

Sonu Sood's 'Fateh' earns Rs 10 crore at box office in three days



China launches new warship with drone warfare capability

You cannot compare one generation of cricketers with another, says Kapil



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Satwik-Chirag working on defence after reuniting with Tan Kim Her

MARKET	
SENSEX	NIFTY
76330.01	23085.95
-1,048.90	-345.55
GOLD SILVER	
78,222.00	90,464.00
-201.00	-2,042.00

WEATHER	
Sunrise	7:16 AM
Sunset	5:46 PM
Moonrise	6:10 PM
Moonset	8:24 AM
Today's Prediction	
Maximum	Minimum
18°C	8°C
Tomorrow's Prediction	
18°C	10°C

Modi keeps promises; PM assures Kashmiris on statehood

The prime minister assures people of the Union Territory that he will walk side-by-side with them and remove all hurdles in achieving their dreams

Sonamarg
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday asserted that he would keep promises he had made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, a statement seen as an oblique reference to the demand for restoration of statehood voiced strongly by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.
"Yeh Modi hai, wada karta hai toh nibhata hai. Har kaam ka ek samay hai, aur sahi samay pe sahi kaam bhi hone wala hai (This is Modi who keeps his promises. And right things are going to happen at the right time)," the prime minister said at a large public meeting where he shared the stage with Abdullah after inaugurating a strategic 6.4-km tunnel between Srinagar with Sonamarg.
Terming Kashmir as India's crown, Prime Minister Modi also said the dream of 'Viksit Bharat' will be achieved only when this crown is bedecked with jewels.
Speaking earlier at the function, Abdullah



pressed for the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir as promised by the prime minister before the assembly elections in September last year and said, "My heart believes that you will fulfil this promise soon."
"You also promised (assembly) elections within four months and you stayed true to your words," he said.
Without making a direct reference to the issue of statehood, Modi assured the gathering that all promises would be kept and the right things would happen at the right time.
The prime minister said he wishes Jammu and Kashmir to be beautiful and prosperous.
"There is an atmosphere of peace in Jammu and Kashmir and we have seen its effect on tourism. Kashmir is writing a new saga of development today," he said.
"Jammu and Kashmir of the 21st century is scripting a new chapter of development," he said

and remarked that the region is regaining its identity as "Paradise on Earth," leaving behind the difficult days of the past.
Modi said the Kashmir Valley will soon be connected by train and there is enthusiasm among people about it.
He also paid tributes to the seven people who were killed in a terror attack near the tunnel here on October 20 last year.
After inaugurating the project, the prime minister went inside the tunnel and interacted with project officials.
He also met construction workers who worked meticulously amid harsh conditions to complete the tunnel.
He thanked the labourers who worked hard and also put their lives at stake for the development of Jammu and Kashmir and India.
"Despite the challenges, our resolve did not waver," the prime minister said while lauding the labourers for their resolve and commitment.
CONTD ON PAGE-2

India summons Bangladesh envoy amid border row



New Delhi
India on Monday summoned Bangladesh's acting High Commissioner Nural Islam and conveyed to him that New Delhi has followed all laid down protocols in the construction of fencing along the border between the two neighbours.
India's action came a day after Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma was called in by the neighbouring country's foreign ministry to express its 'deep concern' over the activities of the Border Security Force.
The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said it was conveyed to Islam that India observed all protocols and agreements between the two governments on the security measures at the border and it expects that all earlier understandings will be implemented by Bangladesh along with a cooperative approach to combating cross-border crimes.
"The Bangladesh acting high commissioner to India, Md. Nural Islam was summoned by MEA to the South Block today at 2 pm," an official read-out said.
"It was conveyed that with regard to security measures at the border, India observed all protocols and agreements between the two governments and between the Border Security Force and Border Guard Bangladesh," the MEA said in the readout.
Agency

Retail inflation slows to 4-month low of 5.22% in Dec

New Delhi:
Retail inflation declined to a four-month low of 5.22 per cent in December, mainly on account of easing of prices in the food basket, including vegetables -- according to government data released on Monday -- giving headroom to the Reserve Bank to reduce the key interest rate in upcoming monetary policy reviews.
The inflation-based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) eased for the second month in a row after it breached the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) upper tolerance level of 6 per cent in October.
The annual rate of inflation was 5.48 per cent in November and 5.69 per cent in the year-ago period.
"During the month of



December 2024, significant decline in inflation is observed in vegetables, pulses and products, sugar and confectionery, personal care and effects, and cereals and products," the National Statistics Office (NSO) said while releasing the CPI data.
The top five items showing highest year-on-year inflation in December 2024 were peas (89.12 per cent), potato (68.23 per cent), garlic (58.17 per cent), coconut oil (45.41 per cent), and cauliflower (39.42 per cent).
CONTD ON PAGE-2

Delhi govt admits CAG report's validity in HC

New Delhi
The Delhi High Court on Monday said CAG reports over city administration should have been promptly placed before the assembly for discussion and the state government "dragging its feet" on the issue raised "doubts on its bonafides".
Justice Sachin Datta, who was hearing a petition filed by the opposition MLAs from BJP, asked if the court could direct the speaker, having the "prerogative", to call a sitting of the assembly when elections were around the corner.
"The way you dragged your feet raises doubts about your bonafides.. You should have promptly forwarded the reports to the speaker for having a discussion on the floor of the assembly," the court said.
"The judge went on, 'You have dragged your feet to avoid having a discussion. See the number of dates you held onto the report, and the time taken to send them to the LG, and then forwarding it to the speaker...The timeline is stark. See the way you have been dragging your feet is something that is unfortunate.' Opposition leader Vijender Gupta and BJP MLAs Mohan Singh Bisht, Om Prakash Sharma, Ajay Kumar Mahawar, Abhay Verma, Anil Kumar Bajpai and Jitendra Mahajan filed the petition last year and sought a direction to the speaker to call a sitting of the assembly for the purpose of tabling the CAG (controller and auditor general) reports.
Agency

Ladakh standoff persists to some degree: Army chief

Abhishek Byahut
New Delhi:
Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi on Monday stressed on the Indian Army's preparedness to address any situation along critical borders, including the sensitive Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan, Manipur, and the northern frontier. Addressing the situation in eastern Ladakh, General Dwivedi described it as "sensitive but stable" while acknowledging that "there's degree of stand-off still persists."



Gen Dwivedi, describing the situation in the region as 'sensitive but stable', said the core commanders have now been delegated powers

HIGHLIGHT

Dwivedi blamed Pakistan for the violence levels in the Union Territory saying it was being orchestrated by the epicentre of terrorism that is Pakistan.
The Army chief, addressing a press conference ahead of the Army Day on January 15, also said that there was no such thing called buffer zones as a temporary moratorium was put on patrolling in certain areas to avoid chances of violence.
Agency

Rupee sinks 58 paise to 86.62-mark in worst fall in 2 yrs

New Delhi
The rupee logged its steepest single-day plunge in nearly two years ending the session sinking 58 paise on Monday to a historic low of 86.62 to the dollar that has been on a song since October, weighed down by a stronger greenback, surging crude prices and the continuing mayhem in the equity markets.
The rupee fell as much as 58 paise, or 0.67 per cent, in a day making it the steepest fall since February 6, 2023 when the unit had lost 68 paise. This is in spite of the fact that the Reserve Bank has sold almost \$115 billion to prop the



unit since March and the most in October selling as much as \$38 billion.
The rupee saw the deepest plunge of more than Re 1 in the past two weeks from the closing level of 85.52 on December 30 and the unit breached the

85-per-dollar mark for the first time on December 19.
Friday, the currency declined 18 paise to settle at 86.04, a day after registering a marginal gain of 5 paise. In the preceding back-to-back sessions, it plunged 6 paise and 17 paise, respectively.
Traders and currency analysts told TNDI that that unprecedented fall is due to the relentless chase of the dollar by investors, which also led to a massive withdrawal of foreign capital from equities. Since October foreign funds have pulled out close to Rs 2 trillion from equities.
Agency

Modi keeps promises; PM assures Kashmiris on statehood

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Admiring the beautiful snow-covered mountains and the delightful weather, Modi said that his eagerness to visit Jammu and Kashmir increased after seeing the recent pictures shared by the chief minister on social media.

He reminisced about his earlier days when he frequently visited the region while working for the BJP and mentioned spending considerable time in areas like Sonamarg, Gulmarg, Ganderbal and Baramulla, often walking for hours and covering several kilometres.

Despite the heavy snowfall, the warmth of the people of Jammu and Kashmir made the cold unnoticeable, the prime minister said as the audience broke into applause.

Modi also spoke about the recent foundation stone laying of the Jammu Rail Division, a long-standing demand of the people.

He highlighted that the tunnel will significantly ease the lives of people in Sonamarg, Kargil and Leh.

The prime minister remarked that the tunnel will reduce the difficulties faced during avalanches, heavy snowfall and landslides, which often lead to road closures.

The prime minister noted that the actual construction of the Sonamarg Tunnel began in 2015 after his government came into power and said he was pleased that the tunnel's construction was completed under their administration.

Retail inflation slows to 4-month low of 5.22% in

CONT FROM PAGE-1

The key items having lowest year-on-year inflation in December were jeera, ginger, dry chillies, and LPG (excluding conveyance). "The CPI (General) reached its lowest point during this period in July 2024. However, the CPI (General) and food inflation in December, 2024 is the lowest in the preceding month and 9.53 per cent in December 2023.

Inflation in the food basket was at 8.39 per cent in December, down from 9.04 per cent in the preceding month and 9.53 per cent in December 2023.

The RBI, which has been tasked by the government to ensure inflation remains at 4 per cent (+/- 2 per cent), has kept the key short-term lending rate (repo) at 6.5 per cent since February 2023.

The Reserve Bank's rate setting panel - Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) - is scheduled to meet in February.

Commenting on the data, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist and Head - Research and Outreach at ICRA - said while the CPI inflation declined in December 2024 from 5.5 per cent in November 2024, the pace of the correction was narrower than expected.

In sequential terms, the dip was driven by food and beverages, even as the year-on-year inflation for fuel and light, and pan, tobacco and intoxicants recorded mild upticks, she said.

Congress govt in Karnataka united: Surjewala

Bengaluru

Trying to downplay the alleged power tussle within the ruling Congress amid speculation about a change of guard in Karnataka, AICC general secretary in-charge of the state, Randeep Singh Surjewala, said on Monday that the party's government was united and accused the opposition of manufacturing stories to attack it.

