of truth, justice, and the weaker sections of society." He urged the advocates to uphold the dignity of the court, ensure fair and speedy justice for the litigants, and remain ever vigilant towards their social responsibilities. Other guests also extended their heartfelt wishes to the newly formed executive committee and expressed hope that the Central Bar Association would play a significant role in protecting the interests of the advocates and in making the judicial system more robust, transparent, and people-friendly. The program was efficiently and effectively conducted by Krishnanand Rai, while the ceremony was presided over by Awadh Bihari Yadav. Finally, the chairman of the assembly expressed his gratitude to all the esteemed guests, judicial officers, and fellow advocates.

This grand ceremony, conducted in an atmosphere of harmony, discipline, and inspiration, will remain memorable for a long time as a symbol of a new beginning, renewed energy, and unwavering commitment to the service of justice for the legal community.

Mahatma Gandhi, the Great Prophet: Swami Shri Yogi Satyam

Paramahansa Yogananda wonderfully propagated Kriya Yoga in the West, calling Mahatma Gandhi a divine messenger. Spread the message of Sanatana Dharma and Kriya Yoga for 32 years.



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. In the Kriya Yoga practice and meditation camp being held under the guidance of Kriya Yoga Guru Swami Shri Yogi Satyam Ji Maharaj at the Kriya Yoga camp in the

Magh Mela area on Thursday, the Kriya Yoga Guru, during his class, spoke about the propagation efforts of Paramahansa Yogananda Ji. He said that the immortal saint Mahavatari Babaji sent Paramahansa Yogananda to receive formal

training from Jnana Avatar Swami Yukteswar Giri Ji to propagate and teach Kriya Yoga (Sanatana Dharma) in the West. Paramahansa Yogananda presented the captivating message of Kriya Yoga at the Second Parliament of Religions

held in Boston, USA, and thereafter formally propagated the teachings of Sanatana Dharma in the West for 32 years. Paramahansa Yogananda attained Mahasamadhi on March 7, 1952, at a special program at the Biltmore Hotel

in California.

Ambassadors from 50 countries and disciples were present on this occasion. He addressed Mahatma Gandhi as a divine messenger and a great prophet. Yogananda clearly stated that all nations should

solve their national problems by following the path of Mahatma Gandhi. His teachings not only propagated Sanatana Dharma and Kriya Yoga in the West but also strengthened spiritual consciousness globally.



Blanket Distribution for the Needy by Meja Urja Nigam

Meja

Under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, Meja Urja Nigam distributed approximately 1,200 blankets to needy people in nearby areas to protect them from the winter cold. The distribution was carried out in the villages of Salaiya Khurd, Salaiya Kala, and Mai Kala in Meja Tehsil of Prayagraj district, Uttar Pradesh. The initiative aimed to provide support particularly to the elderly, persons



with disabilities, women, and other underprivileged



sections of society. Meja Urja Nigam continues to

make meaningful contributions in the fields of social welfare, education, healthcare, and community development. Local residents appreciated this humanitarian initiative and expressed their gratitude to Meja Urja Nigam. The event was attended by Shri Vivek Chandra, HoHR, Shri Manoj Kumar Verma, DGM, HR, members of the CSR team, Shri. Devishankar Yadav (Village Head – Salaiya Kala), Shri Suresh Yadav (Village Head – Salaiya

District Road Safety Committee Meeting Concludes

Etah

Under the directions of District Magistrate Prem Ranjan Singh, a meeting of the District Road Safety Committee was held at the Collectorate Auditorium, chaired by Additional District Magistrate (Administration) Satyaprakash. During the meeting, a detailed review of various activities and public awareness programs conducted

Bhajan evening held at the divisional-level Khadi and Village Industries Exhibition in Prayagraj, singer Indal Singh performed



Prayagraj. On Tuesday, a cultural evening was organized at the divisional-level Khadi and Village Industries Exhibition, held at Parade Ground, Triveni Road, by the Uttar Pradesh Khadi and Village Industries Board on the occasion of Magh Mela 2026. During the event, singer Indal Singh and his group presented devotional songs, which attracted a large number of people. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Local for Local' campaign was cited as the basis for the success of indigenous products at the exhibition. A total of 210 stalls have been set up for Khadi institutions

and village industries units at this exhibition. Khadi institutions from the state and other states like Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand are also selling their products—including Khadi, silk, poly Khadi, cotton and woolen garments, and other apparel. So far, the sales of Khadi and village industry products at the exhibition have reached Rs 95 lakh. Jawaharlal, District/Regional Village Industries Officer, Senior Auditor Rakesh Mohan Gupta, and other officials were present at the event.

Swami Avimuktshwaranand retaliates against the fair administration's notice, calls the allegations baseless

Objects to the palanquin being called a carriage, cites a 2500-year-old tradition, Accuses police of violating the dignity of the Shankaracharya and assaulting his followers, Claims the palanquin was dragged and paraded, Says he was ridiculed, Alleges an attempt to throw the palanquin into the river, calls it an act of 'attempted murder'

Prayagraj. In response to the notice issued regarding alleged rule violations in the Magh Mela area on the day of Mauni Amavasya, Swami Avimuktshwaranand Saraswati has sent a written reply to the second notice from the Prayagraj Mela Authority. In his reply, he has completely rejected the administration's allegations and presented the entire incident in the context of religious dignity and tradition. Swami Avimuktshwaranand clarified that the means of transport which the administration is calling a carriage was actually a palanquin, not a vehicle. He said that traveling in a palanquin is an integral part of the Sanatan tradition and this tradition has been continuing for approximately 2500 years since the time of Adi Shankaracharya. A palanquin does not have



wheels, so calling it a vehicle or a carriage is contrary to the facts. In his reply, he leveled serious allegations against the administration and the police, saying that the officials violated the dignity of the Shankaracharya. His followers were assaulted, and the palanquin was dragged by police personnel, treating them like criminals. He also alleged that throughout the

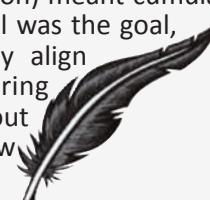
planned manner to hurt religious sentiments and humiliate him. It is noteworthy that earlier, the Mela administration had issued a notice to Swami Avimuktshwaranand, accusing him of breaking through an emergency pontoon bridge and crossing barriers to enter the crowded Sangam area on Mauni Amavasya day, despite vehicles being prohibited in the area. The notice stated that his actions could have led to a stampede and loss of life, and warned of the cancellation of land and facilities allocated to him, along with a permanent ban. Now, after Swami Avimuktshwaranand's response, the entire matter has become even more sensitive. It is expected that the Mela administration will review his response before taking further action.

