

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Title Code - UPENG04488

MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

Friday, 12 December, 2025

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NATIONAL ENGLISH DAILY

Election Commission extends SIR deadline in six states

New Delhi

The Election Commission today took a significant decision regarding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process. According to reports, the Election Commission has extended the SIR deadline in six states. In Uttar Pradesh, the dead-



line has been extended until December 31st. The Commission

believes that ensuring more accurate voter lists is a priority, so

additional time may be necessary. The primary objective of SIR is to clean and update the voter list, including removing duplicate names, removing the names of deceased or transferred voters, and adding new eligible voters (above 18 years of age). This process is also being implemented across the country to

reduce the possibility of fraudulent voting. The second phase of SIR is currently underway. The first phase began in Bihar. In the second phase, door-to-door verification is being conducted across the states by booth-level officers (BLOs). Many BLOs are teachers or government employees, making it challenging for

them to complete the entire area within a limited timeframe. Two-week extension sought for SIR in UP. Bihar Chief Electoral Officer Navdeep Rinwa said on Wednesday that the state has requested the Election Commission of India for two more weeks to complete the Special Intensive Revision.

Congress gave India a fragmented independence: JP Nadda

New Delhi

Parliament's winter session continued its ninth day of proceedings on Thursday. BJP MP Anurag Thakur complained to Speaker Om Birla that TMC MPs were smoking e-cigarettes in the House. The Speaker responded by saying that action would be taken. Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri was responding to an opposition question with his hands in his pant pockets. Speaker Birla interrupted him and asked the MP to take his hands out of his pockets before answering. Puri immediately took his hands out. Meanwhile, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh arrived at the Lok Sabha in the morning. As soon as he got off his car, Congress MP Jairam Ramesh met him. Ramesh handed him a



BJP doesn't understand Tamil Nadu properly: Karti Chidambaram

Congress MP Karti Chidambaram said, "The BJP and its allies don't understand Tamil Nadu well. Tamil Nadu probably has the largest number of Hindus among all the states in India. The people of Tamil Nadu are the most God-fearing, ritual-observant, conservative, and temple-going people in India. Their beliefs don't align with the IKH's politics. The BJP's allies are trying to create unnecessary controversy."

book titled "Sardar Patel's Inside Story: Maniben Patel's Diary," saying, "It's in Gujarat, please read it." Rajnath Singh smiled and said, "Give it to me in English. I don't know Gujarati." With that, Rajnath Singh moved on. Even

today, there are chances of uproar in both houses on issues like electoral reforms, Special Intensive Revision (SIR), and vote theft. Rahul challenges Shah to a debate. Earlier on Thursday, during a discussion on electoral

How long was the national anthem discussed in the Constituent Assembly: Nadda

Nadda said, "I respect the national anthem wholeheartedly and dedicate my entire life to its honor. But I want to know how long the national anthem was discussed in the Constituent Assembly. You formed a committee on the national flag, the committee's report came, and it was discussed in detail. But what did you do when it came to the national anthem?" Nehru was the president of the National Congress in 1936-37. In 1937, under the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru and under pressure from communal elements,

reforms. Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi challenged Home Minister Amit Shah to a debate. Shah had previously stated that BJP members do not shy away from discussions on electoral



UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressing the public in Gorakhpur district and listening to the problems of the people.

Pollution: BJD MP appeals for shifting of session

New Delhi

Regarding Delhi's poor air quality, BJD Rajya Sabha MP Manas Ranjan Mangaraj on Thursday appealed for the winter session of Parliament to be shifted to another city. He said that until Delhi's air quality improves, the

winter and budget sessions of Parliament should be held in a city outside Delhi. He described Delhi's annual pollution problem as a man-made disaster. Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Mangaraj, a resident of Odisha, said that just as his state responds swiftly and

disciplinedly to natural disasters, Delhi's pollution should also be addressed promptly and seriously. "I come from Odisha, which fights disasters like cyclones and floods very effectively," Mangaraj said. "But what troubles me is Delhi." The MP said that MPs, officials, driv-

ers, sanitation workers, and security personnel have to work in toxic air every day. He said, "We cannot ignore their problems. We cannot call it normal." He argued that holding Parliament sessions every year during peak pollution hours puts people's lives at risk.

Lok Sabha extends the term of the Parallel Election Committee

New Delhi

The Lok Sabha on Thursday passed a resolution extending the tenure of the parliamentary committee examining bills related to holding simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies. Committee Chairman P.P. Chaudhary proposed extending the tenure of the joint committee examining the Constitution (129th

Amendment) Bill, 2024, and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, until the first day of the last week of the Budget Session of 2026. The resolution was passed by voice vote. The committee was formed in December last year and has since met with several constitutional experts, economists, and Law Commission Chairman Dinesh Maheshwari.

Pakistani boat enters Indian waters, 11 crew members arrested

Ahmedabad

The Coast Guard on Thursday seized a Pakistani fishing boat that had entered Indian waters. Eleven crew members were also arrested. The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) seized a Pakistani fishing boat and arrested 11 of its crew members for illegal fishing in Indian waters, officials said on Thursday. The arrested individuals have been handed over to Gujarat's Jakhau Marine Police for further investigation, offi-



Social innovators need to be appreciated: Sudha Murthy

Rajya Sabha nominated member Sudha Murthy said on Thursday that while we often laud technological achievements, true innovators who address everyday problems in society often go unrecognized. She emphasized that social innovators, who find new ways and solutions to make life easier for ordinary people, deserve equal importance and respect. Their work is directly linked to the well-being of society. Innovations like the Idli Grinder have trans-

formed lives. Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Murthy said that innovations like the Idli Grinder have transformed lives, especially those of women, yet their inventors have largely been forgotten. She further said, "When you create a technologi-

cal innovation, you are honored for your achievements, you receive awards, and people applaud, but when it comes to other achievements, people don't care." Citing global examples, Murthy cited the Japanese inventor of the QR code, who chose

Goa fire tragedy; Luthra brothers detained in Thailand

New Delhi

On Thursday, the fifth day since the fire at Birch Nightclub in Goa, club owners Saurabh Luthra and Gaurav Luthra were detained in Thailand. Thai police released photographs of the brothers, handcuffed and holding their passports. According to sources, a team of Indian officials has left for Thailand and will bring the Luthra brothers back within 24 hours. It is expected

Incidents of GPS interference on aircraft at airports have increased: Government

New Delhi

Incidents of interference with aircraft GPS systems have risen sharply at major airports across the country. The central government informed the Lok Sabha that 1,951 such incidents were reported between November 2023 and November 2025, raising serious concerns about aviation safety. Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol stated that incidents of GPS spoofing



and interference have increased at major airports such as Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Amritsar, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Chennai. The DGCA issued a consultation on GNSS interference on November 24, 2023, following which such reporting began. Cases surfaced after the DGCA's reporting system Mohol stated that systematic reporting of such incidents began only after the DGCA circular was issued, and a total of 1,951 incidents

Indigo passengers get compensation



New Delhi

IndiGo, the country's largest airline, has announced additional compensation for passengers affected by the recent crisis, following refunds. However, this relief will only be available to a select few. IndiGo stated that if passengers purchased their tickets through a travel partner platform, all refund procedures have been initiated. However, the airline does not have complete information on such passengers in its system. In such cases, passengers can provide information to IndiGo's email address - www.indigo.com/indiGo. We will continue to assist them. IndiGo fur-

Government committed to protect every needy from cold wave: Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath

Gorakhpur

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has stated that the government is committed to protecting every needy from the cold wave and providing them with decent shelter. To this end, while night shelters are operating at full capacity, tehsils and municipal bodies have been provided with adequate funds to distribute woolen clothes and blankets to the needy.



and arrange for bonfires. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was speaking to media persons after inspecting two night shelters in Gorakhpur on Wednesday evening. During the inspection, Chief Minister Yogi

Cleanliness must also be maintained. Furthermore, if anyone lacks food, food should be provided. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inspected the night shelters near the railway station and near the Jhulelal Temple and interacted with the people staying there to assess the available facilities. The Chief Minister personally distributed blankets and food to the needy at the night shelters. It is expected

Assam's "Kohinoor" Superstar Garg's Mysterious Death Shakes the State

Assam

The death of Assam's iconic singer, actor and superstar Zubeen Garg continues to stir widespread outrage and suspicion nearly a month after the tragedy. Officially, his death on September 19, 2025 in Singapore was attributed to drowning, but allegations of murder and conspiracy have fueled intense public and political turmoil across the state. Multiple individuals, including Garg's manager, event organizers, and personal security staff, have been detained for questioning. On Wednesday, five accused were sent to judicial custody in Baksa District Jail, triggering large-

scale protests and clashes between the police and demonstrators outside the facility. According to public sentiment, the government's handling of the case—marked by alleged manipulation, slow investigation, and attempts to shield powerful figures has severely eroded confidence in administration. Protesters claimed that efforts are being made to suppress the truth behind the singer's mysterious death. Several post-mortem and forensic reports remain under review as various investigative agencies, including the CID, continue their probe. However, justice appears elusive, deepening frustration among the late artist's fans and the

general public. The controversy has grown into a full-blown political crisis, testing the credibility of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's government. Observers say the case has exposed cracks in the justice system and raised serious concerns about administrative transparency in Assam. Zubeen Garg's demise has not only robbed the state of one of its most beloved cultural icons but has also ignited a movement demanding accountability and fairness. As protests intensify, calls for an independent and impartial investigation grow louder, with citizens insisting that the culprits face the strictest punishment under law.



When visiting Hindu temples and practicing Sanatana Dharma.

Sanatana Dharma guides India and the world, he said. Visiting Hindu temples and adopting Sanatana Dharma requires some ideals. The country can not survive without Sanatana Dharma, a guiding light for the globe,

he said. The JanaSena president stressed religious tolerance but defended Sanatana Dharma. "We respect churches and mosques, but we will punish any act that hurts Hindus. He stated social media posts mocking Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma are prohibited. Kalyan added that the

Uttarakhand has 37 UCC 'prohibited' relationships



Delhi: The newly implemented Uniform Civil Code in Uttarakhand lists 37 "prohibited relationships" for men and women. The relationships under Schedule 1 of the Act are mostly blood relatives, extended family, and three-generation links, many of which are unattainable owing to age gaps. Some strange men's forbidden partnerships Historically, young people married young. Such cases may still occur, therefore we included them. The Act requires religious authorities to certify that these relationships are allowed under their conventions before marrying or living together.