Claiming that there were differences within the BJP and its alliance with the JD(S), he also attempted to portray the alleged political power struggle within the Congress as a media creation.

"A select group of news channels, instead of questioning a fractured BJP, which is on a fratricidal path and tearing itself apart, are questioning a united Congress government that is solidly executing a direct benefit transfer to every Kannadiga family, with a cumulative total of Rs 58,000 crore," Surjewala told reporters here, in response to a question.

The Karnataka Congress government's guarantee scheme is the biggest welfare initiative in India, and naturally, the BJP is perturbed by it, he said, and highlighted the differences within the saffron party in the state and even claimed



that the BJP and its alliance partner, the JD(S), are engaged in a "fratricidal war". "In an attempt to hide their misdeeds and failidly reporting that a change of guard in the state was in the offing. "There is no confusion among us. The media repeatedly reports that the CM will be changed, even though the chair is not vacant. Yet, such claims continue to be made. It is speculated and reported as a political discussion if we meet over food. Sometimes, even dialogues are fabricated about what we might have discussed,

based purely on speculation," the CM had said. Following Siddaramaiah's recent dinner with select Dalit and ST Cabinet colleagues, speculation is rife within the Congress about a possible change of guard in the state after the March budget, under a "rotational chief minister" or "power-sharing" formula.

Several party leaders, including ministers, have commented on the leadership change, with some hinting at its possibility, while others have dismissed it. Minister K N Rajanna, who is close to Siddaramaiah, recently told Deputy CM D K Shivakumar, a chief ministerial aspirant, that he should aim to become CM by successfully leading the party in the next elections, rather than pursuing the top post during the remaining two and a half years of the incumbent government's term.

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A meeting of Congress leaders, ministers, and lawmakers from SC/ST communities, scheduled for the evening of January 8 under the leadership of Home Minister G Parameshwara, was postponed following instructions from Surjewala.

According to sources, the decision to postpone the meeting came after Shivakumar met AICC general secretary (Organisation) K C Venugopal in New Delhi on the night of January 6.

Surjewala is in the city to attend Karnataka Congress meetings to review preparations for

the mega 'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' convention, which will be held under the aegis of the AICC on January 21 in Bengaluru. The event will commemorate the centenary of the 1924 Indian National Congress session, which was presided over by Mahatma Gandhi.

State Congress leaders may discuss the ongoing developments with Surjewala during today's meeting or at the legislative party meeting in the evening, party sources said.

Surjewala said that the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee meetings are regarding the 'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' convention and noted that it was originally scheduled for December 27, 2024, but had to be postponed following the death of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh last month.

He said, "Union Home Minister Amit Shah insulted and mocked Babasaheb Ambedkar on the floor of Parliament. It was not just an insult to Ambedkar, but an assault on every SC/ST, backward class, and poor person in the country. From Bengaluru, through this convention, we will give a clarion call to the entire country to demand the resignation of Amit Shah."

UGC-NET January 15 exam postponed due to festivals: NTA



The National Testing Agency (NTA) has announced the postponement of the University Grants Commission-National Eligibility Test (UGC-NET) December 2024 exam, which was originally scheduled for 15 January.

The decision comes in light of the Pongal, Makar Sankranti, and other festivals taking place on that date.

In an official statement, Rajesh Kumar, Director (Exams) of the NTA, explained, "The NTA has received representations to postpone the UGC-NET December 2024 examination on account of Pongal and Makar Sankranti and other festivals on 15 January 2025. In the interest of the aspirants, the NTA has decided to postpone the UGC-NET December 2024 exam scheduled on 15 January only. The new date of the exam will be announced later."

The UGC-NET December 2024 exam, which is being conducted for the award of Junior Research Fellowship (JRF), Assistant Professor appointments, and Ph.D. admissions, was initially scheduled from 3 January to 16 January. The exams, being held in the Computer Based Test (CBT) format, cover 85 subjects.

Candidates are advised to regularly check the official NTA website at www.nta.ac.in and <https://ugcnet.nta.ac.in> for updates. For further clarifications regarding the UGC-NET December 2024 candidates, contact 011-40759000 or email ugcnet@nta.ac.in.

No alliance can succeed if dialogue stops: Sanjay Raut

Mumbai

Days after the Shiv Sena (UBT) announced to go solo in the local body polls in Maharashtra, party leader Sanjay Raut on Monday said no alliance can succeed if dialogue with its partners ceases.

"To maintain communication among partners, 'responsible leaders' need to be appointed, and the Congress, which is the largest constituent of the opposition INDIA bloc, must take on this role, Raut told reporters here. He also said there was nothing wrong in contesting elections against coalition partners, but in such cases, no party should dub their former or potential future allies as "traitors".

"On Saturday, Raut cited the lack of opportunities for workers of respective parties in an alliance and the right to organisational growth as the major considerations for contesting solo, which raised a question mark over the opposition bloc's unity.

The Rajya Sabha member on Sunday asserted his party wants to



go solo in the local body polls to strengthen its base and has never called for dissolution of the opposition INDIA bloc or the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), which include the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress, and Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP).

On Monday, while speaking about the INDIA bloc, Raut said, "It is the collective desire of all of us to progress further in the political landscape of this country. However, over the past few days, some of our alliance partners seem to have taken the stance that communication has broken down. No alliance can succeed

if dialogue is severed." He claimed the Shiv Sena-BJP alliance collapsed in 2019 because dialogue between the two ceased.

"Lack of proper communication and dialogue directly contributed to the alliance's breakup," he said.

"The INDIA bloc consists of nearly 30 parties and to maintain dialogue with all of them, it is essential to appoint some responsible leaders," Raut said.

He said Uddhav Thackeray has repeatedly emphasised this point during the INDIA bloc meetings and other senior leaders have also raised the issue.

"The INDIA bloc has performed remarkably well in the country's politics during the Lok Sabha elections, and it must continue to thrive. As the largest party in the alliance, the Congress bears the greatest responsibility. Congress must assume this role," Raut said.

On contesting elections against allies, Raut said there is nothing wrong in fighting polls against one another.

Govt approves 56 new watershed development projects at Rs 700 cr

New Delhi

The Rural Development Ministry has approved 56 new Watershed Development Projects that will be undertaken at a cost of Rs 700 crores in the ten best-performing states, the government said on Monday.

In a statement issued here, the ministry said the projects will be undertaken in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhanda and Sikkim.

"Department of Land Resources announce sanction of 56 new Watershed Development Projects at a cost of Rs 700 crores under

the ongoing scheme of PMKSY-WDC 2.0 in the 10 best-performing states..." the ministry said.

"Each project will approximately have an area of 5,000 hectares, but in hill states, it may be lesser. The initiative prioritises visible field impacts by allocating Rs 700 crore to cover approximately 2.8 lakh hectares, ensuring timely recovery of degraded land and efficient utilisation of funds," the statement said.

"These projects would further help in increasing the income of farmers, addressing land degradation and strengthening climate resilience efforts," it

said. The Department of Land Resources (DoLR) is implementing the Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (WDC-PMKSY) which aims to develop degraded and rain-fed areas of the country, by undertaking watershed development projects in an integrated approach.

The activities undertaken, include ridge area treatment, drainage line treatment, soil and moisture conservation, rainwater harvesting, nursery raising, pasture development, and livelihoods for asset-less persons.

"The evaluation of the completed projects

under WDC-PMKSY 1.0 has revealed significant improvement in groundwater table, increased availability of surface water, improvement in crop productivity and farmers' income. WDC-PMKSY, through these interventions, seeks to ensure sustainable development through improved natural resource management and better resilience of farmers to climate change," the ministry said.

In 2021-22, 1,150 projects covering an area of about 50 lakh hectares have been sanctioned at a cost of Rs 12,303 crores under the WDC-PMKSY 2.0.

MP considering liquor ban in religious cities and towns: CM Dr Mohan Yadav

Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government is considering banning liquor in religious cities and towns of the state, Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav announced on Monday.

"Our government is considering amending our policy pertaining to religious cities and towns to enforce total ban on liquor there. Many seers have already recommended to prohibit liquor in such cities/towns, after which the government is seriously considering to impose such a ban within the limits of religious cities/towns through appropriate amendments in the excise policy. A decision will soon be taken about it," the CM said in Bhopal.

The development happened just a day after the CM continued with his name changing spree to rename villages having Muslim names. On Sunday, the CM had announced renaming 11 villages of western MP's Shajapur district, particularly with names inspired by Hindu deities.

The 11 villages of Shajapur district were renamed a week after the CM announced a similar



move for three villages in his home district of Orchha, Omkareshwar, Mandla, Multai, Mandla (Narmadaghat), Jabalpur, Chitrakoot, Malhar, Salkapur, Mandaleswar, Mandsaur, Barman and Panna.

The latest development happened two days after the CM had reportedly discussed with officials about the new excise policy.

Importantly, four months ago, the MP CM had directed officials to ensure that meat and liquor aren't consumed in religious towns on the banks of river Narmada in the state. The decision was taken at the first meeting of the cabinet committee on integrated development of river Narmada in September 2024.

Such cities and towns, include the CM's home city of Ujjain, Amar-kantak, Maheshwar,

CLAT UG 2025: SC to hear Consortium of NLU's pleas over case transfer from HCs

New Delhi

The Supreme Court would on January 15 hear pleas of the Consortium of National Law Universities seeking transfer of pps against the results of the common law admission test 2025, from various high courts to the apex court.

According to the SC website, a bench of Chief Justice Sanjay Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar would hear the petitions of the Consortium of National Law Universities (CNLU's), relating to the results of the common law admission test (CLAT), 2025, for an authoritative pronouncement and avoiding any multiplicity of litigations filed by can-

didates in various high courts. The CNLU's filed the plea through advocate Prithi Srikrumadhar. An aspirant recently informed a Delhi High Court division bench that several petitions were pending in different high courts and the transfer pleas would be moved before the top court.

The high court then posted the pleas, filed against the order of a single judge bench, for hearing on January 30.

On December 20, 2024, a Delhi High Court single judge directed the consortium to revise the result of CLAT-2025 over errors in the answer key of

PUBLIC NOTICE

My clients Gorakh Nath Sahu s/o: Aameri and his wife Soma Devi. R/O: Old Plot No. 46, C- New Plot No E-209, Gali No-71, Mahavir Enclave, Uttam Nagar, West Delhi-110059, divorced and terminating their relationship with their daughter Manita Kamari Sahu, from all right over her movable or immovable property and also her broken relations with her due to her misbehaviour and misconduct. If anybody in future dealing with her then his/their name would not be responsible for the same.