Editorial

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

India's crude oil trade has evolved from a purely economic exchange into both a geopolitical test of strategic autonomy and a measure of the constraints in its energy policy. Over the past three years, India has gone from being a marginal buyer of Russian crude to one of its largest importers, carefully balancing ties with the US, Europe, and shifting global energy markets. That balance is now under pressure from Donald Trump's 50 per cent tariff offensive, aimed selectively at India and leaving little ambiguity about his objectives—and in Trump's world, what he wants, he usually gets. Yet the national debate has taken too many assumptions for granted. It is worth applying a deconstruction approach to India's famous oil bargains with Russia—a decision once hailed as tactical brilliance, but one now risking entanglement in overlapping economic and diplomatic challenges. While public commentary has focused heavily on Trump, tariffs, and New Delhi's indignation, the more pressing task is to interrogate the rationale behind these choices. To navigate the road ahead, India must revisit three fundamentals: why it embraced Russian oil, how it misread Trump's European recalibration, and where future India–Russia energy engagement should head. Clarity on these three points may well define the next chapter of India's energy strategy. Despite close political ties and deep defence cooperation, India and Russia were never bound by energy dependence. Even with India's heavy reliance on imports—currently 88 per cent of its daily crude requirement of 5.5 million barrels—its primary suppliers have traditionally been Gulf countries. The earlier chapter of India capitulating to Trump 1.0's sanctions on Iran and Venezuela is well known; today, however, the challenge is starker. Russia entered India's energy equation only after the geopolitical earthquake of President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. That act shattered the European order painstakingly built since the Second World War and crystallised after the Soviet Union's collapse. Central to this upheaval was Putin's weaponization of energy: Europe's decades-long dependence on cheap Russian oil and gas became a vulnerability. In response, Europe diversified away from Russia, while the G7 imposed a \$60 per-barrel price cap on Russian crude in December 2022. The logic was clear: as one of the world's top three oil producers, Russia could not be cut off overnight. The aim was instead to squeeze Moscow's revenues, which were funding its war machine, while keeping prices stable and securing alternative supplies for Europe. India saw opportunity in this upheaval. With vast import needs, it began rerouting Russian oil at supposedly lower prices, rejecting G7 sanctions and arranging direct and indirect deals through intermediaries. Early reports spoke of a "free on board" discount of 30 per cent, though never confirmed.

Brent crude fell from \$86.51 in January 2022 to \$80.92 in December, peaking briefly at about \$90 in June 2023 before sliding again. While some credit India's purchases with stabilising prices, Russian oil for India almost always remained way above the \$60 price cap. The critical question is whether India ever bought below that threshold. Reports suggest an average discount of only \$5 per barrel—hardly transformative—and potentially offset by hidden costs and surcharges. Even so, large volumes (peaking at over 2 million barrels per day before dropping to 1.5 million) meant cumulative savings. But if cheap oil was the goal, why not join or informally align with the price cap, securing crude closer to \$60 without the complications of shadow fleets and sanctions risks?



Kashmiris need to be treated like other Indians



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

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

India, from the adivasi heartlands in central India to parts of the Northeast, democracy has struggled to grow in exceptionally harsh conditions. All blame, though, does not lie across the Line of Control. Elections that served to undermine democracy, the state-enabled subversion of the political system through corruption, the use of coercion unconstrained by law: All these, the story of Ghulam Nabi Patel should remind us, were Indian inventions. Today, the challenge isn't just to restore statehood in Kashmir. The task Indians need to embrace is to build a state that is Indian, an unremarkable part of our republic. Eighty years ago, Prime Minister Abdullah had promised that a utopia would be built from the ruins of Partition and war. The Naya Kashmir manifesto—which, Andrew Whitehead reminds us, liberally helped itself to text from the 1936 constitution of the Soviet Union—held out promises to redi-

ctribute feudal landholdings to the peasants, to uphold the rights of women, and introduce universal access to healthcare and education. The communist couple Freda Houlston and her husband Baba Pyare Lal Bedi wrote the manifesto with Abdullah's encouragement, though it is unclear if his commitment to communism was ever serious. To the great Kashmiri poet Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor, it seemed Abdullah was leading the region out of the darkness: "The ranges of the mountains shall yield gold," he gushed, "Pearls shall emerge out of the Wular lake." Less than five years after Independence, though, the poet had encountered disillusionment. The reality of 'New Kashmir', it turned out, was one-party authoritarianism, electoral malpractice, and communalism. "Freedom being of heavenly birth, can't move from door to door," he avidly wrote, "You'll find her camping in the homes of a chosen few alone." How did this come about? The story has something to do with bad luck, scholar Ajiaz Ashraf Wani has written, in an excellent survey of the roots of misadministration in Kashmir. Two successive bad harvests, in 1949–1950 and 1950–1951, created enormous rural discontent. Forced levies of crops from farmers, imposed in a desperate effort to stave off famine, sharpened the resentment, while shortages of food in the cities grew to alarming levels. The National Conference succeeded in dominating the Constituent Assembly, winning all 75 seats in the 1951 elections. This was only possible, though, because 45 out of 49 candidates of the Hindu-nationalist Praja Parishad party were barred from contesting, mainly on frivolous technical grounds, Behera has observed. The media was muzzled, and opponents were intimidated and imprisoned. Less than five years later, though, the relationship between Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Abdullah had begun to break down. The Praja Parishad, denied electoral space, started a mass movement seeking the full integration of Kashmir into India. Abdullah, in a 10 April 1952 speech in RS Pura, suggested it was becoming impossible to "convince the Muslims of Kashmir that India does not intend to swallow them up." The threat of war with Pakistan was alive, Nehru could not countenance this rebellion. "I am afraid Kashmir is heading in an adverse direction," Nehru warned in a 28 June 1953 letter. The new regime of Prime Minister Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad.

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

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

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

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

The deadly flash floods and landslides in Uttarkashi on 5 August, in which 16 people were killed, highlight the problems of illegal riverbank constructions and inadequate warning systems. Videos of submerged villages, ravaging floods sweeping up buildings and cars in their tide, and stranded people have become an almost annual occurrence now in the Himalayan region. Dharali's floods struck in the absence of any weather warning, and authorities are still confused about the actual cause. While the Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority called it a cloudburst, the India Meteorological Department could not confirm it with the available data. Uttarkashi district recorded 12.7 cm of rain in 8 hours on 5 August; it is still lower than districts such as Haridwar and Dehradun, which got 15–30 cm of rain on the same day. In a state that sees frequent cloudbursts and floods during the monsoon, and has been explicitly marked as a 'high vulnerability zone' for landslides by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the damage from the Dharali floods is not merely nature's fault. The blame also rests squarely on building norms, mass road construction and mining projects, and other anthropogenic activities that have exacerbated Uttarakhand's fragility.

The floods should be another wake-up call for the IMD and the NDMA to buck up and ensure the safety of people and ecology in the Himalayas. Dharali is a small hamlet 2,680 metres above sea level, situated 18 km from Gangotri, and is a common stopover for tourists and pilgrims going to one of the Char Dhams of Uttarakhand. It is dotted with hotels, restaurants, and homes built precariously close to the banks of the Kheerganga River that runs through the village. On Tuesday afternoon, a barrage of water descended upon the village and damaged houses, roads,

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

"The canal is very narrow, and a lot of trees and mud could have been uprooted and swept along with the water." If extremely heavy rainfall can cause such damage without a rare event like a cloudburst, it should leave the system working toward India's disaster preparedness thinking.