UCC sees clergy as "any person who conducts marriage ceremonies in accordance with customs and practices of the community concerned." Gaur said the registrar may refuse petitions that contravene public policy and morality even with a

religious certificate. He said UCC rules explicitly state that a registrar can refuse to register a relationship if the applicants are closely related by blood or family ties and their marriage is either not permitted by their customs or, even if allowed, contradicts public policy and moral standards.

MP Sports Competition Concluded at SPVP Inter College

Bahraich

The MP Sports Competition was held with great enthusiasm at SPVP Inter College, Semrahn. Students from various schools displayed their sports talents and received much appreciation from the audience. The event

Bahraich

was inaugurated by Chief Guest, Bahraich MP Anand Gaur, Distinguished Past President Saurabh Verma, MLA Representative Alok Jindal and BJP District Vice President Ranvijay Singh by lighting the lamp. The competition featured various sports,

including kabaddi, volleyball, athletics and kho-kho.

The players performed exceptionally well, bringing glory to their respective schools. The winning players were honored with certificates and trophies by the guests. The Chief Guest stated.

Pawan Kalyan's Jana Sena to form Sanatana Dharma protection wing

Delhi: Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Jana Sena Party (JSP) president Pawan Kalyan announced the formation of the Narasimha Varahi Brigade to safeguard Sanatana Dharma in Telugu states Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. I speak for the Jana Sena Party, not the NDA. "Several people have asked us to keep a youth wing, cultural wing, etc., but with Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy's blessing, we will set up a wing to protect Sanatana Dharma," Pawan Kalyan added. Pawan Kalyan stressed the significance of respecting religion, especially

Karnataka govt pres- sured to restore 4% Muslim quota

Delhi: Since last year's assembly elections and this month's bypolls to three assembly seats showed the Muslim community had consolidated behind the Congress party, they are pressuring the government to restore their 4% reservation. The previous BJP government eliminated the quota, but the Supreme Court delayed the decision. In 2023, the Supreme Court deemed the quota abolition "prima facie shaky and flawed", making it a difficult matter. It is unclear whether and

Delhi: According to Election Commission audited reports, political parties spent 2023-24 on ads, helicopter flights, and media consultants. Offering insights into their spending during a year of many state elections. The reports may only cover part of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections' spending patterns, announced on March 16. Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Mizoram had assembly elections during this time. With a budget of



1,754 crore, the BJP prioritized media presence, spending roughly 58% on commercials and electronic media. Party advertising and publicity costs were 591.39 crore and electronic media 434.84 crore. Press conference expenses increased to 90.99 lakh from 71.60 lakh last year. From April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, the party won three state assembly elections and lost Karnataka. With 240 Lok Sabha seats, it returned to power as part of the National Democratic Alliance coalition without a majority.

Consumer initiatives launched by telecom minister Scindia



Delhi: Telecom minister Jyotiraditya Scindia introduced three projects, including the National Broadband Mission 2.0 and Sanchar Saathi mobile app, to improve connection and consumer convenience. The Sanchar Saathi software lets users report suspicious calls and SMS from phone logs. To prevent unauthorized use, users can identify and manage all mobile connections granted in their name. Other functions include blocking, tracking, and recovering lost or stolen mobile phones and verifying their legitimacy to ensure users buy legitimate gadgets. As an extension of the DoT's 2023 Sanchar Saathi platform, the app has disconnected 2.75 crore fraudulent mobile connections and secured over 25 lakh lost or stolen

devices. The National Internet Mission (NBM) 2.0 seeks to position India at the forefront of digital transformation with high-speed internet and meaningful connectivity for everybody. The plan extends operational optical fibre cable (OFC) connectivity to 270,000 villages by 2030 with 95% uptime from 50,000, improves fixed broadband download speeds, and provides broadband connectivity to 90% of anchor institutions (such as schools and Panchayat offices). Other goals

include providing 100 Mbps download speed nationwide, reducing Right of Way application average disposal time to 30 days by 2030 from 60 days, increasing rural internet subscribers per 100 people to 60 from 45, and powering 30% of mobile towers with sustainable energy by 2030. We want 60 out of 100 rural households to have broadband. To strengthen rural India's digital infrastructure, we aim for a minimum fixed broadband download speed of 100 mbps "Scindia remarked.

Bahraich

The District Employment Office, Bahraich, in collaboration with Babu Vasudev PG College, Rupaidiha, organized the employment fair in the college auditorium. Chief guest, Block Panchayat Chief

J.P. Singh, along with special guests Ratan Agarwal, Devendra Pathak, and R.P. Singh, along with school administrators Dinesh Pratap Singh, Principal Dr Rajan Singh and other guests, inaugurated the fair by lighting a lamp. Ten companies partici-

pated in the employment fair, and 245 candidates were selected through interviews. Addressing the fair, Block Chief Singh wished the attendees a happy upcoming festival and congratulated the selected candidates, saying that no task is small or large.

Everyone who has achieved a high position in society started from scratch.

He advised the selected candidates to set a big goal for themselves and strive to achieve it with full commitment and hard work. He said that under the leadership .

DU to expand PhD admis- sion slots by 20-25 pc

Delhi: Delhi University's executive council (EC) resolved to boost PhD admission seats by 20-25% from the last round of admission. The EC also allowed a university representation on St. Stephen's College's governing body to connect DU and the college. DU also updated donation rules to fund scholarships, honors, and capital assets. Under this, the government, trusts, and corporations may set up scholarships.

245 Candidates Selected at the Employment Fair

Bahraich

The Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (Yeida) approved the layout design for the proposed Film City in Sector 21, allowing filmmaker Boney Kapoor-led Bayview Bhutani Film City Private Limited to begin building. On December 24, 2024, Bayview Bhutani submitted the layout plan for clearance because work cannot begin without it. Yeida officials approved the layout plan following a thorough planning and high-level committee assessment. The concessionaire must get authorization for spe-



cific parking, landscaping, and horticulture work and phase the project, according to the authorities. Officials said the developer must establish a film institute and get GRIHA 4-Star/IGBC Gold accreditation for green buildings to minimize environmental damage and carbon footprint during con-

struction. "We authorized the layout plan, allowing site building. The concessionaire will now schedule site work. The concessionaire must build according to the terms and conditions. Yeida CEO Arun Vir Singh re marked . Construction of the 1,000-acre Film City project, with the first

Yeida approves Film City layout

Delhi: The

Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (Yeida) approved the layout design for the proposed Film City in Sector 21, allowing filmmaker Boney Kapoor-led Bayview Bhutani Film City Private Limited to begin building. On December 24, 2024, Bayview Bhutani submitted the layout plan for clearance because work cannot begin without it. Yeida officials approved the layout plan following a thorough planning and high-level committee assessment. The concessionaire must get authorization for spe-



Govt to establish 8th staff pay commission



Delhi: The Union government stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had established the Eighth Central Pay Commission to recommend compensation modifications for five million central government employees and 6.5 million retirees, including defence personnel. As national pay modifications affect state employees' salaries and emoluments, the economically and politically crucial move may boost the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in approaching assembly elections, notably in Delhi. In a briefing, information and media minister Ashwini Vaishnav said the prime minister approved a central pay commission for all central government employees. "The government will soon appoint its chairman and two members," he said. He said the panel is designed to receive its recommendations well before the seventh commission's 10-year term ends in 2026, giving the government enough time to execute them. Several states and agencies follow commission recommendations. These commissions consider inflation, exchequer load.

Media and travel dominate political parties' poll expenses



lakh last year. From April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, the party won three state assembly elections and lost Karnataka. With 240 Lok Sabha seats, it returned to power as part of the National Democratic Alliance coalition without a majority.

A major accident was averted: Fire brigade brought a gas leak from a tanker vehicle under control

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. A major accident was averted on the highway in Tharwai. A tanker filled with flammable gas was being transported when a high-speed car collided with it from behind, causing a gas leak. Due to the prompt action of the fire brigade, a major accident was averted. A tanker truck carrying flammable gas was traveling on the Berui Highway near the Tharwai police station area. A speeding car collided with the tanker, causing a gas leak. The Tharwai police station, fire station, and highway team were immediately informed of the incident. Eight fire brigade vehicles arrived at the scene with full preparation. After nearly two hours of intense water spraying, the tanker's gas leak was contained, averting a catastrophic accident. Police teams also remained on scene. After nearly two hours



of intense water spraying, the gas leak was contained, averting a catastrophic disaster. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief. CO Fire, Inspector Santosh Kumar Pandey, Sub-Inspector Amit Kumar, and Girish Kumar, along with their team, were present at the scene. The accident was averted through the tireless efforts of all involved. Inspector Santosh Kumar Pandey said that the vehicle was going

from Mathura to Paradip, West Bengal. SI Amit Kumar, who was present at the spot, said that the tanker was filled with propylene gas, which is a more dangerous gas than LPG. After controlling the gas, the tanker was parked at a safe place near Sahason Ring Road and three fire engines were also deployed to prevent any further accidents. It is being said that the propylene gas filled in the tanker was used in making plastic items.



tents, and instructions were given to ensure proper covering. The Municipal Commissioner also instructed to install fire systems, curtains at the entrances, and ensure pure drinking

water in all temporary night shelters. He also directed that the Prayagraj Municipal Corporation signboard be installed at all temporary night shelters and that a continuous bonfire be provided.

After this, the Municipal Commissioner gave instructions for proper cleanliness around the night shelters and for installing dustbins etc. Along with this, the Municipal



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. For the first time in the history of the Magh Mela, a logo has been released by the Honorable Chief Minister, reflecting the philosophical essence of the fair. This logo comprehensively depicts the pilgrimage site of Prayag, the holy land of the Sangam, and the significance of performing rituals on the sands of the Sangam during the month of Magh, as per astrological calculations. First, the presence of the 14 phases of the Sun and Moon in the logo reflects the positions of the Sun, Moon, and constellations, according to astrological calculations, which contribute to the Magh Mela in Prayagraj. According to Indian astrological calculations, the Moon completes its orbit around the 27 constellations in approximately 27.3 days. The Magh Mela is based on the intricate mathematics of these constellations' movements. When the Sun is in Capricorn and the Moon is near the constellations Maghi or Ashlesha-Purva Phalguni on the full moon day, the month of Magh is formed, and the Magh Mela is held during that period. The 14 phases of the moon

are believed to be linked to human life, psychological energy, and spiritual practice. The Magh Mela is also a special period for the activation of these phases of lunar energy. The waxing moon (Shukla Paksha) from the new moon to the full moon is considered best for spiritual practice. The dates for Magh Snan are chosen based on the delicate balance of the lunar phases. The energy (Shakti) of the month of Magh is associated with discipline, devotion, and intense spiritual pursuits, as this month is considered special for activities such as bathing in holy rivers, charity, penance, and Kalpavas. Activities performed during this month make a person healthy and fill him with divine energy. The mere sight of the indestructible Akshayavat of Prayagraj, where Lord

Brahma resides in its roots, Lord Vishnu in its trunk, and Lord Shiva in its branches and locks, simplifies the path to salvation. For this reason, its place among Kalpavas is unique. According to Sanatan Dharma, the ultimate goal of human life is to attain salvation.