SARVAYA LAW CHAMBERS
FLAT NO. 565, SUNVIEW
APARTMENTS, POCKET 4,
SECTOR 11, DWARKA, NEW
DELHI-110075
TEL: 011-4307652

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Client Sant Ragni W/o Sh. Pawan Kumar & Sh. Pawan Kumar S/o Late Bani Singh R/O H.No. 36/60, East Mehra Nagar, Delhi Cantt, New Delhi-110016. Dissolving Their Son's Marriage with Late Manika & Shweta. From Their Children Aaditya & Shweta. From All Their Movable & Immovable Properties Of Their Free Will And Consent As Due To Certain Issues, Personal Difficulties, Irregular Behaviour And Was Not According To Them The Above Vanted Their Son's Marriage, Daughter-In-Law Monika & Their Children Aaditya & Shweta Are Beyond Their Control And Supervision. Act Done By Them Which Even Include Money, Property, Emotional Activities Is Not Related To Them. My Clients Are Not Responsible For Any Claim Made By Them Off Any Kind.

Sunder Lal Sharma
Advocate
Office: B-19, Ground Floor, Near
RSES Office, Mangalpur Palam,
New Delhi-110045
Mob.: 9312231850

NEWS IN BRIEF

Case registered against illegal occupants of Noida Authority land

Noida
The sector-113 police station has registered a case acting on the complaints of the Noida Authority in regard to illegal occupation of its land.

In a complaint to the police, JE Yashpal Singh of the Noida Authority said that illegal construction is being done on the authority's land at Sarfabad village. This work is being done by Mukesh son of Prakash.

The authority's team also tried to stop the illegal construction several times. But even after this, the construction work of the accused continues. The accused also misbehaved with the authority's team when the work is stopped.

The JE alleged that the map of the sector is also getting affected due to the illegal construction done by the accused. He has demanded action from the police against the accused.

In a complaint to the police, JE Vineet Sharma of Noida Authority said that two real brothers Salim and Zakir have occupied the authority's land at Village Sorkhia Zahidabad. The accused are carrying out illegal construction on the land. The authority's team tried to stop the illegal construction several times. But the accused did not stop the work and instead misbehaved with the team.

In this regard, the local police said that a case of encroachment on the authority's land has come to light. In both the cases, a case has been registered on the basis of complaint. Investigation of the case has been started. Further action will be taken soon after the investigation.

Delhi LG VK Saxena inspects Jewar Airport

Noida
Delhi's Lieutenant Governor (LG) VK Saxena visited the Noida International Airport, Jewar on Monday. He reviewed the development work of the airport.

In the meeting, Yamuna Authority's ACO Shruti and nodal officer Shaileendra Bhatia gave a presentation of important projects. Apart from the airport, presentation was also given on projects like International Film City, Medical Device Park, Apparel Park, Toy Park, MSME Park, Heritage City and Logistics Hub. Nodal Officer Shaileendra Bhatia gave detailed information about various connectivity schemes of the Jewar Airport.

Lieutenant Governor Vinay Kumar Saxena said that due to the vision of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Uttar Pradesh has taken an unprecedented leap in the field of development in just seven years and the way the model of law and order and development has developed here, others should also learn from it.

After this, Lieutenant Governor Vinay Kumar Saxena also visited the proposed Film City and Medical Device Park along with Jewar MLA Dharendra Singh. Jewar MLA Singh said that Yogi Adityanath is a visionary Chief Minister. Today Uttar Pradesh is setting new dimensions of development. Jewar has established its identity on the world stage. After the construction of the airport, the standard of living of the people here will improve and this area is going to be included in the developing area.

Kejriwal following Modi's strategy of propaganda, false promises: Rahul

New Delhi
Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday launched a blistering attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, saying that they keep mum on the issue of caste census as they do not want backwards, Dalits, tribals and minorities to get their due share.

Specifically targeting Kejriwal at his first public meeting for Delhi assembly polls, Gandhi said that the AAP convener was following "Modi's strategy of propaganda and false promises" despite rising pollution, corruption and inflation in the national capital.

Gandhi also promised a caste survey in Delhi if the Congress formed the government. Has he removed corruption? Just like Modi ji's propaganda of making false promises, he is following the



same strategy.... Pollution, corruption and inflation are on the rise in Delhi," Gandhi said.

The Congress and AAP are part of the INDIA bloc. The two parties had fought the Lok Sabha election together in Delhi, but are contesting the assembly polls separately.

Stressing that India belongs to everyone, Gandhi said the Congress does not want "an India run by a handful of crony capitalists".

"When I talk of caste census, neither Modi says a word nor does Kejriwal because both want that backward sections, Dalits, tribals and minorities do not get their due share (bhaagidar). Ask Kejriwal whether he is with the caste census. Ask Modi ji whether he is with the caste census," Gandhi said.

"I had said to Modi ji in Parliament that you do or not, we will get the caste census done and reservation cap removed in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha when a Congress government comes.

"We want the poorest of the poor, whether they are Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or Christians, to dream big... headbig companies," he said.

He urged the people to support the Congress and make it victorious, assuring that the party would ensure Delhi's development as in the past under Sheila Dikshit's government.

"Neither Kejriwal nor the BJP can do what the Congress had done," Gandhi said.

He said a battle of ideology is currently on in the country.

"It is written in the Constitution that India belongs to everyone. The BJP-RSS people spread hatred, make people fight," he alleged.

"We walked from Kanyakumari to Kashmir to protect the Constitution. (BR) Ambedkar's Constitution is being attacked by Narendra Modi and the people of BJP-RSS daily," he alleged.

"Till I am alive, I will protect every Indian from assault by the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians," he said.

With the rise of AAP, Congress' stake in Delhi's political landscape has shrunk and it failed to open its account in the last two assembly polls.

Fire in Delhi's Paschim Puri claims one life two injured

New Delhi
An elderly woman was killed and two persons were injured in a fire that broke out in a flat in the Paschim Puri area of west Delhi, officials said on Monday.

The incident occurred in New Slum Flats in Paschim Puri in the Punjabi Bagh police station area on Sunday night.

"The fire department received a call about the fire around 10:27 pm (on Sunday) and dispatched three fire tenders to the scene. The fire, confined to domestic articles in a second-floor flat of the ground-plus-three-storey building, was brought under control," Delhi Fire Services (DFS) chief Atul Garg said.

Firefighters discovered the charred body of a woman inside the flat. The body was handed over to police, he said.

Two persons were rescued. They sustained burn injuries and were rushed to Acharya Bhikshu Hospi-

tal, he added.
Delhi Police said in a statement that after a PCR call was received at Punjabi Bagh police station on Sunday night, a team was rushed to the spot.

After reaching the spot, Constables Nafe and Mohit found that three people - Nirmala (65), Prahalad (68) and Jitender (40) - were trapped inside a flat on the second floor in New Slum Flats in Paschim Puri, the statement said. "Both the constables, along with Sub-Inspector Sandeep, arranged a ladder from the neighbourhood and rescued Prahalad and Jitender through a balcony. But the fire was so intense that it was impossible to go inside, due to which Nirmala could not be saved," it said.

Crime and PSL teams have been called in for an investigation and statements of the injured are being recorded. Further action will be taken based on the findings of the inquiry, police said.

Delhi AAP releases song 'Dilli Da Putt Kejriwal' urging citizens to re-elect him

New Delhi
The Aam Aadmi Party on Monday released a campaign song titled 'Dilli Da Putt Kejriwal', on the occasion of Delhi, urging Delhiites to re-elect Arvind Kejriwal in the upcoming assembly polls.

The 1:33 minute Punjabi song features the line, "Is Vaari Sun Lo, Phir Kejriwal Nu Chunn Lo," calling on voters to choose Kejriwal again to ensure the continuation of the public welfare schemes and the fulfillment of his promises, a party statement said.

Lohri, a festival marking gratitude for the city's develop-



ment, reflecting the aspirations for progress under his leadership.

It underscores key initiatives of the Kejriwal government, such as free electricity, water, and the tenth program for senior citizens, the statement said.

The song also outlines new guarantees under the AAP's manifesto. These include the Mahila Samman Yojana, which promises Rs 2,100 per month to every woman directly in their bank accounts and the Santosevani Yojana, which aims to cover all medical expenses for senior citizens above the age of 60, it added.

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AAP delegation to meet EC officials raise vote transfer issue of party's Patparganj candidate

New Delhi
A delegation of AAP leaders led by national convener Arvind Kejriwal will meet the Election Commission officials at 3 pm on Monday to raise the issue of transfer of vote of party's Patparganj candidate Awadh Ojha from Greater Noida to Delhi.

Addressing a press conference here, Kejriwal said that it was an urgent issue since Ojha's candidature depended on transfer of his vote to Delhi so that he can file the nomination papers.

Ojha filed Form 8 for transfer of his vote from Greater Noida to Delhi on



January 7 - the last day to do so - but the chief electoral officer, Delhi, through an order changed the last date to January 6, the AAP chief claimed.

"This is against the law," he said and suspected that the move was aimed at "deliberately debarring" Ojha from contesting the polls. Kejriwal said that al-

though no appointment was given by the Election Commission (EC), but the party delegation will go there and wait for a meeting with the chief election commissioner since the matter was urgent.

The delegation will also raise the issue of multiple applications for registration of voters in addresses of the senior BJP leaders living in New Delhi constituency, he added. Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and her Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann will be members of the delegation along with AAP MPs Sanjay Singh and Raghav Chadha.

Kejriwal demands action on Jat Community OBC list promise

New Delhi
In a sharp attack on the BJP, AAP Chief Arvind Kejriwal on Monday raised questions regarding the inclusion of the Jat community in the Central OBC list and issues related to new voter registrations in the New Delhi Assembly seat.

Addressing a press conference here today, Kejriwal accused the ruling party of attempting to undermine the integrity of the Delhi elections.

"The BJP can abuse me as much as they want, but just tell me when will the Jat community, which is in the Delhi OBC list, be included in the Central OBC list? The Prime Minister will come to Delhi at dif-

ferent times and give speeches, but he should answer this question: when will the Jat community be included in the Central OBC list, as he promised in 2015?" he said.