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

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

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

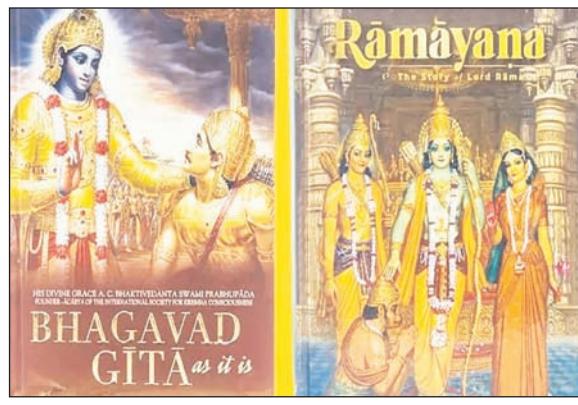
in several branches has proved unremunerative. They have invested more than Rs 600 crore in Government securities. They have been broadening their capital base and increasing their reserves in accordance with statutory requirements. The enormous increase in their deposits during recent years bears testimony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

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

Modern science is connected to early Indian discoveries in NCERT books

Delhi : Indian scientific knowledge and discoveries are featured in sections of the new National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) science textbook for Class 8, from the ideas of ancient philosopher Acharya Kanad's "Parmanu" (atoms) to the methods of water bowl astronomy developed by mathematician Bhaskara II. Ayurvedic medication compositions include natural solvents like water and oils, the old practice of variolation was used to battle smallpox before modern vaccines, and alloys like "Kamsya" (a copper and tin alloy) are mentioned as well. Parts of the book headed "Ever heard of?" and "Our scientific heritage" draw connections between contemporary scientific ideas and findings made by ancient Indians. The seeks to pique students' curiosity by providing interesting information and insights from ancient Indian writings, while the latter provides

details on organizations and individuals.



305K students compete for 71K DU spots

Delhi: Delhi University (DU) began its preference change window for the 2025-26 academic session under the Common Seat Allocation System, intensifying the competition for 71,642 undergraduate seats with over 305,000 applicants. After simulated ranks are released, the window will stay open. According to university data, 38,795 applicants chose Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC) as their first college choice this year. Hindu College, Hansraj College, St. Stephen's College, and Miranda House follow. Based on CUET scores and preferences, the simulated ranks allow students to adjust their course and college selections before the initial allocation list, which will be announced July 19. 239,890 of 305,357 CSAS portal users selected colleges and programs. Three are transgender, 127,284 (53.06%) are female, and 112,603 (46.93%) are male. The orphan quota has 221 female and 291 male applications, while 7,243 students have expressed interest in the single girl child quota.

details on organizations and individuals.

Japanese 'no-match' artificial blood could put an end to shortages



ongoing scarcity of donors have contributed to India's severe blood shortage. Therefore, in this kind of situation, the concept of a blood substitute might be absolutely game-changing. The absence of white blood cells and platelets makes it an incomplete substitute for human blood. On the other hand, it

may transport oxygen, which is absolutely necessary in an emergency. Made from donated blood that would have otherwise gone to waste, these artificial cells are stable at ambient temperature, look just like genuine blood, and imitate the body's natural red blood cells.

SRCC, Hindu and BCom (Hons) top preferences at DU

Delhi: The University of Delhi has got an overwhelming response to its undergraduate admissions this year, with Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC) emerging as the most sought-after college and BCom (Hons) as the most preferred course among applicants.

According to the data released by the university on Tuesday, DU has received over 3.05 lakh registrations through the Common Seat Allocation System (CSAS), of which 2.39 lakh candidates have successfully submitted their college and programme preferences for admission to 71,642 undergraduate seats in 69 colleges and various departments. SRCC alone received 38,795 first-preference applications, followed by Hindu College with 31,901, Hansraj



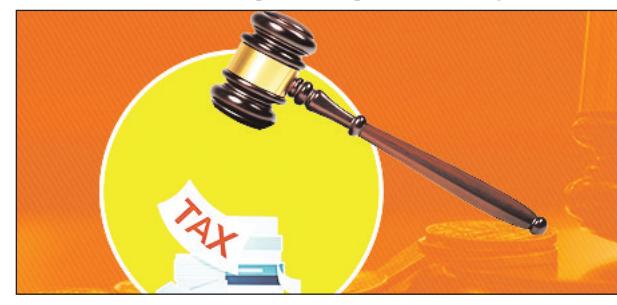
IITTA urged the board of governors to expunge show-cause notices

Delhi: The IIT Kharagpur Teachers' Association (IITTA) urged the institute's board of governors to expunge show-cause notices issued to 86 faculty members, restore their administrative positions, and protect the association's office bearers from arbitrary or retaliatory actions amid the faculty-administration dispute. In September, the IIT Kharagpur teachers' association accused director Virendra Kumar Tewari of "nepotism" and "arbitrary faculty recruitment" in a letter to the Union Ministry of Education, sparking a confrontation. They wanted an academically qualified, inclusive governance-experienced successor. When the administration sent show-cause notices to IITTA office bearers and disciplined them for not answering within seven days.

College (15,902), St and Miranda House Stephen's (12,413), (11,403).

A Third of the Total Fees Will Go Towards Reevaluating Legal Papers

Delhi
Students in the Faculty of Law at Delhi University are protesting the introduction of a new re-evaluation facility, and not because of the facility itself but because of how much it would cost. DU's re-evaluation price for LLB students is Rs 2,000 per answer sheet, which is equivalent to one-third of the faculty's yearly tuition fee and twice the fee for other disciplines. Previously, the only alternative accessible to law students was to have their marks re-totaled; re-evaluation of answer sheets was not an option. Professional courses, like



law, do not currently have access to re-evaluation facilities, but DU announced plans to expand them in November of last year. Many were disappointed by the recently approved pricing, despite the fact that the move was well-received initially. The application fee is too high for the majority of law students, according to a fifth-semester stu-

dent who asked to remain anonymous, adding that this is the first time that LLB students have the option to apply for re-evaluation. "With a total annual fee of just about Rs 6,000, how can students be asked to pay Rs 2,000 for each paper?" Many will be discouraged from accessing a fundamental academic entitlement because of this.

RIL makes record profit amid oil decline, sets clean energy outlook

Delhi : India's most valuable company, Reliance Industries Ltd., surpassed predictions to register a strong increase in revenue and profit for the April-June quarter, driven by better telecoms and retail profitability despite crude-based difficulties. Profits from its Asian

Paints disposal also boosted the bottom line. According to an investor presentation, Reliance's new energy business's production plants—which will drive its growth over the next decade—are being commissioned quickly. The new energy business would create solar mod-

ules, generate clean electricity from them, use electrons to run data centres, and make hydrogen, ammonia, and aviation fuel. Reliance did not provide timescales. Reliance Industries' oil-to-chemicals (O2C) business's operating profit fell in the first quarter.

Premji pledges 2,250 crore for college education of girls



Delhi: Azim Premji Foundation has committed to giving 2,250 crore over three years to help more girls complete their college education, making it the country's largest direct benefit transfer scheme by a not-for-profit private entity. Under the initiative, a girl who has completed her standard X and XII from a government school can apply for the Azim Premji scholarship. Billionaire and philanthropist Azim Premji's eponymous foundation, Azim Premji Foundation, would give 30,000 a year to up to 250,000 girl students. This translates to 750 crore a year, which, over a three-year degree program, would total 2,250 crore.

"The basic purpose of this is to allow girl children to complete their higher education," said Anurag Behar, chief executive officer of Azim Premji Foundation. "If a girl has completed 10th and 12th from a government school and is admitted to a bona fide college, the child is eligible to get 30,000 every year for the duration of her course." Beginning in September, a girl who starts college and has received the Azim Premji scholarship will receive 90,000 over a three-year degree program.