Therefore, the image of the Mahatma reflects the Sanatan tradition in this holy land, where sages and saints have been coming for spiritual energy since time immemorial. The full benefits of worship and Kalpavas performed during the month of Magh are achieved by seeing the reclining Hanuman after bathing in the Sangam. Therefore, the presence of his temple and flag on the Sangam signifies the completeness of the penance performed during the Magh Mela. The presence of Siberian birds at the Sangam reflects the uniqueness of the environment here. The verse on the logo, "Maghe nimajjanam yatra papam pariharet tatah," means that bathing in the month of Magh frees one from all sins. This logo was designed by Ajay Saxena and Pragalbh Ajay, design consultants engaged by the Mela Authority.

The Municipal Commissioner inspected temporary night shelters and issued necessary instructions

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. In view of the increasing severity of the cold, and to provide relief to the homeless and those spending the night on footpaths and roads, Sai Teja, Municipal Commissioner of Prayagraj Municipal Corporation, inspected the temporary night shelter located at MG Marg P.D. Tandon Park on November 10, 2025. During the inspection, it was discovered that cold air was likely to emanate from the edges of the

A disaster management meeting was held under the chairmanship of Dimri

To improve disaster management procedures in view of the Magh Mela

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj In order to improve disaster management processes in view of the upcoming Magh Mela in Prayagraj district and in connection with the proposed symposium-cum-tabletop exercise on December 22nd and 23rd, 2025, a disaster management meeting was held in the ICCC auditorium of the Mela Authority under the chairmanship of Lieutenant General Shri Yogendra Dimri, Vice Chairman, Uttar Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority. Police Commissioner Jogendra Kumar, District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma, Mela Officer Rishiraj, and officials from other related departments were present. The meeting discussed in detail crowd management, arrangements at parking lots along various routes, fire, holding areas, emergency arrangements, disaster



management with the Water Police, Health Department, Railways, Roadways, Electricity, and other departments. Lieutenant General Yogendra Dimri stated that disaster management plays a vital role in ensuring a smooth and safe Magh Mela. To ensure the safety of pilgrims at the Magh Mela, attention must be paid to all aspects of disaster management, with coordination and rehearsal among all departments being crucial. He stated that in addition to the main bathing festivals, caution and vigilance must be maintained even during normal times. He stated that the Sector Magistrate, Deputy

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Editorial

Tharoor was embroiled in controversy

Power is in the words. Language has mystical powers. I enjoy playing with words. Those words are hot. You can be moved to tears by words. You can find humor in words. Moreover, there are few things that can convey the planet and all its inhabitants as vividly and comprehensively as words. During the 2009 austerity drive of the Congress-led UPA administration, Tharoor was embroiled in controversy for his response to a query regarding flying "cattle class" to Kerala. His statement, "Absolutely, in cattle class out of solidarity with all our holy cows!" caused a political storm following his response. Tharoor, an accomplished writer of numerous best-selling books on Indian society and politics, was forced to clarify that he did not want to offend economy class passengers after the Congress party swiftly censured him. After 16 years, Tharoor is now again in trouble for comments he made in an interview. In response to a Malayalam report that he had claimed, "We have many leaders, but many feel that there are no ordinary workers," Tharoor clarified that he had really said, "several workers feel there is an absence of a leader in Kerala's Congress." "You should not think that I have no option to spend my time. I have options," Tharoor added earlier in the interview. I have speeches, books, and invitations to speak all around the globe. Some saw his comments as a covert signal to the highest levels of Congress that he was thinking about other political paths. Amidst the upcoming Assembly elections in the state next year, Tharoor is now facing accusations of "crossing the line" from the top leaders of the Congress's faction-ridden Kerala unit, putting him in the center of a maelstrom. Because of this, Shashi Tharoor has been named this week's ThePrint Newsmaker. Actually, Tharoor's essay praising the new industrial policies of the Left-led Kerala government had already been a hot topic before the interview controversy erupted. Tharoor had stated that, during the course of 18 months last year, Kerala's startup ecosystem was valued at an astounding \$1.7 billion, which is five times higher than the worldwide average for the same time period. While the fact that this change has started happening under an LDF government run by communists is shocking, it is not totally unexpected. "The path to growth and prosperity for their people lies in capitalism, entrepreneurship, and initiative, not in red flags, strikes, and agitations," he said in the post, comparing the Communists in Kerala to their West Bengali counterparts at the turn of the century. While he disagrees that the state's industrial climate has changed generally, Tharoor defended himself by saying that "when something good emerges, even if only in one area, it is better not to acknowledge it" in response to attacks from Kerala Congress officials over the piece. Tharoor, a former UN diplomat, has had a tumultuous political career with the Congress since his 2009 victory in the Lok Sabha elections from the Thiruvananthapuram constituency. Mostly because he had a habit of saying things that went against the party line. However, he consistently gets himself into problems by more than simply his words. In 2009, as the UPA was implementing its austerity measures, Tharoor and then-External Affairs Minister SM Krishna came under fire from the government for allegedly residing in a five-star hotel in Delhi while their official quarters were still being prepared. Tharoor lost his position in the Manmohan Singh government's council of ministers in 2010 due to the scandal surrounding the sweat equity provided to Sunanda Pushkar, his then-girlfriend and later-wife, by a consortium that owned the Kochi club of the Indian Premier League. His ordination as a junior minister was renewed in 2012. Tharoor was thrust into his gravest professional crisis in January 2014, when Pushkar was discovered dead in a luxurious Delhi hotel room—months prior to the Lok Sabha elections.



Muslims want waqf reforms too. It's not an issue for political acrimony

When the Waqf Amendment Bill 2024 was first tabled in the Lok Sabha on 8 August last year, it triggered fears within the Muslim community, as it was perceived to have been introduced without adequate consultation with stakeholders. After all, the issue of waqfs—Muslim institutions through which property is bequeathed for religious or charitable purposes—is sensitive because it involves socio-religious spaces such as qabristans, masjids, idgahs, and madrasas. As such, the government and Parliament were exhorted to adopt procedures that allayed rather than stoked the fears of

Muslims. In this backdrop, the decision to refer the bill to a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament was welcome. The 31-member committee, drawn from across party lines, received 97,27,772 memoranda overall. There were representations from various ministries and departments—including Minority Affairs, Law and Justice, Railways, Housing and Urban Affairs, Road Transport, and Culture (Archaeological Survey of India)—as well as state waqf boards and experts, ensuring a diversity of opinions. As such, the government and Parliament were exhorted to adopt pro-

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correct to state that waqf reforms are being externally foisted. Rather, to a large extent, the demand for waqf reforms has emerged from within the Muslim community also. The Ministry of Minority Affairs received numerous complaints from Muslims on the maladministration of waqf properties, which manifested in luminous litigations. The ministry's analysis of grievances received from April 2023 found that 148 complaints pertained mostly to encroachments, illegal sales of waqf land, delays in surveys and registration, and complaints against waqf boards and mutawallis.

Has Trump Abandoned Ukraine In Favour Of Russia?



Donald Trump has spent only a month in his second term as the US President. However, he has disrupted the international order, weakened the Western alliance and created a sense of insecurity and uncertainty among its members, surprising even some of his supporters. There has been a paradigm shift in US foreign policy under Trump. He is now closer to Moscow than Washington's traditional allies. He has embraced the Kremlin's narrative on Ukraine and has sidelined US allies. Although senior members of the Trump administration have denied that the US has abandoned Kyiv and ignored its European allies, Trump himself has not made any serious attempts to pacify Ukrainians and Europeans. His closeness to Russia has been on display since he talked for 90 minutes on the phone with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, in which they agreed to start negotiations to end the Ukraine war, which will mark its third anniversary on Monday. Trump did speak to Zelenskyy soon after that call with Putin, but a nervous Ukrainian President warned that excluding his country from the talks would be "very dangerous". Events after that only made Ukrainians feel sidelined. Trump's Vice President, JD Vance, met European leaders in Munich two days later. But his comment that Europe will not be included in the peace talks only helped fuelled the speculation that they were being left out of the future of Ukraine, which is closer to their homes and in which they have invested a lot of money and effort since

the Russian invasion. Vance's meeting with Zelenskyy did not go well either as the Ukrainian leader refused to give access to the country's vast reserves of critical minerals unless he was given security guarantees. That angered Washington. Ending the Russia-Ukraine war was Trump's major campaign promise. But hardly anyone expected him to brazenly take Russia's side and even blame Ukraine for the conflict, which he did. Last Tuesday, a US delegation led by Secretary of State Marco Rubio met the Russian delegation headed by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Saudi Arabia, to discuss peace. Ukraine was not invited. Putin—who had been shunned by the US and its allies since the invasion of Ukraine—was delighted. A frustrated Zelenskyy dismissed the Riyadh talks as worthless. Trump did not like those comments and called the Ukraine President a dictator, even accusing him of starting the war. Zelenskyy said the US President was living in a Russian-made "disinformation space". This infuriated Trump, who does not take kindly to any criticism. He described Zelenskyy as "a modestly successful comedian" who "talked the United

States of America into spending \$350 Billion, to go into a War that couldn't be won, that never had to start, but a War that he, without the U.S. and 'TRUMP', will never be able to settle." Trump's behaviour towards Zelenskyy is in stark contrast to Biden's, who had backed Ukraine against Russia with all the possible military and financial aid. President Biden travelled to Ukraine many times since the Russian invasion in February 2022 to display his administration's full support. He also promised NATO membership to Ukraine at a future date. Russia was severely punished for invading Ukraine. The US joined hands with its allies to isolate Moscow. Russia faced tough sanctions and its assets in the West were seized. The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against Putin for alleged war crimes in Ukraine. There were even plans to put Putin and his close allies on Nuremberg-style trials. Until a year ago, Ukraine's leader was talking about even liberating all its territory, including Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014, with the help of Western military equipment. Ukraine even succeeded in occupying the