On January 9, Kejriwal wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging him to include Delhi's Jat community in the OBC list of the Centre. He accused the BJP-led Central government of "cheating" the community in the name of OBC reservation for the last 10 years.

The AAP Chief also mentioned that an AAP delegation will meet the Election Commission at 3 pm today on two issues.

"Awadh Ojha, who is our

candidate from Patparganj, had his vote registered in Greater Noida. To get his vote transferred to Delhi, he filed out Form 6 on December 26, 2024. He did not receive any response. Someone told him that he would need to fill out Form 8 for the transfer, which he did on January 7. According to the ECI manual, Forms 6 and 8 can be filled before the last date of nominations," Kejriwal pointed out.

"The Delhi CEO issued an order stating that January 7 was the last date, and then mysteriously issued another order stating January 6 as the last date. This second order is against the Election Commission's

rules. Was this order issued to disbar Ojha J?" he said.

Further, the AAP chief alleged that in the New Delhi seat, several new vote applications have come from the homes of BJP MPs and leaders.

"This is quite mysterious. If so many new votes are being registered before the elections, what will happen to the sanctity of the election? No (BJP) may have won Haryana and Maharashtra, but the poor of Delhi will not tolerate this fraud," Kejriwal said. The Delhi assembly polls will be held in a single phase on February 5 and the counting of votes will take place on February 8.

BJP settling Bangladeshis Rohingyas across India: AAP



New Delhi
A day after AAP MLA Mohinder Goyal received notices over alleged connection with a syndicate of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh on Monday charged the BJP with settling "Bangladeshi and Rohingyas" across the country.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah should be held responsible for the situation as border security is the Centre's responsibility, the senior AAP leader said.

"For the last 10 and a half years, the prime minister, home minister and foreign minister - all of the BJP - they have settled the Bangladeshis and Rohingyas in the nation. They have cheated the country just for election benefits," Singh alleged in a press conference.

Singh asked how have the Bangladeshis and Rohingyas crossed the border and entered the national capital in the last 10 years and how many of them have been deported.

The AAP MP asked how have the immigrants crossed the border along West Bengal, Assam, and Tripura, passed through Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh and reached Delhi.

Singh also said the prime minister should be asked about the whereabouts of

former Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasena. Calling Hasena the "leader of Bangladeshis, Rohingyas" the senior AAP leader asked, "Where have you kept her?" Hasena flew to India after being ousted from power by anti-government protests in Bangladesh.

On Sunday, the BJP hit out at AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal, questioning his "silence" over the alleged links of Goyal to a syndicate facilitating Aadhaar and voter ID cards to illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in Delhi.

BJP leader Smriti Irani claimed that the investigative agency had found signatures and seals of two AAP MLAs - Goyal and Jai Bhagwan - on Aadhaar update forms for 26 illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in the city.

During the press conference, Goyal said that he would file a defamation case against Irani and BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi.

Sanyukt Kisan Morcha burns copies of Land Acquisition Bill

Noida
The Sanyukt Kisan Morcha burnt copies of the Land Acquisition Bill. The farmers said that the government wants to impose the Land Acquisition Bill again, which was withdrawn after a nationwide movement and they will not let this happen again.

In such a situation, the Bharatiya Kisan Union protested burning copies of the bill in the collectorate under the banner of the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha and they also talked to the officials concerned about not implementing the bill again.

Pawan Khataona, Western UP president of Bharatiya Kisan Union said that the government of India is doing injustice to the farmers by bringing the



Land Acquisition Bill and other bills. Regarding this, today the representatives of all the organisations of the United Front protested and burnt copies of the bill by staging a dharna at teshis across India.

A panchayat will be held to prepare the future strategy. If the bill is again im-

posed on the farmers, then once again the farmers will be forced to take to the streets and protest. The administration and the government will be responsible for this. We farmers will not tolerate this bill at all. It will not be allowed to be implemented again.

Delhi LG slams AAP on basic services

New Delhi
Delhi LG VK Saxena Monday slammed the AAP and said the party has failed on basic services in 11 years. He alleged that the party lacked accountability and their excuses won't hide failures.

He accused AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal of lying about the Shakur Basti Juggi community, and claimed that the DDA didn't change land use or issue eviction notices and said that Kejriwal was misleading people.

"Today, Arvind Kejriwal went to the Juggis of Shakur Basti. There, he stated about the Juggis of Shakur Basti, which is a complete lie. Referring to the meeting of the DDA on 27th December, he said that LG has changed the land use of this land.

CHANGE OF NAME AND DATE OF BIRTH

I, DULARO DEVI, Mother of No 14851313Y Hav/CK Shah Uday Kumar Shriram resident of VIII- Parneshwar Nagar, P.O. Veraval, Dist- Gir Somnath, Gujarat-362265 have changed my name from DULARO DEVI to SHAH DULARO DEVI SRIKANT and affidavit Certificate No. IN-DL8453394609431W dated 11 Nov 2024 before the Notary of Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to public at large that my client Smt. Sonwati Devi, W/o Late. Ramesh Chand, R/o H. No. 36 A, Main Nala Road, Jagdamba Colony, Johripur, Karawal Nagar, North-East, Delhi-110094 has debarred, disowned & dis-herited their son namely Armit, and his wife namely Poonam Kumari, D/o Harwaroop Singh, from their entire movable & immovable assets & severed all relations with them. Any one who deals with them shall do entirely at his own risks, costs & consequences and responsibilities. **PERPETRATED ADVOCATE DELHI HIGH COURT Office: E-29, Lawyers Chambers, Karakoram Courts, Delhi-32.**

NORTHERN RAILWAY
Pre-Bid Meeting for Procurement of Snow Blower/Cutter
Tender No. 15245170 for procurement of 02 Nos. of Snow Blower/Cutter has been published by this office. The pre-bid meeting is scheduled for dated 05.02.2025 in PCBM Conference Room, Stores Branch, Baroda House from 11:00 hrs. onwards & tender is due to open on dated 26.03.2025. Please make it convenient to attend the same.
No. 15245170/Snow Blower/Cutter Dt. 13.01.2025 142/2025
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

MERI Group Professors called on his excellency Shalar Geldynazarov ambassador of Turkmenistan to India

■ Prof Lalit Aggarwal, Vice-President, MERI Group of Institutions and Prof (Dr.) Ramakant Dwivedi, Head, MERI CIS called on His Excellency Mr. Shalar Geldynazarov, ambassador of Turkmenistan to India

New Delhi
Prof Lalit Aggarwal, Vice-President, MERI Group of Institutions and Prof Ramakant Dwivedi, Head, MERI Centre for International Studies (CIS) met His Excellency Mr. Shalar Geldynazarov, ambassador of Turkmenistan to India in New Delhi, on Monday.



They discussed bilateral issues of importance between the India and Turkmenistan with special reference to enhance education interactions, engagements and collaboration between the MERI Group of Institutions, India Central Asia Foundation and the various institutions of Turkmenistan. Prof Dwivedi underlined the need of information technology (IT) in today's world. He elaborated the role of MERI Group of institutions which is known for its world class faculty & industry oriented curriculum.

IT program trains professionals in advanced Cyber security, Data Science and Analytics, Machine Learning & Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Software Engineering, Cyber security

is aimed at safeguarding systems and data against evolving threats, data science and analytics develops data scientists and analysts skilled in extracting actionable insights from complex data, Machine learning and AI equips students with advanced knowledge in ML and AI to build intelligent systems and predictive models whereas software engineering is designed to develop analytical skilled software engineers proficient in designing, building, and maintaining software systems for various applications, he added.

He further provided details about the current status of the Joint Study between India Central Asia Foundation, New Delhi and Institute for International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkmenistan. TCAF has been working to promote common studies on India-Turkmenistan partnership and engagements. The publication of the Joint Study would help in disseminating Indian and Turkmen perspectives not only on bilateral interactions but also on regional and international engagements. Students who opt for Indian studies in Turkmenistan and Turkmen study in India would find the Study extremely useful as it would provide Indian and Turkmen perspectives on bilateral, regional and international affairs. A part of the Study would also examine the policy options available to both the countries. The focus of the joint study would be to assess the current status of India-Turkmen Relations and the potential for enhanced engagement in economic, science & technology and cultural arena. The said Study covers issues such as Overview of India-Turkmen relations in economic, science & technology, cultural arena, India-Turkmen cooperation at regional and international level and prospects for enhancing the same.

Prof Aggarwal stated that MERI CIS is an initiative to advance the common interest between India and the International community. CIS has established good contacts with prominent research/academic institutions and distinguished scholars at the global level. The Centre strives to make pioneering contributions in promoting the study of International Relations, International Business and Economic Studies. It aims at advancing knowledge and understanding of international affairs through theoretical and interdisciplinary lenses.

His Excellency Mr. Shalar Geldynazarov, ambassador of Turkmenistan to India in New Delhi appreciated the initiatives taken by the ICAF and MERI Group of Institutions in enhancing cooperation with Turkmenistan in the field of Education. Prof Lalit Aggarwal presented a bouquet and a shawl to Amb Rustambayev on behalf of the MERI Group of Institutions. Both the sides have agreed to carry forward this cooperation in the field of education.

Jain defamation plea politically motivated BJP's Swaraj to court

New Delhi
BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj on Monday said the defamation complaint filed against her by AAP's Satyendra Jain in a Delhi court was "politically motivated".

Swaraj's counsel submitted before additional chief judicial magistrate Neha Mittal that the case's facts were available in the public domain and it couldn't be classified as defamation. "The timing in this case is important as the person is contesting an election. The petition is politically motivated and it has been filed to gain political advantage," the counsel said.

Jain's lawyer opposed the submissions, calling Swaraj's statements "contrary to the facts". The court posted the hearing on January 22.

Jain alleged Swaraj made defamatory remarks against him during an interview on a news channel on October 5, 2023 which was watched by millions.

According to his complaint, Swaraj made "false claims" over the recovery of Rs 3 crore in cash besides 1.8 kilogram of gold and 133 gold coins from Jain's home.

Kejriwal thanks ECI for assuring action on fake votes in New Delhi seat

New Delhi
AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal said on Monday that the Election Commission of India (ECI) has assured an appropriate action on the alleged fake votes in the New Delhi assembly constituency ahead of polls.

