

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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Uranium in breast milk increases risk of cancer in children

Patna

A recent study in Bihar has revealed dangerous levels of uranium in mothers' milk, raising serious concerns about the health of their children. Researchers from several institutions have found that exposure to uranium through breast milk can pose significant non-cancerous

health risks to children. Dr. Ashok Sharma of AIIMS, Delhi, co-authored the study. He explained that the study analyzed the breast milk of 40 lactating mothers, and uranium was found in all samples. Although 70% of children showed non-cancerous health risks, the total uranium levels were below the permissible



limit, and it is expected that the actual health impact on both mothers and children will be minimal. The highest

average contamination was found in Khagaria district, and the highest individual values were found in Katihar district. Although uranium exposure may pose risks such as impaired neurological development and stunted growth, breastfeeding should not be discontinued and remains the most beneficial source

of nutrition for children unless clinically indicated. The study found that 70% of children had a RD > 1, indicating a non-carcinogenic health risk from uranium exposure through breast milk. Uranium exposure in children may affect kidney development, neurological development, cognitive and mental health out-

comes. They stated that, however, based on the uranium concentrations observed in breast milk samples (0-5.25 µg/g), the study still concludes that the actual impact on child health is likely small and that most of the uranium absorbed by mothers is primarily excreted through urine and not concentrated in breast milk.

'Operation Sindoor' should have been conducted after the Mumbai terror attack': CM Devendra Fadnavis



Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that if India had carried out operations like Operation Sindoor after the November 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, no one would have dared to target our country again. He said that Pakistan knows it cannot defeat India in a direct war, which is why the terrorist attack in Pahalgam and the recent bombings in Delhi occurred. Speaking at an event at the Gateway of India to

mark the 17th anniversary of the 26/11 attacks, he said that this was not just an attack on the Taj and Trident hotels. Mumbai is India's economic capital. The attack on this city was an attack on the country's sovereignty. If we had understood this and shown the courage to carry out Operation Sindoor at that time, no one would have dared to attack us again. Following the Pahalgam terror attack in April 2025, India carried out military operations under Operation Sindoor.

Operation Sindoor was like a trusted orchestra: Army Chief

New Delhi

Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi said, "Operation Sindoor was like a faithful orchestra, where every musician played a harmonious role. Similarly, in 22 minutes, the Indian Army destroyed nine terrorist sites." He added, "Military operations demonstrate the foresight to anticipate changing circumstances. This was a response not conceived in the moment, but developed over years of deliberation about how intelligence, precision, and technology can combine to translate into action." General Dwivedi said that Pakistan also launched attacks against India, and all subsequent Indian retaliatory strikes were conducted under Operation Sindoor. The nearly 88-hour military



conflict between the two nuclear-armed neighbors ended after an agreement was reached on the evening of May 10. The Army Chief was in Delhi attending the convocation ceremony of the New Delhi Institute of Management. He told the students that the world is changing rapidly and that it holds opportunities. More than 55 conflicts ongoing, blurring the boundaries between peace and war. The world in the 21st century is rife with competition and conflict. More than 55 conflicts

are ongoing, involving over 100 countries, either directly or covertly. **Goeconomics has turned into a war-like strategy: General Dwivedi** Markets have also changed—goeconomics has evolved into a war-like strategy amid nationalism, sanctions, and protectionism. Technology has transformed warfare—When they first entered the military, computers were a distant memory, but today the military is using AI and data science in combat operations. From

trenches to networks, rifles to drones, boots to bots, and shampoo sachets to businesses, technology is changing the face of warfare. The Indian Army is working to achieve greater agility, work more closely with the Navy and Air Force and other domains, accelerate modernization through the latest technology, improve human resource systems, continuously refine our system processes, and increase efficiency and responsiveness.

The Army Chief said, "We manage millions of lives—I lead a community of 13 million soldiers, veterans, and families. That's one percent of India's population. The corporate world manages a few hundred resumes. We manage millions of lives, ready to be shot at a single command."



RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at the Divya Geeta Prerna Utsav programme organised in Lucknow.

CM orders stringent measures against illegal immigrants

Lucknow

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has issued clear instructions to all District Magistrates to take swift and stringent action against illegal immigrants. Emphasizing that law and order, national security and social harmony



remain top priorities, he stated that any illegal activity will not be tolerated. District administra-

tions have been directed to identify illegal immigrants residing in their areas and take action in

accordance with the law. CM has also instructed the establishment of temporary detention centers in each district to house identified infiltrators. Foreign nationals found living illegally will be accommodated in these centers until the completion of the verification process.

Congress suppressed Sardar Patel's contribution: Nadda

New Delhi

Recalling the role of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel during an event in New Delhi on Saturday, BJP President JP Nadda alleged that for four decades after independence, the Congress party did not give Patel's contributions the place in history that they truly deserved. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the leader who has given Sardar Patel the rightful respect. At the event, Nadda also flagged off the 150 Unity March, marking Patel's birth anniversary. Nadda said that at the time of India's independence, the country



was divided into 562 princely states, and the British wanted India to remain weak and divided. However, Sardar Patel unified all these princely states within two years, establishing India as a strong nation. He said that despite his immense contribution, Congress governments, for political reasons, did not give Patel the respect he deserved.

New Delhi

Cold weather has rapidly set in across North India. Temperatures are steadily dropping in the plains of North India, while rain is expected in South India. The cold will intensify in Delhi starting today. According to the Meteorological Department, the maximum temperature in Delhi today is expected to be 26 degrees, the minimum temperature 11 degrees, and the wind speed is expected



to be 10-15 kmph. Fog in Punjab and Madhya Pradesh The temperature in Delhi dropped to 1 degree Celsius by nightfall, making it feel cold. The International Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued its latest weather forecast with health advisories for resi-

dents. A light fog layer was observed in many areas of Punjab, Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh, and western Madhya Pradesh. Over the next two to three days, night temperatures may slightly increase in parts of Central India, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. Cold wave

conditions may develop in western Madhya Pradesh. **Chills intensify in Uttar Pradesh** Uttar Pradesh will experience severe cold with fog in the morning on November 23rd; The minimum temperature will be 11-15 degrees Celsius, with a further drop of 2-4 degrees Celsius expected between November 26-28. Severe cold will continue in Uttar Pradesh today, and morning fog and mist will affect visibility.

An 8th-grade student took her own life after her parents refused to give her a mobile phone

Nagpur

In Nagpur, Maharashtra, when her parents refused to give their daughter a mobile phone, the teenager, driven by stubbornness, committed suicide. The 8th-grade student hanged herself. Upon receiving the information, police arrived at the scene and sent the body to the hospital for a postmortem. The incident occurred near the Hanuman Temple in the Chankapur area of Nagpur. The 13-year-old 8th-grade student hanged herself because her parents refused to buy her a new smartphone.

Women will protect the India-China border, ITBP will set up 10 women border posts

New Delhi

The government is now increasing the deployment of Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force personnel to enhance surveillance along the India-China LAC. The ITBP guards the 3,488-kilometer-long LAC. The ITBP's Director General has announced that 10 all-women border outposts will be established along the LAC. Following the 2020 border clash in Ladakh, the ITBP developed a "forwardization"

The central government clarified its stand on Chandigarh



New Delhi

Regarding the administrative process related to the Union Territory of Chandigarh, the Central Government has clarified that the proposal to simplify the legal process at the central level for Chandigarh is currently

under consideration, and no final decision has been taken. The government also clarified that the proposal does not involve any changes to Chandigarh's governance system or altering its traditional relationship with Punjab and Haryana.

UP: A new era of women's empowerment, from social change to economic progress

Lucknow

The extensive efforts made towards the social and economic empowerment of women in Uttar Pradesh under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath are now yielding concrete results. The state has seen rapid improvements in areas such as women's safety, education, health, financial independence, and employment generation. Building on this trans-



formation, Uttar Pradesh is today setting a new example of social and economic change through women's empowerment. The state government prioritized women's safety.

Initiatives such as the activation of the Anti-Romeo Squad, the expansion of the 1090 Women Power Line, and Pink Patrol have created a safe environment for women. The

impact of the changing social climate is clearly visible in both cities and villages. Positive attitudes towards girls' education have increased in families, and parents are now encouraging their daughters to pursue higher education without hesitation. Mission Shakti has played a significant role in social empowerment. Through this initiative, women's groups were connected with leadership, self-reliance, security.



plan. Under this plan, the ITBP will expand its 215 border outposts in northern and eastern India. Government approves seven new battalions Indo-Tibetan Border Police Director General Praveen Kumar stated this during the

force's 64th Raising Day parade in Jammu on Saturday. He said, "We have implemented the forwardization plan, and as a result, the number of forward-deployed border outposts has now increased from 180 to 215." The DG said, "The

Briefs

CHAMPAWAT (UKD)

Gelatin sticks near Almora school found

About 160 gelatin sticks were found hidden in bushes near a school in Almora district of Uttarakhand, police said on Sunday. Preliminary investigations have ruled out any terrorist links and it appears that the explosive were left behind by a contractor during construction of a road, Almora Senior Superintendent of Police Devendra Pincha said. The incident came to light on November 21, when Subhash Singh, acting principal of the Government Higher Secondary School, Dabhra, located in the Salt area, spotted some suspicious packages in the bushes near the campus and informed the police. Upon receiving the information, police arrived at the scene and cordoned off the entire area. Subsequently, bomb squads and dog squads from Udham Singh Nagar and Nainital districts were called to the scene, assisting them in conducting a thorough search of the area. A few packets of gelatin sticks were first recovered from a location near the school, followed by several more packets about 15-20 feet away, police said, adding that a total of 161 cylindrical gelatin sticks were recovered from both locations.

AYODHYA

Ram Temple set for PM's Nov 25 event

Ayodhya is preparing for a historic moment on November 25 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hoist a grand saffron flag atop the newly completed Ram temple, marking the final architectural milestone of the structure. The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust has described the ceremony as the most significant event since the 2024 Pran Pratishtha. The massive saffron flag, embossed with a Sun symbol, will rise over the temple's main shikhara, symbolising completion from foundation to crown. Trustee Anil Mishra said the ceremony carries profound cultural and emotional weight.

—Biswajeet Banerjee

BLO DEATHS | Opposition party intensifies its attack on Modi govt, says scenario reminiscent of note ban & Covid lockdown**Hasty implementation of SIR taking toll: Cong**

NEW DELHI

Attacking the BJP over the death of some Booth Level Officers (BLOs) in various states, the Congress on Sunday alleged that the workload is forcing BLOs and polling officers to commit suicide, and claimed that the "hasty" implementation of SIR is reminiscent of demonetisation and the Covid lockdown.

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Sunday harshly criticised Special Intensive Revision (SIR) over alleged suicides of some Booth Level Officers (BLOs) due to 'intense work pressure' and termed the exercise an 'imposed oppression'. The Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha further said that the SIR is a 'deliberate ploy' to harass the citizens of the country.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the BJP's "vote chori" has now taken a deadly turn.

Kharge shared on X a media report which claimed that in 19 days, there have been deaths of 16 BLOs during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The workload is forcing BLOs and polling officers to



commit suicide, the Congress chief said. "My deepest condolences to every family who has lost a loved one. Based on ground reality, this number is far higher than reported, which is extremely worrying. Who will provide justice to these families?" Kharge said in his post in Hindi.

"The BJP is busy enjoying the fruits of stolen power, while the Election Commission is watching as a mute spectator," he charged.

"The hasty, unplanned forced implementation of SIR is reminiscent of demonetization and the Covid lockdown," Kharge claimed.

The BJP's hunger for power is driving institutions to force

suicides, shredding of the Constitution, and weakening of democracy through misuse of power, he alleged.

"Enough is enough! If we still don't wake up, no one can save the last pillars of democracy from collapsing. Those who remain silent on SIR and vote theft are responsible for the deaths of these innocent BLOs. Raise your voice, save democracy!" Kharge said.

A woman working as a Booth Level Officer (BLO) in West Bengal's Nadia district was found hanging at her residence on Saturday, with her family members claiming that she was under considerable SIR work-related stress and died by suicide, police said.

Vijay's party in SC against roll revision

New Delhi: Actor Vijay's TVK (Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam) party has moved the Supreme Court challenging the Election Commission of India's (ECI) decision to conduct Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voter roll in Tamil Nadu. TVK's plea filed through Advocates Dixita Gohil, Pranjal Agarwal, Shikhar Aggarwal, and Yash S Vijay has sought that the ECI's notification issued on October 27, to undertake the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process in ten states and Union Territories, including Tamil Nadu, be quashed and set aside. The plea states that SIR constitutes a gross violation of constitutional protections under Articles 14, 19, 21, 325, and 326 and is contrary to statutory provisions under Sections 21 and 23 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 (ROPA).

Delhi blast: Docs' radicalisation began on social media in 2019

NEW DELHI

The radicalisation of the doctors involved in the recent 'white-collar' terror module that came to light with the November 10 Red Fort area bombing began as early as 2019 on social media platforms, officials said on Sunday.