Russian territory of Kursk, which it had thought would be used as a bargaining chip during negotiations with Moscow. But all that now looks like a distant dream. With Trump back in the White House, Ukraine fears that Russia will be allowed to keep all the occupied territory as part of the deal to end the war. Kyiv is now likely to be denied NATO membership. That could be a promise to Russia to end the war. The US under Trump has now even opposed calling Russia an aggressor in a G-7 statement being prepared to mark the third anniversary of the war. The US team removed the phrase from the first draft, which was prepared by Canada, the current holder of the group's presidency. It is not just Ukraine, America's European allies are also now nervous about the intent of Trump. Since the Second World War, they enjoyed the US security umbrella under NATO. But now they are unsure if the US under Trump will honour Article 5 of the NATO, which is triggered when a member state comes under attack. It implies that an attack on one member is an attack on all. There is even fear in Europe that Donald Trump may sign a deal with the Russian leader Vladimir Putin that will lead to the withdrawal of US forces from Baltic states and effectively kill the NATO alliance. That could be similar to the non-aggression treaty signed by the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany on August 23, 1939, sending shockwaves to other European countries and prompting Hitler and Stalin to annex neighbouring countries. It is another matter

The Hindutva Pitch of the BJP

Rather than a rising embrace of the Hindutva ideology of the BJP, observers pointed out that Bihar was shifting away from the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) led by Lalu Yadav owing to fears of his previous misrule. North Bihar is still firmly under the control of the NDA, and yatras, which were once used to communalize politics, have not been very successful. The Hindu Swabhiman Yatra, which Union Minister Giriraj Singh attempted last year but was unable to launch, is a prime example.

In this context, many questioned whether Modi was in Bihar trying to test the ideological limits of the BJP. "Those who believe in jungle raj hate our heritage and our faith," he said, slamming the opposition for "abusing" the current of Unity. He stressed that more individuals had bathed at the Kumbh than lived in Europe. Anyone who finds fault with the Ram temple will seize the chance to criticize the Maha Kumbh. He made it clear that someone who disrespects the Maha Kumbh would never be forgiven in Bihar. Lalu Prasad Yadav

caused a stir last week when he criticized the, claiming that it was "meaningless" and placing the responsibility on the Railways for the 18 lives lost in the stampede. The people who disagreed with Maha Kumbh weren't limited to him either. In addition, Akhilesh Yadav, leader of the Samajwadi Party (SP), offered Yogi Adityanath and himself a book based on a Harvard University research on Kumbh Mela management that they had commissioned in 2013.

The opposition has brought up the problems of the January 29 stampede, the filthy water, and the enormous number of worshippers at the Mela on multiple occasions. Mamata Banerjee, chief minister of West Bengal, used the moniker "Mrityu Kumbh" to emphasize the gravity of the events. Despite the Opposition's nasty campaign, devoted Hindus were unconvinced. In spite of all the negative feedback, a staggering 62 crore people made the journey to the Sangam to take a sacred dip, proving once and for all the spiritual importance of Maha Kumbh.

The trinity that failed women at Maha Kumbh. Holy, unhol, and the algorithm

Aasavag irony is unfolding in Uttar Pradesh right now. India's holiest gathering is a hunting ground for faceless remote predators. At the "once in 144 years" underway in Prayagraj, where millions congregate to wash away their sins in the Ganga, an unhol alliance of voyeurs, traders, and technology has formed. They're transforming purification into portable entertainment. What's on sale? The privacy and bodily integrity of women devotees. And the price? Anywhere between Rs 800 and Rs 2,000, depending on the quality of violation. Indian women have been failed, yet again, by a new trinity: The holy, the unhol, and the algorithm. Last week, 13 FIRs were lodged against 140 social media accounts for posting objectionable videos of women, including those of female devotees taking a dip at the Kumbh. The bathing videos came to light during a separate investigation by the Ahmedabad Cyber Crime Police into videos sourced from a Rajkot hospital's gynaecology department. The investigation revealed that the three accused—Prajwal Taili, Praj Patil, and Chandraprakash Phoolchand—ran at least 22 Telegram channels where they sold clips of women, recorded and traded without their consent. The three men, a YouTuber from Prayagraj and two NEET aspirants from Maharashtra, ran their enterprise under an innocuous name "Megha Demos Group". The channels, with labels like "CCTV Injection Group", "Labor Room Injection Group", and "Ganga River Open Bathing Group", turned these transgressions into a menu of options.

"Disturbingly, some content featured covert recordings from hospital labour rooms, medical examinations, and public areas like bus stands, marriage halls, and parlours," cyber crime officers told The

Times of India. This lucrative venture raked in Rs 8 lakh a year. To the credit of UP Police, their social media monitoring team has moved swiftly, and identified 15 more accounts across Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram participating in this ecosystem of exploitation. The state government has now banned cameras at bathing ghats, deploying CRPF and state police personnel to enforce this prohibition. In 2019 too, the Allahabad High Court had banned the publishing of photos and videos of women at the Kumbh Mela: "The court said no pictures of women bathing or taking a holy dip should be shared. It also warned that action would be taken if the order was broken. This rule applies to both print and visual media." This violation and commodification of women's bodies at the Maha Kumbh represents a betrayal across three interconnected spheres. It's not as if Indian women are unfamiliar with such trespasses—that's our daily reality. But the Kumbh videos expose a particularly perverse intersection of faith, trade, and technology. First, there is the sacred:

In a space of spiritual liberation, the crowd provides both cover and target for predators.

Elaborate systems at Indian temples and other places of worship prevent photography to protect idols and deities. Those regulations don't extend to the bodies of women who show up at these sites. Then comes the betrayal by the profane, a carefully constructed marketplace where every assault is catalogued, priced, and traded. What's most chilling about the Kumbh videos is the clinical efficiency of their distribution. The "Megha Demos Group" operated with the precision of a tech startup, complete with a freemium business model. Finally, there is the betrayal by technology.

CM launches NDMC's 'Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi' educational initiative

Delhi : Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta launched the New Delhi Municipal Council's (NDMC) educational initiative, "Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi", at Talkatora Stadium. The initiative includes the introduction of a new curriculum for NDMC school students. "The initiative emphasized Indian philosophies and the Guru-Shishya model, yoga and wellness education, and learning in natural surroundings, along with environmental stewardship and nature-based learning," said the CM. She added, "Under the new curriculum, we are not only teaching development but also heritage - ensuring our students connect life values with cultural values and grow into great personalities for the nation." Vice Chairman NDMC Kuljeet Singh Chahal, who was present at the event, said, "The first objective will be to help in furthering the thinking and idea of a developed India of the Prime Minister.

Under the "Vikas Bhi Aur Virasat Bhi", new courses have been included from Panch



Free electricity up to 1,200 units for Ramleela and Durga Puja committees

Delhi : The Delhi government will provide free electricity up to 1,200 units to Ramleela and Durga Puja committees and meters for the same will be installed on just 25% security deposit, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said.

Moreover, to ease administrative hurdles, the government will issue no-objective certificates (NOC) for various services through a single-window system, eliminating the need for

Pran, Learning from Nature, Yoga, and the Indian Knowledge Tradition."

these organising committees to approach multiple departments, the CM said. Gupta added that public amenities such as toilets, security arrangements, health-care services, ambulances and fire brigades will also be ensured at the venues of Ramleela and Durga Puja. She made the announcements after meeting representatives of Ramleela and Durga Puja committees at the Delhi Secretariat.

Under the "Vikas Bhi Aur Virasat Bhi", new courses have been included from Panch

Student concession Metro passes on the way, says CM

Delhi : Rekha Gupta, chief minister of Delhi, recently announced that the city will finally grant students' long-sought request for discounted metro passes. "This Delhi government will ensure that the metro passes are supplied shortly. Up till now, they have been unavailable. During her talk at the annual function 'Swayamsiddha 2025' at Delhi University's Sports Complex, Gupta assured the audience that the facility would be made available to their pupils. Gupta, who was president of



DUSU many years ago, reflected on her undergraduate days as the Delhi University Students Union (DUSU) elections approached. The primary contestants included the RSS-backed ABVP, the Congress-backed NSUI, and the Left-backed student wings AISA and

SFI. The CM gave an impassioned speech in which she thanked the ABVP for helping her launch her career and encouraged college students to find a "cause" to devote their time to. "Joining ABVP means joining a cause," the CM told the students.

NDMC approves night food bazar at Connaught Place & India Gate

Delhi : NDMC approved 16 major proposals aimed at improving civic infrastructure, enhancing public services and promoting citizen welfare. Among the key initiatives that received the nod was a 'night food bazar' at Connaught Place and India Gate. The project

will see 50-60 food trucks operating daily between 10:30pm and 1am, offering a wide range of food and enriching the night-time experience for locals and tourists. The concept was proposed by Delhi minister and NDMC ex officio member Parvesh Verma. He

said the project will be developed along the lines of successful night markets in other parts of India. "Indore's Sarafa Bazaar, a jewellery market by day, transforms into a night street food market, serving a wide variety of local delicacies late into the night.

Employees will be moved from non-operating Mohalla Clinics to operational ones



minister Pankaj Singh, 31 Mohalla Clinics, including 17 porta cabins and 14 rented AAMCs, have been closed with immediate effect, according to an earlier order seen by, which was issued by Dr. Manoj Kumar Gupta, state programme officer, Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinic (AAMC) Cell. "All chief district medical

officers (CDMO) are requested to post a message in their respective Mohalla Clinic groups that the staff posted in 31 Mohalla clinics (17 Porta cabins and 14 Rental) which are already non-functional due to the non-availability of doctors are shifted to other Mohalla Clinics very soon."

DJB proposes new groundwater contamination rules

Delhi : Jal Board (DJB) submitted an affidavit to NGT on rainwater harvesting pit groundwater contamination. Among other ideas, the board suggested banning stormwater drain collection systems. DJB claimed that a joint committee expert meeting was convened on July 31, 2025, to identify groundwater contamination from RWH structures in Delhi when developing new rules. Separators were needed to prevent the first rain from entering. In 2023, a Dwarka homeowner complained that rainwater collection pits were polluting.

NCERT Offers Free Online Mathematics Classes For Class 12, Details Here



Delhi : A strong foundation in mathematics is essential for sharpening the mind, developing a scientific temperament, and building problem-solving skills that benefit individuals in every sphere of life. From pursuing engineering and science degrees to careers in data science and research, proficiency in mathematical concepts is crucial. To support students in strengthening their mathematical knowledge, especially those who cannot afford private tuition or coaching, the National

Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is offering a free online mathematics course on the government's SWAYAM portal.

