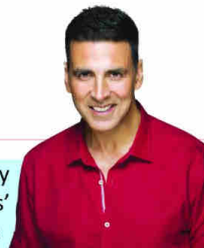




**Kohli does not deserve place in Indian team, says Irfan Pathan**

**Ukraine will ask allies to boost its air defenses at a meeting in Germany, Zelenskyy says**

**After 'Stree 2', will Akshay be part of Maddock Films' horror comedy universe**



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**4 DELHI**  
GRAP 3 curbs revoked in Delhi NCR amid dip in air pollution levels

## No welfare scheme to be shut if BJP comes to power in Delhi: PM Modi

The prime minister assured that no public welfare scheme would be discontinued if the BJP assumed power but the party's government would weed out the corruption in their implementation.

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday accused Delhi's AAP government of wasting a decade fighting with the Centre and urged its people to give the BJP an opportunity to turn the national capital into a city of the future.

The prime minister also assured that no public welfare scheme would be discontinued if the BJP assumed power but the party's government would weed out the corruption in their implementation.

Addressing a rally in the Rohini area, Modi dubbed the AAP government a "disaster" that had struck Delhi and asserted the BJP would usher in change.

"Only when this 'aapda (disaster)' is gotten rid of in Delhi, the double-engine of development will come in," Modi said. The prime minister said the Centre had been developing highways in Delhi, expanding the Metro network, starting the Namoo Bharat Regional Rapid Transit System, and running big hospitals.

"However, the moment you step out of a Metro



Today, the PM spoke for 30 minutes and he kept abusing the people of Delhi and the elected govt of Delhi - I was listening to it, it felt bad...The promise made by the Prime Minister for Delhi in 2020 - the people of Delhi Dehat are still waiting for that to be fulfilled. - Arvind Kejriwal

station, you can see pot-holed roads, overflowing sewers. Some areas are such that even auto and cab drivers refuse to ply due to long traffic jams," he said.

"In the past 10 years, Delhi has witnessed a state government that is no less than an 'aapda (disaster)!' Delhiites have realised this. Only one voice is reverberating in Delhi -- 'Aapda

nahi sahenge, badal kar rahenge (will not tolerate disaster, will bring change)," Modi said.

The prime minister said when the people of Delhi were grappling with COVID-19, struggling to find oxygen and medicines, the entire focus of the "aapda people" was on building their "Sheesh Mahal".

"They made a huge budget for the 'Sheesh

Mahal'. This is their truth... They do not care about the people of Delhi. That is why every Delhiite today is saying... 'we will not tolerate aapda, we will change,' he said.

Modi also accused the AAP government of spreading fear that a BJP government in Delhi would discontinue several welfare schemes implemented by it.

CONTD ON PAGE-2

**4 Maoists, cop killed in Chhattisgarh encounter**

Raipur: Four Maoists were killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region, a senior police official said on Sunday. A head constable of the District Reserve Guard was also killed in the face-off, he said.

The gunfight broke out on Saturday evening at a forest in south Abujhmad along the border of Narayanpur and Dantewada districts when a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-Maoist operation, the official said.

After the exchange of fire stopped late Saturday night, bodies of four Maoists and automatic weapons, including AK-47 rifle and self-loading rifle, were recovered from the spot, he said.

DRG head constable Sannu Karam was also killed in the gunfight, the official said.

Search operation was still underway in the area, he added.

Security forces recovered automatic weapons, including an AK-47 rifle and a Self-Loading Rifle (SLR), from the scene.

Agency

**3 killed as Coast Guard chopper crashes in Gujarat's Porbandar**



Porbandar: Two pilots and a crew member were killed on Sunday after an Indian Coast Guard helicopter on a routine sortie crashed at Porbandar airport runway in Gujarat and caught fire, officials said.

The maritime security agency said the reasons for the incident are being investigated through a Board of Inquiry. "ICG ALH MK-III helicopter CG 859 met with a mishap at Porbandar Airport Runway at about 1215 hrs on 05 Jan 25. The ICG helicopter had 02 Pilots and 01 Air Crew Diver at the time of the incident and was on a routine training sortie," an ICG statement said.

Immediately after the incident, the crew was rescued and shifted to a government hospital at Porbandar, where

they were declared as brought dead.

The deceased are Commandant (JG) Saurabh, Deputy Commandant SK Yadav and Navik Manoj Pradhan. They will be cremated as per service traditions and honour, the ICG stated.

Porbandar Superintendent of Police Bhagirathsinh Jadeja said the chopper crashed while landing near the Porbandar airport runway and caught fire.

"The chopper was returning and trying to land when the incident occurred near a runway. Three crew members were present on the chopper. They were rescued and rushed to Bhavsinh Civil Hospital in Porbandar with severe burn injuries, but none of them survived," the police officer told reporters earlier in the day. Agency

**8 STATE**  
UP CM Yogi to perform Ram Lalla's Abhishek during Pratishtha Dwadashi fest on January 11

**9 BUSINESS**  
India FDI Surges: Goyal Highlights growth & investment opportunities

**WEATHER**  
Sunrise 7:15 AM  
Sunset 5:39 PM  
Moonrise 11:34 AM  
Moonset 12:18 AM  
Today's Prediction  
Maximum 19°C | Minimum 9°C  
Tomorrow's Prediction  
18°C | 7°C

Government of Haryana

ਸੂਰਾ ਸੋ ਪਹਚਾਨਿਏ ਜੂ ਲਰੇ ਦੀਨ ਕੇ ਹੇਤ ॥  
ਪੁਰਜਾ ਪੁਰਜਾ ਕਟਿ ਮਰੇ ਕਵਹ ਨ ਛਾਡੇ ਚੇਤ ॥

**'Deg Teg Fateh'**

**Heartiest Greetings on the Prakash Parv of  
Sahib-E-Kamal  
Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji**

6 January, 2025

“में श्री गुरु गोबिन्द सिंह जी को उनके प्रकाश पर्व के पावन अवसर पर शीश नवाता हूँ तथा मानवता की सेवा में उनके योगदान का स्मरण करता हूँ। उनका अद्वितीय साहस सदैव लोगों को प्रेरित करता रहेगा।”

**- नरेन्द्र मोदी**

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana

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No welfare scheme to be shut if BJP comes to power in Delhi: PM Modi

CONT FROM PAGE-1

The prime minister asserted a new BJP government would implement central schemes that, he claimed, had been stalled by the AAP government, with renewed vigour.

"For Delhi, these people have made every season, every weather, 'aapda kaal'. The energy of Delhiites is spent in dealing with 'aapda' throughout the year," he said.

"Aapda" turned every season into an emergency, with water shortages, waterlogging and pollution, the prime minister alleged. "Therefore, only if AAP is removed from Delhi, the double engine of development and good governance will come."

"We are in the 21st century and 25 years have passed. Two or three generations have entered their youth. The next 25 years are very important for Delhi. The next 25 years will see India emerging as a developed nation before their eyes. We all will be stakeholders in this journey," Modi said.

The national capital should be a part of this glorious journey, he added.

"In Delhi, people blessed the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections and now, in the assembly polls, are set to bless the BJP. This is a golden opportunity to win the heart of Delhi and free it of disaster ('aapda')," he said.

Nation actively working to preserve tribal culture, says CM Yogi

Lucknow Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Narendra Modi, the Narendra Modi, the Narendra Modi is actively working to preserve tribal culture with several programs underway.

While interacting with the youth from Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh at his official residence during the Tribal Youth Exchange Program 2025, he highlighted that Prime Minister Modi declared November 15, the birth anniversary of Birsu Munda, as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas. He further emphasized the significance of this year as it marks the 150th birth anniversary of Birsu Munda.

During the interaction, the youth shared their perspectives with the Chief Minister, offering insights into the rich cultures of their respective states. The CM warmly welcomed the participants to Lucknow, acknowledging their efforts to attend despite the inclement weather conditions.

Introducing the youth to Uttar Pradesh, the Chief Minister stated: "It is the most populous state in the country, home to 215 crore people. The state comprises 75 districts, 18 divisions, over 350 tehsils, more than 825 development blocks, 17 municipal corporations, over 200 municipal councils, and more than 400 nagar panchayats."

# Ramesh Bidhuri expresses regret over his 'roads like Priyanka Gandhi's cheeks' remark

New Delhi: BJP candidate from Kalkaji Ramesh Bidhuri on Sunday drew flak for his remarks that he would make roads which are like Congress leader "Priyanka Gandhi's cheeks" in his constituency, with the Congress demanding an apology from him for "insulting women" and some leaders in his party also expressing their disapproval.

Bidhuri, who has courted controversies in the past too over his statements, initially remained defiant, pointing to similar remarks by RJD leader Lalu Prasad on actor and BJP MP Hema Malini.

However, he later posted a message on X expressing regret if his comments had hurt anyone and stated that his remarks had been misconstrued by some for political gains.

"Lalu said in Bihar that he would make roads like Hema Malini's cheeks, but he lied, he could not do it."

"I assure you that just as we made the roads in Okhla and Sangam Vi-



har, we will make all the roads in Kalkaji like Priyanka Gandhi's cheeks," Bidhuri is heard saying in the purported video, which went viral on social media. The Congress condemned the remarks, alleging it reflected the "anti-women" mentality of the BJP.

"Ramesh Bidhuri's statement regarding Priyanka Gandhi is not only extremely shameful but shows their ugly anti-women thinking. But what else can be expected from a man who used

foul language against his fellow MP in the House and did not receive any punishment? "Not only Bidhuri, but the BJP's top leadership should apologise with folded hands," Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete said, adding it was not only an insult to Priyanka Gandhi but to all women.

Asked about the Congress' demand for an apology, Bidhuri sought to defend himself by saying, "If this is a mistake, then the one who committed it first should

apologise. Isn't Hema Malini a woman? Accusing the Congress of hypocrisy, he said, "Hema Malini was from a simple family, is she not a woman? The one who is from a known family is a woman, how is it possible? Hema Malini is from the South, does that mean that she is not a woman. Everybody should get respect. ... they should have made him (Lalu Prasad) apologise, they did not ask for it because she was from a simple family. It is their hypocrisy,"

Senior BJP leader Behrawast said, "A politician should say anything after giving a thought to it." As the row escalated, Bidhuri, a former two-time MP from South Delhi and three-term MLA from Tughlakabad, in a post on X claimed that his remarks were being misinterpreted by some for political gain.

"It was not my intention to insult anyone. Still, if any person has been hurt then I express regret," Bidhuri said. X. Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva stated that such statements should be avoided and said all should follow proper conduct regarding language and respect for women, while reminding the Congress of the objectionable statements by its leaders and allies in the past.

"I have not heard the entire statement of Ramesh Bidhuri but I think that all the women, who are in politics, face a lot of difficulties. So, we should not make such statements and should exercise restraint in our language. I would also tell the Congress that when such remarks are made against our MP Hema Malini, they should not stop it. Having said that, respect

for women and maintaining control over our language is our duty and such statements are not welcomed by us," he said.

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for women and maintaining control over our language is our duty and such statements are not welcomed by us," he said.

NIA conducts raids in Delhi's Jamia Nagar in connection with 'cyber slavery' case

New Delhi: The NIA has conducted searches at the home of a recently-arrested accused in Delhi's Jamia Nagar as part of its probe into the human trafficking and cyber slavery case, the agency said in a statement on Sunday.

Advt Contact: 9818-799941

PUBLIC NOTICE

IT IS INFORMED TO THE PUBLIC AT LARGE THAT MY CLIENTS NAMED (1) MINEKH (UID-9258 912 8078) W/O NARESH KUMAR (2) RAGNI TOMAR (UID-6734 5575 2132) and (3) PREETI TOMAR (UID NARESH KUMAR have made a co-located SETTING PIECE OF LAND AREA MEASURING 250 SQ YDS. OUT OF KHASKNA NO (6) / 1862 (2), 1870 (3), 840 (14), 441 (14) & KHATA-KHATOUNI NO. 58-48, MINU, SITUATED IN THE REVENU ESTATE OF VILLAGE UJWA, DISTRICT BHAU KNOWN AS LA, DISTRICT OF VILLAGE UJWA, NEW DELHI - 110073 executed on 13/01/2024. Notary R. C. Joshi (Reg. No. 2367) in favour of RISHI KUMAR S/O PHOOL SINGH R/O RC-51, PHASE-4, FARM NAGAR, FADNAGAR, NEW DELHI - 110043, now due to omission of online transfer of Ra. 10/00/000- which was mentioned in the GEN. Act. by this public notice said GPa Set and any person who sale/purchase above property with the GPa Set will be null and void.

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This is to inform the public that my client, Sh. Veer Pal Son of Sh. Hari Kishan & Smt. Babita W/o of Sh. Veer Pal, Resident of R-6/36, Gali No. 4 A, Swatantra Nagar, Narela, Delhi - 110043, has dissolved and severed all relationships with his son, Rahul and daughter-in-law, Priya Alisa Khushi. This decision has been made by mutual consent in anti-social behaviour, anti-family activities, and disrespectful conduct towards my client. From this point onwards, Sh. Veer Pal & Smt. Babita disclaims any responsibility for their actions and completely dissociates himself/herself from any movable and immovable assets held by them. Any transactions or dealings with the aforementioned individuals shall be undertaken at the sole risk, cost, and consequences of the parties involved.

Mukesh Gupta (Adv) MISHRA CHITPA & ASSOCIATES O.E. AL. K.No. 42/2, 2nd Floor, Main Safdarabad Road, Narela, Delhi-110043 Mob: +91-9895955863

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GENERAL PUBLIC AT LARGE IS INFORMED THAT MY CLIENT SH. MEHANT DEVI W/O LATE SH. CHANDER R/O H.NO.-253, KIE-57/2/25, 58/41 AND 5, PHASE-02, FARM HOUSE NANGLOL, NEW DELHI-110043 HAS DISOWNED AND DEBARRED ALL RELATIONS FROM HIM AND HIS WIFE NAMELY SMT. SHIVANI D/O RAJESH AS BOTH ARE NOT UNDER THE CONTROL OF MY CLIENT MY CLIENT AND HIS FAMILY MEMBER ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ACT WHETHER LEGAL OR ILLEGAL COMMITTED BY BOTH NEERAJ AND HIS WIFE SHIVANI IN PAST OR FUTURE. ANY CONSEQUENCES OF ANY ACT DONE BY EITHER OF THEM AGAINST EACH OTHER SHALL BE BEAR BY THEMSELVES ONLY AND NEITHER MY CLIENT NOR ANY OF HER FAMILY MEMBER WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SAME ANY PERSON WHO DEALS IN ANY MANNER WITH NEERAJ AND HIS WIFE SHIVANI SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COSTS AND CONSEQUENCES AND MY ABOVE NAMED CLIENT SHALL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAME IN ANY MANNER WHATSOEVER. I HEREBY ALSO STATE THAT ALL MY MOVABLE AND IMMUNEABLE PROPERTIES/ASSETS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED BETWEEN MY ELDER SON RAJANUMAR AND MY DAUGHTER KARISHMA.