The investigation so far indicated a concerning shift in cross-border terror strategy, where highly educated professionals were groomed entirely through digital means by handlers operating from Pakistan and other parts of the world, the officials familiar with the probe said.

The members of the terror cell, which included Dr Muzammil Ganaie, Dr Adeel Rather, Dr Muzzafar Rather and Dr Umar-un-Nabi, who drove the explosive-laden car on November 10, were initially spotted by handlers across the border while active on social media platforms like Facebook and discussion spaces on X (formerly known as Twitter).

They were immediately shifted to private groups on 'Telegram', they said, adding that actual brainwashing started from here.

While Ganai and Adeel are now in the custody of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), probing the Red Fort blast, Muzzafar escaped to

**J&K police, along with their counterparts in UP and Haryana, busted 'white collar' terror module** —File pic

Afghanistan in August this year, and the process to seek his deportation has already been initiated by the Jammu and Kashmir Police, which unravelled the entire terror module.

They also used YouTube extensively to learn how to create Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) for carrying out terror attacks. Digital footprints analysed during the interrogation identified the primary handlers as 'Ukasa', 'Faizan' and 'Hashmi'.

All three have been operating from outside India and their names often crop up in inputs related to the Jaish-e-Mohammed terror network, the officials said.

They said that the recruited doctors had initially expressed intent to join terror groups in conflict zones like Syria or Afghanistan, but were later refrained by their

handlers who asked them to continue in India and carry out multiple blasts in the hinterland.

The 'white collar' terror module was busted by Jammu and Kashmir police along with their counterparts in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. It led the investigators to a Faridabad university where 2,900 kg of explosives were recovered.

It all started on the intervening night of October 18-19, when posters of the banned JeM surfaced on walls just outside Srinagar city. The posters warned of attacks on police and security forces in the Valley.

Srinagar police treated the matter as a serious issue and not just as a one-off incident, and Senior Superintendent of Police (Srinagar) GV Sundeep Chakravarty formed several teams for an in-depth probe.

U'khand tribal villages ban liquor, fast food at weddings

DEHRADUN

In Uttarakhand's Jaunsar-Bawar region, 25 villages have agreed to hold all weddings and auspicious ceremonies with complete simplicity — no alcohol, fast food and extravagant gifting.

Under the new rules, serving English liquor, beer, chowmein, momos, tikki, chaat and other fast foods at ceremonies has been prohibited. The long-standing custom of the bride's family gifting a goat has also been discontinued to ease financial pressure on poorer households. Anyone violating these rules will face a fine of Rs1 lakh.

The decision was taken at a meeting in Doha village, chaired by Khatt president and 'Syana' Rajendra Singh Tomar. The gathering concluded that excessive display, rising competition and mod-

ern showmanship were pushing many families into debt. To curb inequality, even the giving and receiving of silver coins, dry fruits and costly gifts has been banned. As per tradition, only the maternal uncle will be allowed to bring wheat, rice and a goat.

NUPTIAL RULES

Several villages in Jaunsar-Bawar already follow an earlier rule restricting women to wearing only three traditional ornaments at weddings. This was adopted in Kandhar and Kharsi villages. With gold prices soaring, the measure is being viewed as a significant step toward social balance.

Community leaders said that modern trends had led to sharp increases in wedding expenses, pushing many into unnecessary competition. Families often borrowed money to arrange lavish fast-

food counters, gold ornaments and pricey gift exchanges.

Jaunsar-Bawar operates through a traditional collective governance model called 'Khatt Shaili', in which clusters of 7 to 18 villages make collective social decisions. The system is led by the 'Syana', who, along with senior members of the villages, frames rules and resolves social issues.

With a population of around 2.5 lakh and more than 20,000 families, nearly 90 per cent of Jaunsar-Bawar still live in joint families. Several homes have 40 to 90 members under one roof. The Chillhad-based Bijalwan family has 90 members, while villages like Brinad-Basteel, Bulhad, Rangeu and Kulha continue to maintain large traditional units of 40-75 members.

Community leaders say the new rules will help bridge the gap between rich and poor.

Parameshwara hints he, too, in K'taka CM race

BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Sunday hinted that he too was in the race to become the Chief Minister, in case of leadership change in the state, and amid demands for a "Dalit CM".

However, trying to play down reports about confusion within the party on the issue of Chief Minister change, he pointed out that no one from the Congress high command has spoken on the matter so far, nor has it been discussed in the Congress Legislature Party.

The senior Congress leader further said that AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge will decide on leadership change, if there is a need, after discussing with top party leader Rahul Gandhi, who is currently abroad.

Jamiat chief Madani's Al Falah remarks draw BJP criticism

NEW DELHI

Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind chief Maulana Arshad Madani's remarks alleging discrimination against Muslims while citing the example of the Al Falah University, which is under scanner in the Delhi blast probe, triggered a row with the BJP on Sunday, saying the "aatanki bachao (save terrorist) jamaat" has become active.

Madani claimed that while Zohran Mamdani had been elected the mayor of New York and a Khan could become the mayor of London, Muslims in India cannot even become vice chancellors in universities.

"The world thinks that Muslims have been crippled and finished. I don't believe so. Today, a Muslim, Mamdani, can become the mayor of New York, a Khan



can become mayor of London; whereas in India, no one can even become a university vice-chancellor," he said at a session at the Jamiat headquarters here on Saturday.

"And even if someone does, they will be sent to jail, like Azam Khan. Look at what is happening today with Al Falah. He (the founder) is in jail, and no one knows how many years he will be in jail," Madani said.

The government is working relentlessly to ensure that Muslims never raise their heads, the chief of one of the two factions of Jamiat

alleged. BJP leaders slammed Madani for the remarks and accused him of giving a communal colour to the Delhi blast probe.

The ruling party's spokesperson, Shehzad Poonawalla, said, "In the name of vote bank, the 'bhaijann of appeasement' and the 'aatanki bachao jamaat (save terrorists group)' has become active."

"Arshad Madani ji, leave aside this talk of mayor; this country has seen Muslims becoming President, vice president, chief justice, home minister. The biggest artists and businessmen have also come from the Muslim community."

"When a terror act takes place, those people who say terrorism has no religion, start advocating on behalf of terrorists on the basis of religion," he told PTI Videos.

Gita provides guidance for a world in confusion: Bhagwat

LUCKNOW



said.

The Bhagavad Gita provides timeless guidance for a world struggling with moral confusion, conflict and the lack of peace, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Sunday.

Addressing the Gita Prerna Mahotsav here, Bhagwat said the purpose of the event was not merely ceremonial, but to inspire people to live the Gita. "We are here because the Gita has to be lived, not just recited. Its 700 slokas must be read, contemplated and applied in our daily lives," he

Drawing parallels between Arjuna's dilemma on the battlefield of Kurukshetra and the present global situation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief said the world today is "lost, exhausted and directionless", despite material progress. "There is wealth and comfort, but no peace, no contentment, no

moral clarity," he said.

Bhagwat said India's ancient wisdom once guided the world for thousands of years and the Gita is the distilled essence of that knowledge.

"Just as Krishna removed Arjuna's confusion, the Gita can help humanity confront its challenges today," he said.

Bhagwat said the Gita inspires one to be courageous while facing problems, rather than running away from those. "Krishna tells Arjuna -- 'Do not escape. Stand firm, confront the problem and act without ego or fear,'" he said.

Vijay back on campaign trail, targets DMK

CHENNAI

Tamilaga Vettri Kazhgam chief Vijay on Sunday resumed his campaign for the 2026 Assembly election after a break of nearly 2 months and without directly naming the ruling DMK, accused it of a 'loot' of Rs 4,730 crore via illegal sand mining.

He also indirectly levelled the allegation of dynasty politics against it and claimed that the ruling party had forgotten its founder CN Annadurai's diktat of 'go to the people.'

Addressing party workers, fans and the public at an auditorium in Kancheepuram dis-

**TVK leader Vijay addresses a gathering during a public meeting in Kanchipuram on Sunday**

trict, Vijay, avoiding a direct reference, alleged that DMK's ideology was only to loot. "They just talk about ideology, mortgaging all their principles, acting as if they alone have leased all principles. Isn't

their ideology just to loot? Do you think people don't know all this?"

Asserting that Palar River is the lifeline of Kancheepuram region, he said such a life giving river has been degraded

and ruined by those merely using the names of social reformer "Periyar" EV Ramasamy and Anna. He said these were not casual remarks and alleged a loot of a "small amount of Rs 4,730 crore" by way of illegal sand mining as about 22.70 lakh units of sand was mined by exceeding the permitted level.

"They cannot ask for evidence as it is in court and with the Enforcement Directorate...if sand is looted, water bodies will be destroyed, agriculture will be destroyed and if agriculture is destroyed, farmers will be destroyed. In total, all of us will have to be completely destroyed."

Uranium in breast milk? Bihar sets up probe team

PATNA

The Bihar government has formed a team of health department officials to study the findings of a research, which claimed to have found breast milk of lactating mothers from six districts of the state 'highly contaminated' with uranium.

The study was carried out by Mahavir Cancer Sansthan, Patna, under Dr Arun Kumar and Prof Ashok Ghosh, in collaboration with AIIMS-Delhi, led by Dr Ashok Sharma. The study conducted on 40 sample lactating mothers said that contamination had very little impact on the health of the mother and infants.

Bihar health minister Mangal Pandey on Sunday said, "I have asked the department officials to go through the findings of the research and submit a report at the earliest. We will see what preventive measures can be taken."

As many as 40 mothers, aged between 17 and 35, took part in the research conducted in selected districts of Bihar, which included Bhojpur, Samastipur, Begusarai, Khagaria, Katihar and Nalanda.

ITBP to establish 10 all-women outposts along LAC

NEW DELHI/JAMMU

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police force, which guards the 3,488 km-long India-China LAC, is establishing 10 all-women border posts along this arduous and icy frontier, the director general of the paramilitary said.

The force, as part of its ambitious "forwardisation" plan, initiated post the 2020 military clash in Ladakh, has also moved its 215 border posts forward along the front

on India's north and eastern flank so far.

Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) DG Praveen Kumar said this during the 64th Raising Day parade of the force held in Jammu on Saturday.

"We have worked on the forwardisation plan and, as a result, the number of forward-deployed BOPs (border outposts) is now 215 as compared to 180.

"The establishment of seven new battalions and a sector headquarters has not only



strengthened this plan (forwardisation) but has also enhanced our reach and supervision of the forward

areas..." the DG said.

The Centre had sanctioned seven more battalions and a sector office comprising about

9,400 personnel for the ITBP in 2023.

The DG said the force will establish 41 more such forward bases along the India-China Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the near future in order to "strengthen security and coordination".

As part of enhancing the role of women combatants, the ITBP is in the process of establishing two all-women BOPs in Ladakh's Lukung and Thangi in Himachal Pradesh. Eight more all-women BOPs will be made oper-

ational on this front, the DG said.

The ITBP chief said the training institutions of the force have been "reorganised" and five new skilling modules have been launched for the troops, including on subjects like mountain warfare and tactical survival.

The ITBP, with a manpower of more than one lakh personnel, has its border posts ranging between the height of 9,000 feet and over 14,000 feet, affected by inclement weather and low levels of oxygen.

DM distributed voter forms as part of the SIR campaign

Visited various booths to inspect the collection and digitization work, and provided necessary guidelines to all concerned officials



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

District Magistrate Mr. Manish Kumar Verma on Sunday inspected the distribution, collection, and digitization of voter forms at various booths as part of the special intensive revision campaign of the voter list and provided necessary guidelines to all concerned officials. The District Magistrate had given instructions to run a special campaign on Sunday to ensure that voters do not face any inconvenience in filling the forms during the revision of voter list being done under SIR in Prayagraj district and

they do not have to wander anywhere. In this sequence, a special campaign was run today and all the BLOs along with other supporting staff were present at their respective booths. The District Magistrate inspected booths including Ashok Nagar, Maharishi Balmiki Inter College, Zone No. 2 Muthiganj Ward-6 Tulsipur and DAB Inter College Meerapur and obtained information from the BLOs and other concerned officials about the number of forms distributed and collected in relation to the number of voters there and how many

forms were digitized and gave instructions to increase the progress of the work. He has instructed the BLOs to increase the door-to-door contact campaign and to speed up the work of getting the forms filled by the voters, collecting them and digitizing them. He talked to the people present at the booth and understood their problems and also informed them about the process of filling the form and necessary instructions. Municipal Commissioner Sai Teja and other concerned officials were present on this occasion.