The course is designed to help learn-

ers clarify doubts, strengthen concepts, and achieve proficiency in problem-solving. Students can register for the course through the official portal: SWAYAM Mathematics Course Link.

SC rules Aadhaar isn't proof of citizenship



The Capital Sees a Surge in Hepatitis Cases During the Monsoon Season

Delhi: On World Hepatitis Day, experts warned that hospitals in the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) have seen an alarming increase in hepatitis A and E cases since the rainy season has begun. Children, pregnant women, and individuals with liver illness are particularly vulnerable to this seasonal rise, which doctors attribute to unclean water.

Delhi : Serious allegations, including kidnapping and murder, have been filed against over half of India's ministers, spanning both the Union government and individual states. The latest research from the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) alleges. Among the 643 ministers examined—representing 27 state assemblies, 3 Union Territories, and the Union Council of Ministers—302, or 47%, listed criminal charges in their election affidavits.

There are

174 ministers in this group who are facing serious accusations, including murder, abduction, and crimes against women. The report's release followed the introduction of laws in Parliament by the Centre to remove a

serving minister, chief minister, or prime minister from office and imprison them for 30 days on suspicion of a major crime. The bills were submitted to a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) that has not yet been created.

Attorneys general's office: "Nearly 50% ministers face criminal cases"



DJB informs NGT of 33 Sangam Vihar colonies on Ridge forest

Delhi : While building a sewage network in Sangam Vihar, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) found 44 unauthorized colonies, 33 of which are forest land encroachments. The affidavit states that 22 of these colonies are totally on forest property and 11 are partially on it. The NGT took suo motu notice of a news article in March showing Sangam

ed after being tabled in the Lok Sabha on August 20 amidst a

Vihar's internal roadways damaged and waste strewn in illegal colonies. The DJB reported on August 13, 2025, that 44 of Delhi's 1,799 unauthorized colonies were in Sangam Vihar and 33 were on the southern and south-central Ridge. 11 of these 33 illegal woodland communities are undergoing sewer work.

storm of protests and sloganizing by the opposition.

Dec: IGI Airport T3 would handle 50% more international passengers



Delhi: Terminal 3 (T3) at IGI Airport will handle 50% more foreign travel this winter as its capacity increases from 2 crore CPA to 3 crore. T3 has four piers, two for domestic (3 CPA) and international traffic. Delhi International Airport Ltd. (DIAL) received the final approval to convert a domestic dock to international

national last week and began work. This should be done by

December, insiders indicate. T3 will have a capacity of 3 CPA internationally and 1.8 CPA domestically (with one pier). "Bureau of Immigration, BCAS, customs, and CISF clearances were needed to start work. Only BCAS approval remained. A source stated DIAL has begun preparations. T2 will reopen after the middle of next month, but Pier C of T3 will handle domestic traffic until then. On October 26, domestic flights from the 1.5-CPA at T2 will resume for the winter timetable. DIAL CEO Virender Kumar Jaipuria said dock C will not serve passengers in November before becoming international dock."

Briefs

Time names person of '25

"Architects of AI" were named Time magazine's person of the year for 2025 on Thursday. The magazine cited 2025 as the year when the potential of AI "roared into view" with no turning back. "To deliver the age of thinking machines, for wowing and worrying humanity, to transform the present and transcending the possible, the Architects of AI are TIME's 2025 Person of the Year."

The magazine was deliberate in selecting people - the "individuals who imagined, designed, and built AI" - rather than the technology itself, though there would have been some precedent for that. "We've named not just individuals but also groups, more women than our founders could have imagined (though still not enough), and, on rare occasions, a concept: the endangered earth, in 1988, or the personal computer, in 1982," wrote Sam Jacobs, the editor-in-chief, in an explanation of the choice. "The drama surrounding the selection of the PC over Apple's Steve Jobs later became the stuff of books and a movie."

Artefacts stolen in UK

A number of artefacts from India dating back to the British colonial era are among over 600 "high value" items stolen in a burglary at a museum in Bristol, south-west England, the police said on Thursday. The Avon and Somerset Police said the items were stolen from Bristol Museum's British Empire and Commonwealth collection on September 25 and released CCTV footage of four white male suspects in an appeal for information.

Ex-Bolivian prez arrested

Bolivian law enforcement officials on Wednesday arrested former President Luis Arce in a corruption probe, the country's vice president said, opening an uncertain chapter in Bolivia's politics a month after the inauguration of conservative President Rodrigo Paz ended 20 years of socialist rule. In a video to TikTok, Vice President Edman Lara congratulated police forces for detaining Arce, who left office over a month ago.

Champagne auctioning

A wedding captivated the world in 1981. Lady Diana Spencer said "I will" to Prince Charles, becoming Princess of Wales and bringing youth and glamour to Britain's royal family. Over 40 years later, Danish auction house Bruun Rasmussen is putting an exclusive magnum of Dom Pérignon Vintage 1961 champagne produced for the occasion under the hammer on Thursday.

Desi support for Reform UK, Green Party on rise: Report

Aditi Khanna

The votes of British Indians must not be taken for granted by the major parties as the electorate is getting increasingly drawn towards the extremes on the right and left of the political divide, the British Indian Census 2025 reveals this week.

The research by the 1928 Institute think tank, released in a House of Commons committee room in London, found Indian diaspora support for

MOUNTING TENSIONS | Venezuela accuses America of 'piracy'

US has seized oil tanker off Venezuela: Trump

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump said on Wednesday the US has seized an oil tanker off the coast of Venezuela as tensions mount with the government of President Nicolás Maduro.

Using US forces to take control of a merchant ship is incredibly unusual and marks the Trump administration's latest push to increase pressure on Maduro, who has been charged with narco-terrorism in the US.

The US has built up the largest military presence in the region in decades and launched a series of deadly strikes on alleged drug-smuggling boats in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean. The campaign is facing growing scrutiny from Congress.

"We've just seized a tanker on the coast of Venezuela — a large tanker, very large, largest one ever seized, actually," Trump told reporters at the White House, later adding, "It was seized for a very good reason."

Trump did not offer additional details. When asked what would happen to the oil aboard the tanker, Trump said, "Well, we keep it, I guess."

The seizure was led by the US Coast Guard and supported by the Navy, a US offi-

MADURO GOVT DID NOT KNOW WHERE I WAS HIDING: MACHADO

Oslo (Norway): Opposition leader María Corina Machado said on Thursday she doesn't believe the Venezuelan government knew where she was hiding for most of this year, as she met Norway's leader a day after her daughter received the Nobel Peace Prize on her behalf.

Machado arrived in Oslo hours after Wednesday's prize ceremony and made her first public appearance in 11 months early on Thursday, emerging from a hotel balcony and waving to an emotional crowd of supporters. She had been in hiding since January 9, when she was briefly detained after



joining supporters in a protest in Caracas.

On Thursday morning, Machado was received by Norwegian PM Jonas Gahr Støre, who said his country is ready to support a democratic Venezuela in "building new and sound institutions." Whether the Venezuelan government might have known her whereabouts since

January, Machado told reporters: "I don't think they have known where I have been, and certainly they would have done everything to stop me from coming here."

The 58-year-old didn't give details of how she got to Norway but thanked "all those men and women that risked their lives so I could be here today."

She said, "We decided to fight to the end and Venezuela will be free" and, if Maduro's government is still in place when she returns, "certainly I will be with my people and they will not know where I am. We have ways to do that and take care of us."

—AP

VENEZUELA REACTS

Venezuela's government said the seizure "constitutes a blatant theft and an act of international piracy."

"Under these circumstances, the true reasons for the prolonged aggression against Venezuela have finally been revealed. It has always been about our natural resources, our oil, our energy, the resources that belong exclusively to the Venezuelan people," it said.

US prez launches Gold Card
It's shame students have to go back to India, China after graduating: POTUS

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump announced the launch of a million-dollar "Gold Card" offering a pathway for immigrants to US citizenship, saying it is a "shame" that students from India and China

have to go back to their countries. The Trump Gold Card announced on Wednesday is a visa based upon an individual's ability to provide a substantial benefit to the US.

"It is a gift of getting somebody great coming into our country, because we think these will be some tremendous people that wouldn't be allowed to stay," Trump said during a roundtable in the White House.

Trump added students graduate from college, "you have to go back to India, they have to go back to China, they have to go back to France. They have to go back to where ever they came from. Very hard to stay. It's a shame,"

Flanked by IBM's Indian-American CEO Arvind Krishna and Dell Technologies CEO Michael Dell, Trump announced the Gold Card website is live and companies can "buy" the Gold Card to keep the students they hire

from top American universities such as Wharton, Harvard and MIT in the US.

Trump said he has heard from Apple CEO Tim Cook several times and other executives that they cannot hire people from the best colleges because "you don't know whether or not you can keep the person."

Trump said students are "thrown" out of the country. "You graduate number one from your college, and there's no way of guaranteeing... that they're able to stay in the country."

Trump said Cook spoke to him about this "real problem".

"It's not going to be a problem anymore. As you know, they used to send people up to Canada and other places, other countries. So we solved that," Trump said adding through the Gold Card, the US will take in billions of dollars that will be used for the country.

"So it'll be a great thing. We'll take in, I think, billions of dollars, many billions of dollars even. So that's very exciting," he said.

Trump added that the companies are now going to be very happy with the Gold Card, which will have greater advantages over a green card that offers permanent residency in the US.

'Colombia prez Petro could be next target'

US President Donald Trump has renewed his threats against his Colombian counterpart, Gustavo Petro, warning the South American leader could be the next target for his anti-drug campaign.

On Wednesday, at a White House roundtable with business leaders, one reporter asked Trump if he had spoken to Petro. That touched off a fiery response from the Republican leader. "I haven't really thought too much about him. He's been really hostile to the US," Trump began, before going on the offensive. "He's going to have himself some big problems if he doesn't wise up," Trump continued.

"Colombia is producing a lot of drugs. They have cocaine factories. They make cocaine, as you know, and they sell it right into the United States. So he better wise up, or he'll be next. He'll be next. I hope he's listening. He's going to be next because we don't like people when they kill people."

US DEF BILL PASSED

The US House voted to pass a sweeping defence policy bill that authorises \$900 billion in military programmes, including a pay raise for troops and an overhaul of how the Dept of Defence buys weapons.