AKHILESH GRI ADVOCATES & SOLICITORS DELHI HIGH COURT CIVIL MENTRI DEVI W/O LATE CHAMBERS, DWARKA COURT COMPLEX, SECTOR-16, NEW DELHI-110075 Mob:847272917

BJP only national party not owned by any family but by its workers: Fadnavis

Nagpur: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday said that the BJP is the only national party that is not "owned" by any family but by its workers.

Speaking at a party event, Fadnavis called BJP a democratic organisation. There are more than 2,300 registered parties in the country but those that are national parties can be counted on fingertips, he said.

There are only two parties - the BJP and the Communist Party of India - that are not owned by any family, he said.

Almost all of the 2,300 parties are privately owned, Fadnavis said. "The Communist Party of India is no longer a national party. But the BJP is the only national party that is owned by people and party workers. No leader owns the party and it has its own constitution," Fadnavis said. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) is a national party.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rise from humble beginnings, Fadnavis said the BJP is the only party where a boy who once sold tea becomes the CM (of Gujarat) and then the PM.

He said Modi had no relative in politics and no godfather, but could still reach the top position.

Narrating his own political journey, Fadnavis said he started at the booth level, became ward president and went on to become the CM thrice. "This is possible only in the BJP. This is a party of people and party workers," he added.

He also launched the party's special membership drive in Nagpur. Fadnavis said BJP has enrolled 11 crore members that have been verified and it has become the world's largest political party. The BJP has set the target of enrolling 1.5 crore members from Maharashtra.

# PM Modi interacts with Kids during Nammo Bharat train inauguration ride

Sahibabad (Uttar Pradesh):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday interacted with school-children while riding the Nammo Bharat train from the Sahibabad RRTS station to the New Ashok Nagar RRTS station during its inauguration.

The Nammo Bharat trains have now reached Delhi, marking the beginning of a new era of high-speed mobility options for the National Capital.

Currently, a 42-km stretch of the corridor between Sahibabad and Meerut South, featuring nine stations, is operational. With this inauguration, the operational stretch of the Nammo Bharat Corridor has expanded to 55 km, with a total of 11 stations.

Starting today at 5 PM, Nammo Bharat trains will be available to the public at a frequency of 15 minutes. The fare from New Ashok Nagar Station,



the first operational station connecting Delhi to Meerut, to Meerut South is Rs 150 for the standard coach and Rs 225 for the premium coach. With the commencement of operations on this section, Meerut city is now directly connected to the national capital, Delhi, through Nammo Bharat. This reduces travel time by one-third, enabling commuters to travel from New Ashok Nagar to Meerut South in just under 40 minutes.

To date, Nammo Bharat trains have served over 50 lakh commuters, underscoring their popularity and impact. Further construction in other sections—New Ashok Nagar-Sarai Kale Khan and Meerut South-Modipuram—is progressing rapidly. Of the newly inaugurated 13-km section, 6 km is underground and includes a prominent station on the corridor, Anand Vihar. This marks the first

time Nammo Bharat trains will operate in an underground section. The other station on this stretch is an elevated station at New Ashok Nagar, both located in Delhi.

Multi-modal integration has been a core principle of the Nammo Bharat project. Aligned with the PM Gati Shakti-National Master Plan, it aims to make travel seamless and convenient for passengers, encouraging a shift towards public transport.

# PM to inaugurate & lay foundation stone of multiple railway projects today

Staff Reporter New Delhi:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of various railway projects on 6th January at 12:30 PM via video conferencing.

In a key move to further boost connectivity in the region, Prime Minister will inaugurate the new Jammu Railway Division. He will also inaugurate the Charlapalli New Terminal Station in Telangana and lay the foundation stone of Rayagada Railway Division Building of East Coast Railway.

Creation of the Jammu Railway Division, with 742.1 KM comprising Pathankot - Jammu - Udhampur - Srinagar - Baramulla, Bhopur Sirwal - Pathankot, Batala - Pathankot and Pathankot to Joginder Nagar sections, will significantly benefit Jammu and Kashmir and surrounding regions, fulfilling the long-pending aspiration of the



people and improving connectivity to other parts of India. It will create employment opportunities, infrastructure development, promote tourism and lead to overall socio-economic development of the region.

Charlapalli New Terminal Station in the Medchal-Malkajgiri District of Telangana has been developed as a new coaching terminal along with provision of second entry with a cost of around Rs 413

# Days after Lalu's offer, comes a snub from Nitish

Patna:

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Sunday snubbed the RJD, headed by his arch-rival Lalu Prasad, stating that he had forged alliances "by mistake" with the opposition party which "did nothing" while in power.

The JD(U) supreme made the remark days after Prasad, a former CM himself, had claimed that the RJD was keeping its "doors open" for the former ally, who is now back in the BJP-led NDA.

Talking to reporters in the north Bihar district of Muzaffarpur, as part of a state-wide Pragati Yatra, Kumar said, "Those who were in power before us... did they do anything? People used to fear stepping out of their homes after sunset. I had by mistake ('galti se') aligned with them a couple of times." "What was the condition of women back then? To-



day you can see these self-help groups, which we gave the name Jivika. The Centre replicated our model and called it Ajjivika. Did you see such confident rural women earlier?" asked the longest-serving CM of the state.

Kumar, however, did not take questions about the cryptic "offer" from Prasad, which was made light of by the RJD supreme's son and heir apparent Tejashwi Yadav, but endorsed by

ally Congress. Prasad's comments had come in the backdrop of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's equivocal stance on projecting Kumar as the chief ministerial candidate in the assembly polls due in less than a year.

State BJP leaders, on their part, have been maintaining that the JD(U) supreme will be the "face" of the NDA in the 2025 assembly elections.



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NEWS IN BRIEF

**Dense fog disrupts train services**

Ghaziabad

Cold wave and dense fog in North India have disrupted normal life. Rail and air traffic have been badly affected due to dense fog in Delhi-NCR for the second consecutive day in the morning. Premium trains are witnessing delays of up to six hours.

According to the meteorological department, cold day and fog conditions may persist in northwest and central India for the next two days. An alert has been issued that visibility would be limited to 50-100 meter at many places in Uttar Pradesh. According to the senior railway officials concerned, major trains like Rajdhani Express, August Kranti Tejas Rajdhani, Amritsar Express and Swaraj Express have been running late for the past one week. This situation has also affected local train services.

A total of 81 trains are delayed from their scheduled time. The situation of air traffic is even more serious. About 19 flights had to be diverted and 24 cancelled due to zero visibility at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport on Saturday morning. The visibility range on the runway was limited to just 100-250 meters. 144 flights had to take off late.

The meteorological department has issued orange and yellow alerts in various states of North India. Severe cold continues to hit Delhi-NCR as well as Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Temperatures are continuously falling in Ghaziabad, Noida, Greater Noida, Faridabad and Gurugram, with the minimum temperature reaching 8 degrees Celsius. In Bahadurgarh, it was even lower, at 7 degrees Celsius.

**AAP leaders join Delhi Congress**

Staff Reporter

New Delhi Many Aam Aadmi Party leaders here on Sunday joined the Delhi Congress. Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav welcomed them to the party fold by presenting them party scarves. Among those who joined the Congress were AAP's national-level leader Raghurendra Pathania and Monia Singh.

Delhi Congress president Yadav said that Raghurendra Pathania was a national council member of AAP, president of Delhi SC/ST department, Goa, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh booth manager and publicity manager and a member of the selection committee of candidates for the 2017 MCD elections while Monia Singh was the president of the women's wing at Badli, and 2017 MCD election candidate from Badli.

Yadav said that disillusioned with Kejriwal's corruption and autocratic functioning, senior leaders, including ministers, MLAs and others were leaving AAP and many such leaders have joined the Congress. They were motivated by the vision, policies and programmes of the Congress party and the democratic manner in which the party functions under the dynamic leadership of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi. The AAP leaders and workers have been upset and unhappy with functioning of former CM Arvind Kejriwal as his focus was on corruption and playing low level politics instead of putting focus on development works and welfare measures for the people, he added.

**GRAP 3 curbs revoked in Delhi NCR amid dip in air pollution levels**

New Delhi

The Centre's panel on Delhi-NCR's air quality on Sunday revoked Stage 3 curbs under the Graded Response Action Plan after witnessing a dip in air pollution levels owing to favourable meteorological conditions, especially improved wind speed, according to an official order.

The city's 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) stood at 339 at 4 pm on Sunday. According to forecasts from the India Meteorological Department and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, the air quality is predicted to improve further -- from "severe" to "poor" -- due to favourable meteorological conditions.

**Delhi LG grants relaxation in criteria for jobs to 1984 anti-Sikh riots victims**

New Delhi

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinay Kumar Saxena has approved full relaxation in required educational qualification and age relaxation upto 55 years for 88 applications for employment from victims of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, officials said on Sunday.

According to a release from the Delhi LG office, this relaxation has been approved for their appointment in Government Service to the post of Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS). Repeated representations had been made by the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, public representatives and groups of victims, who had met LG recently, in this regard.



Delhi-NCR, directed authorities in the region to immediately revoke curbs prescribed under stage 3 to prevent further worsening of the situation.

The IMD has predicted rain in northwest India over the next two-three days due to back-to-back western disturbances. The Commission for Air Quality Management, responsible for strategising air pollution mitigation in

work. Classes up to grade 5 are required to shift to hybrid mode under Stage 3. Parents and students have the option to choose online education wherever available.

Under Stage 3, the use of BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel cars (four-wheelers) is restricted in Delhi and nearby NCR districts. Persons with disabilities are exempted. Stage 3 also bans non-essential diesel-operated medium goods vehicles with BS-IV or older standards in Delhi.

During winters, the Delhi-NCR region enforces restrictions under GRAP, which categorises air quality into four stages -- Stage I (Poor, AQI 201-300), Stage II (Very Poor, AQI

301-400), Stage III (Severe, AQI 401-450), and Stage IV (Severe Plus, AQI above 450). Unfavourable meteorological conditions, combined with vehicle emissions, paddy-straw burning, firecrackers, and other local pollution sources, lead to hazardous air quality levels in Delhi-NCR during winters.

Doctors say that breathing Delhi's polluted air is equivalent to smoking approximately 10 cigarettes a day. Prolonged exposure to high pollution levels can exacerbate respiratory issues such as asthma, bronchitis, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and significantly increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Under Stage 2, the use of BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel cars (four-wheelers) is restricted in Delhi and nearby NCR districts. Persons with disabilities are exempted. Stage 2 also bans non-essential diesel-operated medium goods vehicles with BS-IV or older standards in Delhi.

During winters, the Delhi-NCR region enforces restrictions under GRAP, which categorises air quality into four stages -- Stage I (Poor, AQI 201-300), Stage II (Very Poor, AQI

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**Delhi Police foils suicide attempt by 15-year-old girl**

New Delhi

The Delhi Police foiled a suicide attempt by a 15-year-old girl who allegedly jumped off a bridge into the Yamuna due to academic stress, an official said on Sunday.

According to the police, the incident occurred on Saturday. Roop Nagar Police Station received a distress call from a woman about her daughter's disappearance. Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Raja Bantia said.

The girl's mother informed the police that her daughter had been home alone while the rest of the family was out. After a conversation about her academic performance, the mother grew concerned that her daughter might take a drastic step and she asked her son to check on her.

Upon returning home, the son discovered that the girl had left behind a suicide



note, Bantia said. A police team, led by ACP Vinita Tyagi, initiated a search operation. The team examined CCTV footage and conducted local inquiries, focusing on the Signature Bridge and Warzabad Old Bridge areas. Metro site guards were briefed and joined the search.

"During the search, the girl was spotted jumping into the Yamuna River. A guard and swimmer, Brijesh Kumar, leapt into the river and rescued her. She was safely pulled ashore and immediately counselled by the police team. Following due formalities, she was reunited with her relieved family," Bantia said.

**Projects inaugurated by PM Modi result of collaboration between central, Delhi govts: Kejriwal**

New Delhi

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday described the two projects inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as milestones for Delhi's infrastructure and claimed they were joint ventures between the central and the city governments.

Modi inaugurated a 13-kilometre stretch of the Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor from Sahibabad in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad to New Ashok Nagar here and the Janakpuri West-Krishna Park Extension section of the Delhi Metro Phase IV.

During a press conference, Kejriwal congratulated the people of Delhi and



asserted that the projects were a collaboration between the city and the central governments. Taking a dig at his critics, Kejriwal said, "These inaugurations are a reply to those who say AAP only engages in fights." Referring to the challenges faced

by his party, he claimed AAP leaders were imprisoned and tortured but maintained their focus on governance. "Over the past 10 years, our tenure has shown how we kept work above everything else," he said. He also hit out at Modi,

alleging that the prime minister devoted the majority of his speech to criticise the Delhi government.

Kejriwal said, "Today, the prime minister kept abusing the people of Delhi and the elected government of Delhi. I was listening to it, it felt bad. The promise made by the prime minister in 2020 -- the people of Delhi Dehat are still waiting for that to be fulfilled." The former chief minister also urged Modi to fulfil the promises made in the BJP's election manifesto.

With elections to the 70-member Delhi Assembly due in February, Kejriwal's remarks undermined AAP's focus on development amid its continuing tussle with the Centre.

**Delhi Police arrested two notorious shooters in Shahdara, recover arms**

New Delhi

Delhi Police achieved a significant breakthrough in their battle against crime with the arrest of two notorious shooters, Bobby aka Atul (19) and Paras Sharma aka Prince (26), from Shahdara.

Both of them were involved in a recent armed shootout at Vivek Vihar. The operation carried out on January 3, was marked by precision and courage, culminating in the recovery of one desi katta, one country-made pistol, and live cartridges, enhancing public safety in the area. The swift action was led by ACP Gurudev Singh, who formed a specialized team that included officers from Special Staff, such as Insp. Munish Kumar, SI Sunil, ASI Sunil, and others. Acting on reliable intelligence, the team tracked the suspects to CBD Ground, Anand Vihar. Upon confronting the armed fugitives, the suspects opened fire, hitting the officers' bulletproof jackets. In response, the officers showed remarkable restraint, issuing warnings and firing into the air before neutralizing the threat with precise shots to the suspects' legs.



The shooters were immediately provided with medical assistance. Recovered from the accused were one desi katta with an empty cartridge and one live cartridge, as well as one country-made pistol with one empty cartridge and three live cartridges. Bobby aka Atul has a history of involvement in multiple cases of firearm offences and grievous assault, with notable cases under Sections 308 IPC, 25 BNS, and the Arms Act. Paras Sharma aka Prince has been linked to violent crimes, including cases under Sections 324 IPC, 323 IPC, and criminal intimidation. This operation underscores the unwavering commitment of Shahdara Police to fight crime and maintain public safety. The arrest of these shooters sends a strong message that those who disrupt law and order will face justice.

The department has urged citizens to remain vigilant and report suspicious activities to help create a safer community. Further investigations are underway to uncover additional links and prevent future

**Delhi CM Atishi inaugurates shooting range at Kakalji govt school**

New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Sunday inaugurated a 10-metre shooting range at Government School Number 3 in Kakalji. "Over the past few days, I had seen photographs of this shooting range, but I never imagined it would be of such a world-class standard," she said at the event. The 10-metre range has 13 lanes, electronic target system and world-class air pistols and rifles, according to a statement.