IT-Delhi rose 255 places to 171st globally, according to 2025 QS

Delhi: Among Indian universities for sustainability, IIT-Delhi rose 255 places to 171st globally, according to 2025 QS Rankings released. The QS Sustainability Rankings include 78 Indian universities, with nine of the top 10 improving and 21 new institutions entering. Two IITs—Delhi and Kanpur—are in the world's top 100 for environmental impact. With 177 and 67 rank improvements, each became fourth and fifth in India. Bangalore's IISc is among the world's top 50 environmental education schools. The



University of Delhi is the only Indian university to drop from 220 to 299, yet it still ranks sixth. DU leads India in Knowledge Exchange at 121 internationally. At seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth places are IISc, Vellore Institute of Technology, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, and Anna University. Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University ranks 951-960. It is a leader in sustainable education and research, ranking 35th in India and 288th in Asia. "The rankings show that Indian universities are forging ahead with their sustainability initiatives."

An individual contested the exclusion of a tennis match from the Hindu College sports quota admissions

Delhi: A junior national-level tennis player has taken Hindu College of Delhi University to court, claiming that the university should have included tennis in its list of sports accessible for admission under the sports mandate. Aditi Rawat challenged the college's decision to exclude lawn tennis from the sports available for admission under the sports quota for the upcoming academic year, and on Monday, Justice Vikas Mahajan sought the college's and DU's stance on the matter. The petition describes Rawat as "a distinguished Lawn Tennis athlete and gold medalist at the CBSE Nationals" who is contesting what is described as "the arbitrary denial of admission" to Hindu College under the Sports Quota



Samsung may make India a US hub amid rising tariffs

Delhi: Samsung may move some smartphone production from Vietnam if US tariffs drop in India. The world's largest smartphone maker would follow Apple in making India a top US smartphone manufacturing base. Samsung manufactures in various countries. Due to heightened US uncertainty, we are ready for several possibilities.

(Lawn Tennis) category. It states that DU's administration disregarded the 5% supernumerary sports quota that is mandated by the Common Seat Allocation System (CSAS) Policy 2025-26. The appeal, submitted by counsel Jeetender Gupta, states that "Hindu College failed.

The AICTE has formed an expert group

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

A professor from IIT Delhi to head up IIM Lucknow

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

SHRIYA revisits Fan debut with SRK

Actress revisits 2016, celebrates Hindi debut with SRK's *Fan*, theatre, Mediterranean memories and cherished moments with family, co-stars

Actress Shriya Pilgaonkar felt nostalgic as she hopped onto the 2016 throwback viral trend, revisiting a year she describes as "a leap of faith" as it marked her debut in Hindi cinema with the Shah Rukh Khan-starrer *Fan*.

Taking to Instagram, Shriya recalled 2016 as the year of her Hindi film debut with Shah Rukh Khan-starrer *Fan*, a milestone that marked the beginning of new dreams. She also shared memories of taking her beloved *Ajoba* on a Mediterranean cruise and spending time doing theatre.

She shared a string of images featuring her with Shah Rukh Khan, Harshvardhan Rane, Ishaan Khatter and late star Dharmendra with her father Sachin Pilgaonkar among many others. Shriya wrote in the caption section: "#2016 Hopping onto the 2016 throwback bandwagon. Instagram really does feel like a digital scrapbook."

She added: "Came across a few special memories... the film also stars Waluscha De Sousa, Sayani Gupta, Yogendra Tikku, Taher Shabbir, Parveen Kaur and Indranil Bhattacharya to name a few. Shriya will next be seen in *Haiwaan* by director of the film Priyadarshan.

year of my Hindi film debut with *Fan*, taking my *Ajoba* on a Mediterranean cruise, did a lot of theatre and quietly found the courage to take a leap of faith as dreams slowly started taking shape. A seeker then and a seeker now."

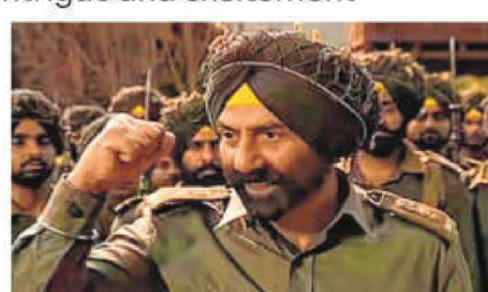
Talking about *Fan*, an action thriller directed by Manesh Sharma, it stars Shah Rukh Khan in a dual role as Aryan Khanna, a film star, and his obsessive fan and lookalike, Gaurav. Gaurav beats up a rival actor to appease Aryan, but is instead punished by his idol; heartbroken, the fan plans revenge.

The film also stars Waluscha De Sousa, Sayani Gupta, Yogendra Tikku, Taher Shabbir, Parveen Kaur and Indranil Bhattacharya to name a few. Shriya will next be seen in *Haiwaan* by director of the film Priyadarshan.

FAN-FAVOURITE CHARACTERS SET TO RETURN

From cult favourites to iconic leads, these beloved Bollywood characters are set to return, bringing nostalgia, intrigue and excitement

Some characters don't fade when the credits roll — they linger. They live on through dialogues that turn into punchlines, scenes that become memes, and performances that quietly embed themselves in pop culture. Years later, the announcement of their return doesn't just spark curiosity; it triggers nostalgia, anticipation, and an emotional reconnect. As actors step back into roles that once defined a phase in Hindi cinema, the excitement lies not just in the films themselves, but in revisiting characters audiences have long held close. Here are a few fan-favourite characters making a much-awaited comeback.



Sunny Deol as Colonel Fateh Singh Kaler (*Border 2*)

Sunny Deol stepping back into the *Border* universe brings with it a sense of legacy and emotional heft. Colonel Fateh Singh Kaler embodies grit, conviction, and the old-school intensity audiences have long associated with the actor. Rooted in patriotism and larger-than-life resolve, the character feels tailor-made for Sunny's screen persona — making his return one fans are genuinely looking forward to.



Akshay Kumar as Rajeev (*Welcome to the Jungle*)

Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar's return to the *Welcome* franchise is driven by familiarity and sheer comic comfort. Known for his effortless timing and ability to thrive in chaos-fuelled comedies, Akshay has been central to the franchise's enduring repeat value. *Welcome to the Jungle* taps directly into that nostalgia, with audiences eager to see him back in a space where his humour and screen presence feel instinctive. The film leans into his strengths, banking on crowd-pleasing banter, situational madness, and the comforting promise of laughs that feel both familiar and reliably entertaining.



Rani Mukerji as Shivani Shivaji Roy (*Mardaani 3*)

Few cop characters in recent Hindi cinema have made an impact quite like Shivani Shivaji Roy. Rani's portrayal combines authority with empathy, strength with moral clarity — making the character formidable yet deeply human. With *Mardaani 3*, audiences are eager to see Shivani return to a narrative space that consistently champions courage, accountability, and resistance against systemic injustice. The franchise's grounded storytelling and hard-hitting themes have built trust with viewers, who expect the third instalment to further deepen Shivani's resolve while confronting darker, more complex realities of crime and power.