He said the commission asserted that it won't let such things happen. Speaking to reporters after his visit to the ECI, Kejriwal informed that an ECI delegation apprised the AAP about 30-40 new voter applications filed at the BJP MP's behest in the New Delhi Assembly constituency. He said the poll panel assured inquiring and examining each application before taking any action.

He said the AAP delegation complained to the ECI against an open distribution of jackets, shoes, and cash by the BJP candidate ahead of the polls. The poll panel countered the allegation with the local DM's report which doesn't mention anything of the sort. To this, the AAP sought his suspension suspecting his connivance with the saffron party.



He thanked the poll panel for issuing an order on the shifting of votes of their candidate from Patparganj Awadh Ojha enabling his voter registration application from the area so that he could file his nomination.

Kejriwal expressed his gratitude to the election commission for giving an appointment to the AAP at a very short notice and taking note of the issues raised by the party and assuring action.

The party's leaders, who accompanied Kejriwal to the ECI, include Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann, MPs, Sanjay Singh and Raghav Chadha.

Bhagwant Mann, in reply to a question on the AAP's allegations, said while the New Delhi assembly seat is targeted, the Opposition is indulging in getting fake votes registered across the constituency.

Meanwhile, the New Delhi assembly constituency has become the talk of the town as it is in for a triangular contest between the AAP chief, BJP's Parvesh Verma, and Congress's Sandeep Dikshit.

Earlier in the day, Kejriwal, while addressing a press conference, alleged, "If 30-40 votes are suddenly registered from MPs' homes just 10-15 days before the elections, and the local DM justifies it, where is the sanctity of the election process?"

The BJP, citing the court's reprimand, said that the AAP government has lost "moral ground" to remain in power.

"The CAG reports have been sent to the Delhi Legislative Assembly Speaker for tabling in the next session of the Assembly. Beyond this, we have no role," the Aam Aadmi Party said in a statement.

The party alleged that the BJP was "fabricating" fake CAG reports and concocting "baseless" stories to mislead the public.

Traders celebrated Lohri with great pomp in Delhi Sadar Bazar

New Delhi
The festival of Lohri was celebrated with great pomp in Sadar Bazar by Federation of Sadar Bazar Trade Association under the chairmanship of Chairman Paramjit Singh Pamma and President Rakesh Yadav.



A program of distribution of Prasad was also organized on this occasion.

On this occasion, Federation Chairman Paramjit Singh Pamma, President Rakesh Yadav, General Secretary Kamal

Kumar, Treasurer Deepak Mittal, Gopal Grover, Abhay Sabharwal, Kuldeep Singh along with the traders first lit the Lohri and congratulated each other and prayed for everyone's health and the prosperity of the country.

'Does Kejriwal consider himself above Constitution': BJP slams AAP chief

New Delhi
The BJP Monday asked AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal if he considers himself above the Constitution as it attacked him over the Delhi government not tabling the CAG reports in the assembly.

BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said the constitutional scheme requires a government to table reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), which scrutinises its revenue and expenses, but the AAP dispensation has not done it.

"Does he consider himself above the Constitution?" he posed. Trivedi slammed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as he cited the Delhi High Court's observation that the Delhi government is "dragging its feet" in placing the report which is "unfortunate".

He alleged that the "anarchist character" of the AAP is pervading the constitutional system.

Hitting back, the AAP accused the BJP of "fabricating" fake CAG reports in its headquaters, concocting baseless stories to mislead the public.

"The CAG reports have been sent to the Delhi Legislative Assembly Speaker for tabling in the next session of the Assembly. Beyond this, we have no role," the AAP said in a statement.

Noting that there are almost a dozen reports of the CAG related to the finances of the Delhi government, Trivedi said the AAP dispensation has refused to table them in the assembly claiming that there is no need for it.

The CAG, in its reports, has been critical of some of



missed Chief Minister Atishi's crowdfunding to run her campaign as a gimmick. It is just a mask in the same way she is a mask as a chief minister while Kejriwal acts like super CM, he alleged.

If there is a perception of crisis of credibility in politics, the former Delhi CM is its "embodiment", Trivedi said. To a question about Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, a Congress ally, praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the inauguration of a tunnel in the Union Territory, he said anyone who observes the Modi government's functioning without any biases will have appreciation for its work.

Asked about the Congress' criticism of the Modi government for rupee's fall to a new low against US dollar, he claimed that it is due to US dollar having its own issues and that the Indian currency has done well against other currencies.

"Now there is talk about 'de-dollarisation', Trivedi said in a reference to efforts of some countries to reduce the importance of the US currency in international trade, and added that India is also trading in rupees with countries like Russia.

Despite the AAP heading one of the numerically strongest governments in the national capital, Kejriwal has done nothing but making excuses and complaints, he said.

The BJP spokesperson, a Rajya Sabha MP, also dis-

BJP workers oppose Manish Singh's candidature from Delhi Cantt, cite rape & corruption allegations

New Delhi
BJP workers from the Delhi Cantonment Assembly constituency have sent a strongly worded letter to BJP General Secretary Arun Singh, opposing the candidature of former BJP candidate Manish Singh. In the letter, dated December 15, 2024, they demanded that Singh not be given the party ticket for the upcoming elections, citing several grave allegations against him. These include accusations of rape, harassment of women, corruption, and violations under the SC/ST Atrocities Act.



The letter claims that cases of rape and harassment of women have been registered against Singh at various police stations in Delhi and Gurgaon. Investigations are underway under FIR No. 205/11 (DLF Police Station, Gurgaon) and FIR No. 112/2024 (Delhi Cantt Police Station). Copies of the FIRs were also attached to the letter for reference. The workers alleged that during his tenure as a member of the Delhi Cantt Board, Singh faced serious allegations of corruption and bribery, leading to his premature removal from the post. Accusations by Local Leaders: Pratibha Jaiswal, president of the BJP Mahila Morcha in Sadar Cantt, accused Singh of defrauding her of ₹40 lakh, a matter she has taken to court while also filing complaints with senior BJP leaders. Similarly, Harish, a Dalit resident of Jheera village, alleged that Singh attempted to seize his shop and lodged a complaint with the SC/ST Commission. Harish claimed that his complaint revealed the numerous cases against Singh.

Impact on BJP's Image: BJP workers warned that nominating Manish Singh as the party's candidate would not only jeopardize their chances of winning the election but also tarnish the party's image and principles.

Impact on BJP's Image: BJP workers warned that nominating Manish Singh as the party's candidate would not only jeopardize their chances of winning the election but also tarnish

the party's image and principles. They argued that Singh's conduct and character are inconsistent with the party's highest standards and could alienate Dalit voters, further damaging the BJP's reputation.

Appeal to BJP Leadership: The letter, signed by prominent BJP workers from the Delhi Cantonment Assembly constituency, including Vikas Sharma, Ashok Pradhan, Gopal Singh, Rashmi Mishra, Mohan Sharma, and Gautam Bainiwala, urged the party leadership to field a candidate with a clean image. The signatories emphasized the importance of preserving the party's integrity and warned that endorsing controversial figures like Singh could undermine BJP's credibility.

Party's Strategy: The BJP has announced 59 candidates for the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections but remains undecided about the Delhi Cantonment seat. Sources indicate that the party is carefully deliberating over the matter, reflecting the gravity of the controversy surrounding Singh's candidature.

Craze among devotees to take selfies with cutouts of PM Modi, CM Yogi

Mahakumbh Nagar (UP):

The Sangam bank in Prayagraj on Monday became a hotspot with crowds flocking to take selfies with the cutouts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on the first bathing festival of the Maha Kumbh.

The 45-day Maha Kumbh Mela will culminate on February 26 with 40 crore devotees expected to take a dip in the Sangam.

A sizeable number of women and youths gathered in large numbers at Nandi Dwar on Paush Purnima Snan to click photos and selfies, displaying their craze for Modi and Adityanath.

Brajesh Sharma, a visitor from Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh expressed his admiration for Modi and Yogi, stating that the cutouts attracted him. His entire family joined in for selfies, praising the arrangements at the Maha Kumbh Mela.

Suganna Dhippo, who travelled from Pune to Maharashtra for the sacred bath, lauded the arrangements at the event. She said the images of Modi and Yogi at Nandi Dwar were captivating, prompting her and her family to take selfies.

Sunita Swami, who arrived from Delhi, shared her experience of unexpectedly encountering the cutouts of Modi and Yogi. Impressed by the attractive visuals, she and her family took selfies, expressing their admiration for the work of the two leaders.

Manoj Kumar Singh, a visitor from Kaushambi in Uttar Pradesh, also joined the selfie craze, capturing moments with the cutouts. He praised the fair's arrangements and the bathing facilities, highlighting the efforts by PM Modi and CM Yogi in organising the Maha Kumbh.

Assam Rescue efforts continue as survival chances fade for trapped miners

Guwahati: The chances of survival of the five coal miners trapped inside an abandoned quarry in Assam's Dima Hasao district continue to diminish as dewatering operations entered the eighth day on Monday, officials said.

Nine workers were trapped inside the mine in Umrangshu, around 250 km from Guwahati, on January 6 with four bodies recovered so far. The mine is being dewatered using specialised pumping machines brought in by the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Coal India.

The water level in the quarry has dropped significantly, but it remains unclear when it will be "completely cleared or when rescue and search operations inside the quarry will resume," an official at the site said.

Rescue operations are being carried out jointly by the navy, army, Assam Rifles, NSRF and the district administration since the first day.

Oppn played politics of 'lies' in last assembly polls, people showed them mirror: Haryana CM

Chandigarh:

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Monday targeted the opposition, accusing it of playing politics of "lies" and promised to give jobs in exchange for votes during the assembly elections last year.

"The people of Haryana showed the mirror to those who wanted to sell government jobs and elected a BJP government again, Saini said. The chief minister attended the 'Abhinandan Samman Samaroh' organized by Rashtrian, Mahayogi, Updhayashree Gupta Sagar Gurudev at Gupti Dham premises in Ganaur in Sonapat, said an official release Saini said with the support of the public, the BJP government has been formed in Haryana for the third time.

"Today, the child of a poor person in the state is becoming successful on the basis of his hard work, because the atmosphere has changed due to the basic mantra of BJP of giving jobs without 'kharichi-parchi' (bribery-favouritism)," said Saini.

Akhilesh slams Uttar Pradesh govt for 'sidelining' boatmen at Maha Kumbh

Lucknow:

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav Monday targeted the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh, claiming boatmen were sidelined at the Maha Kumbh when state minister Nand Gopal Gupta dismissing the charge as "baseless".