"Just a few days ago, someone told me they used to study at No. 2 school, and back then, it was referred to as the 'tent school'. They shared how the walls were broken, rainwater would flood the premises, and the

roof leaked," Atishi said. She said the range was a symbol of the transformation of Delhi's education system, describing it as an 'education revolution'.

Atishi also spoke about the challenges that often make sports inaccessible to many families. "Sports often remain inaccessible because of the high costs associated with equipment, training, coaching, and facilities. In shooting for instance, air pistols and air rifles cost Rs 50,000 to 2 lakh each. Their professional models cost over Rs 3 lakh. Ammunition costs Rs 2,000 per tin, while shooting jackets, gloves, eyewear, scopes, and tripods cost lakhs of rupees," she said.

**BJP seeking votes for Delhi Assembly polls by abusing Delhi govt: Kejriwal**

New Delhi

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alleging that the prime minister devoted the majority of his speech to criticize the Delhi government.

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With elections to the 70-member Delhi Assembly due in February, Kejriwal's remarks undermined AAP's focus on development amid its continuing tussle with the Centre.

**Delhi and central govt jointly taking transport sector in Delhi forward: CM Atishi**

New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Sunday hailed the joint efforts of the Delhi government and the Central government in advancing the transport sector of the national capital.

"I would like to congratulate all the people of Delhi. The Delhi government and the central government are jointly taking the transport sector in Delhi forward."

CM Atishi added that with today's inauguration of the metro line, Delhi is starting to become a model in the transport sector in the country and the world.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of multiple development projects worth over Rs 12,200 crore on Sunday in Delhi. Prime Minister Modi will also inaugurate the 2.8 km stretch between Janakpuri and Krishna Park of Delhi Metro Phase IV worth around Rs 1,200 crore. This



will be the first stretch of Delhi Metro Phase-IV to be inaugurated. The areas of West Delhi such as Krishna Park, parts of Vikaspuri, Janakpuri among others will be benefited," the release read.

Prime Minister Modi will also lay the foundation stone of the 26.5 km Rithala - Kundli section of Delhi Metro Phase-IV, worth around Rs 6,230 crore. This corridor will connect Rithala in Delhi to Nathupur (Kundli) in Haryana, significantly enhancing connectivity in the North-Western parts of Delhi and Haryana. Key areas to benefit include Rohini, Badli, Badli, and Badli, improving access to residential, commercial, and industrial zones. Once operational, it will facilitate travel across Delhi, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh through the extended Red Line.

**Delhi Metro has expanded rapidly under AAP govt: Kejriwal**

New Delhi

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday welcomed the inauguration of new metro and rapid rail lines, saying that under AAP's government, the Delhi Metro has expanded by 200 km.

In a post on X, Kejriwal said, "Congratulations to all the people of Delhi on the launch of the new Metro line and the laying of the foundation stone of another line. After the formation of the Aam Aadmi Party government, the Delhi Metro has expanded rapidly. So far, 200 km has been expanded and work is in progress on 250 km."

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi also welcomed the development saying that through the joint venture of Delhi



Metro, Central Government and Delhi Government, the national capital is now emerging as a great model of public transport in front of the entire country and the world. "Congratulations to the people of Delhi. Today is the inauguration of the first phase of Sahibabad to New Ashok Nagar of the Rapid Rail connecting Delhi to NCR.

Urdu mushaira and Seminar to 'spread message of unity' held in Srinagar

**Srinagar**  
In a remarkable display of literary ingenuity and cultural unity, the Mahasagar Shiksha Samiti Prayagraj under the auspices of the Fakhrudin Ali Ahmed Memorial Committee from Lucknow and in collaboration with the Inder Cultural Forum Sumbal hosted an inspiring seminar and Urdu Mushaira in Srinagar.

The event brought together esteemed poets, writers and literary enthusiasts and gave a vibrant platform for the promotion of Urdu literature and cultural exchange and remembrance of the poets and writers who are not alive but made greater contributions towards Urdu poetry.

Shafiq Abbasi, Organizer said, "We conduct programmes of mutual unity. We hope to hold such programmes in future also in Jammu, Ladakh and Kargil. It is just the beginning." "Such events spread the peace of unity. And we should remember the people who are not among us. We should not forget the past."

The seminar featured thought-provoking discussions centred on the evolution of Urdu poetry and its pivotal role in shaping modern literary narratives.

Renowned scholars and poets shared their insights, delving into themes that resonate deeply within the socio-cultural context. The interactive sessions encouraged the exchange of ideas, fostering a spirit of collaboration among participants.

The highlight was the Urdu Mushaira, where poets recited their verses, captivating the audience with their artistic expressions. The rich rhythms of Urdu poetry echoed through the venue, showcasing the depth of emotion and creativity that the language embodies.

Satish Vimal, a local poet and writer told ANI, "Despite the cold conditions, such a programme created a warmth of opportunities... There is a need for such platforms. We have lost a lot in the last few days... It is a welcoming move... Local talent comes to the fore via such events."

Each poet brought a unique perspective, illuminating diverse themes ranging from love and longing to social issues and cultural heritage, resonating deeply with listeners.

**Advt Contact:**  
**9818-799941**

# Bajwa Seeks Bharat Ratna for Manmohan Singh

**Bajwa proposed the joint resolution to advocate for Singh to be conferred with India's highest civilian honour in recognition of his "monumental contributions to the country's progress and his exemplary service".**

**Chandigarh**  
Congress leader Pardeep Singh Bajwa on Sunday wrote to Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Sandhu, seeking a joint resolution in the House to recommend the Bharat Ratna for former prime minister Manmohan Singh.

Bajwa proposed the joint resolution to advocate for Singh to be conferred with India's highest civilian honour in recognition of his "monumental contributions to the country's progress and his exemplary service".

He also wrote to BJP Legislative Party leader Ashwani Sharma, Shiromani Akali Dal MLA Manpreet Singh Ayal, and Bahujan Samaj Party lawmaker Nachhatar Pal, proposing that an all-party delegation meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi to push for Singh to be conferred with the honour.

Singh -- the architect of India's economic reforms -- died on December 26 at the age of 92 following age-related complications.

In his letter, Bajwa said, "I am writing to propose a collective initiative of profound na-

**He also wrote to BJP Legislative Party leader Ashwani Sharma, Shiromani Akali Dal MLA Manpreet Singh Ayal, and Bahujan Samaj Party lawmaker Nachhatar Pal, proposing that an all-party delegation meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi to push for Singh to be conferred with the honour.**

tional significance -- one that transcends political boundaries to honour one of India's most distinguished statesmen, Dr Manmohan Singh."

"Singh's contributions to our nation have been unparalleled. As the principal architect of India's economic liberalisation in 1991, he set the foundation for the country's transforma-

tion, resilience and global standing. His tenure as prime minister was marked by a steadfast focus on inclusive development, social justice and economic stability, directly impacting millions of lives across the nation," he added.

Bajwa said he pro-



posed the joint resolution due to Singh's contributions profoundly shaping India's destiny.

"As a proud son of Punjab, Dr Singh's dedication to public service and nation-building continues to inspire us all," he said in a post on X.

"I have also proposed forming an all-party delegation to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi to advocate for this recognition. Honouring Dr Singh with the Bharat Ratna will not only celebrate his extraordinary contributions but also reaffirm our shared commitment to democracy,

integrity, and excellence in public service," the Qadian MLA added in the post.

In his letter to the chief minister and the speaker, Bajwa said Singh's journey was a testament to resilience, dedication and humility.

"As a proud son of Punjab, he upheld the values of hard work and service throughout his remarkable career. His contributions to the state are equally commendable, addressing critical challenges in agriculture, rural development, and education, and catalysing growth in Punjab as well as in the

country," he said.

Bajwa added that what distinguished Singh was his unwavering commitment to the nation, consistently prioritising the greater good over political divides.

His calm demeanour, intellectual acumen and ability to foster bipartisan consensus made him a unifying force in Indian politics, he asserted.

"From advocating rural development to strengthening India's global presence, Dr Singh has consistently demonstrated statesmanship of the highest order," Bajwa said in the letter.

"In recognition of his monumental contributions to India's progress and his exemplary service, I propose that we pass a resolution in the legislative assembly, on its very first day of reconvening, to formally recommend conferring upon Dr Manmohan Singh the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour," he said.

This resolution will serve as a unified acknowledgment of his enduring legacy and an inspiration for future generations, he added.

Bajwa asserted that this effort was not just about honouring Singh's lifetime achievements but also a "demonstration of our commitment to the values of democracy, integrity and excellence in public service".

"By coming together, we send a powerful message to the people of India that we, as their representatives, can unite to celebrate those who have made exceptional contributions to our nation," he said.

"I sincerely hope for your support in this meaningful endeavour. Together, we can honour a leader whose vision and dedication have left an indelible mark on India's history," he added.

Cold wave in Srinagar continues, temperature drops to minus 1

**Srinagar**  
The cold wave in Srinagar continued on Sunday, creating difficulties for residents.

The temperature recorded in Srinagar was minus one degree, as per the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

A local complained that there was no visibility in the city which was causing a problem for them.

"The temperature is currently minus one or two degrees. There is zero visibility... we cannot even drive... we have to keep ourselves layered with clothes to protect ourselves from the harsh weather," said a local.

Another local said that there was no sunlight in the city. "We haven't seen sunlight in several days. It has been very cold... however, I feel it is an experience for a lifetime," said another local.

Additionally, IMD has also predicted rainfall in parts of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh on Sunday.

Meanwhile, other parts of North India continue to battle cold conditions and dense fog.

In Uttar Pradesh, people woke up to a chilly morning as a dense layer of fog blanketed cities, towns and villages.

The minimum temperature recorded in Kanpur was 9 degrees Celsius, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Visuals showed people layered in woollen clothes sitting near bonfires to keep themselves warm.

Sanjay Kumar Rathore, a local said that he could not work properly in the harsh weather. "It is very cold... it is getting very difficult for us. We are not able to work as well... we are poor and we don't have any option except to work in this harsh weather," Rathore said speaking to ANI.

In Patna, officials also saw a thick layer of fog and the minimum temperature recorded was 12.6 degrees Celsius, as per IMD.

# Panchnad Shodh Sansthan giving direction to future India: Governor

**Komal Ramola**  
Chandigarh  
Governor of Punjab and Administrator of Chandigarh Gulab Chand Kataria attended the 31st Annual Lecture organised by Panchnad Shodh Sansthan as the Chief Guest.

He lauded the Institute for choosing a deep topic like "Truth of Partition of India" and praised its efforts.

In his address, the Governor said that Panchnad Shodh Sansthan has chosen a topic which not only helps in understanding the past of history but also provides perspectives for the present and future. He emphasised that it is extremely important to acquaint the youth with their history and culture so that they can get the right direction and inspiration in their lives.

Praising the efforts of the institute, Mr. Kataria said, "This institute is working to give direction to future India. A subject like 'Truth of Partition of India' gives the young generation an opportunity to understand the facts and events that have been important in the formation of our nation." He also emphasized that such lectures become a medium to connect the



youth with their society, culture and values. On this occasion, well-known author and thinker Mr. Prashant Paul delivered a lecture on the topic "Truth of Partition of India". He highlighted the events during the partition, the role of leaders and the uncoupled aspects of the freedom struggle. Praising his contribution, the Governor said that this lecture provides a unique opportunity to understand the history of the country.

At the end of the program, the Governor appreciated the efforts of Panchnad Shodh Sansthan and emphasized the need to organize such programs in future as well. He said that this institute is not only

highlighting historical facts but is also making a significant contribution in the promotion of national unity and cultural consciousness.

In his address, the Governor said that the Panchnad Shodh Sansthan is working to give a new direction to the future India. He said that the subjects chosen by the Institute not only pave the way to understand the past but also inspire the youth to build their future.

The Governor stressed that it is important for today's young generation to know their history, culture and values. He said, "Efforts like this lecture make our youth aware of important aspects of history and the struggles of the freedom

struggle." The Governor emphasized that the programs of the Institute contribute to the promotion of national unity and cultural consciousness in the society. He also emphasized the need to know the facts related to the Partition and learn from them.

In this program, well-known author and thinker Shri Prashant Paul delivered a lecture on "The Truth of India's Partition", in which he discussed in detail the events before and after the Partition.

On the occasion of the 31st annual lecture series of Panchnad Shodh Sansthan, Panchnad Shodh Patrika and two books published by the Sansthan were released. The first book among these is 'Vichar Pravah' written by the President of the Sansthan, Prof. Brij Kishore Kuthiala and published by Yash Prakashan. The second book 'Human values and rights in Quran' is a research based work written by Dr. Anandendra Kumar Arya, Assistant Professor of Journalism Department at Delhi College of Arts and Commerce, Delhi University and Co-Coordinator of Delhi University.

On complaints of encroachment on the green belt from Vatika Chowk to Ghata, Singh said district town planner RS Bhat has been appointed the nodal officer to make the city encroachment-free, and a deadline of January 31 has been set to clear the encroachments on the 12 km stretch under question.

The minister was addressing a gathering during a visit to Vatika City in Sector 49.

"It is our collective responsibility to turn Gurugram into a beautiful and clean city. Over the next five years, the opin-

# Haryana minister Rao Narbir's major infra push for Gurugram in next 5 years

**Gurugram**  
Haryana minister Rao Narbir Singh has said that the foundation for Gurugram's prosperous future will be laid over the next five years through improved connectivity and a robust road network, officials said on Sunday.

Badshahpur MLA Singh, who is the minister for industries, commerce, environment, forests, and wildlife, said as part of the ongoing efforts to develop infrastructure in the district, an elevated road will be built from the Gurugram-Jaipur National Highway to Vatika Chowk, along with four flyovers from Vatika Chowk to Ghata at an estimated cost of Rs 800 crore.

According to an official statement, Singh said a detailed project report (DPR) is currently being prepared, and work on the ground will commence soon.

The minister was addressing a gathering during a visit to Vatika City in Sector 49.

"It is our collective responsibility to turn Gurugram into a beautiful and clean city. Over the next five years, the opin-

ions of common people will be prioritised in all development projects in the district. The present government does not only make promises in the 'Sankalp Patra', but ensures their fulfilment," Singh said.

Addressing people's concerns, the minister directed the concerned officials to ensure that every government scheme is effectively implemented at the ground level so that the citizens receive their full benefits.

He also emphasised that when planning development projects, officials must ensure that all the criteria for completing the schemes are met.

Acknowledging the demand for a community centre at Close South in Sector 50, Singh said work on the project will commence in the next two months.

On complaints of encroachment on the green belt from Vatika Chowk to Ghata, Singh said district town planner RS Bhat has been appointed the nodal officer to make the city encroachment-free, and a deadline of January 31 has been set to clear the encroachments on the 12 km stretch under question.