Ajay Devgn as Vijay Salgaonkar (*Drishyam 3*)

Vijay Salgaonkar proved that restraint can be riveting. Ajay Devgn's quiet, calculated performance turned an ordinary man into one of the most compelling minds in thriller cinema. Always ten steps ahead and never revealing more than necessary, Vijay's silence became his biggest weapon. As *Drishyam 3* approaches, the intrigue around his next move is stronger than ever — because with Vijay, nothing is ever as it seems.

Adil Hussain joins Lakadbagha 2

Actor Adil Hussain, known for his roles in films such as *Love Sonia* and *English Vinglish*, is set to feature in *Lakadbagha 2: The Monkey Business*. The upcoming film is a sequel to actor Anshuman Jha's 2023 film *Lakadbagha*. Jha is returning for the second part, which will also feature Ridhi Dogra and Eksha Kerung. It is directed by Sanjay Shetty.

Hussain will replace Milind Soman, who was previously attached to the film, according to a press release. The actor said he is grateful to be a part of the film. "Watching *Lakadbagha* was so inspiring. It felt like someone was finally making a film that stood up for the rights of animals-something we haven't seen in decades, perhaps since *Haathi Mere Saathi* in the seventies. I also had the good fortune of working with Anshuman Jha, both under his direction and as a co-actor," he said in a statement. "The martial arts training and ac-



11-year-old founder wins grant

Amazon MX Player's entrepreneurial reality show *Bharat Ke Super Founders* witnessed a standout moment as 11-year-old Athvik Amith Kumar received an ₹11 lakh grant for his startup, Zozo Connect. The young founder pitched an NFC-based digital networking platform that replaces traditional paper visiting cards. Athvik impressed the investment panel with his clarity, confidence, and understanding of the product's potential. While the tycoons did not proceed with an equity deal, they praised his vision and commitment. Nitish Mittal awarded the grant to support Athvik's journey, with mentors also offering guidance.



Boman Irani as Kishan Khurana (*Khosla Ka Ghosla 2*)

Kishan Khurana remains one of Bollywood's most memorable antagonists — not because of menace, but because of charm. As the smooth-talking property dealer who could con with a smile, Boman Irani delivered a performance layered with sly humour and sharp wit. A character audiences loved to hate, Kishan's swagger, quotable lines, and unapologetic confidence turned him into a cult figure. His return has fans curious about how that same cunning energy translates years later, in a changed world.

Rani Mukerji as Shivani Shivaji Roy (*Mardaani 3*)

Few cop characters in recent Hindi cinema have made an impact quite like Shivani Shivaji Roy. Rani's portrayal combines authority with empathy, strength with moral clarity — making the character formidable yet deeply human. With *Mardaani 3*, audiences are eager to see Shivani return to a narrative space that consistently champions courage, accountability, and resistance against systemic injustice. The franchise's grounded storytelling and hard-hitting themes have built trust with viewers, who expect the third instalment to further deepen Shivani's resolve while confronting darker, more complex realities of crime and power.

Ajay Devgn as Vijay Salgaonkar (*Drishyam 3*)

Vijay Salgaonkar proved that restraint can be riveting. Ajay Devgn's quiet, calculated performance turned an ordinary man into one of the most compelling minds in thriller cinema. Always ten steps ahead and never revealing more than necessary, Vijay's silence became his biggest weapon. As *Drishyam 3* approaches, the intrigue around his next move is stronger than ever — because with Vijay, nothing is ever as it seems.

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Welcoming NY

Auckland was the 1st major city to ring in 2026 with a downtown fireworks display launched from NZ's tallest structure, Sky Tower, followed by a defiant celebration in Australia in the aftermath of its worst mass shooting.

Mamdani's wearing

Zohran Mamdani will become mayor of New York City as the clock ticks over into 2026 — but the celebrations are set to last through New Year's Day. The Democrat's team is planning separate swearing-ins on Thursday — a small, private one with his family in an old subway station around midnight, followed by a large event in the afternoon that will include a public block party outside City Hall. As a new mayor's term begins with the new year, it has been customary for the incoming leaders to hold two events.

Thailand frees 18 PoWs

Thailand on Wednesday released 18 Cambodian prisoners of war held for 5 months, fulfilling the terms of a ceasefire agreement the two countries signed to end the border fighting. The release was stipulated in the ceasefire pact signed on Saturday by the defence ministers of the countries.

Peru train crash kills 1

A train driver has died and at least 40 people have been injured in a head-on rail collision near Peru's most popular tourist attraction Machu Picchu. Two trains collided on the single track leading to the ancient Inca town on Tuesday. The US embassy in Peru said its citizens were injured, while the UK Foreign Office said it was "supporting a number of British nationals involved".

Travel ban on US nationals

Mali and Burkina Faso said late on Tuesday they would ban US citizens from entering their countries in retaliation for President Trump's decision to ban Malian and Burkinabe citizens from entering the US. The announcements were made in statements by the foreign ministers of the West African countries.

US freezes care funds

President Donald Trump's administration announced it was freezing child care funds to Minnesota after a series of fraud schemes in recent years. Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services Jim O'Neill said on X the step is in response to "blatant fraud that appears to be rampant in Minnesota and in the US."

Eurostar snag fixed

Channel Tunnel's operator said trains through the undersea link between continental Europe and the UK were running again on Wednesday after a day of travel chaos caused by a power malfunction. Eurostar, which runs passenger trains through the tunnel, said its services were operating again but warned "knock on impacts" following the disruptions on Tuesday could still cause delays and cancellations.

Iran appoints cent bank guv

Iran named Abdolnasser Hemmati, a former economics minister, as new governor to central bank after the former one quit following a record currency fall against the US dollar.

CATASTROPHIC SITUATION | Tel Aviv says organisations fail to meet 'stringent requirements'; 10 nations warn of suffering

Israel to ban dozens of aid agencies from Gaza

TEL AVIV

Israel has announced it will stop dozens of aid organisations working in Gaza within 36 hours for failing to meet stringent new requirements to hand over personal details of Palestinian and international staff deployed in the devastated territory, 'The Guardian' reported.

The list of groups hit by the ban include some of the world's best known humanitarian organisations such as ActionAid, International Rescue Committee and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF).

Tuesday's announcement by the ministry of diaspora affairs comes amid recent fierce storms, which destroyed thousands of tents in Gaza, exacerbating an already acute humanitarian crisis.

Foreign ministers of 10 nations expressed "serious concerns" about "renewed deterioration of the humanitarian situation" in the devastated territory, saying the situation was "catastrophic".



A Palestinian boy collects water from a tank amid the rubble of destroyed buildings in Gaza City.

"As winter draws in, civilians in Gaza are facing appalling conditions with heavy rainfall and temperatures dropping," the ministers of Britain, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Japan, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland said in a joint statement released by the UK's Foreign Office.

The statement added, "1.3 million people still require urgent shelter support. More than half of health facilities are

only partially functional and face shortages of essential medical equipment and supplies. The total collapse of sanitation infrastructure has left 74,000 people vulnerable to toxic flooding."

The ministers called for the UN and its partners to continue their work in Gaza, and for the lifting of "unreasonable [Israeli] restrictions on imports considered to have a dual use". Hundreds of items have been blocked by Israel from



The target of 4,200 trucks per week, including an allocation of 250 UN trucks per day, should be a floor not a ceiling. The targets should be lifted so we can be sure the vital supplies are getting in at the vast scale needed.