A young man died in an accident on the Azhuva Highway last night, extinguishing the light of a family's life

Azhuva Highway is reeling from accidents, and officials have turned a blind eye to the flyover construction

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Azhuva, Kaushambi. A young man riding a bike tragically died after being hit by an unknown speeding vehicle on the highway near Munir Chai Paan in the Adarsh ??Nagar Panchayat Azhuva town of Saini Kotwali. The news of the young man's death caused an uproar in the family. Police arrived on the scene, sent the body for post-mortem and are beginning further proceedings. Sonu Pal, 26, son of the late Indrapal, a resident of Kakrali village, a hamlet of Dhumai in Saini Kotwali, was his father's only son. Sonu worked in a private job in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. According to family members, Sonu had come home for Diwali. Sonu had gone to Sultanpur Ghosh on Saturday for an invitation and returned by evening. He left for Saini



on his bike around 9 pm for an invitation. At around 9:35 p.m., as Munir reached the highway in front of Chaayapaan in Azhuva town, an unknown vehicle coming at high speed from Kanpur hit the bike and fled. According to eyewitnesses, the impact was so strong that the bike jumped and fell

about twenty feet away, and the unknown vehicle ran over the biker. The young man died on the spot. Police arrived on the information, took the body into custody, completed the formalities on the complaint of the deceased's cousin, Pramod Kumar, and sent it for post-mortem. The family performed the last rites on

Monday evening in a mournful atmosphere. The deceased's mother Kalavati, wife Poonam, and one-and-a-half-year-old daughter Baby are inconsolable due to the young man's death. According to the residents of the area, 2027 is near and if the elevated bridge is not built, politicians will be held accountable.

A businessman sitting on a bike parked on the tracks was hit by a speeding bike, seriously injuring him

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kaushambi. Vipin Kumar, son of Harishchandra Kesarwani, a businessman living in the town of Nagar Palika Parishad Manjhanpur, was returning after dropping his school children from school on the morning of November 19th. He parked his bike on the side of the road in front of Chaurasia Pan Shop near State Bank and was sitting on the bike. Meanwhile, the driver of a speeding bike



number UP 73 H 7963 collided with his parked bike, causing Vipin to fall on the

road and was seriously injured. Seeing the accident, people nearby reached the spot and

took him to the district hospital for treatment, from where he was referred to Prayagraj,

where he is undergoing treatment.

Kotwali police have been informed of the matter. Police have registered a case in the matter and started searching for the bike rider. It is said that Babul, a resident of Karari Road, Kotwali, Manjhanpur, had come to the spot to pick up the bike that had caused the accident, upon which local people protested against him, upon which Babul also abused the people. Police are searching for the bike rider.

Fight on a Moving Roadways Bus, Video Viral

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. A roadways bus driver was publicly assaulted in Soraon on Sunday. A group of youths boarded the moving bus, verbally abused him, and kicked and punched him. Passengers on board screamed in terror. The bus belonged to the Pratapgarh depot and was coming from Sultanpur to Prayagraj's Civil Lines bus station. A video of the incident has surfaced. However, the police have denied receiving any complaint. Dispute over



Unloading Luggage It is reported that the incident began with an argument over a delay in unloading luggage. A passenger and his companions had an argument with the driver and conductor. After the driver drove off, the same youth, along with his companions, approached from behind in a car and tried to stop

the bus. The driver was assaulted after boarding a moving bus. The video clearly shows that when the bus slowed down, some young men got out of a car, boarded the bus, and began assaulting the driver. Throughout the incident, the young men are seen continuously abusing, creating panic among the passengers.

Police arrested a woman who incited her husband to commit suicide

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kaushambi After having physical relations with another man, the woman started staying away from her husband and when the husband opposed this, the woman abused her husband and instigated him to commit suicide, due to which the young man committed suicide. After the suicide, the police arrested the young man's wife and sent her to jail. On 21.11.2025, information was given at Kaushambi police station that Anil Kumar's wife Laxmi Devi had an illicit relationship with Shailendra Kumar, resident of village Bhaila Makdumpur, police station Karari, due to which he was trou-



bled. On 19.11.2025, Anil told his wife not to do such wrong things or else I will commit suicide. On this, Laxmi Devi said go and die, it does not matter to me. Hearing this, Anil committed suicide by hanging himself inside the house. On the complaint of Anil's mother, a case was registered at Kaushambi police station under relevant sections. On the basis

of sufficient evidence during the investigation, on 23.11.2025, the Kaushambi police team filed a case against the wanted person related to the above. Accused Lakshmi Devi, daughter of Munna Lal, resident of village Bhaila Makdumpur, police station Karari, was arrested and after legal proceedings, the accused was sent to the court.

A young man from a neighboring community had been in a physical relationship with a young woman for a long time and then deceived her and stole jewellery worth lakhs

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kaushambi

A young woman from Sirathu Road in the Manjhanpur Kotwali area has been having a physical relationship with her neighbor for a long time. After the matter came to light, the woman leveled several serious allegations against the neighbor. Instead of complaining to the police station and the Superintendent of Police in Kaushambi, the woman sent a letter directly to the Inspector General of Police, Prayagraj Zone.



The woman says that some time ago, a neighbor filmed her while she was bathing. After that, the neighbor began blackmailing her. The neighbor came to Jhansi and had a physical relationship with the young man. The woman says that by talking about buying

land, the young man took away her jewelry worth three lakh rupees. The woman, who has been having a physical relationship with a young man from the neighboring community for a long time, now says that when she is asking for the jewelry back, the accused men, Ashish Soni, Anshu Soni, her sister, etc., are threatening to make the videos and photos viral. After they made the photos viral, the woman's husband came to know about the matter. The woman's husband had a heated argument with them. It

is alleged that she was abused, beaten, her clothes were torn, and her head was broken. And a threat to kill was also given. The girl says that she too was injured in the assault and has been treated in the hospital and the matter has been reported. The girl said that the father of the accused youth is a follower of Manjhanpur Kotwali but the father is not doing the duty of a follower and at present his son is doing the duty of a follower in place of the father due to which the Kotwali police is not listening to her complaint.

A young man crossing the road was hit by a vehicle and died during treatment

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Kaushambi. Last night, near Chandwari intersection, under the jurisdiction of the Muratganj police station, a young man crossing the road was hit by a vehicle, causing him to fall to the ground and sustain serious injuries. Seeing the accident, nearby resi-



dents rushed to the scene and

informed the police and ambulance. Locals, with the help of an ambulance, admitted the injured youth to the Alam Chand Community Health Center for treatment. Doctors referred him to the district hospital, where he was declared dead due to his serious injuries. The local police took custody of the body and sent it for a

post-mortem. Upon learning of the accident, family members also arrived, and the family is in a state of shock. According to reports, Shivrinarayan, approximately 40 years old, son of Kedamath, a resident of Dharamnagar Ward No. 19, also known as Mujahidpur, had gone out for some work on Saturday night.

Editorial

Beijing might claim that packing the plateau

Therefore, the frontier highway will also be an economic asset, apart from being a strategic masterstroke. This will also develop a connectivity conduit by interlinking the East-West Industrial Corridor Highway and the Trans-Arunachal Highway. It will also discourage migration from the border space to urban areas. The development will become more distributive than concentric. Pressure on the urban space will be primarily eased. The volatilities of the border space and Chinese hegemonic gravity will be minimised because of India's fully prepared, vigilant presence in the region.

The Myanmar chapter is currently in the doldrums. The Chinese alleged involvement in derailing democratic government there disturbs the geopolitics in the region, which imposes a cloud of uncertainty around India's infrastructure projects in Myanmar. Given the geopolitical complexity in the region, India makes measured strategic progress and anchors its hold firmly and irreplaceably. Building tunnels, bridges, airports, railroads, highways, etc, has become part of the process that systematically ensures India's strength and resilience. On the contrary, China's determined efforts in building highways, tunnels, bridges, railways, etc, on the Tibetan Plateau explain its preparedness. The skirmishes it indulges in along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) indicate its ulterior motive. Though Beijing might claim that packing the plateau with high-tech infrastructure is mainly for the economic development of Tibet, the territorial desires embedded in this exercise cannot be ignored. The Nyingchi-Lhasa rail line and highway that Beijing has built, as well as some sections that remain under construction, come close to the McMahon Line. Its concept of reconstituting border villages and a host of other things are symptoms of the region's complex geopolitics. Chinese brinkmanship has been primarily responsible for the disturbed geopolitics of the region. Much of these crises is expected to be resolved by the frontier highway. Therefore, India puts the required effort in the right direction to ease these tensions in the region.

West Siang, Upper Siang, Dibang Valley, Lower Dibang Valley, Anjaw, and Changlang in Arunachal Pradesh adjoining

Tibet and Myanmar is a geostrategic milestone. It was conceived in 2016 and is expected to be completed in 2027. Work in this direction has started at a quick pace. This shows the urgency and importance India gives to its territorial integrity.

The infrastructural development that China has brought along the McMahon Line is quite extensive. The frontier highway is a precise and direct response to this and to curb China's irrationality. The highway will become an all-weather road to handle any geopolitical and geostrategic pressure likely to emanate from the other side of the border. From Tawang to Vijayanagar, which covers the entire border space in Arunachal Pradesh, the frontier highway is a milestone in India's robust preparedness in the eastern Himalayas. The dragon finds a fitting competitor. The scale with which China develops its infrastructural might, both at the border and in the hinterland, the frontier highway is a geostrategic imperative. The risk these complex infrastructures present leaves no scope for a second thought but to act urgently to protect the territorial integrity of India. The frontier highway manifests India's right intent and seriousness in addressing the possible dangers that the enemy constantly poses. The frontier highway will present the required checkmate to Chinese bullying attitudes in the region. Beijing's reaction to these infrastructural initiatives is not new. It always does this to keep itself relevant in the thick of things. However, it has no business in making any comment as Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of the sovereign India. China uses this drama to keep the issue alive and effectively uses its propaganda machinery to develop

some geopolitical weight in the region.



A hundred and twenty years later, historians remain sceptical

Suman Singh

Circa 1900: Rudyard Kipling wrote Kim, placing the eponymous hero at the centre of the Great Game of espionage between the British Empire and Russia in the 19th century. The book is set after the Second Anglo-Afghan War, which ended in 1881, but before the Third, likely in the period 1893–98. Kim, short for Kimball O'Hara, is an impoverished Irish orphan who lives on the streets of Lahore and works for Mahbub Ali, a Pashtun horse trader. He later befriends an aged Tibetan lama, accompanies him on his journey along the Grand Trunk Road, learns

about the Great Game, and is eventually recruited by Mahbub Ali, who works for the British Secret Service in their quest to extend influence in both Afghanistan and Tibet. Whether or not the Great Game—the expression used by British imperialists to describe the perceived expansion of Russian influence in Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Tibet—actually existed, the fact remains that surveys were undertaken, expeditions mounted, spymasters recruited, and novels written, even as soldiers lost their lives. Taking a cue from Viceroy George Curzon, all pro-establishment papers—from the

Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore to The Pioneer of Lucknow, The Statesman of Calcutta (now Kolkata), and The Times of India of Bombay (now Mumbai)—concurred that Tsarist Russia posed a real threat to the jewel in Britain's crown. A hundred and twenty years later, historians remain sceptical of Curzon's assertions. Is the hue and cry about the Deep State similar to the Great Game? Whether or not it exists, whether it operates in all countries, and whether the 'deep state' of one country is connected with others through the dark web or entrenched corporate inter-

ests remains unclear, as the discourse is more ideological than empirical. Sometimes, those who claim to be part of the deep state ascribe to themselves a larger-than-life role in state affairs—for example, AS Dulat and Asad Durrani in their 2018 book The Spy Chronicles: RAW, ISI and the Illusion of Power. Their claim to be arbiters of one of the most tense and difficult relationships in the region has been widely critiqued by reviewers. The term first gained wide currency in the context of Türkiye as derin devlet, which literally translates to "deep state" in English.