**PUBLICATION NOTICE**  
DUE ON 06/01/2025 or thereafter  
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE  
AT CHANDIGARH

APPELLATE SIDE, CIVIL JURISDICTION  
Interim Application No. 18232 of 2022  
First Appeal No. 1948 of 2022  
[Preliminary Objection] filed on 22/12/2022 passed by the CHAIRMAN, MACT, MUMBAI in MAC APPLICATION No. 18232 of 2022.

through Advocate SANDEEP S. JINWALE  
Versus  
SUBHASH SHYAM BHOOSAR & ANR.  
Respondents

NO. 2: SHR. USMILA KADAVAN  
1-255, NAR VIHAR PH-4, SECTOR 34,  
NOIDA 201301, UTTAR PRADESH.  
WHEREAS the Applicant above named has presented an I.A. to this Court praying for reliefs as stated in the I.A. and whereas the same has been registered in this Court as First Appeal Interim application and the Court has on 24/02/2023 ordered issue notice to the respondent herein and that, if no appearance is made on your behalf either in person or by an Advocate of this Court by the date specified in the notice, I will be deemed and determined in your absence.

Witness: SHRI. S. V. GANAPATIYAN (ACTING) & SHRI. DEVENDRA KUMAR JAIN (ACTING), Chief Justice of the Court dated 24th day of January, 2023 & 05th day of September, 2024.

Clerk  
By order of the Court  
For Deputy Registrar  
(Signature)

Enclosures (i) copy of application with annexures.

N.B. Attention is invited to Rules 9 and 11 of Chapter XVII of the Bombay High Court Appellate Side Rules, 1960, which are as follows:-  
Rule 9: An answer to the writ showing grounds against such application shall be filed by an affidavit in the Office of the Registrar and not later than 14 days before the date of the hearing of the writ, unless the Applicant or his Advocate or Attorney, as the case may be, at or before the date of the hearing of the writ, shall be by any party accept with the leave of the Court.

# Saini Shiksha Prasr Samiti honours Haryana CM Saini

**Komal Ramola**  
Chandigarh  
Saini Shiksha Prasr Samiti, Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh, organized a felicitation function today in honor of Haryana Chief Minister, Nayab Singh Saini, at Mandapam Palace in Islamnagar, Rampur Maniharan. Upon his arrival, the Chief Minister was given a warm and enthusiastic welcome by the people.



During the event, the Minister of State for Industrial Development, Uttar Pradesh, Jawsant Singh Saini, along with BJP office bearers and workers, felicitated Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini by tying a turban on his head, presenting a memento, Haryana BJP State Pres-

ident, Mohan Lal Badoli, was also present on this occasion.

Addressing the felicitation function, Nayab Singh Saini said that he is happy to have this opportunity to come to this city situated at the

holy land of Maa Shakumbhari Devi and Ma Bala Sundari. He also thanked Saini Shiksha Prasr Samiti for inviting him to the felicitation function. Expressing his gratitude to the public, he said that I am

overwhelmed by your welcome and felicitations and thank you from the bottom of my heart. Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini said that our society has a glorious history. He said that I will never let the respect that the public has given me diminished. I will work to increase the pride of the society. On this occasion, he remembered and paid homage to the country's first woman teacher Savitribai Phule, creator of Chandigarh's Rock Garden and other great personalities.

The Chief Minister, while urging the youth to pursue education and contribute to societal progress, emphasized their significant role

in nation-building. He stated that the youth should play an essential part in making India a strong nation through education. He also highlighted the collective responsibility of realizing Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi's vision of transforming India into a developed nation by 2047. The Chief Minister further said that the present Haryana Government has prioritized providing government jobs to the youth based on merit. The Chief Minister said that he had promised that he would take the oath of Chief Minister later and would first give jobs to the youth. Fulfilling his promise, he has given government jobs to 2,000 youth of Haryana.

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
Tender Notice No : 13120242023 Dated: 02.01.2025

**E-TENDERING NOTICE**  
Divisional Railway Manager (Engineering) North Central Railway Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites the following E-Tender on prescribed form for the following works up to 13.30 hrs. On 24.01.2025 The details of the tenders are as under:

Tender No. : 265	Approx. Cost of Work (Rs.) : 34,51,200.00
Date of Opening of tender: 24.01.2025	
Name of Work : Modification of ST Sleeper for 60kg Rails for ART at Prayagraj & Kanpur station under ADEN/Line/CNB and ADEN/Line/PRY.	
Earnest money (Rs.) : 80,000.00	Completion Period : 01 Month
Date of Closing of Eligibility Criteria : Nil	

Note - 1. Tender on line can be submitted upto 13:30 hrs. on 24.01.2025.  
2. The complete information along with tender document of above E-Tenders are available on Website www.treps.gov.in up to 13:30 hrs. on the due date of tender opening i.e. 24.01.2025. 1/225 (AS)

North central railways www.nccr.indiarailways.gov.in CPNRNC



# VP Dhankhar urges youth to remain vigilant against anti-national forces

■ The vice president said the foundation of "our national transformation" rests on five basic pillars and these include social harmony, environmental protection and adherence to civic duties.

New Delhi Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday urged the country's youth to "stay vigilant" against "anti-national forces", saying it alone will secure India's democratic values.

In his address at a ceremony at the Delhi Cantonment here to mark the formal inauguration of the NCC Republic Day Camp, he also said "nationalism has to override all other interests, personal or organisational".

The vice president said the foundation of "our national transformation" rests on five basic pillars and these include social harmony, environmental protection and adherence to civic duties.

"Our Constitution gives us fundamental rights and we are conscious of those fundamental rights but there are fundamental duties also. Nationalism blossom, nationalism is nurtured, growth is secured, harmony is established when every citizen of the country believes and subscribes to fundamental duties. For civic duties, you as a disciplined member of the force can really be torch-bearers," he added.



VP Dhankhar

A total of 2,361 NCC cadets from around the country are taking part in the month-long Republic Day camp, which began on December 30, and will culminate with the PM's rally on January 27.

The annual event is also witnessing the participation of 917 girl cadets, the largest contingent so far. "The organisation instils nationalism and nation-first approach. No nation in the world can grow unless its citizens are deeply committed to nationalism," Dhankhar told the gathering.

"Nationalism has to override all other interests, personal or organisational. Nation first approach has to be our only approach, maintain these qualities as a tribute to our motherland," he said.

In his address, the vice president also emphasised that India's vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047 is no longer a dream but a "certain destination".

He praised the National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets for being a section of the country's youth known for fostering unity and discipline with a sense of service to the nation.

"My dear cadets, stay vigilant against anti-national forces because that alone will secure our democratic values. Our dedication to motherland has to be the foremost. It has to be steadfast, it has to be unflinching, it has to be unshakable because it is bedrock and foundation of our existence," Dhankhar said.

The vice president further said the "challenges are emanating" because the nation is witnessing a rise which is "globally acknowledged".

"A rise that is incremental for last decade or so, a rise that is envy of the world,

a rise that is positively impacting every person in this country," he said.

Dhankhar said the month-long camp, with convergence of over 2,000 cadets, is bound to be "remarkably rewarding".

Of the 2,361 cadets at the camp, 114 are from Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and 178 from the northeast region.

"Boys and girls, you represent our youth demographic dividend. This is envy of the world, our developed nation vision at 2047 is no longer a dream. It is our certain destination," the vice president said.

"You all are crucial to Bharat's development at 2047," he stressed.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government has envisioned becoming 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047 when the nation completes 100 years of independence from colonial rule.

"Boys and girls, you are fortunate to be living at a time when India is no longer a nation with a potential. It is a nation rising with unmatched infrastructure growth," Dhankhar said.

He cited various infra-

structure projects, including new airports and metros, to emphasise his point.

"To reflect on our digital penetration, technological advancement that has been acclimated by the world, we have 6.5 billion monthly digital transactions. Boys and girls, we are living at a time when national optimism prevails as we approach to becoming the world's third largest global economy," he said.

The vice president underlined that youth opportunities expand as "global institutions hail Bharat as advance prime investment destination".

The government has taken much-needed initiatives and policy decisions. Now there is "transformation from discriminatory to merit-based mechanisms all over," he said.

Emphasising the five-point mantra, Dhankhar said, "I urge all citizens and particularly the youth and more particularly the NCC cadets to practise these in all earnestness, in letter and spirit because subscribing to these, adherence to these, will be game changer and game changer for the better for Bharat, that is home to one-sixth of humanity.

## Govt launches 2 special categories visas for international students

New Delhi The Ministry of Home Affairs on Sunday introduced two special category visas for international students intending to pursue higher education in the country.

The e-student visa and 'e-student-x' visa have been introduced by the Ministry. Students using any of the two visas, the 'e-student visa' and 'e-student-x' visa will have to use the 'Study in India' (SII) portal launched by the government.

Eligible international students registered on the Study in India (SII) portal can access the e-student visa facility, while dependents of e-student visa holders are eligible for the e-student-x visa, officials stated.

The SII portal facilitates the admission process of international students who wish to pursue either long-term or short-term courses in India.

To obtain a visa, students must apply through the portal at indianvisaonline.gov.in, where the SII ID will verify the authenticity of their applications.

Hence it is mandatory for students to apply to Indian higher educational institutions through SII website, the officials said.

Students may proceed with their visa applications only after receiving an admission offer from one of SII's partner institutions.



The e-student visa will be granted to such foreign nationals who obtain admission to studying in India and who wish to pursue such studies, regular, full-time, courses of under graduate, post graduation, PhD and such other formal programmes at educational institutes duly recognised by the statutory and regulatory body in India, the officials said.

These visas are issued for durations of up to five years, depending on the course length, and can be extended. Holders of valid e-student visas can enter India through any immigration check post.

The SII is a flagship initiative by the Ministry of Education, hosting over 600 partner institutions offering more than 8,000 courses across disciplines such as engineering, management, agriculture, sciences, arts, humanities, law, paramedical sciences (including pharmacy and nursing), and specialised fields like Buddhist Studies and Yoga.

## PFI Phulwari Sharif conspiracy case: NIA arrests 18th accused

New Delhi The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday arrested a key accused in the Phulwari Sharif Popular Front of India (PFI) case from the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport in Delhi.



NIA

The accused was arrested on arrival from Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), the agency said in a release on Sunday. An NIA team arrested accused Mohammad Sajjad Alam of east Champaran district of Bihar, as soon as he landed at the IGI airport. Alam, a trained cadre of the banned PFI, had an arrest warrant issued against him by the NIA special court in Patna and

also had a Look Out Circular issued against him. As per NIA investigations, the accused was involved in channelling illegal funds from Dubai to PFI cadres in Bihar through a UAE, Karnataka and Kerala-based syndicate. The funds were used for promoting the banned outfit's criminal and unlawful activities. The case "RC-31/2022/NIA/DJI" was initially registered by the Phulwari Sharif police in July 2022 and related to PFI cadres' involvement in un-

lawful and anti-national activities. The cadres had conspired to create an atmosphere of terror and spread religious enmity between members of different religions and groups through activities prejudicial to the maintenance of peace and harmony in the country.

Aimed at disrupting public tranquillity and causing disaffection against India, their activities involved the use of criminal force to advance the PFI ideology of establishing Islamic rule in India as envisaged in the organisation's vision document, "India 2047 Towards Rule of Islam in India, Internal Document: Not for circulation."

## Chinese annexation of Indian territory occurred during Nehru's term: BJP hits back at Congress

New Delhi The BJP on Sunday flayed the Congress for alleging Chinese occupation of the Indian territory during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's term and said the grand old party cannot get away with "such lies" as all of it occurred during Jawaharlal Nehru's tenure.

The BJP's reaction came a day after the Congress alleged in a post on X, "China kept occupying India's land. Narendra Modi kept giving clean chit." Reacting sharply, BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said the Congress has the "dishonesty" to speak of Chinese annexation of the Indian territory despite the fact that all of it



Amit Malviya

occurred during Nehru's tenure as the prime minister. "Imagine blaming Prime Minister Modi for Nehru's betrayal," he said in a post on X.

"The Congress cannot get away with such lies, even if Rahul Gandhi thinks other-

"The significance of He'an County lies in the G219 Highway, which China formally opened in 1957. Prime Minister Nehru acknowledged its construction in Parliament in 1959," Malviya said.

The "key features" of the He'an County include Haji Langar, occupied by China in 1959 and an Indian patrol was detained here in 1958, he said.

"Qizil Jilga, captured by China in 1962. Chung Tash, occupied by China in 1962. Dehra Compas, taken over by China in 1961. Shama Lungpa, seized by China in October 1959, close to the site of a 1959 attack on an Indian patrol," Malviya said.

The Hekang County refers to the adjacent territory, he said.

## "BJP is extremely anti-women": Congress



Sunpriya Shrinete

Congress leader Sunpriya Shrinete on Sunday strongly criticised the BJP candidate from Kalkaji for the upcoming Delhi Assembly Polls, Ramesh Bidhuri, after his recent comment on Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi, terming the remark as "shameful," and accused the BJP of fostering an anti-women mindset.

Taking to X, Shrinete said that Bidhuri's statement against Congress Lok Sabha MP from Wayanad, was not only shameful but also shows his "disgusting mentality towards women. But what else can be expected from a man who used foul language against his fellow MP in the House and did not receive any punishment? This is the real face of the BJP," she said.

This came following a video of Bidhuri shared by AAP MP Sanjay Singh on X, where he stated that they would make all the roads in Kalkaji like the "cheeks of Priyanka Gandhi" if BJP comes to power.

Shrinete added that the women leaders of the party, including Women Development Minister and BJP president JP Nadda, should speak out about such remarks. She also called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi to address the issue.

## LS Speaker Om Birla to inaugurate "Panchayat se Parliament 2.0"

New Delhi Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will be inaugurating the second edition of the one-day programme "Panchayat Se Parliament" on Monday at the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan, as per an official statement.



Om Birla

The programme is being organised in commemoration of the 150th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsu Munda and will include workshops, sessions, and a guided tour of key locations such as the new Parliament House, Samvidhan Sadan, Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya, and Rashtrapati Bhawan.

The programme will bring together 502 elected women representatives from Scheduled Tribes across 22 states and Union Territories. Its primary focus is to empower these women representatives from Panchayati Raj institutions by enhancing their understanding of constitutional provisions, parliamentary procedures, and governance. The programme also aims to recognise the contributions of these representa-

tives in areas such as education and rural development.

Interactive workshops and sessions will also be held, moderated by experts and Members of Parliament. Topics will include constitutional provisions related to women, with a special focus on the 73rd Amendment and the The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) (PESA) Act, as well as government schemes addressing tribal issues.

The Lok Sabha Speaker will also lead the delegates in reading the Preamble to the Constitution of India during the event.

The event will be attended by several dignitaries, including Union Minister for Women and Child Development Annapurna Devi, Chairperson of the National Commission for Women Vijaya Rahatkar, and others. Utpal Kumar Singh, Secretary-General of Lok Sabha, will deliver the welcome address, and Union Min-

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ister of Tribal Affairs, Jual Oram, will address the second session later in the day.

"Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0" follows the success of "Panchayat Se Parliament 2024," which engaged 500 women Sarpanch from across India. The second edition aims to build upon the progress made, further strengthening the leadership skills of women, particularly in rural and tribal communities.

## No HMPV cases in Andhra; need not panic, says health official

Amaravati There are no reported cases of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) in Andhra Pradesh, a health official said on Sunday, assuring the public that there is no need to panic about the virus.