A statement

entering Gaza on the basis they may be used by Hamas to rebuild tunnels or for military purposes. The items include vitally needed medical and shelter equipment.

The ministers called for the opening of crossings to increase the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza, saying corridors for moving goods remained closed or severely restricted for humanitarian aid, including Rafah, the biggest entry point that leads directly to Egypt.

"Bureaucratic customs processes and extensive screenings are causing delays, while commercial cargo is being allowed in freely," the statement said.



Granddaughter of JFK no more

Tatiana Schlossberg, the granddaughter of former US President John F Kennedy, has died at 35. Her family announced her death in a social media post shared by the John F Kennedy Library Foundation, writing: "Our beautiful Tatiana passed away this morning. She will always be in our hearts."

In November, Schlossberg, a climate journalist, announced her diagnosis of an aggressive form of cancer. She said in an essay she had been given less than a year to live.

Schlossberg was the daughter of designer Edwin Schlossberg and diplomat Caroline Kennedy, and is survived by her husband George Moran and their children, Edwin, 3, and Josephine, 1.

In a 'New Yorker' article 'A Battle With My Blood' last month, Schlossberg revealed she had been diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia in May 2024, after giving birth to her second child.

2026: FAST FORWARD

The year is packed with major global events

POLITICS

Thailand general election (Feb 8)

Bangladesh general election (Feb 12)

Nepal general election (March 5)

Hungary parliamentary election (April 12)

Colombia presidential election (May 31)

Ethiopia general election (June 1)

Armenia parliamentary elections (June 7)

Sweden general election (Sept 13)

Brazil presidential election (Oct 4)

Israel Knesset election (Oct 27)

US midterm elections (Nov 3)

MUSIC

Madonna to release sequel to Confessions On A Dancefloor.

BTS to launch new album & tour after military service.

Lana Del Rey to launch Stove, a country/Southern Gothic project.

Robbie Williams to release Britpop album on Feb 6.

SPACE

Nasa's Artemis II mission, likely in February, will take four astronauts on a 10-day voyage around the moon.

Chinese astronauts on board Chang'e 7 will study the moon's south pole.

SpaceX set to debut a new version of its Starship megarocket.

Boeing's Starliner spacecraft is scheduled for an uncrewed test flight to ISS.

FILMS

Release of Avengers: Doomsday, Spider-Man: Brand New Day, Toy Story 5, and The Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping

Marilyn Monroe's 100th: Centennial celebrations

Hadi murder suspect in Dubai

Dhaka: In the Bangladeshi student leader Osman Hadi's murder case, prime accused Faisal Karim Masud has denied any role, claiming he was in Dubai, contradicting Bangladesh police's allegations about his presence in India, reports said. In a viral video (veracity was not verified), Masud said he did not kill Hadi, claiming a radical political group was involved.

Masud accepted he went to Hadi's office before the shooting but insisted his relations with Inqilab Moncho spokesperson was business related. The video has sparked fresh debate and uncertainty over what really happened.

"I am Faisal Karim Masud. I want to state I am not involved in the murder of Hadi in any

way. This case is completely false and based on a fabricated conspiracy," Masud said.

"Because of this false implication, I was forced to flee the country and come to Dubai. I came here with great difficulty, though I held a valid 5-year Dubai visa," he added.

He claimed his family was being falsely implicated and is being severely harassed and tortured, despite being completely innocent. "They have no involvement whatsoever. This kind of inhumane treatment of my family is unjust and unacceptable. I strongly protest against it," he said.

About ties with Hadi, Masud said, "Yes, I did go to Hadi's office. I am a businessman; I own an IT firm. I was previously employed at ministry

— Agencies

of finance. I went to meet Hadi about a job. He promised to arrange it and asked for an advance payment."

"Accordingly, I gave him 500,000 taka. He asked me to donate to his programmes, and I provided funds whenever he requested. Last Friday, I gave him money for one of his programmes," he added.

Masud accused Jamaat of Hadi's murder, saying, the student leader was "a product of Jamaat" and he was killed by "Jamaat elements". "This incident is the work of Jamaat. Neither I nor my younger brother was on that motorcycle, and we have been deliberately framed. My family is suffering unjustly. This level of harassment is disturbing and unacceptable."

— Agencies

France to ban social media for U-15s

PARIS

The French government on Wednesday said it would ban social media for children Under-15. If the bill is passed, France would be one of the first democracies to do so.

The bill, scheduled to be presented in Parliament in January, and, if passed, to be enforced in September 2026, is a two-fold initiative. The law will ban social media sites from serving anyone under 15, in addition to enforcing the long-standing prohibition on mobile phone usage in high schools. The proposal follows Australia's decision to prevent its young citizens from accessing social networking sites, which has stirred a controversy over the use of social media and its impact on mental health.

According to **President Emmanuel Macron** and his cabinet, the law is intended to ensure "appropriate

measures are put in place to protect youngsters from inappropriate content, bullying, and sleep disturbances that have become distressingly frequent in adolescents."

There is increasing evidence, over the past decade, of the consequences of excessive social media exposure on the health and well-being of adolescents and also adults. There is mounting research evidence in Europe, the US, Australia, and Asia of increasing levels of teenagers suf-

fering from anxiety, body image disturbances and self-harm.

The implementation of the ban is not going to be easy. According to teachers' unions, the use of phones, although banned in middle schools, is not implemented consistently. High schools are expected to be more problematic, since students are older and independent.

"We do not have the human and technical capacity to implement it," said Jean-Rémi Girard, head of National Office of High School, Middle School, Primary Schools, and Higher Education (SNALC). Whether the policy is right is no longer the question, the challenge is to make it practical.

Notably, under-16s in Australia were banned from using major social media sites, including Tiktok, X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat and Threads on December 10. The ban is the first of its kind and was being watched closely by other countries.

Jailed Lai's teeth rotting, fingernails falling off: Daughter

The daughter of **Jimmy Lai**, the pro-democracy tycoon jailed in Hong Kong, has expressed concerns about her father's deteriorating health in prison, saying his fingernails "sometimes fall off" and his teeth are rotting.

Lai, 78, has been detained since December 2020 and faces life in prison. Earlier this month he was convicted of colluding with foreign forces under the city's controversial national security law.

Hong Kong and Chinese authorities have denied that Lai has been mistreated in prison, saying he is in "good health". The BBC has seen a letter written by Lai's family urging UK PM Keir Starmer to release Lai's release when he meets Chinese President Xi Jinping next month.

His daughter Claire Lai, who's in exile in London, said she fears she "may never see



him again". "Of course I worry that my father is going to be a martyr, and I don't want him to be a martyr. But I would not be here today. I would not be speaking out if I didn't think this was his best chance of reuniting with our family."

"He is diabetic, he has heart issues which he never had in the past. He has fingernails that turn purplish grey and sometimes fall off. He has teeth that are rotting. He has back and waist pains. Some days it's painful for him to stand. Sometimes he can't stand. And some days he can't even get out of bed," she said.

Isiah Whitlock Jr, 'The Wire' and 'Veep' actor, dies at 71

Isiah Whitlock Jr, known for his memorable acting roles on 'The Wire' and 'Veep', has died at the age of 71, according to his manager. "It is with tremendous sadness I share the passing of my dear friend and client Isiah Whitlock Jr," manager Brian Liebman wrote on Instagram.