Well-functioning market requires a suitable regulatory role of the state



decade suggest that it seeks to address India's economic growth pangs through fiscal policy. Consequently, fiscal policy has done much of the heavy lifting in the government's growth strategy over the past decade. In the economic slowdown from 2016-17 to 2019-20, the government sought to maintain its expenditure. To do so without increasing the reported fiscal deficit, from 2017-18 to 2019-20, it transformed a significant part of its on-budget expenditure into off-budget expenditure done by public enterprises. It also sharply raised cesses and surcharges on petroleum products, which are not shared with the states. These unusual tactics allowed the government to spend more, and expenditure continued to outpace GDP growth. These tactics also allowed the government to introduce new cash transfer schemes such as PM KISAN and increase allocations to existing schemes. In 2019, in an effort to stimulate investment, the government announced major tax breaks for corporates, especially in manufacturing. At the time, corporate tax collection had

been growing rapidly while other taxes were struggling to deliver the budgeted increase. The tax cut led to a sharp reduction in the corporate tax to GDP ratio in the subsequent years. As the pandemic hit, fiscal policy became even more central. The pandemic allowed the government to suspend its concern for deficits and bring the off-budget expenditure to the Budget in 2020-21. For a few years, revenue expenditure as a percentage of GDP was higher than its pre-pandemic levels. Among other things, this allowed the government to increase subsidies and cash transfers, and introduce production-linked incentives for manufacturing in India. Total subsidies as a percentage of GDP have now gone back to their pre-pandemic levels. The most important change in expenditure since the pandemic has been in its composition. Of the Union government's total expenditure, the share of capital expenditure has increased. Its share rose from 12.5 per cent of total expenditure in 2019-20 to 22.2 per cent in 2023-24. In 2019-20, capital expenditure was 1.67 per cent of GDP. It

rose to 3.21 per cent.

in 2023-24, before moderating to 3.14 per cent in 2024-25 (revised estimates). It is again budgeted to be 3.14 per cent of GDP in 2025-26. At the same time, there was a reduction in capital expenditure by public enterprises in these years. If we consider the combined capital expenditure by the Union government and its public enterprises from the pre-pandemic years, there has been a decline. Between 2017-18 and 2019-20, the combined capital expenditure was 4.94 per cent of GDP, while it has been only 4.32 per cent of GDP between 2022-23 and 2024-25. This probably shows the limitations of implementation capacity that a capital expenditure strategy tends to run into. So, in the last decade, the government has tried a variety of fiscal tactics—from increasing expenditure by "creatively" easing the Budget constraints, to giving generous corporate tax cuts, to introducing new welfare schemes, to increasing on-budget capital expenditure. The cut in the personal income tax is the latest in this series of measures. If this does not work, there are other arrows in the fiscal quiver—cut in GST, for instance. The fiscal policy landscape in India is such that there are always some instruments at the government's disposal, especially because it borrows domestically for the most part, that too, through financial institutions it controls. All this tells us something about the government's explanation of

how the economy works and what the challenges are. The government probably does not see deeper problems in the political economy. Now that it has made so many fiscal policy interventions, perhaps it should consider whether these can truly address the growth pangs of the Indian economy. The fundamental challenge for the Indian economy for over a decade has been the lack of revival of private investment and the lackadaisical performance of merchandise exports. While the latter performed well for about six quarters in the post-pandemic period, this was due to temporary opportunities created at that time—the exports are now back to low growth. Similarly, there have been a few quarters of better private investment activity in recent years, but we are not yet in a period of revival. On the other hand, some high-productivity services sectors continue to be the silver lining. The IT services exports have continued to grow and export services such as business and management consultancy as well as public relations have doubled from the pre-pandemic years. The FM's Budget speech and Economic Survey 2024-25 hinted at actions beyond fiscal policy—deregulation and tax code simplification. Depending on what reforms will follow, these can be steps in the right direction. However, two points are worth considering.

First, mere deregulation is not enough—a well-functioning market requires a suitable regulatory role.

It shouldn't take anybody that much time to explain the applicable tax rates

Swati

While this may seem like a trivialisation of GST, it actually lays bare how the system has now rebounded on its initial promise of bringing ease of doing business in the country. The Finance Minister's four-minute explanation on the taxation of popcorn highlighted how complex the system has become. It shouldn't take anybody that much time to explain the applicable tax rates on a single product. Since then, GST has been ridiculed, derided, lamented about, and generally panned by laypeople and even former government officials who worked on its implementation. That is why India's Goods and Services Tax is ThePrint's Newsmaker of the Week. So, what is the issue behind GST on popcorn? You see, as per the taxman, depending on your taste preferences, popcorn can either be a namkeen (salty) or a

mithai (sweet) — forget that those two terms have never been used by anyone to refer to popcorn. Ready-to-eat popcorn, salted and spiced for taste, and sold loosely attracts a GST rate of 5 per cent. That same popcorn, if packaged and labelled, attracts a rate of 12 per cent. One wonders what happens if the vendor tears open the packet and sells loose popcorn to the customer. Perhaps the universe will explode, who knows? Things get even trickier when you talk about caramel popcorn. Those who prefer this flavour will have to shell out 18 per cent GST, regardless of whether it is packaged or sold loose. Then some head to the movie hall and ask for salted and caramel popcorn mixed together. What happens to them? Over the week, one particular meme stood out among the lot. It was a picture of salted caramel popcorn.

The fourth anniversary of the notorious fatwa of the late Imam Khomeini

Abhimanyu Sharma

To stand in this house is to be reminded of what is most beautiful about religious faith: its ability to give solace and to inspire, its aspiration to these great and lovely heights, in which strength and delicacy are so perfectly conjoined. In addition, to be asked to speak here on this day, the fourth anniversary of the notorious fatwa of the late Imam Khomeini, is a particular honour. When I was an undergraduate at this college, between 1965 and 1968, the years of flower-power and student power, I would have found the notion of delivering an address in King's Chapel pretty far-out, as we used to say; and yet, such are the journeys of one's life that here I stand. I am grateful to the Chapel and the college for extending this invitation, which I take as a gesture of solidarity and support, support not merely for one individual but, much more importantly, for the high moral principles of human rights and human freedoms that the Khomeini edict seeks so brutally to attack. For just as King's Chapel may be taken as a symbol of what is best about religion, so the fatwa has become a symbol of what is worst. It feels all the more appropriate to be speaking here because it was while in my final year of reading history at Cambridge that I came across the story of the so-called satanic verses or temptation of the Prophet Muhammad, and of his rejection of that temptation. That year, I had chosen as one of my special subjects a paper on Muhammad, the rise of Islam, and the caliphate. So few students chose this option that the lectures were cancelled. The other students switched to different special subjects. However, I was anxious to continue, and Arthur Hibbert, one of the King's history dons, agreed to supervise me. So as it happened I was, I think, the only student in Cambridge who took the paper. The

next year, I'm told, it was not offered again. This is the kind of thing that almost leads one to believe in the workings of a hidden hand. The story of the 'satanic verses' can be found, among other places, in the canonical writings of the classical writer al-Tabari. He tells us that on one occasion the Prophet was given verses which seemed to accept the divinity of the three most popular pagan goddesses of Mecca, thus compromising Islam's rigid monotheism. Later he rejected these verses as being a trick of the devil saying that Satan had appeared to him in the guise of the Archangel Gabriel and spoken 'satanic verses.' Historians have long speculated about this incident, wondering if perhaps the nascent religion had been offered a sort of deal by the pagan authorities of the city, which was flirted with and then refused. I felt the story humanized the Prophet, and, therefore made him more accessible, more easily comprehensible to a modern reader, for whom the presence of doubt in a human mind, and human imperfections in a great man's personality, can only make that mind, that personality, more attractive. Indeed, according to the traditions of the Prophet, even the Archangel Gabriel was understanding about the incident, assuring him that such things had befallen all the prophets, and that he need not worry about what had happened. It seems that the Archangel Gabriel, and the God in whose name he spoke, was rather more tolerant than some of those who presently affect to speak in the name of God. Khomeini's fatwa itself may be seen as a set of modern satanic verses. In the fatwa, once again, evil takes on the guise of virtue; and the faithful are deceived. It's important to remember what the fatwa is. One cannot properly call it a sentence, since it far exceeds its author's jurisdiction; since it contravenes fundamental principles.

Briefs

VARANASI

Laborer Dies After Dumper Hits Cyclist

A 45-year-old laborer, Jugunu Harijan, was killed instantly when a dumper hit him while he was cycling on the service road near the highway over-bridge in Rajatalab. The truck driver fled the scene, and police seized the vehicle. Angry family members and villagers blocked the highway for two hours, demanding the driver's arrest and compensation. Senior police officials assured action and convinced the protestors to clear the road, restoring traffic flow.

MAU

BJP Leader Helps Fill SIR Forms in Wards

BJP Minority Morcha leader Firoz Ansari is organizing camps across various wards of Ideal Nagar Panchayat, Ghosi, to assist residents with their SIR (Special Intensive Revision) forms. Ansari is personally present at the camps, helping people fill out the forms. The initiative has been well-received by locals, who appreciate the convenience and express enthusiasm for the ongoing form-filling process.

LALITPUR

Chairperson Inspects Cow Shelter, 949 Cattle Healthy

Municipal Chairperson Mrs. Sonali Jain conducted a surprise inspection of the Kanha Gaushala in Dailwara. She assessed winter preparedness, cleanliness, fodder, and healthcare arrangements. Officials reported that all 949 cattle at the shelter are healthy. The chairperson directed staff to ensure a suitable environment for the cattle during the cold, provide immediate treatment to any sick animals, and maintain proper safety and warmth arrangements, warning against any negligence.

VARANASI

DM Sets 2-Day Deadline for Voter Form Delivery

District Magistrate Satyendra Kumar conducted surprise inspections of various polling booths to review the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) campaign for the upcoming elections. He directed Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and supervisors to ensure that voter enumeration forms reach every household within the next two days. The DM warned that any negligence would not be tolerated and instructed officials to coordinate with sanitation workers and ward members to expedite the process.

BALLIA

Newly Repaired Road Crumbles Within Days

A road in Hathoj, Maniyar block, which was repaired just ten days ago, has already started to crumble, with the gravel coming loose. Locals allege poor construction quality and a lack of oversight. They claim that despite the road's initial construction five years ago, no repairs were undertaken until now, and the recent work has proven substandard. Officials reportedly remained silent when approached for comments on the deteriorating condition.

6) Lucknow

ACTION | : Yogi says the Gita remains the compass for righteousness and courage

“When Duty Becomes Light: Gita’s Eternal Message Resonates Across India

LUCKNOW

Lucknow's Janeshwar Mishra Park glowed with spiritual energy as Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressed the Divine Gita Prerana Utsav, describing the Bhagavad Gita as the ultimate reservoir of divine inspiration. For every follower of Sanatan Dharma, he said, the Gita's 700 verses are a guiding mantra—offering new motivation with every reading.

Yogi Adityanath emphasized that Indian philosophy has always linked religion with duty. Rituals may differ, he said, but the heart of Sanatan Dharma is the art of living. The Gita teaches that righteous action defines true religion. Quoting “Dharmakshetra Kurukshetra,” he reminded that only India considers a battlefield sacred—because when the fight is for justice, performing one's duty becomes dharma.

He invoked timeless verses,



At the Divine Gita Prerana Utsav, CM Yogi Adityanath calls the Bhagavad Gita India's timeless guidebook for righteous living and nation-first spirit.

from Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam to Swadharme Nidhanam Shreyah, urging people to choose their own righteous duty even in adversity. Like a seed that bears fruit simply by being nurtured, he said, karma

done without desire inevitably brings success. Praising RSS Sarsangchalak Dr. Mohan Bhagwat, the Chief Minister called him a living symbol of service. For a century, he said, the RSS has worked without

foreign funding, driven purely by society and for society. In contrast, some have turned “service” into a bargaining tool for personal or political gain—attempting to distort India's cultural essence.

The event, attended by leading saints and scholars, echoed a shared message: the Bhagavad Gita is not for a few, but for every Indian seeking clarity, balance, courage, and purpose in modern life.

Bhagwat Calls for ‘Fight for Dharma’ at Gita Utsav

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath shared the stage at the Divya Gita Prerna Utsav in Lucknow, where spiritual themes mixed with strong ideological notes. Bhagwat spoke of historical invasions, religious conversions, and the enduring need to “fight for dharma,” framing today's challenges as extensions of ancient conflicts. Yogi Adityanath stressed that the RSS runs solely on social support, dismissing claims of foreign funding. He said conversions driven by “greed” weaken genuine faith and connected the Gita's teachings to modern responsibilities.

Deputy CM Keshav targets opposition over ‘Vote theft’



RAMPUR

During a public programme in Rampur organised as part of the month-long events marking the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya addressed attendees and criticised opposition parties. The event featured a Run for Unity march followed by an open gathering.

While speaking, the Deputy CM referred to historical electoral disputes involving national leaders and connected them with comments made by opposition parties after the Bihar election results. He said that reactions from the Samajwadi Party and Congress indicated dissatisfaction fol-

Deputy CM links past electoral controversies with current Bihar results

lowing the outcome. He also mentioned earlier political incidents such as the 1971 Rae Bareli verdict and disputes involving Raj Narain, highlighting court rulings related to election procedures of that period. Maurya additionally commented on current political narratives, stating that remarks by leaders across various parties on “vote theft” were influenced by the Bihar result. He said that public decision-making continues to work as a corrective force in elections.

199 couples tie knot at large mass wedding

SHAHJAHANPUR

A total of 199 couples were married on Sunday in Shahjahanpur under the UP government's mass wedding scheme. Finance Minister Suresh Khanna attended the event as the chief guest and interacted with the newly married couples. The programme was organised at the OCF Ground, where a large pandal, stage and seating arrangements were created for Hindu and Muslim ceremonies. A total of 154 Hindu couples took the seven vows while 45 Muslim couples underwent nikah conducted by qazis.

For the first time, biometric face authentication was implemented at the entry point to ensure the elimination of fraud. Officials verified each



UP minister addresses couples, shares ₹1 lakh breakdown

bride and groom before allowing them into the venue.

During his interaction, the minister outlined the financial

assistance provided under the scheme, stating that 60,000 is given as a fixed deposit to the bride, 25,000 is allocated for jewellery, and the remaining amount is spent on event arrangements, completing the support package of 1 lakh per couple. He advised grooms not to trouble their brides or raise questions about what they brought to the marriage.