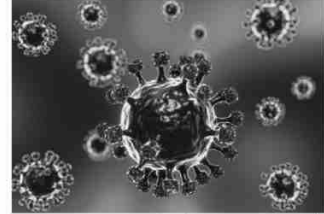
Public Health and Family Welfare Director K Padmavathi stated that the virus spreads from person to person, similar to Covid-19, primarily affecting children, the elderly, and individuals with weakened immunity.

"There are no HMPV cases in Andhra Pradesh. The virus, detected in China, does not warrant any panic," Padmavathi said in an official press release.

According to the director, individuals in close contact with HMPV-infected persons are at risk of contracting the virus.

She added that it can also spread through coughing, sneezing, touch, and handshakes with infected individuals.

Similarly, Padmavathi noted that the disease can spread through utensils used by infected individuals.



The symptoms of the disease typically appear 3 to 10 days after infection and include flu-like signs such as cough, blocked nose, runny nose, sore throat, and breathing difficulties.

In some cases, she noted, pneumonia and bronchitis may also develop. She added that the disease tends to be more severe in children, the elderly, and individuals with chronic illnesses.

Recommending preventive measures similar to those followed during Covid-19, the director advised washing hands with soap for at least 20 seconds and covering the nose and mouth with a handkerchief while coughing or sneezing, among other precautions.

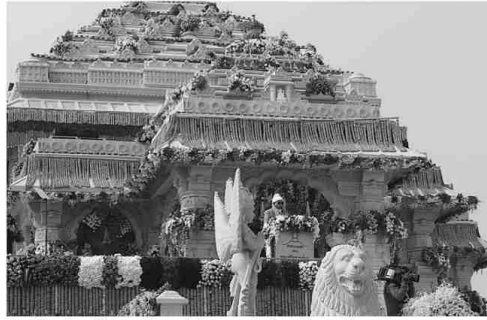
She further noted that there is currently no specific antiviral treatment or vaccine for HMPV and added that affected children and elderly individuals will be treated at government hospitals.

Pak pilgrims to arrive on Monday in Ajmer to attend annual Urs

## UP CM Yogi to perform Ram Lalla's Abhishek during Pratishtha Dwadashi fest on January 11

Security ramped up as sea of devotees throng Mahakumbh 2025

**Lucknow:** Ayodhya will host the Pratishtha Dwadashi festival from January 11 to 13, celebrating the first anniversary of Ram Lalla's installation in the grand temple.



On the opening day, January 11, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will perform the sacred Abhishek of Shri Ram Lalla in the sanctum sanctorum at 11 AM. Following this, he will inaugurate a cultural programme at Angad Tila and address devotees.

Devotional songs by renowned artists including Sonu Nigam, Shankar Mahadevan, and Malini Awasthi will also be released on the occasion.

Champat Rai, General Secretary of the Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust said here on Sunday that, "On January 11, corresponding to Paush Shukla Paksha, Dwadashi, Vikram Samvat 2081, we mark one year since the establishment of the newly built temple at Ayodhya Dham, the sacred birthplace of Maryada Purushottam Lord Shri Ram, the patron of Indian culture

and Sanatan Dharma." He added, "Events will include vibrant kiratans at key locations across Ayodhya, such as Lata Chowk, Jannabhoomi Path, Shringar Haat, Ram Ki Paidi, Sugriva Fort, and Chhoti Devali. Young artists will enchant audiences with musical performances throughout the city."

As part of the festivities, he said, "A three-day festival to honour the occasion and experience the spiritual atmosphere of Ayodhya. Ram Temple was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on

January 22, 2024. During the three-day programme: On day one, January 11, the festival will open with Raga Seva, performed by renowned singer Usha Mangeshkar, sister of the legendary Lata Mangeshkar, and accompanied by Mayur Patel, who will present devotional bhajans. This will be followed by a soulful duet (Jugalbandi) of the star by Sahitya Nahar and the violin by Santosh Nahar. The day will conclude with a captivating Bharatanatyam dance performance by Dr Ananda Shankar

with support from the Sangeet Natak Akademi, will present devotional offerings to Lord Shri Ram through music, dance, and instrumental performances." The Trust has extended invitations to sants and devotees from across the country. Champat Rai urged residents and pilgrims to participate in the celebrations, making at least a one day visit during the three-day festival to honour the occasion and experience the spiritual atmosphere of Ayodhya. Ram Temple was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on

**Devotional songs by renowned artists including Sonu Nigam, Shankar Mahadevan, and Malini Awasthi will also be released on the occasion.**

Jayant.

On January 12, the second day will begin with Raga Seva by celebrated folk singer Shailesh Srivastava, featuring traditional Badhwa and Sohar melodies. Following this, classical vocalist Kalpani Komkali will perform Shri Ram bhajans and Nirgun Gayan. The day's programme will end with a mesmerising flute recital by the internationally acclaimed maestro, Rakesh Chaurasia.

On January 13, the festival's final day will start with a classical vocal performance by the acclaimed Aarti Ankalikar, followed by an elegant Kathak performance by renowned dancer Shobhana Narsyan. The grand finale will feature classical singing and Shri Ram bhajans by the celebrated South Indian duo, Shri Krishna Mohan and Shri Ram Mohan Thirissur Brothers.

**Prayagraj:** With the Mahakumbh set to begin next week, authorities have put in place a set of security measures, including automatic number plate recognition technology, as crores of people are expected to throng the holy city of Prayagraj.

Elaborating on the security measures, Mahakumbh Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Rajesh Dwivedi said "Autometric number plate recognition technology is also available with us to verify vehicles in real-time... We have deployed an anti-drone system to keep a check on drones flying without permission. We also have underwater cameras..."

"We have a number of boats, speed boats, water police personnel and professional divers to ensure the safety of people in the water..." he added.

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh DGP Prashant Kumar inspected the Kumbh site on Saturday and elaborated on the security arrangements for the celebrations.

"I have seen the mock drill of NDRF and SDRF to know what would be our response time if a boat capsized, which was very good. Along with that, a mock drill of women ATS commandos was also going on. It is also being seen what would be the arrangement for bathing at the ghat, and these time arrangements are being made in such a way that the length of the ghats has been increased so that people can be accommodated properly. People who come from whichever route, we will make them take a bath at the ghat of the same route and then send them back," Prashant Kumar had said.

The Maha Kumbh is being celebrated after 12 years and a huge turnout of devotees is expected in Prayagraj from January 13 to February 26.

The main bathing rituals, known as the Shahi Snan (royal baths), will take place on January 14 (Makar Sankranti), January 29 (Mauni Amavasya), and February 3 (Basant Panchami).

**Ajmer (Rajasthan):** A delegation of Pakistan pilgrims will arrive on Monday in Ajmer to attend the annual Urs.

"As per the schedule, they (Pakistan pilgrims) will arrive on January 6 and return via train on January 10 around pm. Around 100 people will come," Gajendra Singh Rathore, Additional District Collector Ajmer said.

"They will be accompanied to the Dargah in the presence of full security," he added.

Meanwhile, Union Minister Kiren Rijjui on Saturday visited the revered Dargah of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer on the occasion of the 813th Urs.

Following his visit, he posted a tweet on Post X, stating, "On the very auspicious occasion of the 813th Urs of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, I had the privilege of visiting the revered Dargah Ajmer Sharif. On behalf of Hon'ble PM Shri @narendramodi ji, I offered the sacred chadar, a timeless gesture of faith, unity & peace that inspires millions."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday presented the Chadar that would be offered on his behalf at the Ajmer Sharif Dargah on the Urs of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti on the occasion of 813th Urs.

The chadar was presented to the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Minister of Minority Affairs, Kiren Rijjui and BJP Minority Morcha President Jamal Siddiqui.

**CM to launch nation's largest youth empowerment initiative on UP Diwas**

**Lucknow:** In a landmark initiative to economically empower the youth of Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is set to launch the Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyam Vikas Abhiyan on January 24, celebrated as UP Diwas.

This ambitious program, touted as the nation's largest youth employment drive, aims to create one lakh jobs annually, benefiting 10 lakh young individuals over the next decade. A standout feature of the initiative is the provision of interest-free and guarantee-free loans to aspiring entrepreneurs, enabling them to establish their ventures and contribute to self-reliance and economic growth in the state.

The Chief Minister has consistently emphasized his vision of transforming Uttar Pradesh's youth into job creators rather than job seekers. In line with this goal, the Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyam Vikas Abhiyan will support 25,000 beneficiaries in its initial phase through loans.

As part of the campaign, youth aged 21 to 40 years, who have completed at least Class 8 and possess skill training, can apply for loans on the official portal <https://msme.up.gov.in>. The portal provides access to 400 project reports and 600 business ideas in various formats, along with videos and expert guidance on starting and managing businesses.

**Advt Contact 9818799941**

## Two Megawatt Solar Power Plant installed in Kaza: CM Sukhu

**Shimla:** Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh today here said that a 2 Megawatt solar power plant has been installed to ensure and improve the power supply in the tribal region of Kaza. He appreciated the efforts of the officers and employees of the Electricity Board, who worked diligently to complete this project.

He said that within a few months, the plant would be fully operational with the addition of a 1 MW battery storage system. The Chief Minister stated that the state government was focusing on maximizing the use of solar energy to make Himachal Pradesh a 'Green State'.

To support this EV charging stations were being set up in various areas based on demand. He said that the government has also approved the installation of 18 Megawatt ground-mounted and rooftop solar plants on vacant land near Electricity Board offices.

Apart from this, the state government was also working to install rooftop solar systems on 50,000 houses across the state by 2026-27. As of now, 4,444 applications have been received for this scheme.

Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said that the state government was taking measures to make Himachal Pradesh self-reliant by proper utilization of resources of the state. These measures include rationalizing electricity subsidies and the staff. He said that the power project agreements signed by the Electricity Board



were under review and loans taken at high-interest rates would be reassessed. This would help the Board repay loans at lower interest rates and reduce its debt burden. It would play an important role in making the Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board Limited self-reliant.

He further said that the state government was committed to safeguarding the interests of employees and for their betterment and the government was regularly providing them the financial benefits.

## Journalist Welfare Fund to increase to Rs 10 crore: CM Dhama

**Dehradun:** Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama has said that the budget of the Journalist Welfare Fund in the state will be increased from Rs five crore to Rs 10 crore. CM Dhama said that journalists will now be given accreditation by the state government at the tehsil level as well.

He also participated in the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected executive of Uttarakhand Press Club in Dehradun earlier on Saturday.

During the program, the Chief Minister said that the Non-resident Uttarakhandis have shown interest in the 'Adopt a Village' programme and have presented their proposals to the government. A detailed develop-



ment plan is being prepared for the identified villages on the suggestions of the Non-residents living abroad on the initiative of Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama, many NRIs have identified villages for themselves. Along with

this, a roadmap of development for the identified villages has also been presented before the state government.

The idea of the 'Adopt a Village' program came out in a dialogue held by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama with Non-resident Uttarakhandis living in different countries on March 5 in which the Chief Minister appealed to the NRIs to adopt one or more villages in the state. After this, many Non-residents have identified villages and presented a roadmap of the work to be done here to the state government.

He also inaugurated the 5-day State Industrial Agriculture Development Fair organized in memory of Veer Shiromani Madho Singh

## 'Drinking water supply scam now in Cong rule'

**Rajan Panchhi Mandi:**

Water scam has now become a topic of discussion in Himachal Pradesh. On one hand, the Deputy Chief Minister, the Minister of Jal Shakti Department, is trying to suppress the matter by taking action against a few officials, while the Chief Minister is trying to save those government-protected contractors and Congress leaders.

The Deputy Minister was loudly claiming that the Sukhu government's hands are clean, while on the other hand, his own department kept looting the government treasury by preparing fake bills for providing drinking water to people by carrying it on scooters. Former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur, while talking to the media in Mandi, said that in the water supply scam of about Rs. 1.25 crore in Theog, Shimla, water was supplied on scooters and Maruti cars. In this, the numbers of all the vehicles and the names of the peo-



ple have also been exposed through RTI. He said that the state government has taken action against the concerned high officials, but the Chief Minister of the state is trying to save the Congress leaders and contractors involved with the officials in the scam. Strict action should be taken against them for this act. Such incidents have been happening in the state for two years but the contractors who are protected by the government are doing their

job without any fear and are earning money by doing wrong things. He said that the Congress government of the state has crossed all limits of corruption. There is only looting in Himachal.

The government is not able to do development work while in many departments the government treasury is being looted by just making bills. He said that the BJP is trying to get to the bottom of the corruption cases so that their deeds can be exposed.

**Govt. is protecting Congress leaders and contractors who have got protection: JR Thakur**

There is no such department in which there has been no scam. There are complaints of many types of irregularities in the industries, forest, tourism, health and agricultural departments but demanding an investigation from this government has become a crime.

Cases are being registered against those who raise their voice. Even the fourth pillar of democracy, the media, is being targeted and cases are being registered against them to scare them. We have already submitted the raw account of their deeds to the Government. Now even common people are making revelations about their work by taking information through RTI which is worrying and extremely surprising. The popularity of the government has reached its lowest point.

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## Maha Kumbh: UP gov set to introduce 40 electric buses for devotees

**Prayagraj:** The Uttar Pradesh government will introduce electric buses to ensure convenient transportation services for devotees gearing up to visit the 2025 Maha Kumbh Mela, which is scheduled to commence on January 13. Nearly 10 to 15 buses are set to begin operations in the holy city ahead of the Kumbh.

Additionally, 30 more buses will be dispatched from the Lucknow headquarters to Prayagraj ahead of the main bathing festival, Mauni Amavasya, on January 29.

Electric buses will operate on various routes to provide seamless transport services to devotees, making the journey more convenient. With crores of people expected to attend the Maha Kumbh, these buses are set to play a crucial role in managing transportation.

Ajit Kumar Singh, General Manager (GM) Tech-

anical of Uttar Pradesh Transport Corporation, stated in a press release, "Before the start of the Maha Kumbh Mela, 10 to 15 electric buses will begin operations in Prayagraj. Additionally, around 30 to 40 buses will arrive in Prayagraj before the Mauni Amavasya festival."

He further informed that the buses are being supplied by Switch Mobility. Each bus is 12 meters long and can run for more than 200 kilometres on a single charge.

Singh mentioned that the new electric buses allocated to the Transport Corporation are being directly dispatched to the Prayagraj area. Previously, pre-delivery inspections were conducted in Kanpur, but considering the Maha Kumbh Mela, these inspections will now be carried out in the Prayagraj region under the Prayag Depot.

**Bangladesh cancels planned training of judges in India**

Dhaka: Bangladesh's interim government on Sunday cancelled a planned training programme for 50 judges and judicial officers in India, scrapping a previous notification. The notification has been cancelled, a law ministry spokesman said without elaborating. The Daily Star newspaper, however, reported the cancellation came in compliance with a directive from Bangladesh's Supreme Court. The cancellation order came a day after the state-run Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha reported that 50 lower judiciary judges would undergo a one-day training programme from February 10 at the National Judicial Academy and the State Judicial Academy in Madhya Pradesh. The trainee judges selected under the programme were district and sessions judge or its equivalent officers, additional district and sessions judge, joint district judge, senior assistant judge and assistant judge. The Indian government was supposed to bear all the expenses for the training programme. India and Bangladesh have witnessed strained ties since the deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled to New Delhi on August 5 last year following a massive student-led protest that toppled her Awami League's 16-year regime.