Whitlock, who also featured in 'Goodfellas' and 'The Chappelle Show', was a long-time collaborator with director Spike Lee, who also shared a heartfelt tribute to him.

"Today I learned of the passing of my dear beloved brother Isiah Whitlock. God bless," Lee wrote, alongside a photo of the two men shaking hands. "If you knew him — you loved him. A brilliant actor and even better person," Liebman wrote.

In statements to Hollywood news outlets, he added Whitlock passed away in New York after a short illness.

UKRAINIAN UAV ATTACK ON PUTIN'S RESIDENCE

Russia releases video proof

MOSCOW



Russia on Wednesday published video proof of its claims, showing a downed drone it said was launched by Ukraine at President Vladimir Putin's residence in the northwest.

The video, released by Russia's defence ministry, shows the damaged drone lying in snow. It described the incident as a "targeted, carefully planned" attack that had been carried out in stages".

Officials said the UAV was part of a mass drone launch aimed at Putin's residence. They claimed the home was not damaged, and Putin's whereabouts at the time were not revealed.

Moscow called the alleged drone attack a "terrorist act" and a "personal attack" on Putin. In response, Russia said

it would harden its stance in peace talks concerning the Ukraine war. The US-based Institute for the Study of War expressed scepticism over Russia's claims, saying there was no supporting footage or evidence associated with deep strikes from Ukrainian forces to back up the assertion Putin's house had been targeted.

Four apartment buildings were damaged, according to regional military administration head Oleh Kiper.

Power company DTEK said two of its energy facilities suffered significant damage.

The company said 10 substations that distribute electricity in Odessa were damaged in December alone.

It would place the power grid in Ukraine's Odessa in an overnight attack that injured six people, including a toddler and two kids, officials said.

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Briefs

BENGALURU
Poonawalla to make strong bid for RCB



The ownership transfer process of Royal Challengers Bengaluru gained momentum on Thursday as Adar

Poonawalla said he will be tabling a "strong and competitive" bid for the IPL team. "Over the next few months, will be putting in a STRONG and COMPETITIVE bid for RCB, one of the best teams in the IPL," Poonawalla, Chief Executive Officer of Pune-based vaccine-maker Serum Institute of India, wrote on his official 'X' handle.

HYDERABAD
Sarfaraz, Lad tons power Mumbai



Sarfaraz Khan and Siddhesh Lad compiled superlative hundreds to power table-toppers Mumbai to a commanding 332 for 4 on day one of their Ranji Trophy match against Hyderabad, here on Thursday. Sarfaraz notched up his 17th first-class hundred and his first of the 2025-26 Ranji season, scoring 142 not out off 164 balls. Lad scored 104, while putting on 249 runs for the fourth wicket after Mumbai was asked to bat first. Rohit Rayudu trapped Lad in front in the 86th over.

NEW DELHI
Tendulkar pays tribute to retired Saina



Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar on Thursday paid glowing tribute to former badminton world number one Saina Nehwal, saying her career was a testament to how greatness is built over time and that her legacy extended far beyond medals. Saina, who has been out of action for the last two years due to a chronic knee condition, confirmed her retirement from competitive badminton earlier this week, saying her body could no longer cope with the physical demands of elite sport. The 35-year-old from Hyderabad last played a

English Daily
AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Title Code
UPENG04488

Prayagraj
Printer, Publisher & Owner Swami Shree Yogi Satyam for Yog Satsanga Samiti
Printed at
PARASHAKTI OFFSET
118A/2A Chauhan Kydganj, Prayagraj-211003
Uttar Pradesh

Published from
Kriyayoga Ashram & Anusandhan Sansthan Jhansi, Prayagraj-211019

Editor:
SWAMI SHREE YOGI SATYAM
All disputes of news and publication against the AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH are the subject matter of Allahabad Jurisdiction.
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2ND T20I | Red hot India aim to make it 2-0 against New Zealand
Focus on Samson, Kishan

RAIPUR

Sanju Samson would look to hit his straps in a much-needed settled role at the top of the order, while Ishan Kishan would be better served to make the limited opportunities count in the second T20 international between India and New Zealand here on Friday.

In and out of the playing eleven for no fault of his own, Samson is now certain to get an extended run ahead of next month's T20 World Cup.

Falling to a soft dismissal in the series opener, Samson would be determined to display his wide range of shots that have helped him rack up three hundreds in the shortest format.

Another batter who needs to repay the faith of the team management is Kishan, a surprise inclusion in the World Cup squad and played ahead of Shreyas Iyer in Nagpur on Wednesday night.

The southpaw looked good in his brief stay before being caught at cover. With batting till eight, most Indians players bat in top gear trying to hit every ball out of the park. Kishan would continue with that fearless approach and can only hope that it pays off.

Focus has been on captain Suryakumar Yadav's form ahead of the ICC event and even though he could not make a major contribution, the 32 off 22 balls would have lifted his confidence by a few notches.

Despite the individual areas of improvement emerging from an emphatic win in the first T20, the performance as a team sent ominous signals to rivals ahead of the World Cup where India go in as defending champions.

If India are to become the first team to defend the T20 World Cup title, Abhishek



India's Sanju Samson plays a shot during the first T20I against New Zealand in Nagpur on Wednesday. PTI

Sharma must continue to breathe fire at the top of the order like he did on Wednesday night.

The left-hander seems to be in the form of his life and someone who has shown a rare ability to hit most balls out of the ground.

In the lower-order, Rinku Singh coming back into the team and firing instantly was another big positive for India.

Even in the absence of Kuldeep Yadav, the bowling department looks well rounded.

If Arshdeep Singh and Hardik Pandya keep taking wickets in powerplay, Jasprit Bumrah can be used for three overs post the powerplay, giving the side an additional weapon in the middle overs.

Largely due to the massive total, India were able to

Squads:

India: Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wk), Ishan Kishan, Shreyas Iyer, Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah, Varun Chakravarthy, Rinku Singh, Arshdeep Singh, Ravi Bishnoi, Harshit Rana.

New Zealand: Mitchell Santner (captain), Devon Conway, Bevon Jacobs, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips, Tim Robinson, Jimmy Neesham, Ish Sodi, Zak Foulkes, Mark Chapman, Michael Bracewell, Rachin Ravindra, Kyle Jamieson, Matt Henry, Jacob Duffy.

negate the dew factor in Nagpur.

"The way we batted, even after when we were put under pressure in the powerplay, we were 25-2, and then we took the game till the 15th over, and then we never stopped, all the batters I think played their role really well and I think that was a big plus point," said Suryakumar after the win.

Dew is expected here as well and no total would be safe as South Africa showed last month, chasing down 359 rather comfortably against the hosts in an ODI game.

New Zealand know they were not up to the mark on the bowling front and being a side which learns and adapts quickly, the Black Caps would be backing themselves to level the series.

"We are all aware of Hardik's exceptional finishing abilities. (Shivam) Dube is not a finisher, he is a spin enforcer. Now with Sanju Samson locked at the top of the order and with Ishan Kishan back as the wicket-keeper batter, what is left?