Syed Modi India international badminton championship commences



LUCKNOW

The Syed Modi India International HSBC World Tour Super 300 Badminton Championship will be hosted in Lucknow from November 25 to 30, 2025, featuring a total prize money of \$240,000 USD. Top Indian players, including former champion Kidambi Srikanth, HS Prannoy, rising stars Priyanshu Rajawat and Unnati Hooda, and the reigning women's doubles pair Trisha Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand P, are set to compete.

UP police marks 74th flag day with ceremony at headquarters

LUCKNOW

The UP Police observed its 74th Police Flag Day at the state headquarters in Lucknow on Sunday. The ceremony included senior officers, the CM and the Governor, with formal exchanges of the police insignia. According to officials, the programme began with the ceremonial arrival of the police flag near the flag post, followed by a salute from the gathered personnel. The police band performed the tune “Saare Jahan Se Achha” during the ceremony. The police flag, originally awarded on 23 November 1952 by the then Prime Minister for the force's service record, was highlighted as a long-standing symbol of discipline and duty. Officers described the red and



Senior officers, CM and Governor attend symbolic badge-pinning at police headquarters

blue flag as representing commitment and responsibility within the police force. During the event, officials outlined several ongoing policing initiatives. They stated that emphasis has been placed on law-and-order management,

case convictions through the “Operation Conviction” framework, and measures under the state's women-safety programme. Updates were also provided on the functioning of specialised units, including UP-112, the Special Task Force, the Anti-Terror Squad and the Anti-Narcotics Task Force. Police officials also noted efforts related to cybercrime awareness and steps taken to reduce road-accident fatalities.

BSc student killed after saying ‘No

LUCKNOW

A 19-year-old BSc student, Priyanshi Rawat, was killed inside her home in Mohanlalganj, Lucknow, after she refused a marriage proposal. Police said the accused, Alok Kumar, entered the house on Sunday afternoon while Priyanshi's mother was at work and attacked her with a knife on the first floor. After cutting her throat, he fled on a motorcycle. The victim collapsed near the stairs and struggled for nearly ten minutes before dying at the doorstep.

According to her younger sister Mehak, the accused parked his bike about 100 metres from the house before entering. He asked whether Priyanshi would marry him, and when she refused, he assaulted her. Neighbours and



Student murdered after rejecting marriage proposal, accused fled on a bike

relatives gathered after learning of the incident. The family initially stopped police from taking the body for post-mortem, demanding the arrest of the accused. After persuasion, the body was sent for examination.

Police teams are analysing CCTV footage, mobile locations and forensic evidence from the spot.

Family stopped from self immolation attempt

LUCKNOW

A family of around a dozen members from Unnao was detained on Sunday afternoon after attempting self-immolation outside the CM residence in Lucknow. The incident took place around noon when the group arrived near the residence carrying fuel. The self-immolation prevention unit stationed at the location intervened immediately and handed all individuals over to Gautampalli police.

According to police officials, the family, led by Jagdish Yadav, alleged that multiple cases had been registered against them in their home district following a dispute in their village. Records indicate that an SC/ST case was filed earlier in March, followed by another recent complaint. The family claimed frustration with the investigation process



Police detain 12 members who arrived with fuel near CM residence

and said that these circumstances prompted them to travel to Lucknow.

Officers stated that the police team on duty noticed the group before they could attempt any dangerous act and detained them for safety. The case is now being examined to determine the details of the earlier disputes and the current legal situation of the family members.

Five day Majalis continues at Husainabad Imambara

LUCKNOW



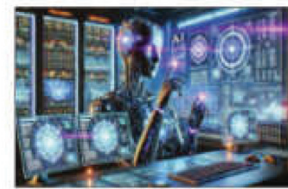
A five-day series of religious gatherings, known as ‘Aza-e-Fatimia’, is currently underway at the Husainabad Chota Imambara in Lucknow. The gatherings, organized collaboratively by Markaz-e-Fiqh-o-Faqahat and Jamaat-e-Jafari, have seen large attendance from devotees, regardless of religious background. Addressing the third Majlis, Maulana Syed Azadar Husain stated that “Shehzadi-e-Konnain (Hazrat Fatima) is an invaluable gift given by Allah to the Prophet of Islam.

20,000 students to learn coding and AI skills

LUCKNOW

The UP government has advanced its plan to train 20,000 students from council schools in artificial intelligence, coding and digital skill development. The initiative targets students of Classes 6 to 8, with the Basic Education Department introducing AI, coding and cyber security into the curriculum. To implement this, selected teachers from across the state are being trained in collaboration with IIT Kanpur.

A total of 750 teachers will undergo specialised training, with the first batch of 150 teachers already completing initial sessions at IIT Kanpur. After completing the programme, each trained teacher is expected to instruct 250–300 students in their respective districts. The government is also



IIT Kanpur begins training programme for selected teachers across districts

exploring hybrid models where students receive a mix of in-person and virtual learning support from experts. The programme aims to equip students with practical skills in computer operations, digital creativity, online research, computational thinking, algorithm design, Python basics, cyber safety, AI voice tools, animation tasks, and data handling using online platforms.

Women’s SHGs take active role in Ayodhya flag hoisting initiative

AYODHYA

Ayodhya's flag-hoisting ceremony has evolved beyond a religious gathering, emerging as a platform that reflects ongoing community participation and local economic activity. Women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and young volunteers played an active role in crowd management, visitor assistance, and support services during the event. Many women who earlier had limited livelihood opportunities are now contributing to the city's expanding develop-



Youth volunteers and women's groups assist crowd management, visitor support in major ceremony

ment network.

A large number of SHGs were involved in preparing materials for guests arriving for the ceremony where the PM is scheduled to hoist a saffron flag atop the temple struc-

ture. Women from SHGs in neighbouring districts displayed and sold handmade items including handicrafts, handloom goods, offerings, garlands, bags, cloth products, and small statues. These sales

provided additional income and visibility for their enterprises. In Milkipur, Radha Lakshmi—associated with the Divharin Mai Women's SHG—has become a notable example of livelihood improvement. She utilised government schemes and began working as a BC Sakhi, earning between 40,000 and 50,000 per month. Several women in the district have similarly expanded their income sources by taking up structured roles within SHGs.

Ayodhya has also benefited from micro-enterprise initiatives supported under the

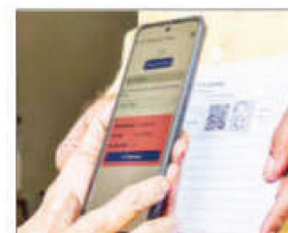
HFDC Bank People's Action for National Integration programme. Its Holistic Rural Development Programme has supported group formation and micro-enterprise development in Amaniganj block, enabling rural women to operate small businesses. The initiative has improved confidence among women, who now participate more actively in household and community-level decisions. In Masodha block, SHG member Kranti Didi from the Avadhupuri Women's Group utilised a loan of ₹50,000 from CCL to expand her livelihood activities.

DM to honor Top 10 BLOs for electoral roll revision

HATHRAS

In Hathras district, the administration is motivating Booth Level Officers (BLOs) involved in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls, which uses January 1, 2026, as the qualifying date and runs until December 4, 2025.

The Deputy District Election Officer announced a special reward and recognition initiative for the top-performing BLOs. The top 10 BLOs from each assembly constituency who are the first to complete



the digitization of all census forms on the BLO App will receive significant appreciation. These top-performing BLOs will be honored with a certificate of appreciation and invited to a special lunch with the District Magistrate/District Election Officer.

Yesteryear cinema star Kamini Kaushal no more



Veteran actress Kamini Kaushal, Hindi cinema pioneer for over seven decades, passes away at 98 in Mumbai

Actor Kamini Kaushal, one of Hindi cinema's earliest female stars who began her career with the classic *Neecha Nagar* in 1946 and went on to act in a host of films right till 2022, has died in her Mumbai home, a close family friend said. She was 98.

Amongst the industry's highest paid actress in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Kaushal starred opposite the triumvirate of Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand and Raj Kapoor before moving on to char-

acter roles in the 1960s. Her last screen appearance was in Aamir Khan's 2022 film *Laal Singh Chaddha* at the age of 95, making for a remarkable 76 years in the movies.

"She died at her Mumbai home late on Thursday night. She would have turned 99 in February," Sajjan Narain, a close friend of the family, told PTL.

Early life and education

Kaushal was born Uma Kashyap on February 24, 1927, in Lahore.

Her father, Shiv Ram Kashyap, was widely regarded as the father of Indian botany and taught as a professor at the University of Punjab in pre-partition Lahore.

The youngest of two brothers and three sisters, Kaushal graduated with a degree in English literature from Government College in Lahore.

Entry into cinema

Kaushal's film career began when family friend and filmmaker Chetan Anand approached her for *Neecha Nagar* (1946).

The movie, co-starring Rafiq Anwar and Anand's wife Uma, won the Grand Prix at the inaugural

Cannes Film Festival.

It was a landmark film portraying social inequality and marked the debut of Zohra Sehgal, with music by sitar maestro Ravi Shankar.

Chetan Anand renamed her Kamini Kaushal to avoid confusion with another Uma.



A still from *Neecha Nagar*



A still from *Nadiya Ke Paar*



A still from *Biraj Bahu*

Rise to stardom

After *Neecha Nagar*, Kaushal worked extensively with Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand, and Raj Kapoor in hits like *Jail Yatra*, *Do Bhai*, *Aag*, *Shaheed*, *Nadiya Ke Paar*, *Ziddi*, *Shabnam*, and *Arzoo*.

Acclaimed performances

She played the lead in Bimal Roy's *Biraj Bahu* (1954), which won a National Film Award, and earned her a Filmfare Award for Best Actress. Kaushal also starred in the adaptation of Premchand's celebrated novel *Godaan*.



A still from *Upkar*

Transition to character roles

By the late 1960s, she moved to motherly roles, starting with Manoj Kumar's *Upkar* (1967) at age 40.

She appeared as the mother in Kumar's hits: *Purab Aur Paschim*, *Sanyasi*, *Shor*, *Roti Kapda Aur Makaan*, *Dus Numbari*, and *Santosh*. She also played Rajesh Khanna's mother in *Prem Nagar* (1974) and *Maha Chor* (1976).



A still from *Prem Nagar*

Industry tributes

The Producers Guild of India posted on X: "We pay tribute to versatile and multifaceted Kamini Kaushal ji, whose captivating performances enthralled millions over seven decades. Condolences to the family."



A still from *Chennai Express*

Television & later yrs

In 1984, Kaushal played Aunt Shalini in the British TV series *The Jewel in the Crown*. She remained selective but active in films, appearing in *Chennai Express*, *Kabir Singh*, and at 95, in *Laal Singh Chaddha*. She also acted in television shows like *Chand Sitare*, *Shanno Ki Shaadi*, and *Waqt Ki Raftaar*.

Personal life

She married her brother-in-law B S Sood in 1948 after her sister's death, adopting two daughters, and had three sons: Rahul, Vidur, and Shravan. She balanced her film career with family responsibilities, often choosing projects selectively. Known for her discipline and warmth, she created a nurturing home environment while remaining admired in the industry.



Chadwick Boseman to be honoured

Late actor Chadwick Boseman will be honoured with a posthumous star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame five years after his demise, reported People. The actor passed away at 43. The ceremony will take place on November 20. Ryan Coogler, who directed Boseman in *Black Panther*, and Viola Davis, who costarred with Boseman in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, will speak at the ceremony. Boseman's wife, Simone Ledward-Boseman, is set to accept the honour at the ceremony.

Illusions, intrusions and mild confusions



TITLE: *Now You See Me: Now You Don't*

DIRECTOR: Ruben Fleischer

CAST: Jesse Eisenberg, Woody Harrelson, Dave Franco, Isla Fisher & others

WHERE: In theatres near you

RATING: ★★★



fic, the spectacle remains enjoyable, particularly when the film leans into its playful chaos.

Music

Visually, the film packs in enough illusions to fuel an entire season of reality (TV magic competitions). The highlight is a labyrinth of trick rooms at the Eye's former headquarters, a sequence designed with gleeful excess and a clear desire to out-Nolan Christopher Nolan.

The soundscape stitches together adrenaline-heavy beats with sleek orchestral swells. The music occasionally competes with the action for dominance, but it certainly keeps the pulse brisk. Exotic locations, sharp lighting, and glossy production design provide a global sheen, though the constant hopping between cities can feel like a travel reel curated by an overexcited intern.

Final verdict

The film is a colourful, chaotic, enjoyable escapade: some polished, some puzzling, many knowingly overstuffed. Its charm lies not in narrative sophistication but in its unabashed commitment to spectacle. Long-time fans will appreciate the familiar rhythm, while newcomers may enjoy the cheeky irreverence the younger cast brings. The film may stretch itself thin, but it never stops entertaining. If magic is the art of distraction, this instalment certainly keeps the eyes busy, even if the mind occasionally wanders.