**Ukraine will ask allies to boost its air defenses at a meeting in Germany, Zelenskyy says**

Kyiv: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he will again call on allies to boost its air defenses at this week's meeting in Germany, as U.S. President-elect Donald Trump takes over later this month with a vow to end the almost three-year war quickly. Zelenskyy said that dozens of partner countries will participate in the meeting of the Ramstein group at Ramstein Air Base in Germany on Thursday, "including those who can help boost our capabilities not only to defend against missiles but also against guided bombs and Russian aviation." "We will discuss this with them and continue to persuade them," Zelenskyy said in his nightly address on Saturday. "The task remains unchanged: strengthening our air defense." U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin will attend the meeting. Biden was originally scheduled to attend the October summit in Ramstein but it was postponed because of response to Hurricane Milton that battered the U.S. In its last few weeks in office, the Biden administration was pressing to send as much military aid as possible to Ukraine before Trump is sworn in Jan. 20. Trump claimed during his election campaign that he could end the war in one day and his comments have put a question mark over whether the United States will continue to be Ukraine's biggest — and most important — military backer. Zelenskyy said last week that Trump is "strong and unpredictable," and those qualities can be a decisive factor in his policy approach to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Advertisements Russia controls about one-fifth of Ukraine, and capitalized last year on weaknesses in Ukraine's



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defenses to slowly advance in eastern areas despite high losses of troops and equipment. The war's trajectory isn't in Ukraine's favor. The country is short-handed on the front line and needs continued support from its Western partners. Zelenskyy said Saturday that Russian and North Korean troops had suffered heavy losses in the fighting in Russia's Kursk region. "In battles yesterday

and today near just one village, Makhnovka, in the Kursk region, the Russian army lost up to a battalion of North Korean infantry soldiers and Russian paratroopers," Zelenskyy said. "This is significant." Zelenskyy said last month that 3,000 North Korean troops had been killed and wounded in Kursk, where Ukrainian forces launched an incursion in August, dealing a blow to Russia's prestige and forcing it to deploy some of its troops from a slow-moving offensive in eastern Ukraine. The incursion didn't significantly change the dynamic of the war, and military analysts say Ukraine has lost around 40% of the land it initially captured. In other developments, nine people were wounded in a Russian guided bomb attack on the border town of Semenovka in Ukraine's northern Chernihiv region on Saturday evening, local officials said.

**South Korean protesters brave cold to demand Yoon's ouster**

SEOUL: Hundreds of South Koreans, bundled up against freezing temperatures and snow, rallied overnight into Sunday near the residence of impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol, calling for his ouster and arrest, as authorities prepared to renew their efforts to detain him over his short-lived martial law decree. Dozens of anti-corruption agency investigators and police attempted to execute a detention warrant against Yoon on Friday but retreated from his residence in Seoul after a tense standoff with the presidential security service that lasted more than five hours. The one-week warrant for his detention is valid through Monday. There were no immediate indications that anti-corruption authorities were ready to send investigators back to the residence as of Sunday afternoon. Staff from the presidential security service were seen installing barbed wire near the gate and along the hills leading up to Yoon's residence over the weekend, possibly in preparation for another detention attempt. Last Tuesday, a Seoul court issued a warrant to detain Yoon and a separate warrant to search his residence after the embattled president defied authorities by refusing to appear for questioning and obstructing searches of his office. But enforcing them is complicated as long as Yoon remains in his official residence. Investigators from the country's anti-corruption agency are weighing charges of rebellion after the conservative president, apparently frustrated that his policies were blocked by a legislature dominated by the liberal opposition, declared martial law on Dec. 3 and dispatched troops to surround the National Assembly. The Assembly overruled the president's declaration within hours in a unanimous vote and impeached Yoon on Dec. 14, accusing him of rebellion, while South Korean anti-corruption authorities and public prosecutors opened separate investigations into the events.

**'Our country ignored Africa,' Jimmy Carter said. He didn't**

NAIROBI: Jimmy Carter was the first U.S. president to make a state visit to sub-Saharan Africa. He once called helping with Zimbabwe's transition from white rule to independence "our greatest single success." And when he died at 100, his foundation's work in rural Africa had nearly fulfilled his quest to eliminate a disease that afflicted millions, for the

first time since the eradication of smallpox. The African continent, a booming region with a population rivaling Chi-



na's that is set to double by 2050, is where Carter's legacy remains most evident. Until his presidency, U.S. leaders

had shown little interest in Africa, even as independence movements swept the region in the 1960s and '70s. "I think the day of the so-called ugly American is over," Carter said during his warm 1978 reception in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country. He said the official state visit swept aside "past aloofness by the United States," and he joked that he and

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo would go into peanut farming together. Cold War tensions drew Carter's attention to the continent as the U.S. and Soviet Union competed for influence. But Carter also drew on the missionary traditions of his Baptist faith and the racial justice he witnessed in his homeland in the U.S. South. "For too long our country ignored Africa," Carter told the Democratic National Committee in his first year as president. African leaders soon received invitations to the White House, intrigued by the abrupt interest from the world's most powerful nation and what it could mean for them. "There is an air of freshness which is invig-

orating," visiting Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda said. Carter observed after his first Africa trip. "There is a common theme that runs through the advice to me of leaders of African nations: 'We want to manage our own affairs. We want to be friends with both of the great superpowers and also with the nations of Europe. We don't want to choose up sides.'" "There is an air of freshness which is invig-

**BUSINESS**

**CCI to boost enforcement, leverage tech for fair competition**

New Delhi: CCI will focus on strengthening enforcement, enhancing collaborations and leveraging technology to ensure fair competition in the country, its chief Raveen Kaur has said. Competition Commission of India (CCI), which has the mandate to foster fair competition as well as curb anti-competitive practices, has been working on understanding the dynamic interplay between traditional market practices and the rapidly evolving digital economy. "There is an imperative need for a nimble, proactive regulatory approach that adapts to emerging market challenges, particularly in sectors driven by technology and innovation," Kaur told PTI in a recent interview. Various amendments to the Competition Act were made in 2023 leading to introduction of new mechanisms, including settlement, commitment and deal value thresholds. The CCI Chairperson

emphasised that the endeavour is to strike a balance between effective oversight and a simplified, market-friendly regulatory regime. "Going forward, our focus will be on strengthening enforcement, enhancing collaborations and leveraging technology to uphold fair competition in India," she said. Among other efforts to boost its capabilities, the watchdog plans to hire more domain experts to help assess competition amid rapid changes in the technology landscape. "Recruitment of domain experts in areas like AI, data analytics and digital markets is a priority. This will ensure that CCI remains future-ready and well equipped to address challenges posed by rapidly evolving technologies," Kaur said. Currently, the regulator is conducting two market studies on competition issues in relation to artificial intelligence and to renewable energy space across BRICS nations.

**India FDI Surges: Goyal Highlights growth & investment opportunities**

New Delhi: FDI inflows into the country are surging, with investors from the Middle East, Japan, European Union, and the US recognising India's status as a top investment destination, driving rapid economic growth and generating millions of new jobs, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said. He said that global investors are showing keen interest in India as the country offers several advantages such as strong domestic market, skilled and talented workforce and rule of law. "I can clearly see FDI (foreign direct investment) in India once again growing rapidly and creating millions of jobs. Countries in the Middle East, EFTA region, Japan, and investors from the EU and the US are all realising that India continues to



be the most preferred destination for FDI," Goyal said. He added that India's stable and predictable regulatory framework, coupled with a favourable business environment and progressive policies aimed at enhancing ease of doing business, is attracting an increasing number of investors from

around the world. "Last month I met a CEO of one of the largest funds in the US, who is also the largest investor in India, and he shared with me that his investments in India over the last 10 years have been some of the best investments his funds have ever done," he noted. The US fund, Goyal

said, informed him that they are investors in India for the last 20 years, but more than 80 per cent of their investments happened in the last few years. "The CEO told me that he will be coming to India to celebrate 20 years of investing in India by announcing a further tranche of investments in India," he said.

He said that global investors are showing keen interest in India as the country offers several advantages such as strong domestic market, skilled and talented workforce and rule of law.

The healthy performance of the Indian stock market will also attract more and more FIIs (foreign institutional investors), the minister said. India is averaging over USD 4.5 billion in monthly foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows since January this year despite global uncertainties and challenges. In the January-September period this year, FDI into the country rose by about 42 per cent to USD 42.13 billion. The inflow was at USD 29.73 billion in the year-ago period.

**Punjab & Sind Bank Launches Instant Loan Scheme for MSMEs**

New Delhi: State-owned Punjab & Sind Bank plans to launch instant loan scheme up to Rs 25 lakh for the MSME sector during this month as part of its initiative to push credit through its digital platform. As part of its transformative agenda, the bank has already introduced digital home loan and vehicle loan schemes under which in-principle approval to an application is given within 15 minutes. "The journey from applying the loan to sanction, for both the



segments i.e. PSB e-Appna Ghar and PSB e-Appna Vahan (launched last month), is based on Straight Through Process (STP) which

proach eliminates manual intervention at the processing and sanctioning stage, enhancing the speed, efficiency, and customer experience, he said. After initial success on the retail side, he said, the bank has lined up similar product for MSME (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises) borrowers up to the loan limit of Rs 25 lakh to begin with. The product is almost ready and final checking of the system and processes are being done before the launch planned later this month, he said.

"This STP journey for assessing and sanctioning the loans to MSME borrowers, both the existing customers and new to the bank as well, shall be primarily based on the cash flow assessment and tracking of the digital footprint through the account statement and GST returns of the applicant, he said. The best part of such digital products is that the loans can be sanctioned even during the holidays, he said, adding, default risks in such sanctions are very low. Going forward, he

said, the bank is also planning to launch renewal and sanction of Kisan Credit Card (KCC) through digital platform next month. Under the KCC, up to Rs 2 lakh loan can be sanctioned to a farmer without collateral. A farmer can visit our platform or give a missed call on a specified number for renewal of KCC and if the account fulfils all criteria, renewal will be done instantly, he said. The bank is also working on to provide collateral-free loan under the Pradhan

Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) of up to Rs 50,000 through its digital platform soon, he said. Punjab & Sind Bank is committed to take more such digital initiatives which makes the credit assessment and sanctioning process for the MSME borrower hassle-free, faster, and without or minimal manual intervention, he said. These new product initiatives, he said, are a testament to the bank's dedication to making a positive societal impact and creating

# Cricket

## India lose Border-Gavaskar trophy after 10 years

### Kohli does not deserve place in Indian team: Irfan Pathan

**Sydney**  
An out-of-sorts India was knocked out of the World Test Championship final as Australia cruised to a six-wicket victory in the fifth and final Test here on Sunday to reclaim the Border-Gavaskar Trophy after 10 years, leaving the visitors with several points to ponder in a difficult transition phase.

Australia won the five-match series 3-1 and also qualified for the World Test Championship final against South Africa slated at the Lord's from June 11 to 15.

A target of 162 could have been trickier had new Test captain Jasprit Bumrah been in a position to bowl despite painful back spasms but once Virat Kohli led the team out, it was as clear as the Sydney skyline that defending the total would be next to impossible.

Bumrah deservedly claimed the player of the series honour for his 32 wickets in five matches but that was hardly a consolation for the shambolic team performance that India managed.

Prasidh Krishna (3/65 in 12 overs) and Mohammed Siraj (1/69 in 12 overs) were not a patch on Bumrah and despite multiple breakthroughs, they bowled too many poor deliveries to make it easy for the hosts to canter home in just 27 overs.

Usman Khawaja (41), Travis Head (34 not out) and debutant Beau Webster (39 not out) completed the formalities, putting an end to India's misery in a tour that has exposed all of the team's batting frailties and an unhealthy reliance on Bumrah.

Once Bumrah was ruled out after he tried some shadow bowling during the morning warm-up session and



didn't feel comfortable, the writing was on the wall.

The magnificent Scott Boland (6/45) and the ever-reliable Pat Cummins (3/44) polished off the Indian tail for just 157 in 39.5 overs. If one takes out Rishabh Pant's feisty 61 and Yashasvi Jaiswal's 22, the other nine players collectively contributed a mere 74 runs.

The series would leave the men who matter in Indian cricket establishment with a lot on their minds when they deliberate on ways to get the house back in order.

With six of the completed innings yielding less than 200 runs, one doesn't need a soothsayer to tell what went wrong on the tour.

Regular skipper Rohit Sharma and batting talisman Virat Kohli flopped with technical issues troubling them

throughout the season. Jaiswal (391 runs) was the top-scorer despite three ducks followed by rookie Nitish Kumar Reddy (298 runs), KL Rahul (276 runs) and Pant (255 runs).

As much as one wants to take a nuanced view of Rohit and Kohli's poor form but it is undeniable that both veterans are finding it increasingly difficult to stem the rot that has set in their batting.

There are a few good youngsters in the fringes and the new World Test Championship cycle would demand that they be given a chance to develop over time.

While a tough call on Kohli and Rohit is awaited, the BCCI brass also needs to seriously look at whether coach Gautam Gambhir is the right

man to be in-charge across formats. Under Gambhir, India have lost six Tests out of 10 during the season going by apart from being defeated in an ODI series in Sri Lanka.

If Kohli and Rohit are held accountable, Gambhir can't be let off merely because the team is in transition.

The head coach's head-strong approach is a pen secret and it is not earning him too many friends in the dressing room.

Ravichandran Ashwin's retirement after Brisbane and Rohit's eventual call to drop himself happened in a manner that can best be described as abrupt.

Messing with a player's gameplan isn't the best way to manage as Rishabh Pant demonstrated by oscillating between too careful at times that only disrupted his natural rhythm.

But more than batting, it would be the bowling – both pace and spin that would be a huge concern for the national selection committee as well as the team management.

Bumrah's absence showed what India missed on the final day even though it was heavily tilted towards Australia. As Glenn McGrath put it, had Bumrah not taken 32 wickets, there was no chance that India would have managed a 1-3 margin.

In Brisbane, they were saved by rain and in Melbourne, Rohit let the game drift away during the final session on day four.

It has taken Mohammed Siraj 36 Test matches to complete 100 wickets and these are not exactly great figures. Akash Deep is still raw but has potential while Prashidh Krishna can swing between bowling unplayable deliveries and pedestrian work.

Harshit Rana is simply not prepared for this level and would need to play loads of Ranji Trophy, Duleep Trophy and India A games to get ready for big Tests.

In the spin department, Ravindra Jadeja is now more of a batter and less of a spinner unless the wicket has something to offer from day one like it happens in India.

Washington Sundar's 12 wickets in Pune should be looked in isolation and he is also more of a batter than a competent off-spinner on batting-friendly wickets.

Only silver lining of the series is Jaiswal taking over the mantle as the next batting superstar and the raw talent exhibited by Nitish Reddy.

Reddy's bowling, if it develops, would give India a chance to play three spinners at home on decent tracks.