Sharing a video clip of a foreign news outlet's report on social media, the SP chief criticised the Adityanath government's "treatment" of boatmen in Prayagraj, claiming their concerns were overlooked despite them playing a central role during the Maha Kumbh that went underway on Monday.

In a post on X, Akhilesh Yadav alleged, "Those who guide the world to its destination have been sidelined by the BJP government. The boatmen, whose lives and livelihoods revolve around rowing boats, are now questioning the government in these circumstances, where will we find our shelter?" He used the hashtag #PrayagrajNavikHadtal to underline the issue. The SP chief's claims could not be immediately verified.

Komal Ramola

Chandigarh:

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has said that the state government is fulfilling the dreams of youth by following the footsteps of Swami Vivekananda.

The present state government has provided jobs to youth based on merit. The state's goal is to make every youth skilled and financially prosperous by 2030. To achieve this goal, various plans are being implemented with effective steps, said the CM while addressing on Monday the people during an event organized by the Swami Vivekananda Uththan Samiti in village Karasan, Ambala district.

Earlier, he paid floral tributes to the statue of



"Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Haryana government has continuously developed the state in the last 10 years. The state government is taking steps for the welfare of every section," he said.

Saini said as soon as the BJP government was formed last year, we took many decisions for the welfare of the people. "We started a free dialysis facility for kidney patients. Apart from this, we passed a bill in the Assembly to give ownership rights of land at collector rate to the people who have been

living in houses built on panchayat land for a long time," he said. Hitting out at the rival parties, Saini said the opposition leaders wanted to create the same kind of environment this time as well, which was in the state before 2014.

"But the people of Haryana defeated the politics of lies and gave a befitting reply by forming the government of the BJP in the state," he said.

Saini said as per the promise of providing a roof over every head, plots will soon be provided to one lakh poor people in the state, and for this, the government

has prepared a complete plan.

At a separate event, Saini said the goal of the state government is to make every youth skilled by 2030.

"The state's goal is to make every youth skilled and financially prosperous by 2030. To achieve this goal, various plans are being implemented with effective steps," said Saini.

Saini while addressing an event organized by the Swami Vivekananda Uththan Samiti in village Karasan, Ambala district.

He said the state gov-



Azad Samaj Party (K) leader and Lok Sabha MP Chandra Shekhar Aazad joined the critique on social media, questioning the government's priorities. He noted that if the state government is capable of making grand arrangements for the Maha Kumbh in record time, why doesn't the same efficiency apply to pressing concerns like health, education, employment, and social uplift of farmers, Dalits, and tribals? Responding to the allegations, UP Industrial Development Minister and BJP leader Nand Gopal Gupta, said "When the whole world is experiencing the magnificence of Indian culture, tradition, and spirituality through the Maha

Kumbh, people like Akhilesh Yadav choose to spread rumours and lies. This is proof of their intent to tarnish Uttar Pradesh's image." "The double-engine government has implemented several measures for the boatmen, such as painting their boats attractively, providing life-saving training, and creating streamlined boat traffic facilities in the Sangam area. But for those spreading baseless lies, truth and facts hold no relevance," he said.

Hailing the Maha Kumbh as an "extraordinary, unforgettable, and unparalleled event" under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's leadership, Gupta said, "This

Union minister Nitin Gadkari, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah were also present at the inauguration.

The PM landed in Srinagar at 10.45 am and then flew to Sonamarg for the inauguration. He will also address a public meeting.

This is his first visit to Jammu and Kashmir after the assembly elections in September-October last year. The 6.5 km-long two-lane bi-directional road tunnel between Gangang and Sonamarg

in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district is equipped with a parallel 7.5-metre escape passage for emergencies.

Situated at an altitude of over 8,650 feet above sea level, the tunnel will enhance all-weather connectivity between Srinagar and Sonamarg en route to Leh, bypassing routes prone to landslides and avalanches.

The tunnel will also promote tourism by ensuring year-round connectivity to Sonamarg.

Along with the Zojila tunnel, set to be completed by 2028, the



Swami Vivekananda. On this occasion, the chairman and office bearers of the Samiti welcomed the Chief Minister with a bouquet and a memento. Saini also extended his greetings and best wishes for the festivals

of Lohri and Makar Sankranti to the people of the country and state. Our country is known for its festivals, each of which has its own special significance. Swami Vivekananda had worked to bring India's culture

and glory to the world, he said. Paying tribute to Swami Vivekananda, he called on the youth to stay away from drugs. He said that Swami Vivekananda is an inspiration to the youth, which is why his

Cordon, search operation conducted at bus stands

Chandigarh:

Punjab Police on Monday conducted a cordon and search operation at all the bus stands across the state.

The operation, aimed to ensure peaceful celebrations of Lohri festival, was carried out on the directions of Punjab Director General of Police (DGP) Gurav Yadav from 2 pm to 4 pm simultaneously in all the districts.

Special Director General of Police (Law and Order) Arpit Shukla said that all the district police chiefs were asked to ensure heavy deployment of police force under the supervision of SP rank officers to make this operation successful.

Police teams with the assistance of sniffer dogs frisked people arriving and departing at bus stands, he said, while adding that teams have also rounded up suspicious people for verification.

"We had strictly instructed all the Police Personnel to deal with every person in a friendly and polite manner while frisk-

ing them during the course of this operation," he added. The Special DGP said as many as 493 teams, involving over 3,500 police personnel, were deputed across the state to look for suspicious persons at different bus stands in the state, while ensuring minimum inconvenience to the general public.

Around 3,514 people were checked during the operation conducted at around 249 bus stands in the state, he said, while adding that police teams have rounded up 77 persons for questioning.

Police teams registered three criminal cases during the operation and also recovered 950 grams of poppy husk and 70 bottles of illicit liquor, he added.

During the operation, police teams also conducted checking of vehicles stationed at and around the bus stands.

As many as 318 vehicles were challaned and 17 vehicles have been impounded by the teams, he added.

PM Modi inaugurates Z-Morh tunnel in J-K

Srinagar:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday inaugurated the strategically important Z-Morh tunnel in the Sonamarg area of Jammu and Kashmir which will make the tourist resort accessible round the year.

After inaugurating the Rs 2,700 crore project, the prime minister went inside the tunnel and interacted with the project officials. He also met the construction workers who worked meticulously amid harsh conditions to complete the tunnel.

Union minister Nitin Gadkari, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah were also present at the inauguration.

The PM landed in Srinagar at 10.45 am and then flew to Sonamarg for the inauguration. He will also address a public meeting.

This is his first visit to Jammu and Kashmir after the assembly elections in September-October last year.

Along with the Zojila tunnel, set to be completed by 2028, the



in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district is equipped with a parallel 7.5-metre escape passage for emergencies.

Situated at an altitude of over 8,650 feet above sea level, the tunnel will enhance all-weather connectivity between Srinagar and Sonamarg en route to Leh, bypassing routes prone to landslides and avalanches.

The tunnel will also promote tourism by ensuring year-round connectivity to Sonamarg.

Along with the Zojila tunnel, set to be completed by 2028, the

Z-Morh tunnel will reduce the distance between the Kashmir Valley and Ladakh from 49 km to 43 km and boost vehicle speed from 30 km/hr to 70 km/hr.

The enhanced connectivity will also boost defence logistics, drive economic growth and socio-cultural integration across Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

The work on the Z-Morh tunnel began in May 2015 and it was expected to be completed by 2016-17.

However, it was completed in almost a decade as the Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL-

&FS), the initial concessionaire for executing the project, stopped work in 2018 due to financial stress.

The foundation stone of the Rs 2,716 crore project was laid in October 2012 by the then minister for surface transport C P Joshi in the presence of his then cabinet colleague Farooq Abdullah, then Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi.

The project was re-tendered in 2019 and awarded to APCO Infratech, the lowest bidder, in January 2020.

As skies clear up mercury drops across Kashmir

Srinagar:

Minimum temperatures dropped across Kashmir as the skies cleared up with Pahalgam being the coldest place in the valley at minus 8.4 degrees Celsius, the meteorological department said on Monday.

The valley is likely to witness mainly dry weather over the next few days, it said. The minimum temperature in Srinagar settled at minus 5.1 degrees Celsius on Sunday night, down from the previous night's minus 3 degrees Celsius, according to the meteorological department.

North Kashmir's tourist resort of Gulmarg, known for skiing, recorded a minimum temperature of minus 6.5 degrees Celsius, down from the previous night's minus 5.6 degrees Celsius.

Pahalgam, one of the base camps for the annual Amarnath Yatra in

south Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 8.4 degrees Celsius, down from minus 6.2 degrees Celsius the night before.

The minimum temperature was minus 6.4 degrees Celsius in Qazigund, minus 5.5 degrees Celsius in Konibal in Pampore town, minus 5.5 degrees Celsius in Kupwara and minus 3.4 degrees Celsius in Kokernag.

The weather in the valley will be mostly cloudy but dry till January 18 with a possibility of light snow at isolated higher reaches on January 15 and 16, the meteorological department said.

Kashmir is currently in the grip of 'Chillai-Kalan' - the harshest period of winter. During the 40 days of 'Chillai-Kalan', which began on December 21, the chances of snowfall are the highest and the temperature drops considerably.

The Kumbh Mela: A Confluence of Spirituality, History, and Modern Governance



By Dr. Anil Singh

The Kumbh Mela, often described as the largest human gathering on Earth, is a vibrant confluence of spirituality, history, culture, and science. Held every 12 years at one of the four sacred sites—Prayagraj, Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nashik—this festival draws millions of devotees, ascetics, saints, and tourists. The event is steeped in Sanatan tradition, with roots dating back to ancient scriptures and a rich historical narrative. It has evolved over centuries while retaining its profound cultural and religious essence.

In the present context, the Yogi Adityanath-led government of Uttar Pradesh, supported by key figures such as Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, has redefined the way this mega event is organized. Their leadership has blended ancient traditions with modern governance, ensuring the Kumbh Mela remains a global symbol of India's cultural pride and organizational prowess.

Historical Background of Kumbh Mela

The origins of the Kumbh Mela are deeply rooted in Hindu mythology and ancient scriptures. The event finds its basis in the story of the Samudra Manthan (churning of the ocean of milk), a tale from the Puranas, where the gods (Devas) and demons (Asuras) churned the ocean to extract the nectar of immortality (Amrit). Drops of this nectar fell at four sites—Prayagraj, Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nashik—making them sacred, and thus began the tradition of the Kumbh Mela.