Actors' performance

The veteran ensemble slips back into its roles with practised ease. Jesse Eisenberg returns as J. Daniel Atlas with sharpened gusto, delivering his signature blend of arrogance and quicksilver wit. He treats every scene like a verbal fencing match, particularly when sparring with Woody Harrelson, who once again leans into Merritt McKinney's impish mentalist charm. Dave Franco brings an agile, streetwise energy to Jack Wilder, while Isla Fisher reclaims Henley Reeves with buoyant confidence, proving she can still escape from both tanks and narrative tight corners.

Among the younger recruits, Justice Smith plays Charlie with a quiet sincerity that grounds the more frantic antics around him. Dominic Sessa infuses Bosco with brooding competitiveness, while Ariana Greenblatt's June stands out with her nimble pickpocket flair and spirited problem-solving. Rosamund Pike is deliciously formidable as Veronika Vanderberg, wielding villainy with elegance and relish. Her performance feels like a masterclass in controlled theatricality, effortlessly stealing scenes from the ensemble with a single glacial stare or precisely timed smirk.

The third chapter of this conjurer's carnival arrives with the confidence of a veteran performer who knows the audience will clap, even if out of habit. The film expands its magical circus into a crowded tent of returning icons and energetic Gen Z apprentices, a choice that gives the plot breadth but not always breathing room. The classic Horsemen swagger back into the spotlight, only to find their old trick manuals enthusiastically remixed by three new illusionists who believe activism pairs well with cardistry.

The central heist, orbiting a diamond large enough to anchor its own continent, provides the narrative spine. Around it swirl holographic misdirections, philosophical sniping between generations, and enough subplots to fill a magician's hat with excess rabbits. The film maintains an undeniable energy, yet it occasionally stumbles under the weight of its own exuberance. Just when the action gathers pace, another twist jumps out like a restless jack-in-the-box demanding attention. Still, despite the narrative traf-



TITLE: *De De Pyaar De 2*

DIRECTOR: Anshul Sharma

CAST: Ajay Devgn, R. Madhavan, Rakul Preet Singh, Jaaved Jaaferi, Meezaan Jafri and others

WHERE: In theatres near you

RATING: ★★★

The film starts off with a nostalgic walk-past of the film's first part (*De De Pyaar De*). This is then followed by Ayesha Khurana (Rakul Preet Singh) 'selectively' introducing her 'older-than-her' love interest Ashish Mehra (Ajay Devgn) to her self-confessedly 'educated, progressive, modern parents' consisting of her father Rakesh (R. Madhavan), her mother Anju (Gautami Kapoor) and her sister Kittu (Ishita Dutta). Sensing her father's strong undercurrent of disliking towards Ashish, one day hell breaks loose between father and his daughter on a highway. Ayesha then chooses to leave her parents house to get settled with Ashish. Suddenly, Rakesh develops a change of heart and apologises to Ayesha and Ashish. Amid all this, there enters a 'young' and tal-

Rakul Preet shines in Ajay, R Madhavan film

ented Aditya (Meezaan Jafri), who happens to be Ayesha's childhood friend.

The growing fondness between Aditya and Ayesha starts worrying Ashish. One day, when Ashish catches them kissing, he decides to step back. What happens after that is what forms the rest of the film.

Actors' performance

Despite the presence of two stalwarts- Ajay Devgn and R. Madhavan, it's Rakul Preet Singh who steals the show. Full points to the aforementioned two actors for letting her do so. As for Rakul, without going overboard, she exhibits the right amount of spunk and effervescence which her role demanded.

Ajay Devgn, on his part, continues to be in the 'mould' of his character from the film's first part. One does miss his comic

timing majorly, but that's purely because of the film's narrative. As for R. Madhavan, he delivers a good performance, if not the best! There are a few places where he struggles with his character. But, in totality, he does a decent job. Meezaan Jafri and Ishita Dutta impress with their respective screen time. Seasoned actors like Javed Jaffrey, Gautami Kapoor don't have much to do, but do justice to their roles.

The film's director Anshul Sharma tries his level best to do justice to the audience's expectations. Even though he does not majorly disappoint with *De*

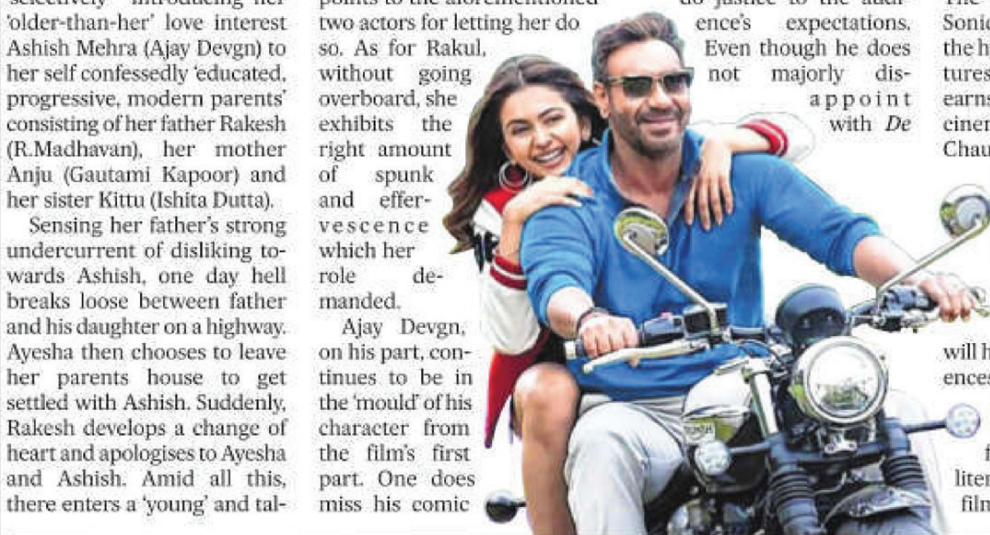
De Pyaar De 2, his direction seems helpless when the film goes astray (esp. second half). Even though he sails the film through successfully.

Just when you think that the film becomes predictable, the film's story (Luv Ranjan) brings in an unexpected twist (very impressive) in the second half. However, the film's writers (Tarun Jain, Luv Ranjan) should have used more punches and one liners.

Music

The film's music (Hitesh Sonik) is average fare. Even the hyped *Jhoom Shorabi* features in the end. The film earns its brownie points for its cinematography (Sudhir K. Chaudhary). Barring a major chunk in the film's second half, the film's editing (Chetan M. Solanki) is decent.

Even though the film will have its share of loyal audiences, word of mouth is what will do the trick. One just hopes and prays the film's fate should not get literally translated to the film's title!



TITLE: *Delhi Crime 3*

DIRECTOR: Tanuj Chopra

CAST: Shefali Shah, Huma Qureshi, Rashika Dugal, Sayani Gupta, Rajesh Tailang, Mita Vashisht

WHERE: Netflix

RATING: ★★★★★

The third season of *Delhi Crime* returns with the quiet confidence of a seasoned detective. This time, the crime extends far beyond the capital's borders. What begins as a case of missing girls from Silchar, Assam, spirals into a disturbing web of human trafficking that stretches across India. The show's creators ensure that every clue, every chase, and every confrontation is interlaced with the cold efficiency for which the series has become known.

While *Delhi Crime 3* doesn't break radically new ground, it reinforces the franchise's trademark realism and narrative discipline. The writing remains taut, refusing to meander into melodrama or moral sermons. The pacing is deliberate, mirroring the methodical steps of Deputy Commissioner of Police Anjali Singh, a ved, affection-

Dark, deliberate & disturbingly good



Music

Visually, *Delhi Crime 3* is a triumph of tonal control. The cinematography transitions effortlessly from exterior to interior shots. Each frame feels lived in, never ornamental. The series captures both the sprawl and the suffocation of India's trafficking nexus with unnerving authenticity. The background score hums beneath the narrative like a pulse; tense, minimal, and never manipulative. In episodes three and four, especially during the chase and arrest sequences, the sound design elevates the adrenaline without overwhelming the realism. Production values remain top-notch, proving once again that Indian streaming content can match global standards without losing its local texture.

ately called Madam Sir by her team, as she navigates through the nation's underbelly. The interlocking cases: a brutally injured baby, a vanished mother, and a nationwide trafficking ring, unfold with unnerving logic. If there's a quibble, it's that the emotional heft, though palpable, sometimes gets eclipsed by procedural precision. The grit and grime are perfectly balanced, yet one wishes for a few more cracks that allow the audience to exhale. Still, *Delhi Crime 3* never slips into spectacle; it stays loyal to its grounded storytelling, and that remains its biggest virtue.

Actors' performance

Shefali Shah once again commands the screen with quiet fury. Her Vartika is not a crusader but a realist, navigating the moral quicksand of law en-

forcement with unflappable composure. Rashika Dugal as ACP Neeti Singh delivers a performance of remarkable restraint, her steady gaze revealing more than pages of dialogue ever could. Rajesh Tailang's Bhupinder is underused in this season.

The surprise package, however, comes from the antagonists. Huma Qureshi's Meena, a trafficker masquerading as a humanitarian, oozes menace with every soft-spoken threat. Mita Vashisht's Kalyani and Sayani Gupta's flamboyant Kusum add colour and chaos to an otherwise sombre palette. Together, they form a chilling reminder that evil can wear lipstick and deliver speeches about empowerment. The ensemble's collective sincerity keeps the narrative credible and gripping.

This season grips viewers with its quiet intensity and rewards patience with depth. Grim yet necessary, it mirrors a faltering system redeemed by a few steadfast officers. Though it could probe deeper into emotional fallout, it remains taut & assured, proof that Madam Sir doesn't just solve crimes, she upholds the integrity of Indian storytelling.

Briefs

ABUJA

50 children escape captivity

Fifty of the 303 schoolchildren abducted from a Catholic school in north-central Nigeria's Niger state have escaped captivity and are now with their families, the school authority said Sunday, bringing relief to some distraught families after one of the largest school abductions in Nigeria's history. The schoolchildren, aged between 10 and 18, escaped individually between Friday and Saturday, according to the Most Rev. Bulus Dauwa Yohanna, chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria in Niger state and the proprietor of the school. A total of 253 schoolchildren and 12 teachers are still held by the kidnappers, he said in a statement. "We were able to ascertain this when we decided to contact and visit some parents," Yohanna said.

LONDON

French stamp honour for Noor Inayat

Noor Inayat Khan, a descendant of the 18th-century Mysore ruler Tipu Sultan, has become the only Indian-origin woman to be honoured with a commemorative postage stamp by France for her role in the French Resistance as an undercover British agent during the Second World War. The French postal service, La Poste, honoured Noor with a stamp issued to honour the "Figures of the Resistance" who fought against Nazi Germany. She is among a dozen war heroes and heroines chosen on the set of stamps issued this month to mark 80 years since the end of World War II. Each stamp is in the form of an etching taken from a photograph, with the stamp on Noor showcasing her in her British Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) uniform.

COLOMBO

Rajapaksa vows to topple govt

Accusing the NPP government of failing to deliver on its pre-election promises, Sri Lanka's opposition party, led by former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, has warned that it would move to topple the administration at the "first opportunity". Since sweeping the 2024 elections, the National People's Power (NPP), led by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, has pursued cases against members of the previous Rajapaksa administration. Several have been jailed or granted bail on corruption charges. "We warn the government that we will topple the government at the first opportunity," Namal Rajapaksa, son of Mahinda, told a well-attended rally in Nugegoda on Friday.

ISLAMABAD

Pak bypolls for 13 seats held on Sun

Pakistanis vote for by-elections in 13 National Assembly and Punjab Assembly seats amid tight security on Sunday. Out of the 13 seats, six are for the National Assembly (NA) and seven are for the provincial seats. Polling began at 8am and continued till 5pm. Most seats were declared vacant after the disqualification of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers, who were convicted for their alleged involvement in the May 9, 2023, attacks on military and civilian installations protesting the arrest of their party chief, Imran Khan. Armed forces have been deployed outside "most sensitive" polling stations.

FRESH FIRE | US prez hits out at Kyiv for not acknowledging peace efforts, slams Europe for continuing to buy Russian oil

'Zero gratitude': Trump spews venom at Ukraine

Agencies

GENEVA

Ukrainian, U.S. and European officials met in Geneva on Sunday to discuss a draft plan presented by Washington to end the war in Ukraine, after Kyiv and its allies voiced alarm over what they saw as major concessions to the aggressor Russia.

U.S. President Donald Trump, who has championed the 28-point plan, said on Sunday that Ukraine had not been grateful for American efforts over the war, even as U.S. weapons continue to flow to Kyiv via NATO and Europe keeps buying Russian oil.

On Friday, Trump said Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelenskyy had until Thursday to approve the plan, which calls on Ukraine to cede territory, accept limits on its military and renounce ambitions to join NATO.