## Sunil Gavaskar upset after not being invited to present BGT with Border



**Sydney**  
The legendary Sunil Gavaskar on Sunday expressed his displeasure after not being invited to present the trophy, named after him and Allan Border, to Australia following their win over India in the high-voltage five-match rubber.

Australia reclaimed the Border-Gavaskar trophy after 10 years with a six-wicket win over India in the fifth and final Test.

Border presented the trophy to the home team but Gavaskar, despite being at the venue at the same time, was inexplicably ignored.

"I certainly would have loved to have been there for the presentation. After all it is the Border-Gavaskar Trophy and it is about Australia and India."

Gavaskar was quoted as saying by Code Sports.

"I mean, I am here on the ground. To me it should not matter that Australia won when it comes to the presentation. They played better cricket so they won. That's fine."

"Just because I am an Indian. I would have been happy to present the trophy with my good friend Allan Border," he added. Both India and Australia have been competing for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy since 1996-1997 and the rivalry has grown to become one of the biggest in Test cricket.

The five-match series that Australia won drew record crowds at multiple venues and broke an 87-year-old attendance record at the Melbourne Cricket Ground last week.

## Virat brings theatre to the game, will be sad if he has played his last Test in Australia: Cummins

**Sydney**  
Australian skipper Pat Cummins rates Virat Kohli as a great competitor who makes the game lively with his theatrics and he will be "sad" if the latest Border-Gavaskar trophy does end up being the Indian superstar's last tour Down Under.

Following the hundred in the series opener, Kohli's troubles outside the off-stump compounded as he was caught in the slip cordon eight times over the course of five Tests.

The tour that got over on Sunday is likely to be Kohli's last. "It's always been a wonderful contest. More than just the runs that he scored, he brings a bit of theatre to the game which is sometimes good and sometimes it can rile you up as an opposition, which I'm sure is part of his plans," Cummins said in a response to a PTI query after the six-wicket win here.

"Really enjoyed playing with him. You know, he's been one of the star batters for the last decade or so. You know, if you get his wicket it goes a long way to winning a game so yeah, it will be sad if it's his last series," Cummins did admit that Bumrah's absence on the final day of the series did help them, considering he took 32 wickets in the series. "Every time he (Bumrah) bowled he seemed to have an impact and took some key wickets. So yeah, no doubt that (his absence) helped our chase a little bit." Although he termed it as Indian team's internal matter, Cummins was a touch surprised with Rohit Sharma's decision to drop himself from the



playing eleven on account of poor form.

"I think you're always surprised when the captain kind of doesn't play. And you know, same with Ashwin retiring, but honestly it doesn't really affect us at all."

"You just turn up and you see who's going to be on the team sheet and you play whoever eleven they put out there. Honestly, it's been very little conversation I've chatted with him about what's going on there," Cummins said.

He termed the win against India as "huge" in the context of the Indo-Australia bilateral, having lost twice at home previously.

"No, it's a huge win in the context of this series. It's as big a series as you get to play at home. It felt like it was kind of see-sawing throughout the

whole series. So to finish it 3-1 to hold the trophy is an amazing feeling," Cummins said.

"and I think the extra layer is now securing a spot in the World Test Championship Final which was always a huge goal for us in this cycle." He has been a part of two World Cup winning squads, won the 50-over World Cup, World Test Championship mace and Ashes as the skipper and now the India series that his predecessor Tim Paine had lost twice. When he was asked if he has any succession plan in place, he sidestepped the issue.

## If you have commitment towards red ball, play domestic cricket: Gambhir

**Sydney**  
India head coach Gautam Gambhir said on Sunday that struggling stars Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli "still have the hunger to excel" but urged all senior players, including the duo, to play domestic games and show their "commitment" towards red-ball cricket.

Known for his plain speak, the two-time World Cup hero also didn't give any assurances on whether Rohit or Kohli will be a part of the Test set-up moving forward.

Both the stars were woefully out of form during the just-concluded Test series against Australia that the visitors lost 1-3 to surrender the Border-Gavaskar Trophy as well as a spot in the World Test Championship final.

"It's not the right moment right now for me to talk about where we are going to be after five months. A lot of things change in sport. Forms change, people change, attitude changes, every-



thing changes in sport. And we all know that five months is a long time," Gambhir said at the post-series press conference.

"So let's see before the England series (in July) what's going to happen. But whatever will happen, will happen for the best interest of Indian cricket," asserted the former opener.

Rohit scored 31 runs in five innings before dropping himself from the playing eleven and Kohli managed 190 in nine knocks, including a second innings century after India had taken a lead of more than 300. A glaring failure for Kohli was his inability to avoid being dismissed on deliveries that were bowled outside the off stump.

Asked if he would like the seniors to play at least one round, if not two, of Ranji Trophy starting January 23, Gambhir sent across a clear message.

"I would always like everyone to play domestic cricket. That is how much importance domestic cricket needs to be given. Not only one game, if they are available and they have the commitment to play red-ball cricket, everyone should play domestic cricket," Gambhir said.

"As simple as it can get. If you don't give importance to domestic cricket, you will never get the desired players that

you want in Test cricket," he explained. Kohli last played a Ranji Trophy match in 2012 while Rohi's most recent domestic red-ball game was in the 2015-16 season.

### The 'Ro-Ko' Dilemma

The tough-talking former player refused to be drawn into a discussion on the much-speculated future of Kohli and Rohit, insisting that they are the best judge when it comes to analysing their role in Indian cricket.

"See, I can't talk about the future of any player, it's up to them as well. But yes, what I can say is that they still have the hunger, they still have the passion, they're tough people and hopefully they can continue to take Indian cricket forward," he said.

"...ultimately whatever they plan, they will plan for the best interest of Indian cricket." He wants the star duo to do some soul searching as to where they stand.



Look its tough and there is always going to be hype when you have a 19-year-old making debut because he is in rare company at his age. — Simon Katich



**Sydney**  
Lambasting Virat Kohli for neither playing domestic cricket nor working hard to iron out the technical flaws in his game, former pacer Irfan Pathan on Sunday questioned star batter's place in the side and called for an end to the superstar culture in the Indian team.

Kohli and Rohit Sharma were woefully out of form during the just-concluded Test series against Australia. The 1-3 defeat resulted in team losing out on qualifying for the World Test Championship final.

Kohli could manage only 190 runs in his nine innings in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, repeatedly offering edges to the slip cordon or keeper.

"We need to end superstar culture, we need team culture. You need to improve yourself and improve the Indian team. There were matches before this series, too, and they had an opportunity to play domestic cricket, but they didn't. We need to change that culture," Pathan told Star Sports.

The former all-rounder said even the great Sachin Tendulkar played Ranji Trophy even when it wasn't required of him only because he wanted to spend that much time -- four or five days -- on the pitch. "When was the last time Virat Kohli played domestic cricket? (the host points out that Kohli's last first-class appearance for Delhi was in 2012) It has been more than a decade."

Pathan went to the extent of saying that maybe Kohli's place should be given to a youngster, given that he has averaged less than 30 in first innings in the last five years.

"For the Indian team in 2024, in the first innings where you basically set up the match, Virat Kohli's average is 15. And if you consider his average over the last five years, it's not even 30."

"Does the Indian team deserve its senior player? Instead, give a youngster a chance. Tell him to get ready. He will also give an average of 25-30. This is about the team, not the individuals," Pathan also questioned if Kohli was even serious to improve.

"When we talk about Virat Kohli, he has done a lot for India. He has delivered many performances. But you are getting out from the same mistake again and again. You are not creating a gap between two mistakes."

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**JAI RAM THAKUR**

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Anil Sharma, MLA, MANDI SADAR

Nihal Chand Sharma, President District BJP Mandi

Inder Singh Gandhi, MLA BALH

Parakash Rana, MLA, JOGINDERNAGAR

## It's cherry on top: Kumar Nitesh on Arjuna award, eyes Khel Ratna in future

■ "It is a huge achievement, like it's the second highest sports award in India. And it's a very good recognition for the achievements of an athlete," Nitesh said.

**New Delhi**  
In a season of discontent among some Paralympic medalists over a perceived snub in the annual national honours, para-shuttler Kumar Nitesh is grateful and elated in equal measure after being finalised for the Arjuna award, determined to work harder for a Khel Ratna in near future.

The 30-year-old from Haryana lost his left leg in a train accident in 2009. But he managed to fight his circumstances to become an ITI Mandli graduate before a maiden Paralympic gold in Paris, defeating Great Britain's Daniel Bédard in a gripping men's singles SL3 badminton final in September last year.

"It is a huge achievement, like it's the second highest sports award in India. And it's a very good recognition for the achievements of an athlete," Nitesh said.



The winners of Arjuna award receive Rs 15 lakh in cash prize, a citation and a statuette of Arjuna, a peerless archer in Indian mythology.

Thirty-two athletes, including a record 17 para-athletes, have been finalised this year along with four for Khel Ratna – the country's highest sporting award. President Droupadi Murmu will bestow the annual honours on January 17 at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

"I'm very happy because I've been playing international badminton for the last eight-nine years and have earned multiple medals. Of course, the ultimate title was at the Paris Paralympics, and then getting nominated for the Arjuna Award is like the cherry on top," Nitesh said.

Some para-athletes like Paris gold-winning archer Harvinder Singh have

expressed disappointment at not being finalised for Khel Ratna, which will be given to shooter Manu Bhaker, men's hockey captain Harmatpreet Singh, chess world champion D Gukesh and Paralympic gold-winning high-jumper Pravleen Kumar.

The disappointment stems from past precedence when Tokyo Paralympics gold-winning shuttlers Pramod Bhagat and Krishna Nagar, shooters Manish Narwal and Avani Lekhara, and javelin thrower Sumit Antil received the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna.

Asked if the expected a Khel Ratna too following his exploits in Paris, Nitesh said, "After the gold medalists of Tokyo 2021 were nominated for the Khel Ratna award, this year there was talk among the athletes that gold medalists would get Khel Ratna.

"But I was not going to differentiate between Arjuna and Khel Ratna. I don't have any disappointment that I was not nominated for Khel Ratna.

"For me, the Arjuna award was the first thing, and now I think I'll have my eyes on Khel Ratna. I'll work harder to earn enough laurels for the country. Then I will be nominated for Khel Ratna as well," he explained.

However, Nitesh, who won a gold, silver, and bronze medal at the Hangzhou Asian Games, was a little perplexed when he learnt that he could self-nominate for the award.

"Earlier, federations and previous Arjuna or Khel Ratna awardees nominated athletes for the awards, and athletes didn't apply themselves. In Olympic and Paralympic years, medalists were directly considered by the

ministry for the Arjuna award," said the Rajasthan-born.

"This year, I didn't even know that I'd have to apply for the Arjuna or Khel Ratna awards. I thought it would be directly considered since it's the Olympic year. So, that was also new to me – that we have to apply for the awards."

Nitesh said now that he has got the recognition that he deserved for his performance, he is focussing on the new season with a renewed sense of purpose.

"I have my eyes on the Asian Championship in June in Thailand. Because I won the gold medal at the Asian Games, and then I won silver in singles. So I want to go to win gold in both of them and also in mixed doubles as well," he listed his goals.

"We probably will have the World Championship in February next year. We'll have the qualifications for that as well. But being the world number one as of now and looking at the consistency I'm playing with, it won't be a big hurdle for me to qualify for it," added the ITI Mandli graduate, who has also won two silver and a bronze at world championships in the past.

Nitesh said he took a break following the Paris Paralympics and has just started training again.

"I was on break because I had two very hectic years. I was happy with my mental strength, I could keep my calm and then go on to win (in Paris). It was a good achievement, it was a good confidence-booster for me.

"There are still a few things that I feel I need to work on. I haven't started training on court and working on my technique and my errors as of now."

## Varun Tomar shines in men's 10m air pistol at 67th Shooting Nationals



**New Delhi**  
Reigning Asian champion Varun Tomar grabbed the spotlight by clinching both the senior and the junior men's 10m air pistol titles at the 67th National Shooting Championship Competitions (NSCC) here on Sunday.

The 21-year-old Army marksman, who narrowly missed out on last year's Paris Olympics, overcame a sluggish start in the senior final to snatch his maiden national crown at the expense of teammate Pradhyumn Singh, who fell short by 0.8 points.

Rajasthan's Aakash Bhardwaj won the bronze.

Tomar then had a similar slow start in the junior final, but quickly made up ground, staying in touch with eventual silver winner Nikhil Saroha of Uttar Pradesh who was on a start-to-finish mission.

Tomar's patience finally paid off after the 21st shot as Nikhil blinked with an 8.5, handing the senior pro an easy double gold in the end at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting range.

**Tomar's patience finally paid off after the 21st shot as Nikhil blinked with an 8.5, handing the senior pro an easy double gold in the end at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting range.**

Tomar's score in the senior final was 238, while he was clearly more confident in the junior final, resulting in greater accuracy with a tally of 246.2.

Pradhyumn also rounded off a fruitful day with a second medal, a bronze in the junior men's air pistol.

The youth final saw a UP 1-2 when Chirag Sharma overcame the 14-year-old Dev Pratap by margin of 1.3 after 24 shots.

Chirag finished with 241.8. Rajasthan's Mayank Choudhary won bronze. Haryana, Rajasthan and Maharashtra stood 1-2-3 on the medal tally at the Pistol Nationals with 23, 22 and 13 gold medals respectively.

## Mandaviya leads 'Fit India Sundays on Cycle' in Porbandar



**New Delhi**  
Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya led the 'Fit India Sundays on Cycle' event in Porbandar, Gujarat, with Olympic medal winner boxer Lovlina Borgohain extending support to the initiative from Guwahati.

More than 150 riders followed Mandaviya from the Municipal Arts & Commerce College to the Taluka School Cricket Ground at Upleta in Porbandar – his Lok Sabha constituency – to complete a 5km distance.

Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist Borgohain joined the cycling initiative from SAI Regional Centre in Guwahati along with other eminent athletes from various parts of the country.

Former World Wrestling Professionals Commonwealth heavyweight champion Sangrith Singh also pledged his support by taking part in the event in Delhi.

The cycling event has been organised in more than 2500 locations across the country since it was launched by Mandaviya last month.

"Cycling is a solution to pollution. It is a health mantra. Everyone should cycle as it is beneficial for keeping one fit. You can form a group and can cycle together," Mandaviya said in a release.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched the 'Fit India' initiative in 2019 with the objective of promoting a healthy and active lifestyle among citizens. The 'Fit India Sundays on Cycle' is organised by the Sports Ministry, in collaboration with the Cycling Federation of India (CFI) and MY Bharat.

Events are simultaneously held nationwide at SAI Regional Centres, National Centres of Excellence (NCOEs) and the Khelo India Centres (KICs).

## This award is significant, my story now reaching people outside my field: Deshpande

**New Delhi**  
Some time before noon on Sunday, crew members of a TV channel landed at Deepali Deshpande's residence for an interview. Likewise, other media outlets are also now looking to highlight her contributions to Indian shooting that have hitherto gone unnoticed.

Nominated for this year's Dronacharya Award after having coached Olympic, World Cup and World Championship medalist shooters over many years of service, the new-found attention is a novelty for the former rifle shooter.