The bill's passage comes at a time of increasing friction between the Republican-controlled Congress and Trump administration over the management of the military.

Open AI, Microsoft face death lawsuit

Victim's kin says chatbots played a role in US woman's murder-suicide

SAN FRANCISCO

The heirs of an 83-year-old Connecticut woman are suing ChatGPT maker OpenAI and its business partner Microsoft for wrongful death, alleging the artificial intelligence chatbot intensified her son's "paranoid delusions" and helped direct them at his mother before he killed her.

Police said Stein-Erik Soelberg, 56, a former tech industry worker, fatally beat up and strangled his mother, Suzanne Adams, and killed himself in early August at the home where they both lived in Greenwich, Connecticut.

The lawsuit by Adams' estate on Thursday in California Superior Court in San Francisco alleges OpenAI "designed and distributed a defective product that vali-

dated a user's paranoid delusions about his own mother." It is one of a growing number of wrongful death legal actions against AI chatbot makers across the country.

"Throughout these conversations, ChatGPT reinforced a single, dangerous message: Stein-Erik could trust no one in his life — except ChatGPT itself," the lawsuit says.

"It fostered his emotional dependence while systematically painting the people around him as enemies. It told him his mother was surveilling him. It told him delivery drivers, retail employees, cops, and friends were agents working against him. It told him that names on soda cans were threats from his adversary circle." OpenAI did not address the merits of the allegations in a statement.

'Unless he changes course, Trump will be president that lost India'

... chased close ally away, says Dem lawmaker

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump's policies towards India are doing "real and lasting damage" to the strategic trust and mutual understanding, a top US lawmaker has said, underlining that Washington must move with "incredible urgency" to mitigate the damage done to bilateral ties.

"...Unless he changes course, Trump will be the American President that lost India, or more accurately, that chased India away while revitalising the Russian Empire, while breaking up the Transatlantic Alliance and menacing Latin America. That is not a legacy any president should be excited about having," Democratic Congresswoman

from California Sydney Kamlager-Dove said.

"When the history books are written about where Trump's antagonism towards India began, they will point to something that has nothing to do with our long-term strategic interests — his personal obsession with a Nobel Peace Prize. While that is laughable, the harm that it will cause is not," she said.

Kamlager-Dove, a Ranking Member, was addressing the House Foreign Affairs South and Central Asia Subcommittee

hearing titled The US-India Strategic Partnership: Securing a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

The hearing heard from witnesses, Director of Asian Studies Centre, Heritage Foundation, Jeff Smith, Executive Director of the Observer Research Foundation America, Dhruva Jaishankar and External Senior Advisor, Special Competitive Studies Project Senior Fellow, Indo-Pacific Programme, German Marshall Fund of the US, Sameer Lalwani. —PTI

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Police recovered the blender, as well as skin flaps with muscle tissue attached and bone fragments. The Telegraph reported. Court documents say Thomas was watching YouTube videos on phone while dismembering his wife.

Putin-Modi selfie speaks thousand words: US envoy

Washington: US representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove while talking about the famous car selfie of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Russian President Vladimir Putin said it spoke a thousand words. Dove said

from California Sydney Kamlager-Dove said.

"When the history books are written about where Trump's antagonism towards India began, they will point to something that has nothing to do with our long-term strategic interests — his personal obsession with a Nobel Peace Prize. While that is laughable, the harm that it will cause is not," she said.

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Beauty pageant star's killing: Hubby charged

Woman was chopped, 'pureed'

The husband of a former Miss Switzerland finalist has been charged with her murder, Swiss authorities announced on Wednesday. The 43-year-old, named Thomas under Swiss privacy laws, is accused of strangling his wife, Kristina Joksimovic, 38, before dismembering her and attempting to dispose of her remains inside their home in Binningen in February 2024.

The model's body was cut apart with a jigsaw knife and garden shears, according to

Zelenskyy to hold urgent talks with 30 countries

... as Trump pushes for swift peace deal with Russia

Kyiv: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was due to hold talks on Thursday with leaders and officials from about 30 countries that are supporting Kyiv's effort to obtain fair terms for an end to the war with Russia.

The leaders of Germany, Britain and France were among those expected to attend the meet of Ukraine's allies, dubbed the Coalition of the Willing, via video link.

Zelenskyy indicated the

talks were hastily arranged as Kyiv officials scramble to avoid getting boxed in by US President Donald Trump's demands for a swift settlement. European governments are trying to help steer the peace negotiations as they say their own security is at stake.

Trump said on Wednesday he and European leaders discussed proposals by phone in "pretty strong terms", adding Zelenskyy "has to be realistic" about his country's position

PIO held in Canada for flashing lady docs

tors. Police say the incidents occurred at several locations over several months in 2025. Confirming the arrest, PRP said, "The 12 Division Criminal Investigations Bureau has arrested and charged a Brampton man in an indecent act probe."

Authorities allege Vaibhav repeatedly attended clinics after pretending to suffer from medical issues, to prompt inappropriate physical contact from women doctors.

Thailand reports 1st civilian deaths

Surin: Three Thai civilians were killed as heavy combat continued along the country's border with Cambodia, the Thai military said on Thursday, marking the country's first civilian fatalities since the fighting resumed.

A Thai Army statement said Cambodia on Wednesday night launched an attack with artillery and mortars against Thai positions, to which it replied with the same kinds of heavy weapons, causing damage including "the destruction of enemy trucks."

Airstrike on hospital kills 34, injures 80 in Myanmar

Bangkok: An airstrike by Myanmar's military destroyed a hospital in an area controlled by a leading rebel armed force, killing 34 patients and medical staff, as per a rescue worker and reports on Thursday.

About 80 people were

injured in the attack on Wednesday night on the general hospital in Mrauk-U township, an area controlled by the ethnic Arakan Army in the western state of Rakhine, told AP a jet fighter dropped two bombs at 9.13pm with one hitting the hospital's recovery ward and the other landing near the hospital's main building.

The ruling military has not announced news of any attack. Wai Hn Aung, a senior official for rescue services in Rakhine, told AP a jet

Rajinikanth: The man behind the star

'Rajini sir would speak to us in Marathi'

On Rajinikanth's 75th birthday, actress Shilpa Shirodkar shared her memories and thoughts about working with the legend in the masala blockbuster *Hum*, which released in 1991

Today marks superstar Rajinikanth's 75th birthday. He has completed over five decades in the industry and is known for his unique mannerisms and cult fan following. He has been honoured with the *Padma Bhushan*, *Padma Vibhushan*, *Dadasaheb Phalke Award*, and the *IFFI Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award*, to name a few. Predominantly known for his films in Tamil cinema, he made his Bollywood debut with *Andhaa Kanoon* in 1983.

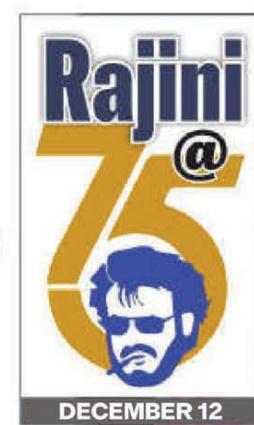
To mark his 75 years, we spoke to actress Shilpa Shirodkar, who acted with him in the blockbuster *Hum* (1991). The film had an ensemble cast comprising Amitabh Bachchan, Govinda, Kimi Katkar, Deepa Sahi, Danny Denzongpa, Anupam Kher, and Kader Khan, and is known for its chartbuster *Jumma Chumma De De*. *Hum* is about a dockworker who overthrows a gangster but has to run away to make a new life for himself and his brothers. Fifteen years later, his past catches up with him as his old enemies resurface.

Shilpa's memories from the sets of *Hum*

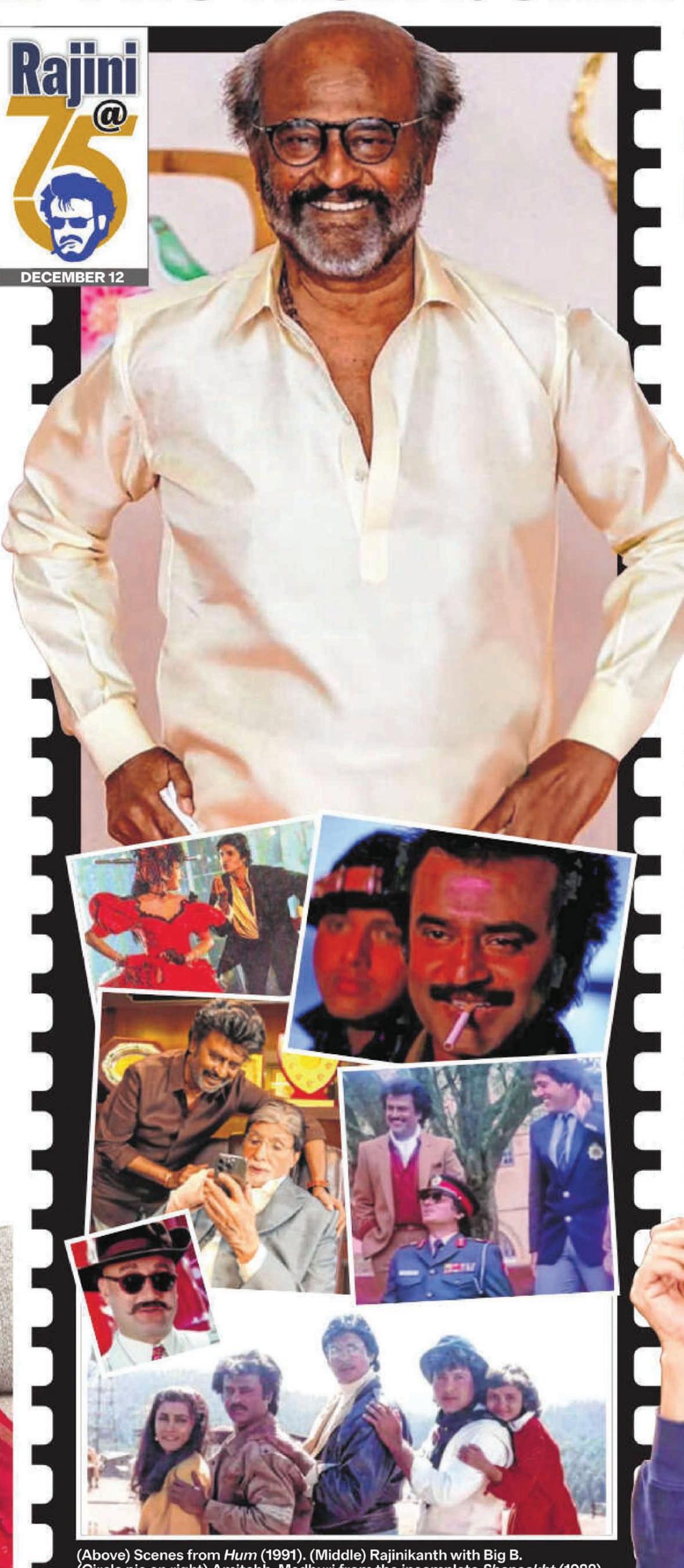
"I remember we were shooting in Mauritius, and my mother and I were the only two Marathi people on set. We would all meet down

Views

Honestly, sharing the screen with Rajini Sir was so much fun. He has this incredible, almost childlike energy, and he's genuinely the most grounded person you'll ever meet. It felt less like working with 'The Superstar' and more like collaborating with a really kind, humble colleague."