For many Ukrainians, including soldiers fighting on the



A motorcade of diplomatic and police cars pass by as US and Ukrainian officials prepare for closed-door talks, with the exact time and location undisclosed, in Geneva, Switzerland, on Sunday

front lines, such terms would amount to capitulation after nearly four years of fighting in Europe's deadliest conflict since World War Two. On Saturday, Trump said the current proposal for ending the war is not his final offer.

With the U.S. delegation led by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the main talks between U.S. and Ukrainian officials got under way in Geneva on Sunday afternoon in a stiff

atmosphere at the U.S. mission, soon after Trump complained in a Truth Social post that Ukraine's leadership had shown "zero gratitude" to the U.S. for its efforts and Europe continued to buy Russian oil.

Since the U.S. plan was announced, there has been confusion about who was involved in drawing it up. European allies said they had not been consulted.

Swiss talks stakes high

Geneva: Top European and Ukrainian envoys conferred in Geneva on Sunday ahead of talks with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio over President Donald Trump's proposal to end Russia's war on Ukraine. The head of the Ukrainian delegation, presidential chief of staff Andrii Yermak, wrote on social media that they held their first meeting with the national security advisers from the UK, France and Germany. The allies have rallied around Kyiv in a push to revise the plan, which is seen as favouring Moscow. "The next meeting is with the US delegation. We are in a very constructive mood," Yermak said. "We continue working together to achieve a lasting and just peace for Ukraine."

Agencies

JOHANNESBURG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday called for a global compact to prevent misuse of artificial intelligence and made a strong pitch for critical technologies to be human-centric, instead of finance-centric.

Addressing the third session of the G20 summit here, Modi also said technology applications should be 'global' rather than 'national', and based on 'open source' rather than 'exclusive models'.

PM Modi said that this vision has been integrated into India's technology ecosystem, and the same has resulted in significant benefits, be it in space applications, AI or digital payments, where it is a world leader.

He was addressing the third session of the G20 Summit on the topic 'A Fair and a Just Future for All - Critical Minerals; Decent Work; Artificial Intelligence.

We must all ensure that AI is used for global good and its misuse is prevented. To do this, we must create a global compact on AI based on certain core principles, including effective human oversight, safety-by-design, transparency, and strict restrictions on the use of AI in deepfakes,

Should've told us hosting G20 tough job, Modi told

Johannesburg: "You should have told us that it (hosting the G20 summit) is such a difficult task, maybe we would have run away," South African President Cyril Ramaphosa jokingly told Prime Minister Narendra Modi during their bilateral talks on Sunday. South Africa is hosting the first G20 Summit being held in Africa. In his opening remarks at the India-South Africa delegation-level talks, President Ramaphosa thanked India for its support in hosting the G20 leaders' summit. "Thank you for the support that India has given to South Africa in hosting G20...You should have told us that it is such a difficult task, maybe we would have run away," Ramaphosa said with a laugh.

PM holds talks with Japan, Canada, SA, Italy leaders

Johannesburg: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday met South African President Cyril Ramaphosa on the sidelines of the G20 Summit here and the two leaders discussed cooperation in various areas, including trade, investment, mining, critical minerals, AI and food security. Modi also met with his Japanese counterpart Sanae Takaichi and discussed bilateral cooperation in areas like innovation, defence and talent mobility. In his meeting with Canadian counterpart Mark Carney, they agreed to unlock the potential for deeper cooperation. In his meeting with his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni, the two leaders discussed ways to bolster bilateral ties in several areas.

crime, and terror activities, Modi said.

The Prime Minister said AI systems that impact human life, security, or public trust must be responsible and auditable.

And most importantly, AI should enhance human capabilities, but the ultimate responsibility for decision-making always remains with humans, he added.

French Navy refutes Pak Rafale claims

Paris

The French Navy has sharply criticised a Pakistan-based media outlet for publishing "misinformation and disinformation" about India's Operation Sindoor on Pakistan-sponsored terrorist sites in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu Kashmir in April this year, which killed 26 civilians.

The clarification came after Islamabad's Geo TV outlet published on its website an article on November 21 claiming that a French naval commander had confirmed Pakistan's air superiority and that Indian Rafale jets were shot down during the border skirmishes. The Navy said the report not only misquoted French officers but even published the wrong name, referring to the officer as "Jacques Launay" instead of his real name, Captain Yvan Launay.

In a statement released on its official X account, the Marine Nationale said all the

remarks attributed to Captain Launay were fabricated. "These statements were attributed to Captain Launay, who never gave his consent for any form of publication. The article contains extensive misinformation and disinformation," it said.

The disputed article had sensationally claimed that a French commander told an Indo-Pacific conference that the Pakistan Air Force performed "much better" during the May 6-7 confrontation involving over 140 fighter jets. It also alleged that he confirmed that Indian Rafales were shot down and linked the outcome to supposed Chinese support. The French Navy said none of this was true.

According to the Navy, Captain Launay's actual role is limited to commanding the naval air station at Landivisiau, where Rafale Marine aircraft are stationed, contrary to the Pakistani portrayal of him as a senior operational authority involved in the India-Pakistan conflict.

Israel targets Hezbollah chief in first strike on Beirut in months

HARET HREIK

Israel on Sunday struck Lebanon's capital, Beirut, for the first time since June, saying it targeted Hezbollah's chief of staff and warning the Iran-backed militant group not to rearm and rebuild.

The strike, launched almost a year after a ceasefire ended the latest Israel-Hezbollah war, threatened a wider conflict just days before Pope Leo XIV is scheduled to visit Lebanon.

"We will continue to act forcefully to prevent any threat to the residents of the north and the state of Israel," Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said in a statement. Government spokesperson Shosh Bedrosian did not say whether Israel informed the US before the strike, saying only that "Israel makes decisions independently." The strike in Beirut's southern suburbs killed at least one person and wounded 21 others, Lebanon's Health Ministry said.

Lebanon's President Joseph



Aoun in a statement condemned the strike and accused Israel of refusing to implement its end of the ceasefire agreement. He called on the international community to "intervene with strength and seriousness to stop the attacks on Lebanon and its people."

Israeli airstrikes over southern Lebanon have intensified in recent weeks while Israel and the United States have pressured Lebanon to disarm the powerful militant group. Israel asserts that Hezbollah is trying to rebuild its military capabilities in southern Lebanon. The Lebanese government, which has approved its military's plan that would

disarm Hezbollah, has denied those claims.

Smoke could be seen in the busy Haret Hreik neighborhood following Sunday's strike. A video circulated on social media showed dozens of people crowded around the area of the strike, which appeared to be on the fourth floor of an apartment building. Gunshots could be heard to disperse the crowds as emergency workers arrived.

"This is definitely a civilian area and void of any military presence, especially the neighborhood where we stand," Hezbollah parliamentarian Ali Ammar told reporters near the site of the attack.

Brazil moves to foil ex-prez escape bid

SAO PAULO

Brazil's former president **Jair Bolsonaro** was taken into custody after the Supreme Court ruled that he posed a high risk of fleeing the country, France 24 reported.

The 70-year-old former leader, who is currently under house arrest, was accused of trying to break his electronic ankle monitor he has been wearing since August.

The court said Bolsonaro used a soldering iron on the device in an attempt to escape, noting that he had become a "high flight risk." Supreme Court judge Alexandre de Moraes described the arrest on Saturday as a preventive step as Bolsonaro's appeals continue.

A video made public by the court showed the monitoring bracelet burnt and damaged but still strapped to his ankle. In the footage, Bolsonaro admitted he had used the tool on the device out of "curios-



ity." According to France 24, Moraes also cited concerns over a Saturday vigil announced by Bolsonaro's eldest son, Senator Flavio Bolsonaro, outside the condominium where the former president had been staying. He said the gathering risked creating "an environment conducive to his escape." Flavio Bolsonaro had urged supporters earlier to "fight for your country." Moraes told Bolsonaro's lawyers to explain the incident within 24 hours.

Reacting to his father's detention, Flavio warned in a live video that the judiciary would be responsible if anything happened to the former president.

'Crossed red line': China seethes over Japan PM's Taiwan remarks

TAIPEI

Japan "crossed a red line" with comments by its new leader suggesting a potential military intervention over Taiwan, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Sunday.

Remarks earlier this month by Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi that a Chinese naval blockade or other action against Taiwan could be grounds for a Japanese military response were "shocking," Wang said in a statement

posted on the Chinese Foreign Ministry's website.

"It is shocking that Japan's current leaders have publicly sent the wrong signal of attempting military intervention in the Taiwan issue, said things they shouldn't have said, and crossed a red line that should not have been touched," Wang said.

The most senior Chinese official to address the tensions so far, Wang added that China must "resolutely respond" to Japan's actions and that all countries have the responsi-

bility to "prevent the resurgence of Japanese militarism."

Takaichi's remarks have led to rising tensions between the two countries over the past few weeks. Beijing on Friday sent a letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres criticising Takaichi's "grave violation of international law" and diplomatic norms.

"If Japan dares to attempt an armed intervention in the cross-strait situation, it would be an act of aggression," China's UN Ambassador Fu Cong wrote in the letter.

Yemen Houthi court convicts 17 of spying for US, Israel, S Arabia

CAIRO

A Houthi-controlled court in Yemen's capital convicted 17 people of spying for foreign governments and sentenced them to death in the latest development in a years-long Houthi crackdown on local staff from foreign agencies.

The Specialised Criminal Court in Sanaa handed down the verdict on Saturday, according to the Houthi-run SABA news agency.

The people convicted were

part of "espionage cells within a spy network affiliated with the American, Israeli and Saudi intelligence," said the court, which handed down a death sentence by firing squad in public.

The court also sentenced a man and a woman to 10 years in prison, while another defendant was acquitted.

Saturday's verdict can be appealed, said Abdulbasit Ghazi, a lawyer representing some of the defendants who were convicted.

The defendants were

accused of "spying with foreign countries in a state of enmity with Yemen during the 2024-2025 period," SABA reported.

Prosecutors said the defendants collaborated with intelligence officers from Saudi Arabia, Britain and the United States, as well as Israel's Mossad intelligence service, SABA reported.

The Iranian-backed rebels have imprisoned thousands of people during Yemen's civil war that began in 2014, including United Nations staff members detained in June.

offgrid

Why Ugandan men seek DNA paternity tests

NABUMALI

Among the most sensitive family disputes Moses Kutoi mediates are those involving upset men questioning why some of their children don't resemble them.

For the Ugandan clan leader attuned to the wisdom of his ancestors, the matter is taboo, never to be discussed with others. Yet Kutoi feels compelled to intervene in the hope of saving marriages that some-

times turn violent and are on the verge of breaking.

"Even me, I don't resemble my father," the clan leader recently told one disbelieving man he was helping.

Paternity has become a key test of faith in this east African country as DNA testing becomes more widely available, fuelled in part by published reports of well-known Ugandans who eventually discovered they were not the biological fathers of some of their children.

The matter has become so

heated that clerics and traditional leaders now urge tolerance and a return to the kind of African teachings that village elders like Kutoi say they stand for.

At last year's Christmas Day service, the Anglican archbishop of Uganda, Stephen Kazimba, cited the example of the virgin birth of Jesus - the bedrock of Christian belief - in a sermon that sought to discourage DNA testing among the faithful.

"You take DNA and you

find out that out of the four children, only two are yours," he warned. "So just take care of the children the way they are, like Joseph did." The Ministry of Internal Affairs runs a government-accredited lab that conducts court-ordered investigations. It says the number of men seeking voluntary DNA testing has soared recently, with often "heartbreaking" outcomes.

"About 95% of those coming for DNA tests are men, but more than 98% of



the results show these men are not the biological fathers," Simon Peter Mundeiyi, a spokesman for the Ministry of Internal

Affairs, told reporters in July. His advice for men was not to seek DNA proof of paternity "unless you have a strong heart," he said.

Blanusu said upon casting his ballot in the northwestern town of Banja Luka that "the election campaign passed in a fair and tolerant atmosphere."

—Agencies

Briefs

COLOMBO

Blind T20 WC: Indian women lift trophy

India on Sunday won the inaugural T20 blind women's world cup after defeating Nepal by seven wickets in the final played at the P Sara oval here. India restricted Nepal to 114 for 5 after opting to bowl and then coasted to 117 for 3 in just 12 overs to win the title. Such was India's domination that their rivals managed just a single boundary in their innings. Phula Saren top-scored for India in the run chase with 44 not out. India had beaten Australia in the first semifinal, while Nepal had won against Pakistan in the second semifinal on Saturday. Co-hosts Sri Lanka could win only one game -- against the USA -- out of the five preliminary round games. Pakistan's Mehreen Ali, a B3 or partially sighted player, was the star batter in the six-team tournament, scoring over 600 runs.

SANGLI

Mandhana's wedding postponed

The wedding of star Indian women's cricketer **Smriti Mandhana** and music composer Palash Munchal has been postponed indefinitely after her father Shrinivas fell ill in the lead-up to the ceremony, which was scheduled to take place here on Sunday. Mandhana is emotionally attached to her father, who has been a constant source of support in her cricketing journey. Tuhin Mishra, the manager of Mandhana, said the World Cup-winning cricketer's father suffered the health complication early on Sunday morning. Considering her father's health condition, Mishra said, Mandhana decided to postpone her wedding till he recovers. A medical team is monitoring the health of her father.