Historically, the first documented evidence of Kumbh Mela in Prades, back to the 7th century, when Chinese traveler Xuanzang wrote about the grand gathering of ascetics and devotees

at Prayagraj. Over the centuries, the festival has become a symbol of spiritual unity and cultural identity for Sanatan Dharma, attracting people from across India and the world.

Scientific Perspective of Kumbh

Beyond its religious significance, the timing and location of the Kumbh Mela align with astronomical and ecological phenomena. The Mela is organized based on planetary alignments, particularly the position of Jupiter, the Sun, and the Moon, believed to create an environment conducive to spiritual growth. Scientifically, the confluence of rivers like the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati (in Prayagraj) is rich in minerals, and a dip in these waters has been found to have therapeutic benefits.

The large-scale human congregation has intrigued scientists and sociologists, offering valuable insights into managing public health, crowd dynamics, and environmental sustainability during such mass gatherings.

Relevance of Present Kumbh Mela vis-a-vis the Past

The essence of the Kumbh Mela remains unchanged—devotion, spirituality, and cultural celebration. However, its scale and organization have undergone significant transformations. Earlier, the Mela was a predominantly religious event with minimal infrastructural support, and pilgrims often faced considerable hardships.

In contrast, modern Kumbh Melas are global events that attract millions, including international tourists, scholars, and media. The 2019 Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj witnessed unprecedented participation, recognized as an Intangible Cultural

Heritage by UNESCO. The event is now as much a display of India's organizational capabilities as it is a spiritual gathering.

Role of the State in Organizing Kumbh Mela

The role of the state in organizing the Kumbh Mela is crucial. The Uttar Pradesh government under Yogi Adityanath has set several benchmarks in managing this mega event. From ensuring safety and convenience for millions of pilgrims to preserving the sanctity of the event, the state's proactive measures have made the Kumbh Mela a model of efficient governance.

Key Contributions by the State:

Infrastructure Development: Roads, railways, and waterways were significantly upgraded, and temporary tent cities with modern amenities were established.

Cleanliness and Hygiene: Thousands of bio-toilets were installed, and waste management systems were implemented under the "Swachh Kumbh" initiative, which received global acclaim.

Security Measures: Advanced surveillance technology, including drones and facial recognition systems, ensured the safety of pilgrims.

Cultural Showcase: The Kumbh was also a platform to celebrate India's cultural heritage through performances, exhibitions, and seminars.

Significant Role of U P Government

Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, a prominent Brahmin face of the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, played a vital role in ensuring the success of the Kumbh Mela. His leadership demonstrated a blend of administrative efficiency and cultural

empathy, resonating with the Sanatan values of the event.

Contributions by Brajesh Pathak:

Healthcare Infrastructure: Pathak, overseeing the health ministry, ensured that adequate medical facilities were set up, including mobile hospitals, emergency response units, and thousands of medical staff stationed across the Mela premises. This ensured that pilgrims had access to quality healthcare during the event.

Community Engagement: As a Brahmin leader, he actively engaged with religious and cultural organizations, fostering inclusivity and ensuring that the sentiments of devotees were respected.

Public Outreach: Pathak spearheaded campaigns to ensure that the Kumbh was accessible to all sections of society. He worked closely with the administration to subsidize travel and accommodation for pilgrims, especially from economically weaker sections.

Symbol of Unity: His presence as a key Brahmin leader reinforced the BJP's commitment to the Sanatan community, highlighting the party's dedication to upholding the cultural and religious heritage of India. Pathak's contributions also demonstrated Yogi Adityanath's leadership, making the Kumbh Mela a benchmark for future events.

Kumbh as a Pride for Sanatan Dharma

For the Sanatan people, the Kumbh Mela is more than a religious gathering—it is a reaffirmation of their spiritual and cultural identity. Celebrating the essence of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family), as people from

diverse backgrounds come together in harmony.

Historically, the Kumbh has been a melting pot of ideas, where saints, scholars, and philosophers congregated to exchange knowledge. It has played a crucial role in preserving and propagating the values of Sanatan Dharma, serving as a beacon of spiritual light for generations.

A Way Forward

The Kumbh Mela is not just a festival; it is a celebration of India's spiritual legacy, cultural diversity, and governance prowess. Its historical roots, scientific underpinnings, and contemporary relevance make it a unique phenomenon that continues to inspire awe worldwide.

In the modern context, the Kumbh Mela has evolved into a symbol of India's soft power, showcasing the country's ability to blend tradition with modernity. The leadership of Yogi Adityanath, supported by Brajesh Pathak's strategic contributions, has elevated the Kumbh's stature to unprecedented heights.

In my opinion, the Kumbh Mela serves as a reminder of the timeless values of Sanatan Dharma—unity, devotion, and selfless service. Leaders like Yogi Adityanath and Brajesh Pathak have not only ensured the preservation of this heritage but have also redefined its global appeal, making it a source of pride for every Indian. As the Kumbh continues to evolve, it will remain a cornerstone of India's cultural and spiritual identity.

(The writer is an Editor, STAR Views)

Breaking Time Sudoku

What to do

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digit 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only one correct solution.

2	1			6	9			
		5		8		1		
	8	2	5		4			5
			2	7				
9				1	2	9		
	1	3				5		
	8	6					3	7

Solution, Sudoku

6	2	7	3	4	1	5	8	9
9	1	5	8	6	2	4	7	3
3	4	8	9	5	7	1	6	2
4	9	6	1	7	5	2	3	8
5	3	2	4	8	6	9	1	7
7	8	1	2	9	3	6	4	5
2	6	3	7	1	9	8	5	4
1	7	4	5	2	8	3	9	6
8	5	9	6	3	4	7	2	1

THE WISDOM TREE BY SUVEEN KUMAR

COVERED SIN

It's a bad news that one day your sin will be uncovered but the good news is that not all the sins and the bad news over this good news is that you don't know which ones will be uncovered and which ones will remain covered. Your life becomes miserable only with one sin uncovered, imagine how miserable your life will be if all of your sins are uncovered. You are never strong enough to fight your own weakness and never weak enough to empower your own strengths. Life is far forgiving than we think. We often forget that it does to us, it overlooks much of our mistakes that we do to it. We know the rules of life but we never care to care for it, it lives with us in all the times but we never care to live for it, it takes our mistakes, it feeds the pain away, it bears the scars, it

walks us through from ground to stars. But we take it for granted, make it suffer knowingly, fail it at important routines, push it to go extreme, force it to experiment with anything and everything, put it through to damaging situation, drive it to wrong direction. We sometimes behave with life as if it belongs to someone else, we sometimes are so cruel with life as if it is made of something else. Give your life a five star as a rating if you think it deserves it, give your life an excellent review if you think it deserves it, glorify it, magnify it, gratify it if you think it deserves it, don't underestimate it just conflate it, give your life a life that it starts living for life.



Moral: Every sin is forgivable and every virtue is immortal.

Makar Sankranti celebrations are adorned with vibrant customs and traditions



By Dr. Satyavan Saurabh

Many states in India celebrate Makar Sankranti on January 14 with different names—Makar Sankranti, Pongal, Magh Bihu, etc. Unlike many Hindu festivals, these festivals have a fairly fixed date. Makar Sankranti, one of the most celebrated festivals in India, marks the entry of the Sun into the zodiac sign Capricorn, which marks the end of winter and the beginning of longer days. The festival is a mix of spiritual devotion and cultural fervor, celebrated with different customs in different states. It is a day to celebrate harvest, prosperity, and new beginnings.

Makar Sankranti is a widely celebrated harvest festival in India, which marks the entry of the Sun into the zodiac sign of Capricorn. It marks the end of the winter solstice and the beginning of longer, warmer days, symbolizing hope, prosperity, and new beginnings. This festival holds great cultural and religious significance in various states of India. Makar Sankranti is celebrated to com-

memorate the entry of the Sun into Capricorn, which marks the beginning of the auspicious Uttarayan period. It is a time of gratitude for the harvest and hope for prosperity in the coming year. The day marks the harvesting season for crops such as wheat, rice, and sugarcane. It marks the movement of the Sun towards the northern hemisphere, bringing warmth and positivity. It is a day to thank nature and express gratitude for abundance.

Makar Sankranti is a symbol of unity in diversity, with each state celebrating this festival in its own unique way. It represents a sense of community, renewal, and well-being. Rituals like holy baths, prayers, and preparation of traditional sweets reflect the essence of the festival. Celebrated by different names like Pongal, Magh Bihu, and Lohri in different regions, highlights the importance of nature, agriculture, and seasonal cycles. Rituals like kite flying, folk dances, and fairs bring communities together. The

celebration of Makar Sankranti is marked by vibrant customs and traditions, which vary across different states; kite flying is especially popular in Gujarat and Rajasthan, symbolizing freedom and happiness. Pilgrims take ritual baths in holy rivers like Ganga and Yamuna. Traditional food, sweets made of sesame and jaggery, are distributed. Fairs and cultural programs are held across the states to celebrate the harvest. Donating clothes, food, and money is considered auspicious at this time. Activities such as building, offering naivedya to the Sun God, charity, Shraddha rituals, and breaking the fast are performed during the festival. Devotees often take a dip in holy rivers such as the Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna, and Kaveri to purify themselves of their sins.

The International Kite Festival is one of the most vibrant and globally renowned

events of Gujarat, celebrated every year during Makar Sankranti in January. Held in Ahmedabad, the festival attracts kite enthusiasts and participants from all over the world. The sky turns into a colorful canvas with the flying of unique kites of different shapes and sizes. The event symbolizes joy, unity and the cultural heritage of Gujarat, making it a must-see for local and tourists. Along with kite flying, the festival also includes cultural performances, local cuisine, and craft exhibitions, offering a true glimpse of the rich traditions of Gujarat.