DECEMBER 12



(Above) Scenes from *Hum* (1991). (Middle) Rajinikanth with Big B. (Circle pic on right) Amitabh, Madhuri from the incomplete *Shanaakht* (1988)

Tinnu Anand reveals unheard personal incident

Actor Tinnu Anand was supposed to make a film with Rajinikanth called *Shanaakht* (1988), which got shelved. He reveals why and shares Rajinikanth's humbleness

films at the same studio. He sent word that he'd like to meet me. I said, 'Don't tell him to come, I'll come to his makeup room.' We met, and he asked me, 'What happened to that film? You have never come back for dates.' I had given him a signing amount. I said, 'I've dropped the film, sir.' He was shocked. He said, 'Why? How come you spent so much money on your shoot?' I said, 'Yes, that's a loss. But anyway, I can't carry on losing money on a script which has already been made.'

Then his secretary came later in the evening and asked, 'Sir, will you be home tonight?' I said, 'Yeah, I'm going straight home.' Around 9 pm, the bell rang, and the secretary said, 'Mr. Rajinikanth has come. He'd like to meet you.' Rajinikanth came and said very soberly, 'You're not making the film. But I promise you I'll give you dates on another film. But right now I cannot carry this money. This is like a load on me.' He asked if it was cash or a check. I said, 'A check.' He said, 'Okay, I'll write a check and return the money.' I literally started crying.

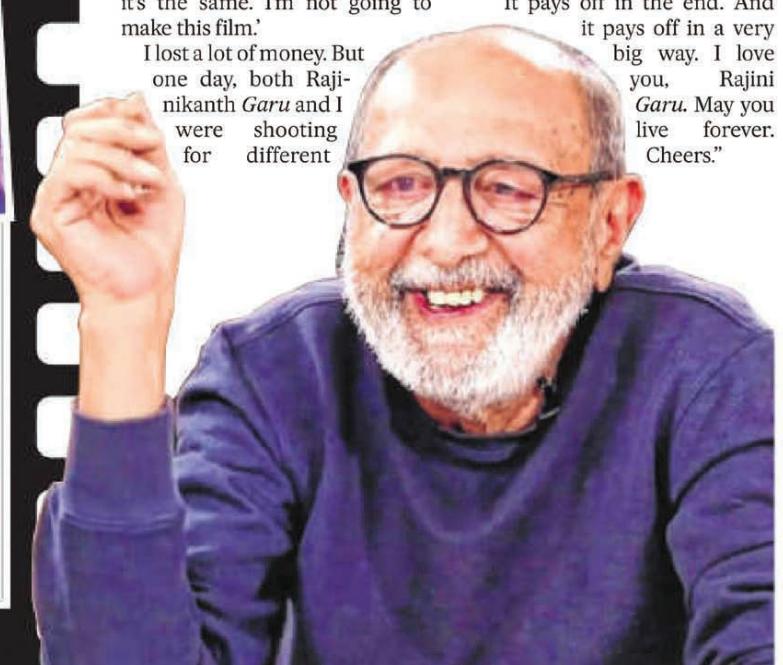
Here was a man who stands very tall, with great integrity, love for his profession, and love for the people he works with. This was Mr. Rajinikanth *Guru*. I always tip my hat, bow my head in front of him. A great man. His stardom exists because of this humbleness.

It pays off in the end. And it pays off in a very big way. I love you, Rajini *Guru*. May you live forever. Cheers."

Wanting to uncover unheard stories about Rajinikanth, we reached out to ace actor-director Tinnu Anand to share memories of the superstar, especially regarding the shelved film *Shanaakht* (1988), which also starred Amitabh Bachchan and Madhuri Dixit. Anand revealed a never-before-shared fact:

"I mean, I just don't have words enough to praise this man. Yes, I was supposed to do a film with him called *Shanaakht* (1988), directed by me. He had come down for the *Mahurat* with Amitabh, Madhavi, and Madhuri Dixit. I shot for five days with Amitabh in RK Studios, and then I went off to see *Gangaa Jamuna Saraswathi* (1988), first day, first show. And then I found out that the story was very similar to mine. Mine was full of action, but the romantic part of the film with Amitabh was the same. So I went to Amitabh and said, 'What is this? How come the story is the same? And you never told me?' He said, 'But yours is action.' I said, 'No, but the romantic angle is exactly the same. A man has lost his memory, a girl falls in love with him, but he's already married; he doesn't know.' He said, 'It's the same. I'm not going to make this film.'

I lost a lot of money. But one day, both Rajinikanth *Guru* and I were shooting for different



Golden moment for Sabry

Actress Hend Sabry, whose career spans Tunisia, Egypt and international productions, is celebrated for her roles in films such as *The Yacoubian Building*, *Scheherazade*, *Tell Me a Story*, and *Asmaa*. "I am deeply honoured to receive a prestigious award named after one of the true legends of cinema from this part of the world. My career has been devoted to uplifting women with complex stories and I am thrilled to be sharing this Golden Globes stage with Alia Bhatt, one of the next generation's brightest and most talented stars. It's a significant moment for women in our industry and I am so pleased to be part of the Golden Globes' enduring history," Sabry said.

Alia receives Golden Globes honour

Bollywood star Alia Bhatt honoured for her global impact as Red Sea Film Festival 2025 celebrates cinematic excellence across regions

Red Sea International Film Festival

Bollywood star Alia Bhatt has been honoured with the Golden Globes Horizon Award at the fifth edition of the Red Sea International Film Festival in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Bhatt, the star of movies such as *Raazi*, *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, *Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani* and Hollywood title *Heart of Stone*, was honoured at a ceremony alongside Tunisian actor Hend Sabry, who was felicitated with the Omar Sharif Award.

"We are honoured to present the Omar Sharif Award to Hend Sabry, a truly iconic performer and humanitarian whose body of work reflects the depth, power, and global impact of Arab cinema, while paying tribute to Omar's remarkable legacy as a pioneering Egyptian artist," said Helen Hoehne, president of the Golden Globes.

"We are equally thrilled to recognise and celebrate Alia Bhatt with the Golden Globes Horizon Award, celebrating her exceptional contributions to international cinema and the continued rise of the Middle East as a

dynamic and influential hub for film and television on a global stage."

The two honours celebrate creative excellence across the Middle East, Asia and North Africa. The Omar Sharif Award, named after the legendary Egyptian actor and three-time Golden Globe winner known for classics such as *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Doctor Zhivago*, recognises artists whose work reflects their enduring legacy and impact on world cinema.

The Horizon Award is presented to an emerging creative force whose rapid rise is shaping both regional and international screen culture.

Alia Bhatt

This is an honour to be recognised by the Golden Globes and I am grateful for the opportunity to speak for a new generation of aspiring performers and women who are making a difference in film and television around the world. At a time when global voices are coming together to tell more inclusive and impactful stories, this recognition feels especially meaningful



Pics: Instagram @_alialabbat

Briefs

NEW DELHI

Sindhu, Sen in Indian team for Asian C'ships



Two-time Olympics medalist PV Sindhu, Lakshya Sen and the star pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty will form the core of Indian squad to take part in the Badminton Asia Team Championships to be played in Qingdao, China from February 3-8. India are defending champions in the women's category of the competition, whereas the men's team had won two bronze medals in the past. "Selected on the basis of ranking, performance, and experience, the women's team will once again be led by former world champion and two-time Olympics medalist, PV Sindhu," the Badminton Association of India said. The world No 13 Sen will be the top ranked men's singles player which also features Kidambi Srikanth, HS Prannoy, Ayush Shetty, and Tharun Manepalli.

NEW DELHI

PGTI softens stance on IGPL players



Weeks after issuing show cause notices to players for participating in a Yuvraj Singh-backed league, the Professional Golf Tour India has softened its position with its President Kapil Dev saying that none of them would be stopped from competing in an upcoming PGTI event. The PGTI announced the launch of '72 The League', a new national-level event scheduled to be held from February 21 to March 6 next year. It will be staged across three Delhi-NCR courses -- Classic Golf and Country Club, Jaypee Greens and Qutab Golf Course. In September, 17 golfers, including Olympian and Asian Tour winner Gaganjeet Bhullar, were issued show-cause notices for participating in the Yuvraj-backed IGPL.

CHANDIGARH

Keerthana routs Sachdev, Yogesh wins



India's Yogesh Kumar came up with a gritty effort to show reigning women's IBSF World snooker champion Anupama Ramachandran the door in the knockout round of the

2ND T20I | Proteas' wicket-keeper batter scores 90 to power visitors to 213; Baartman scalps four wickets as India lose by 51 runs despite Tilak Varma's 62

De Kock lifts up South Africa

MULLANPUR

Quinton de Kock made an effortless 90 of 46 balls, firing South Africa to a challenging 213 for four in the second T20 International against India here on Thursday. Tilak Varma played a lone hand for India with 62 in 34 balls but it wasn't enough on the day. India managed 162 all-out in 19.1 overs, losing by 51 runs. The five-match T20I series is now level at 1-1.

Chasing a mammoth 214, India lost Shubman Gill for a duck and Abhishek Sharma (17) also followed soon. The hosts kept losing wickets at regular intervals. Varma kept hopes alive with breezy partnerships with Hardik Pandya (20) and Jitesh Sharma (27).

But the required rate crept well over 20 and beyond reach of Indian batters. Ottneil Baartman finished with 4 for 24 including three in his last over. Marco Jansen (2/24) had the prize scalps of Abhishek and Indian skipper Suryakumar Yadav while Lutho Sipamla and Lungi Ngidi also scalped two wickets each.