The shooter she has helped achieve success in top global tournaments, including Swapnil Kusale, Arjun Babuta, Anjum Moudgil and Shrivanka Shalangi, recently voiced their support for their long-serving coach for the prestigious award.

She has been receiving calls and messages from family, friends, and classmates, including one from the US, who expressed her joy at "going to the same school" as Deepali.

"This is how things have changed in an otherwise simple life since the news of her being nominated for the country's top prize in coaching became public.

"The main significance of this award is that your story is reaching many more people now, people outside my field, common man" Deshpande said during an interaction.

"I started getting calls from my school friends, people like that. Common man who is otherwise not really interested in sports, know about you," the veteran coach added. "For my family too, it means so much as they are the non sports people because, in your field almost everybody knows what you are doing. They know it all."

"One of my school friends who now lives in the US is so glad. Bal Mohan Vidya Mandir is a big school in Mumbai and my school has big names to boast. One of the mayor in a US state is from our school. They are now living everywhere." As per the requirements, Deepali has applied for the honour in the past and she doesn't feel there needs to be a change in the policy for choosing candidates for national sports awards, except for the Khel Ratna.

"Except for the Khel Ratna, I think the other awards are fine. Khel Ratna, is different because you are awarding it to someone for his extraordinary achievements over a period of four years, so a lot of people would have known about the athlete.

Started setting new goals for 2025 after World Championship and Khel Ratna, says Gukesh

**Mumbai**  
D Gukesh climbed dizzying heights in the past one month, a World Championship triumph getting garnished by the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award recently, but the chess prodigy now wants to reset his focus and goals to tackle a "challenging" 2025.

Gukesh will be seen in action in the Tata Steel tournament in Wijk aan Zee in Netherlands, beginning on January 17.

The event will see participation from frontline players such as Anish Giri, Arjun Erigaisi, Fabiano Caruana and R Praggnanandhaa among others.

"Yeah, 2025 will offer a very tough challenge. A lot of new and interesting tournaments are coming up. The world championship was in the past. I'm very happy about it and all the awards and receptions," Gukesh told a select media gathering during the felicitation ceremony organised by WestBridge Capital here on Sunday.

Remembering Time -19:41

"But now, I have started thinking about new goals, new tournaments and new ways to prepare. The goal, the approach will be the same, to give my best, to keep improving myself, and win as many tournaments as possible.

"So, I am looking forward to a fun year with a lot of learning, a lot of improvements and hopefully a lot of good results," he added.

However, Gukesh will have to carry with him the tag of world champion and along with it load of expectations and increased scrutiny. But the 19-year-old is prepared to stand in the limelight.

At a protest or point out a flaw in the system. That is going to change now since we will have seven positions in the Asian body.

"That's a big plus for athletes who want to perform their best and win an Olympic medal," said Lovlina, adding that "all the right moves must be made to keep boxing in the LA 2028 programme." Eyeing a third straight Olympic appearance in 2028 (if the sport is included in the roster) Tokyo Games bronze medalist Lovlina said she will take it one step at a time from here on.

Lovina, who won a bronze at Tokyo Olympics in 2021 but returned empty-handed from Paris 2024, said Los An-

## All the right moves must be made to keep boxing in LA 2028 programme: Lovlina

**Guwahati**  
With boxing's future as an Olympic sport hanging in the balance, India's star pugilist Lovlina Borgohain on Sunday asserted that "all the right moves must be made" to ensure its presence at the 2028 Los Angeles Games.

Boxing was not on the initial programme for the Los Angeles Olympics and a decision on its inclusion is awaited.

Lovina is now part of the Athletes Commission of the newly formed Asian unit of World Boxing.

"It's a huge privilege to be on this committee as India will now have a voice in decision making," said Lovlina, pointing out that boxing's technicalities,



mission and stressed on the "no drugs" campaign undertaken by the Union Sports Ministry.

Lovina was the darling of the media on Sunday. Assam's 'own daughter' will be touching 31 when Los Angeles arrives but the middle-weight (75 kg) boxer is confident that she will be "stronger and more experienced" if she can convert her Paris learnings into action.

"But I am not going to rush my preparations. LA is a long way off and proper weight and injury management will be part of my core plans. Right now, I am not looking beyond the upcoming National Games in Uttarakhand and to do well for Assam is uppermost in my mind," said Lovlina.

"Yeah, I have been used to being under the attention for a while. Obviously, after the world championship, it will be more. But the basic things I remember are to keep improving myself and accepting failures when they come. "I think in general, I have high expectations of myself. So, I think my aim is to meet my own expectations rather than that of others," he said.

But has he been able to handle all the adulation that has deservingly come his way? "I had thought that it (winning the World Championship) would be somewhat similar to the Candidates, but obviously it's much more. I'm grateful for all the attention and recognition.

"I guess one thing is to manage these things with the training. But after the (World Championship) match, I also need some recovery period. I've started training a bit. But it will be more serious soon," he explained.

Five-time world champion and Gukesh's mentor Viswanath Anand said his ward's victory has brought the attention firmly back to chess.

"I think it brings back the spotlight to chess. If you project this forward, it's possible that in every single tournament there is some Indian playing that you can look forward to watching.

"So I hope a lot of the dots are connected. The audience numbers in India are very good. Now, we have regular broadcasts and everything. So, I think it will be a sport in the main line.

"Of course, Gukesh will spearhead that, especially as being the world champion. But now people are interested to see if there will be Indians playing in a tournament. So there's a lot of excitement at all stages.

"And the second effect, which is maybe even more profound, is that young players will be inspired to take up the game," Anand said.



"I was very surprised when I heard the term 'opting out'." Ponting says of Rohit's absence

# After 'Stree 2', will Akshay be part of Maddock Films' horror comedy universe

**B**ombay superstar Akshay Kumar's cameo in "Stree 2" was one of the highlights of the film and producer Dinesh Vijan on Sunday said the actor is very much a part of Maddock Films' horror comedy universe.

Akshay currently stars in the production banner's latest offering "Sky Force", which has Vijan and "Stree 2" director Amar Kaushik on board as producers.

"At the trailer launch of "Sky Force", Vijan was asked whether the actor will be seen in more films from the horror universe.

In his response, the producer — who heads Maddock Films — said: "Of course! You didn't see the last shot (in 'Stree 2')." "He's our Thanos," said Vijan, likening Akshay's character, who is the descendant of "Stree 2" antagonist Sarkata, to Marvel Universe's supervillain Thanos.

When asked to make a comment on his reappearance in the horror-comedy universe, Akshay said he didn't have anything to say.

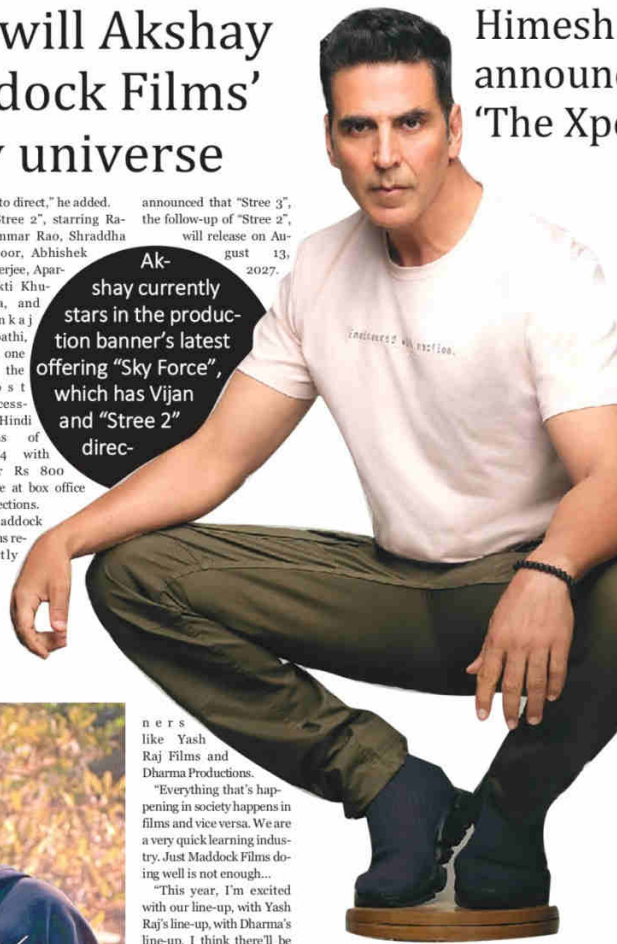
"He (Vijan) will speak or she (Jyoti Deshpande, Jio Studios) will speak. She has to put in money, he has to produce and he (Kaushik)

has to direct," he added.

"Stree 2", starring Rajkumar Rao, Shraddha Kapoor, Abhishek Banerjee, Aparshakti Khurrana, and Pankaj Tripathi, was one of the most successful Hindi films of 2024 with over Rs 800 crore at box office collections.

Maddock Films recently announced that "Stree 3", the follow-up of "Stree 2", will release on August 13, 2027.

**Akshay currently stars in the production banner's latest offering "Sky Force", which has Vijan and "Stree 2" director-**



# Himesh Reshammiya announces release date of 'The Xpose' spin-off film



**M**usic composer and actor Himesh Reshammiya's upcoming film, based on his character from the 2014 film "The Xpose", is slated to be released on February 7.

Titled "Badass Ravi Kumar", the new movie is an action musical entertainer which will see Reshammiya reprising his character of Ravi Kumar.

Produced by Himesh Reshammiya Melodies, the film is directed by Keith Gushal. Reshammiya and Kushal Bakshi are credited for its screenplay.

Reshammiya, who has also penned the story and composed music for the film,

shared the trailer of "Badass Ravi Kumar" on Instagram on Sunday.

"Badass Ravi Kumar" trailer is here, in cinemas 7th Feb, Himesh Reshammiya retro action musical, Jai Matadi, Let's Rock, 80's type ki picture give it all your love," he wrote in the caption.

The film also stars Kirti Kulhari, Prabhudeva, Johnny Lever, Sanjay Mishra, Sunny Leone, Manish Wadhwa, and Saurabh Sachdeva.

In the first movie of "The Xpose" series, Reshammiya played a cop-turned-superstar named Ravi Kumar, who investigates a murder mystery. The film also starred Zoya Afroz and Sonali Raut with Irfan Khan and Honey Singh in special roles.

# This year will be fantastic for Hindi cinema, says producer Dinesh Vijan

**F**ilmaker Dinesh Vijan, whose production banner Maddock Films had a successful run at the box office in 2024 with "Stree 2", "Munjya" and "Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya", on Sunday said Hindi cinema is a "quick learning industry" and the new year will be a fantastic one for the filmmakers up north.

Vijan is looking forward to the release of his new film "Sky Force", billed as the untold story of India's first and deadliest airstrike ever.

Days ago, Maddock Films announced a slate of new and returning titles in Vijan's ambitious horror-comedy universe, including "Stree 3", "Munjya 2", "Shakti Shalini", "Chamunda" and "Pehla Mahayudh".

At the trailer launch of "Sky Force", the producer commented on the underwhelming performance of Bollywood in 2024, as audi-



ences predominantly turned to Telugu films such as "Pushpa 2: The Rule" and "Kalki 2898 AD," with a few exceptions like the Hindi movies "Stree 2," "Bhool Bhulaiyua 3," and "Singham Again."

"Ups and downs tend to happen. But as long as you learn and evolve... I think evolution is happening in

writing. Somewhere our strength is that we write for a year-and-a-half before we go (on floors). We don't try to put projects together. This year, I have a feeling, it will be fantastic (for Hindi cinema)" Vijan told reporters here.

The producer said he is also looking forward to the upcoming line-up of ban-

ners like Yash Raj Films and Dharma Productions.

"Everything that's happening in society happens in films and vice versa. We are a very quick learning industry. Just Maddock Films doing well is not enough..."

"This year, I'm excited with our line-up, with Yash Raj's line-up, with Dharma's line-up. I think there'll be some fantastic films coming," he added.

Recently, Telugu film producer Naga Vamsi in a roundtable conversation said that the Hindi film industry focuses on making films for Mumbai's posh areas like Bandra and Juhu, directing his comments at veteran producer Boney Kapoor who was also part of the interview. During the roundtable, Vamsi also said that "Mumbai didn't sleep" after "Pushpa 2" earned over Rs 80 crore at the box office in a single day.



# Akshay Kumar on his dry run at box office: You just keep working hard

**A**kshay Kumar on Sunday said his 33-year career has been all about working hard and the Bollywood star aims to break his dry spell at the box office by continuing to do exactly that.

Most of his last releases, including 2024's line-up "Bade Miyan Chote Miyan", "Sarfira", and "Khel Khel Mein", didn't do well at the ticket window. "Stree 2" and "Singham Again", which featured the actor in a special appearance, were exceptions.

Akshay, who will next be seen playing an Indian Air Force officer in the upcoming film "Sky Force", said he has witnessed a slump many times in his career.

"It's not that it has happened for the first time. The best part is you keep working hard. That is what I tell myself. If anyone talks to me about it, I say the same thing that you have to keep working hard," the actor told re-

porters at the trailer launch of "Sky Force" here. Akshay said many people advise him to do "one film or maximum two films" in a year.

"... But I say if I can work, then why not? I have based my entire career on that. Many people have told me not to do content-based films, but I don't want to leave that. I want to keep working on different kinds of films," he added. The actor said he is proud of "Sarfira", the Hindi adaptation of superhit Tamil film "Soorarai Pottru" (2020) starring Suriya, even though it didn't work.

"I still say that it ('Sarfira') was one of my best films."

According to the makers, "Sky Force" is the untold story of India's first and deadliest airstrike ever. It will be released in theatres on January 24 during the Republic Day weekend.

Sandeep Kelwani and Abhishek Kapur have co-directed the film, which also marks the acting debut of Veer Pahariya.

# 'Deva' teaser unleashes Shahid Kapoor's electrifying action-packed



**T**he much-anticipated teaser for Shahid Kapoor's upcoming film "Deva" has finally been revealed, and it's everything fans hoped for and more.

Produced by Zee Studios and Roy Kapur Films, this high-voltage action thriller promises to be a rollercoaster ride of intense stunts, exhilarating dance moves, and an adrenaline-pumping storyline.

Shahid Kapoor is all set to break new ground with his portrayal of the titular character, Deva.

The teaser, which has already set social media abuzz, reveals the actor in a powerful new light.

From jaw-dropping car chases to explosive fight sequences, Kapoor's intense cop avatar has left fans eagerly awaiting the film's release.

The "Deva" teaser showcases Shahid's raw, unfiltered action performance, complemented by his electrifying dance skills.

Whether it's high-speed chases, hand-to-hand combat, or stunning choreography, the teaser promises an unforgettable experience for the audience.

Shahid shared the teaser on social media with a caption, "D day is here. Machana chalu," which translates to "The day is here. Let's begin."

Directed by acclaimed Malayalam filmmaker Rosshan Andrews, "Deva" is set to be a game-changer in the action genre.

The film revolves around Shahid Kapoor portraying a rebellious police officer tasked with solving a high-profile case that unravels layers of deceit, betrayal, and a dangerous conspiracy.