In and out Rinku Singh revels in finisher's role

The UP batter's couple of sixes and fours in last over gave India a much-needed cushion in dewy conditions

RAIPUR

Rinku Singh doesn't take long to make an impact in the death overs even if his outings in India colours are months apart.

After hitting the Asia Cup-winning four off the only ball he faced in the tournament back in September, Rinku mostly warmed the bench in the T20 series in Australia. He did not get to bat in the one game he was a part of.

That night in Brisbane on November 8 happened to be his latest India appearance until he made a roaring return on Wednesday night with a match-tilting 44 not out off 20 balls.

His couple of sixes and fours in the 20th over off part-timer Daryl Mitchell gave India a much-needed cushion in dewy conditions with 238 for seven proving to be way out of reach for the Black Caps.

Earlier, with Shubman Gill firm at the top of the order, it had become difficult to accommodate Rinku in the playing eleven.

Now with Gill out of the side, the management can give wicket-keeper Sanju Samson an extended run as an opener, creating more room for Rinku to be the finisher in the lower-order alongside Hardik Pandya.

What is remarkable is Rinku's ability to get going from ball one especially against the fast bowlers.

"We are all aware of Hardik's exceptional finishing abilities. (Shivam) Dube is not a finisher, he is a spin enforcer. Now with Sanju Samson locked at the top of the order and with Ishan Kishan back as the wicket-keeper batter, what is left?



India's Rinku Singh (R) at practice before the first T20I against New Zealand in Nagpur on Wednesday. PTI

Don't want to bother about things I can't control: Arshdeep

PTI

NAGPUR

enjoying that," Arshdeep said with a smile, reminding one and all that non-selection hasn't affected his ability to swing the ball both ways even one bit.

Arshdeep has often been sacrificed for team combination in recent months. On a more serious note, the 26-year-old underlined his professional approach towards selection and readiness.

"My job is to remain ready and whenever team wants me to bowl in any format with new or old ball, I can give my best. My aim is to enjoy the journey, remain in present and focus on the controllable. What is not in my control (selection), I shouldn't be bothered about it," he said.

Arshdeep said he likes to different match conditions.

"You need a finisher with Hardik in the death overs. Who can do it better than Rinku? He has great numbers

Brief Score

Swami Vivekanand:

276 all out in 79.2 overs (Kartik Chhajer 90, Prajwal Taware 82, Shauryakant

Upadhyaya 48; Anup Yadav 5/76, Atharva Kalel 4/66) & 178-8 in 40 overs (Shauryakant Upadhyaya 94, Kartik Chhajer 58") 2x4s, lost to Dnyandeep Seva

Mandal: 330-5 in 80

overs (Anup Yadav 126*, Anuj Chaudhary 102, Atharva Kalel 50, Neil Naik 38; Daivat Kawali 3/81) & 128-6 in 34.5 overs (Atharva Kalel 56; Daivat Kawali 4/66) by 4 wkt.

Harris Shield semifinals last season, in my first year. I started getting perks and other benefits," said Khan after Dnyandeep won their maiden Giles Shield title at the Brabourne stadium on Thursday.

The road wasn't easy for Khan, and he had to assemble players from his academy and the surrounding areas to make a school team. "I was running an academy in Panvel and had produced many junior Mumbai players.

"I approached the Dnyandeep management as the school was close to my academy in Panvel. They didn't have much cricket set up, but they showed faith in me. I worked voluntarily without any salary initially. But later, as I coached the team to the Giles Shield finals and

things in place, and after getting results, everyone started to believe in us. We used to train mostly in our academy ground," he added.

However, SVS experienced coach Dinesh Lad wasn't impressed with Dnyandeep's title win and reiterated that they had fielded a few overage players. "We will file a formal protest against four players," said Lad after the match.

Dnyandeep clinches maiden title

Panvel school's coach Abdul Khan delivers the riches in Giles Shield without fixed salary

MUMBAI



Dnyandeep Seva Mandal Primary and Secondary School won their maiden Giles Shield title after beating Swami Vivekanand International SSC by four wickets in the final on Thursday. The school near Panvel announced its arrival in the MSSA Dream Sports Inter-School Cricket with empathetic performance at the Brabourne Stadium, Cricket Club of India, on Thursday.

After scoring 276 in the first innings and conceding a 54-run lead, SVS started the day precariously placed at 58/5. Still, overnight not out batter Shauryakant Upadhyaya (33) went on to top score with 94 and take Swami Vivekanand to 178/8 in 40 overs and give their bowlers something to bowl. Skipper Kartik Chhajer, who made 90 in the first innings, remained unbeaten on 58 in the second innings and was later adjudged Best All-rounder of the tournament.

Chasing 128 in 40 overs, Dnyandeep stuttered a bit and lost six wickets but romped home with 6.3 overs to spare. They made 128 for 6 in 34.3

overs. Atharva Kalel top-scored with 56. Daivat Kawali, who took three wickets in the first innings for the Borivali School, followed with four wickets in the second innings.

Dnyandeep skipper Anup Yadav was declared man of the match for his hundred and five-wicket haul, while Neil Naik won the Best batter of the 124th edition of the prestigious tournament. Rizvi's Abdullah Khatri won the best bowler award.

Dnyandeep pulled off a heist in only their second year at this level. The School with little history in cricket two years ago has one title, one runners-up in the Giles Shield and two semifinal finishes in the Harris Shield.

The school found a capable coach in Abdul Khan, who was looking for a challenging role. He had a great CV, being the former cricket coach of Anjuman-Islam Allana English School and running Future Star Cricket Academy in Panvel, which has produced many junior Mumbai players.

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Australian Open

Djokovic one away from 400 Grand Slam match wins

unprecedented 25th Grand Slam title. And if he does, he'll beat Ken Rosewall's record (aged 37 in 1972) as the oldest man in the Open era to win a major singles championship.

The Rosewall name was prominent on Day 5 at Melbourne Park, where he was among the invited VIPs.

Wawrinka makes history Wawrinka, at 40 years, 310 days, became the first man over 40 to reach the third round of a major since

Rosewall in 1978. It took a 4 1/2-hour 4-6, 6-3, 3-6, 7-5, 7-6 (3) comeback victory over 21-year-old qualifier Arthur Gea. That's the longest match of the 2026 tournament so far. Wawrinka, who is retiring at the end of the year, will next face No. 9 Taylor Fritz.

Before then, he told the crowd at John Cain Arena: "I think I'll pick up a beer. I deserve one!"

His was one of three high-profile matches that finished around the same time, with

Jannik Sinner continuing his bid for an Australian Open three-peat after beating James Duckworth 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 on Rod Laver Arena.

The defining feature of Naomi Osaka's first two rounds quickly moved from fashion to friction when her 6-3, 4-6, 6-2 win over Sorana Cirstea ended in tension.

Iga Swiatek beat Marie Bouzkova 6-2, 6-3 and later said she's been trying to take lessons from Djokovic's attitude to sustained success and longevity.

Keys to success Defending champion Madison Keys was down a double break in the second set before rallying to beat Ashlyn Krueger 6-1, 7-5 and advancing to a third-round match against former No. 1 Karolina Pliskova.

Melbourne is where Keys made her Grand Slam breakthrough 12 months ago and since her return people have been asking her how confident she is about retaining the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup.



Novak Djokovic of Serbia reacts after defeating Francesco Mazzatorta of Italy on Thursday. AP