When in full flow, De Kock is among the most attractive batters in the game and he flaunted his special skills on a true pitch. He was mainly dealing in sixes in the middle and majority of his seven maximums came in the deep square leg region.

De Kock, who recently reversed his ODI retirement and was not sure about his T20 future post the World Cup last year, is back with a renewed purpose and remains on top of his game.

An innings like this just less than a week before the mini auction will also create the buzz among the franchises, who might indulge in a bid-



South Africa's Quinton de Kock (R) celebrates his half century with captain Aiden Markram during the second T20I against India in New Chandigarh on Thursday. PTI

ding war for the multi-skilled cricketer.

It was a no brainer that India decided to put South Africa in to bat after winning a rare toss. Arshdeep Singh, who had De Kock caught behind in the series opener, was at the receiving end on Thursday. De Kock began the assault with a pick up shot for six off Arshdeep before pulling the left-arm pacer for a

maximum over deep mid-wicket.

Jasprit Bumrah too conceded 16 runs in his second over after being dismally pulled for six by Reza Hendricks. The right-hander missed a skidder from Varun Chakravarthy in the following over to give India a welcome breakthrough but De Kock maintained the pressure on the opposition, taking his

team to 53-1 in the powerplay. Brought back into the attack in 11th over, Arshdeep lost his usual calm under pressure after being smashed for a six down the ground by De Kock. The Indian pacer tried to bowl wide workers from thereon but failed miserably and ended up bowling as many as seven wides in a 18-run over.

The South African opener

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The South African opener

Scoreboard

South Africa: Q de Kock run out (Jitesh Sharma) 90, R Hendricks b Chakravarthy 8, A Markram c Axar b Chakravarthy 29, D Brevis c Varma b Axar 14, D Ferreira not out 30, D Miller not out 20

Extras: (B-1, LB-5, W-16)

22 Total: 213-4 (In 20 overs) **FW:** 1-44, 2-137, 3-162, 4-163 **Bowling:** A Singh 4-0-54-0, J Bumrah 4-0-45-0, V Chakravarthy 4-0-29-2, A Patel 3-0-27-1, H Pandya 3-0-34-0, S Dube 2-0-18-0.

India: A Sharma c de Kock b Jansen 17, S Gill c Hendricks b Ngidi 0, A Patel c Hendricks b Baartman 21, S Yadav c de Kock b Jansen 5, T Varma c Markram b Ngidi 62, H Pandya c Brevis c Sipamla 20, J Sharma c Baartman b Sipamla 27, S Dube b Baartman 1, A Singh c Miller b Baartman 4, V Chakravarthy c Markram b Baartman 4, J Bumrah (not out) 0

Extras: (B-3, LB-1, W-1) **5 Total:** 162-all-out (in 19.1 overs) **FW:** 1-9, 2-19, 3-32, 4-67, 5-118, 6-157, 7-158, 8-162, 9-162 **Bowling:** L Ngidi 3.1-0-26-2, M Jansen 4-0-25-2, L Sipamla 4-0-46-2, D Ferreira 1-0-14-0, O Baartman 4-0-24-4, G Linde 3-0-23-0.

Sale of tickets for the 2026 T20 World Cup begins

Tickets priced at Rs 100 or LKR 1000, sale begins on Thursday

MUMBAI

Sale of tickets for the 2026 T20 World Cup began on Thursday with price being as low as Rs 100 or LKR 1000 in phase 1 for some venues. The competition is being co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka from February 7 to March 8.

The ICC announced the sale of tickets for the 10th edition of the T20 showpiece on its platform with the 20-team tournament set to be played across eight venues.

Ahmedabad, Chennai, New Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata will be the host cities for the World Cup in India, while Sri Lanka will have Colombo (two venues) and Kandy as the two locations.

Defending champions India will take on the USA in one of the three matches on the opening day of the tournament. ICC CEO Sanjog Gupta said the global governing body wants to make the tournament "most accessible and global ICC event ever".

New Zealand, Australia and South Africa have each won the WTC once with India finishing runners-up twice.

Gupta highlighted that a packed Lord's during the previous edition's final between Australia and South Africa, despite the absence of India and hosts England. "What we've seen with three editions past us now, is that the World Test Championship final has definitely delivered on the goal of providing a pinnacle event for Test cricket."



WTC final is pinnacle Test event, says ICC CEO

PTI
MUMBAI

The three World Test Championship finals held so far have "definitely delivered" on the aim of creating a pinnacle event for the traditional format of the game, said ICC CEO Sanjog Gupta on Thursday.

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Gupta highlighted that a packed Lord's during the previous edition's final between Australia and South Africa, despite the absence of India and hosts England. "What we've seen with three editions past us now, is that the World Test Championship final has definitely delivered on the goal of providing a pinnacle event for Test cricket."

TPL7: Gujarat Panthers register first win; Yash Mumbai Eagles prevail

AHMEDABAD



Yash Mumbai Eagles and Gujarat Panthers registered wins on day three of the Tennis Premier League (TPL) Season 7, powered by Clear Premium Water. The first half of the day witnessed incredible action at the Gujarat University Tennis Stadium on Thursday.

Yash Mumbai Eagles and Hyderabad Strikers got the proceedings underway on day three. Carole Monnet got the Strikers off to an ideal start with a 16-9 win against Riya Bhatia in the Women's Singles match. However, Riya Bhatia and Niki Poonacha fought back with a 15-10 win against Carole Monnet and Vishnu Vardhan in Mixed Doubles.

In the Men's Singles category, Damir Dzumhur registered his first win of the tournament, overpowering Pedro Martinez 16-9. The duo of Vishnu Vardhan and Pedro Martinez did clinch a 13-12 against Damir Dzumhur and Niki Poonacha, but it wasn't enough as Yash Mumbai Eagles prevailed 52-48.

Gujarat Panthers battled it out against Rajasthan

Rangers. In the Women's Singles, Ekaterina Kazionova registered a commanding 16-9 win against Nuria Brancaccio. Ekaterina Kazionova then teamed up with Dhakshinewar Suresh in the Mixed Doubles, clinching a 13-12 win against the pair of Nuria Brancaccio and Anirudh Chandrasekar.

In the Men's Singles encounter, Alexandre Müller delivered a clinic to win 17-8 against Luciano Darderi. Alexandre Müller and Anirudh Chandrasekar won 14-11 against Dhakshinewar Suresh and Luciano Darderi in the Men's Doubles, to win 52-48.

Gujarat Panthers battled it

out against Rajasthan

Suryavanshi star attraction in U-19 Asia Cup

Will ICC urge BCCI to revisit 'no handshake' policy with Pakistan?

DUBAI

India's Asia Cup U-19 campaign will be fronted by Gen Z batting sensations Vaibhav Suryavanshi and Ayush Mhatre, but equal focus would be on whether the BCCI allows the youngsters to exchange handshakes with their Pakistani counterparts, in what would be construed as maintaining sporting civility at the junior level.

While the India U-19 side, under the able leadership of dashing Mumbai and CSK opener Mhatre start its campaign against UAE on Friday, it is the match against Pakistan on Sunday that will certainly gain the most traction in the junior continental championship seen as a dress rehearsal for the World Cup early next year.

We know for a fact that ICC doesn't want politics to take front seat when it comes to junior cricket. So it is a case of both bad optics and public sentiment," a BCCI official in the know of things told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

As far as the tournament is concerned, India and Pakistan are almost sure to qualify for the semi-finals as the top two teams from group A. Apart from India and Pakistan, the other two sides are Malaysia and UAE, and they don't have a lot of experience of playing 50 over cricket.

Both Suryavanshi and skipper Mhatre are coming into the tournament following a great run of form in the



Vaibhav Suryavanshi in a file pic. PTI

ongoing Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. While Mhatre played a massive role in the group league stages with back-to-back centuries and a fifty, Suryavanshi became the youngest player in SMAT history to hit a century, against Maharashtra. In India's squad of 15, these are two boys, who have played more than 30 senior level games across the three formats and cumulatively scored nine centuries.

That is, in fact, the most number of senior level centuries when all the other seven teams are combined and it does make India the runaway favourites.

features two players of Sri Lankan (Naden Cooray and Nitesh Samuel) and one of Chinese Origin (Alex Lee Young). Australia enters the tournament as defending champions, with Oliver Peake as captain. "We're delighted to announce a strong and well-balanced squad for the ICC Under-19 World Cup," head coach Tim Nielsen said.

Australia Men's U19 Squad: Oliver Peake, Kasey Barton, Naden Cooray, Jayden Draper, Ben Gordon, Steven Hogan, Thomas Hogan, John James, Charles Lachmund, Will Malajczuk, Nitesh Samuel, Hayden Schiller, Aryan Sharma, William Taylor, Alex Lee Young.

Amend commercially restrictive clauses: ISL Clubs

AIFF should transfer the long-term rights of the top-tier league to the clubs if the national federation is unable to bring the necessary amendments or provide a commercially viable framework.

"...the AIFF should either expressly support removal of commercially restrictive clauses in the Constitution, or itself undertake these amendments at the forthcoming AGM on December 20, in another reminder that the domestic game may collapse if immediate steps are not taken.

All the ISL teams, except for East Bengal, said the

President Kalyan Chaudhary.

"Thereafter, the federation along with the support of the Government and the Clubs proceed to transparently identify an appropriate commercial partner.

"If the AIFF is unwilling or unable to support the necessary amendments or provide a commercially viable framework for the league, then the only logical solution is for the Federation to transfer the long-term rights of the league to the Clubs."



Thursday's letter from the ISL clubs came after a missive a few days back in which they had asked the AIFF to consider a framework under which they (the ISL clubs) may collectively form a consortium to own/operate the league as majority owners, alongside the national federation and aligned investors in case a suitable commercial partner is not found.

A recent tender floated by the AIFF for the commercial

rights of the ISL could not find any bidder.

"Clubs must have commercial flexibility, including the ability to attract sponsors, investors, and long-term partners. This is not possible until the commercially restrictive clauses in the AIFF Constitution are removed. Without this change, no sustainable league structure can be built, regardless of good intentions," the letter said.

In the earlier letter of December 5, the clubs had

even said that under the new AIFF Constitution, the national federation "possesses the authority to amend its own statutes including those impeding commercial operation of the league-without requiring judicial directions."

In its reply to Thursday's letter from the clubs, the AIFF said the options remain limited as the Supreme Court is seized of the matter. AIFF Executive Committee and the General Body will need to approve any proposal.