BENGALURU

Enaan scores 105* for India A U-19 team

All-rounder **Mohamed Enaan** struck a magnificent unbeaten century at No. 8 to power India A to a 26-run win over India B, virtually sealing their place in the

2ND TEST | Muthusamy scores maiden hundred and Jansen hits 93 as South Africa's lower order seizes control of the match by piling up 489, hosts 9/0

GUWAHATI

Senuran Muthusamy and Marco Jansen made Indian finger spinners' look ordinary in good batting conditions with invaluable lower-order contributions as South Africa seized control of the second Test by posting a massive 489 in their first innings here on Sunday. Trailing 0-1 in the two-match series, India were nine for no loss in 6.1 overs when stumps were drawn in fading light.

Muthusamy, who had scored a match-winning 89 not out against Pakistan in Rawalpindi a month ago, hit his maiden Test hundred, a gutsy 109 off 206 balls while Jansen sent the spinners on a proverbial leather hunt with smashing 91-ball-93.

The last four Proteas batters from Nos 7 to 11 added a whopping 243 runs. Muthusamy and Verreynne adding 88 for the seventh wicket while the centurion added another 97 runs with number nine Jansen.

During his belligerent effort, Jansen smashed seven sixes, the highest by an overseas batter on Indian soil, surpassing Viv Richards and Matthew Hayden, both of whom had hit half a dozen maximums.

The South African innings lasted for 151.1 overs and the plight of the Indian bowlers could be gauged by the fact that this was also the first time that all five specialist bowlers had to bowl 25 or more overs in a single innings.

Rishabh Pant's captaincy didn't have a plan B and it also didn't help matters that the track at the Barsapara Stadium didn't show any signs of wear and tear.

While Kuldeep Yadav (4/115 in 29.1 overs) deviated from his plans from the opening day and bowled a lot faster, credit should be given to

India's spin woes on flat pitch



South Africa's Senuran Muthusamy with Marco Jansen celebrates his century against India at ACA Stadium in Guwahati on Sunday. PTI

Muthusamy, Kyle Verreynne (45 off 122 balls) and Jansen for reading him well from the hand. Since Kuldeep increased the speed of his deliveries it also curtailed the chances of getting drift which had yielded results on the opening day.

Fingers spinners flop

However what hurt India the most was the bowling of the two finger spinners, Ravindra Jadeja (2/94 in 28 overs) and Washington Sundar (0/58 in 26 overs), whose figures wouldn't exactly narrate the whole story. Time and again questions have been raised

about Jadeja and even Washington's ability to be penetrative on tracks that don't turn diabolical from day one. The second day was best for batting and neither the off-spinner nor the finger spinner got balls to either turn or bounce. They were trying to rush the batters but negligible zip from the pitch ensured they had no difficulty in defending.

The only bowler, who looked a bit penetrative was Jasprit Bumrah (2/75 in 32 overs), who manfully led the attack and also briefly got the ball to reverse in second session.

Muthusamy's best day

Life has indeed come a full circle for Senuran Muthusamy. In 2019, during a forgettable debut series in India when he got just two wickets in two Tests, the South African all-rounder of Indian descent reckoned that his career was as good as over and he will never ever play a game in this country.

Cut to 2025, Muthusamy has cracked the code of the sub-continent after an impactful performance in Pakistan, where he scalped 11 wickets in the first Test and 89 not out in second Test. Now he cherishes the best day of his career.

Scoreboard**South Africa 1st Innings:**

A Markram b Bumrah 38, R Rickelton c Pant b Kuldeep 35, T Stubbs c Rahul b Kuldeep 49, T Bavuma c Jaiswal b Jadeja 41, T de Zorzi c Pant b Siraj 28, W Mulder c Jaiswal b Kuldeep 13, S Muthusamy c Jaiswal b Siraj 109, K Verreynne st Pant b Jadeja 45, M Jansen b Kuldeep 93, S Harmer b Bumrah 5, K Maharaj 12 (not out)

Extras: (B-8, LB-8, NB-4, W-1) 21

Total: 489 all-out (in 151.1 overs) **FoW:** 1-82, 2-82, 3-166, 4-187, 5-201, 6-246, 7-334, 8-431, 9-462.

Bowling: J Bumrah 32-10-75-2, M Siraj 30-5-106-2, N K Reddy 6-0-25-0, W Sundar 26-5-58-0, K Yadav 29.1-4-115-4, R Jadeja 28-2-94-2.

India 1st Innings: Y Jaiswal 7 (not out), KL Rahul 2 (not out)

Extras: 0 **Total:** 9-0 (in 6.1 overs) **Bowling:** M Jansen 3.1-1-9-0, W Mulder 3-3-0-0.

"My journey's been unique. Got a taste of international cricket in 2019 in India, debuted here, went back into the wilderness a little bit. Like you say, cricket is such a journey that you just try to take it one day at a time. You try not to think too far ahead.

"But there were times, especially after 2019, where I wasn't sure if I'd ever play Test cricket again and certainly not in India after we lost that series," Muthusamy said.

"So just really grateful for the support that I've got back home, for the people that are really close with me. They've been incredible."

'Wicket was a whole road'

Kuldeep on lifeless Barsapara pitch, says Kolkata wicket was different

GUWAHATI

India's premier spinner Kuldeep Yadav on Sunday compared the 22-yard strip at the Barsapara Stadium to a "road" due to the benign nature of the surface that allowed South Africa's lower-order batters to take the team's first-innings score to 489 in the second Test.

Asked about his opinion on playing in Kolkata, where batters struggled and here in Barsapara where it became a nightmare for the spinners, Kuldeep's reply was laced with sarcasm.

"Kolkata ka wicket toh alag thaa. Yeh to pura road tha (Kolkata's wicket was different and this was a whole road). So it's challenging and that's why it's called a Test wicket," said Kuldeep, who was the pick of the India bowlers with figures of 4 for 115 in 29.1 overs.

It will be interesting to see how BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia takes this statement as this is the first ever Test match being held at his home venue, and one of the senior players hasn't exactly been too kind with his assessment of the track.

However, Kuldeep did maintain that one needs to show fighting abilities to counter adverse conditions.

"It is not always about domination but it is also very important how you come back on a good batting surface. It was a difficult wicket for the bowlers because I didn't feel that there was a lot of help in this wicket."

For Kuldeep, it is imperative that one moves on quickly and not stress oneself thinking about the nature of



India's captain Rishabh Pant with Kuldeep Yadav (L) at ACA Stadium in Guwahati on Sunday. PTI

Kolkata ka wicket toh alag thaa. Yeh to pura road tha. So it's challenging and that's why it's called a Test wicket

Kuldeep Yadav
Indian spinner

the track.

"Even for fast bowlers it didn't seem like a lot of help, but yeah, this is Test cricket and you should enjoy it. You should enjoy, learn more and the more you mature, you shouldn't think too much about the wicket. You should go there and play. Next Test, there could be a better wicket, so no complaints."

He was quick to point out that after the opening session on the first day, when some underlying moisture was still at play, there was no help for the slow bowlers in the last five sessions.

Australian Open crown for Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen

The 24-year-old beats Japan's Tanaka in singles final to end title drought

SYDNEY

A fluent Lakshya Sen ended a difficult stretch on the international circuit by clinching his first title of the 2025 season, defeating Japan's Yushi Tanaka in the Australian Open men's singles final, here Sunday.

The 24-year-old from Almora, enduring a tough phase after finishing fourth at the Paris Olympics, capped a resurgent week with a commanding 21-15 21-11 win over 26-year-old Tanaka.

Emerging champion after a 38-minute final of the USD 475,000 Super 500 event, the Indian celebrated the moment by putting his fingers in his ears.

"I have seen a lot of ups and downs this season, with a few injuries at the start of the season. But I kept my hard work going throughout the season and I am very happy to end the season on a good note," said Lakshya.

"I'm very excited, looking forward to the next season now and I am really happy with the way I played today and this week."



Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen scored a commanding 21-15, 21-11 win over Japan's Yushi Tanaka in the final. BAI/X

Lakshya, a 2021 World Championships bronze-medallist, had last won a Super 300 title at the Syed Modi International in Lucknow in 2024.

However, a top-tier crown had eluded him since his triumph at the Canada Open the same year, though he came close at the Hong Kong

Super 500 in September when he finished runner-up.

Facing world No. 26 Tanaka, winner of two Super 300 titles this year at the Orleans Masters and the US Open, Lakshya displayed control, sharp placement and clean execution, wrapping up the contest without dropping a game.

With this victory, the reigning Commonwealth Games champion became only the second Indian to win a BWF World Tour title this season, following Ayush Shetty's maiden Super 300 triumph at the US Open.

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty had reached the finals at the Hong Kong and China Masters, while Kidambi Srikanth also logged a runner-up finish at the Malaysia Masters earlier in the year.

Lakshya made a confident start, opening up a 6-3 lead as Tanaka committed a flurry of errors -- hitting into the net, going wide and overcooking his lifts.

"It was important to have a good start, and keep the momentum in the last set because it was quite even in the first one.

"I got a good lead and I could finish it off. The second set started on a good note and then I just kept the lead to finish the match," the Indian noted.

The second game turned into a one-sided affair as Lakshya kept up the intensity, continuing to play fast.

Gaikwad returns in Indian ODI squad for SA series

Ruturaj comes in after good outing for India A, as Gill and Iyer miss out due to injuries; Rahul to lead team

NEW DELHI

Ruturaj Gaikwad too got the selectors' nod after a couple of impressive outings for India A against South Africa A in the recent unofficial ODI series in Rajkot.

In three one-dayers, the 28-year-old made 117, 68 not out and 25. He amassed total 210 runs in three matches at an exceptional average of 105, including a century and a half-century.

The Maharashtra batter has been drafted in as both Gill and original vice-captain Shreyas Iyer are recovering from their respective injuries. Gaikwad has so far played six ODIs, and the last of them came against South Africa at Gqeberha in 2023.

Senior batter KL Rahul was named India's captain. The series will begin on November 30 in Ranchi followed by matches in Raipur (December 3) and Visakhapatnam (December 6).

Ravindra Jadeja, whose last ODI appearance came against New Zealand in the



India's ODI squad: Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Tilak Varma, KL Rahul (C) (wk), Rishabh Pant (wk), Washington Sundar, Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Harshit Rana, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Prasidh Krishna, Arshdeep Singh, Dhruv Jurel

Champions Trophy final in Dubai earlier in March, returned to the mix, primarily because left-arm spin all-rounder Axar Patel has been rested for this series.

Premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah needs to wait for sometime for his ODI return after donning the blue jersey in the 2023 World Cup final against Australia in Ahmedabad. The pace department will be manned

by Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Prasidh Krishna and all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy.

Yashasvi Jaiswal might just get a chance to add to his lone one-day appearance in the upcoming series, while partnering former captain Rohit Sharma. Jaiswal was a part of the ODI squad against Australia but did not get a chance to play as Gill opened with Rohit.

2nd Ashes Test

Head's hundred, Cummins' possible return bolsters Oz

PERTH

Changing a winning combination in the second Ashes cricket test could be on the cards for Australia after Travis Head's astonishing audition as an opener and the possible return of regular skipper Pat Cummins.

Changing the England approach after succumbing to an eight-wicket loss inside two days - a speed unseen in a century - is unlikely according to head coach

Brendon McCullum. He is steadfastly sticking with his "blueprint" despite mounting criticism of the attack-at-all costs Bazball method from critics including former test skippers.

Wrapping up the first test in Perth so quickly gave the players from both teams an extra three days to recover and prepare for the day-night test at the Gabba starting Dec. 4.

Head volunteered to move up the batting order from No. 5 to open when Usman

Khawaja was injured ahead of Australia's second innings, when the first test was delicately poised after a clattering of 30 wickets in five sessions.

Far from being overawed, he clubbed a century off 69 deliveries - the third-fastest ever by an Australian in test cricket - and ended up with 123, more than double the next-highest individual score in Perth.

How the 38-year-old Khawaja recovers from a back problem will determine

the Australian top order in Brisbane, his home ground, as much as his batting form and age. The bowling attack may also be overhauled with Cummins saying he's "half a chance" to be fit in time after missing the Perth test.

Cummins hasn't played a test since Australia's 3-0 sweep over West Indies in the Caribbean in July because of a lower back issue. "It's feeling good," Cummins said during a brief commentary stint during the first test. "It's on track and

pulling up pretty well. I'm pretty hopeful and it's probably better than it was a few weeks ago."

Cummins said he was disappointed to miss the opening match but that was better than potentially missing the entire series.

"There were probably times where I thought I wasn't going to play a game," Cummins said. "It's been tough. The whole cricketing world is watching, and you just wish you were out there."



Australia's captain Steve Smith and Travis Head (L) celebrate after winning the first Test on Saturday. AP