Makar Sankranti is the time to eat freshly harvested grains, which are first offered to the gods and then eaten. Ayurveda recommends eating khichdi as it is a light and easily digestible dish. Eating khichdi means preparing the body for the change in seasons, be it the cold breeze of winter or the incoming warmth of spring. As the temperature changes from dry cold to wonderfully warm,

the body becomes vulnerable to imbalances. This is the time to eat a perfect dish to satisfy hunger while providing the body with the necessary nutrition. Apart from its benefits for health, cooking and eating khichdi on this festival symbolizes unity, as people cook this dish by combining all the ingredients, including freshly harvested rice, pulses, seasonal vegetables, and spices, in a single vessel. It symbolizes the process of life and regeneration, indicating the beginning of a new harvest year. Ayurveda also suggests eating sesame and jaggery on this divine day. Sankranti and sesame seeds are synonymous, as this festival is also commonly known as 'Til Sankranti.' Sesame seeds can absorb negativity and enhance 'sattva'—purity, goodness, and harmony—which in turn facilitates spiritual practice.

(Dr. Satyavan Saurabh, Poet, Freelance journalist and columnist, radio and TV panelist)

TOP STORY

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Vice prez Dhankhar warns of unrest if Parliament fails

New Delhi
Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Monday stressed the importance of a functioning Parliament for a healthy democracy. He said public unrest could erupt if Parliament continues to be disrupted and becomes irrelevant.



He was speaking at the launch of "Parliament: Powers, Functions and Privileges; a Comparative Constitutional Perspective" by K S Chauhan.

"People will take to agitations. People will find a way out and therefore if Parliament is non-functional, it will gradually get into irrelevance, and that will be a threat to democracy," he said.

Dhankhar highlighted the need for lawmakers to address the nation's aspirations by enacting poli-

cies, emphasizing that this can only occur through a fully functional Parliament. He also noted that India's economic growth is dependent on a functioning Parliament.

"We are the fifth-largest global economy, we will soon be the third-largest. But the challenge is there. An eightfold increase in per capita income has to be achieved for a developed

national status. And that can happen only when Parliament, its committees perform, and our country itself performs," he said.

The Rajya Sabha chairman also expressed pain over the fact that no member of Parliament has come forward to claim a wad of currency notes found in the Rajya Sabha chamber last month, saying it is a "collective challenge to our ethical standards".

"Just imagine my pain. Only a month back or so, we found on a particular seat in the Rajya Sabha, the Council of States, a wad of notes, Rs 500 in denomination. What has really pained me is that no one has come to claim it," Dhankhar said.

"You can carry notes, maybe out of necessity, but then no one has claimed that is a collective challenge to our ethical standards," he said.

Dhankhar pointed out that for a long time, there was no committee on ethics. It was only in the late 1990s that the Rajya Sabha for the first time came to have a committee on ethics, which is functional.

"As the chairman, Rajya Sabha, I can tell you ladies and gentlemen, anyone who is there in the Rajya Sabha as a member is a human resource to reckon with brilliant credentials, great exposure and experience, but when it comes to action, they are guided by someone else," he lamented.

Dhankhar concluded by expressing confidence in the potential of lawmakers, saying, "I envy their enormous talent, their capacity, their contribution. They are very learned people and, therefore, I am sure this book will be an eye opener to those who urge us to take this nation forward."

Congress selling lies about UGC hiring norms: Pradhan

New Delhi
Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Monday attacked the Congress, accusing it of "selling lies" about the draft recruitment norms rolled out by the UGC and said the practice of governors appointing university vice-chancellors has been going on even before Independence.



The University Grants Commission (UGC) released the draft regulations last week, proposing a major overhaul in the recruitment of assistant professors and vice-chancellors.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge had alleged that the UGC draft regulations, 2025, give state governors extensive control over vice-chancellor appointments and allow non-academics to hold these posts and termed it a "direct attack on federalism and state rights".

According to the draft regulations, industry experts, as well as senior professionals from public administration, public policy and public sector undertakings, might soon be eligible for appointment as vice-chancellors. The draft norms have also given power to chancellors or visitors to constitute the three-member search-cum-selection committee to appoint vice-chancellors.

"Whether it is UGC Regulations 2010, 2018 or the current UGC Regulations of 2025, it is clear in all that the chancellor or visitor appoints the vice-chancellor. As far as the discharge of the responsi-

The University Grants Commission (UGC) released the draft regulations last week, proposing a major overhaul in the recruitment of assistant professors and vice-chancellors.

the country should develop. That is why spreading confusion on issues like education, misleading the youth and wanting to spread unrest in the country has become the policy of the entire Congress party, including Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge".

"The Congress party has a problem with the 'National Education Policy' which has been wholeheartedly accepted by all sections of the country, including the youth because it has elements of Indianness. This is the same party which weakened the Indian education system and worked to erase our glorious cultural heritage from the textbooks while being in power for decades.

"Therefore, without understanding the facts, the Congress party should change its policy of criticizing just for the sake of criticism and stop worrying about one family and worry about the youth of the country," Pradhan added.

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"Therefore, without understanding the facts, the Congress party should change its policy of criticizing just for the sake of criticism and stop worrying about one family and worry about the youth of the country," Pradhan added.

Consider early release of gangster serving life term in murder case: SC to UP govt

New Delhi
The Supreme Court has directed the UP government to consider within two months the premature release of gangster Om Prakash Srivastava, alias Babloo Srivastava, serving life term in a 1993 murder case.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Nongmeikapam Kottiswar Singh directed the state government to consider the plea seeking revision under sub-section (1) of Section 473 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023.

Srivastava sought the relief under Section 2 of the United Provinces Prisoners' Release on Probation Act, 1938 but the plea was rejected.

The top court said Section 2 of the 1938 Act was more stringent than Section 432 of the CrPC or Section 473 of the BNSS. It said unless the state government recorded a finding that it was satisfied over the antecedents of a convict, or their conduct in prison, and that they were likely to abstain from crime and lead a peaceful life upon release, the convict could not be released.

"As far as the denial of relief under Section 2 of the 1938 Act is concerned, we cannot find fault with the order passed by the state government. The scope of Section 473 of the BNSS is completely different from Section 2 of the 1938 Act," the court said.

Therefore, the top court in an order on January 8 directed the state government to consider the case of the petitioner for grant of remission under sub-section (1) of Section 473 of the BNSS as "expeditiously as possible". The order said, "As the petitioner has undergone the actual sentence for more than 28 years, the case of the petitioner shall be considered and appropriate order shall be passed within a maximum period of two months. The order be communicated to the petitioner." The bench directed the court concerned — mandated to give its opinion under sub-section (2) of Section 473 of the BNSS — to forward it within 15 days from the date of receipt of the state's request.

TN School undertake Study Tour in Parliament

N. Sivakumar
New Delhi

St. Joseph's Matric School, Sathyamangalam a leading upcoming school in the area recently undertook a study tour of their faculty members in Northern India to gain updated surrounding knowledge. The 15 members of the faculty, headed by Sr. Josephine, Principal came to Delhi and visited the Prime Minister Museum. Many fac-



went around local sightseeing and the next day visited Taj mahal in Agra. Today, the faculty visited Parliament House. This was

one of the lifetime memories of visiting Parliament. They understand Parliament and its function. The mammoth Building, both New Parli-

PM Modi celebrates Sankranti, Lohri at G Kishan Reddy's residence

New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday joined Sankranti and Pongal celebrations at the residence of his Cabinet colleague and Telangana BJP president G Kishan Reddy and later participated in Lohri festivities at Naraina.

Telugu filmstar Chiranjeevi, ace badminton player PV Sindhu and several Union ministers joined the programme at Reddy's residence where Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla was also present.

Modi participated in rituals associated with the festival, which is celebrated in different regions under different names and is associated with harvest.

"Attended Sankranti and Pongal celebrations at the residence of my ministerial colleague, Shri G. Kishan Reddy Garu. Also witnessed an excellent cultural programme," the prime minister said in a post on X.

People across India celebrate Sankranti and Pongal with great fervour, he said, adding it is a celebration of gratitude, abundance and renewal, deeply rooted in the agricultural traditions of our culture.

"My best wishes for Sankranti and Pongal. Wishing everyone happiness, good health and a prosperous harvest season ahead," he said. The prime minister has often visited his Cabinet colleagues from different regions to join them in the celebration of various festivals.

When Mr. Narendra Modi took over as PM he was about to turn 64 and the rupee was at 58.58 to the dollar. He waxed eloquent on making the rupee stronger and mockingly linked its fall to his predecessor's age," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X.

"Well, now as Mr. Modi prepares to turn 75 later in the year, the rupee has already declined well past 86 to the dollar. As the fall continues, Mr. Modi has clearly been hoist with his own petard!"

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 86.12 and fell to the lowest ever level of 86.59 against the greenback during mid-session, registering a loss of 55 paise from its previous close. The local unit, however, pared some losses

As PM Modi prepares to turn 75 rupee has declined well past 86 to the dollar, says Congress

New Delhi

Taking a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over fall in the value of rupee, the Congress on Monday said as the fall continues, he has clearly been "hoist with his own petard".

The rupee logged its steepest fall in nearly two years, plunging 55 paise to hit a historic low of 86.59 against the US dollar during mid-session on Monday due to strengthening of the American currency and surging crude oil prices.

"When Mr. Narendra Modi took over as PM he was about to turn 64 and the rupee was at 58.58 to the dollar. He waxed eloquent on making the rupee stronger and mockingly linked its fall to his predecessor's age," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X.

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and was later trading 46 paise down at 86.50 versus the dollar.

The fall of 55 paise or 0.65 per cent in one session was the steepest since February 6, 2023 when the unit had lost 68 paise.

The Indian currency has witnessed the deepest plunge of more than Re 1 in the past two weeks from the closing level of 85.52 on December 30.

The Congress has been attacking the government over its handling of the economy, pointing to falling investments and value of rupee.

"While the non-biological PM is rediscovering that he is a human after all, foreign investors in our stock markets have ushered in 2025 by taking out \$2 billion just in the past

six days. This shows: The growing impact of our weak macro fundamentals - stagnant wages, faltering private investment, slowdown in consumption growth," Ramesh said in a post on X earlier on Friday.

This also shows complete lack of investor confidence in India's financial markets after disclosures about the SEBI chairperson's conflicts of interests and India's continuing decline as a destination for foreign investment - direct or indirect - compared to other countries, including Vietnam and Malaysia, he added.

The Congress leader said the rupee is hitting new lows against the dollar day after day which increases currency risks.

The top court in an order on January 8 directed the state government to consider the case of the petitioner for grant of remission under sub-section (1) of Section 473 of the BNSS as "expeditiously as possible". The order said, "As the petitioner has undergone the actual sentence for more than 28 years, the case of the petitioner shall be considered and appropriate order shall be passed within a maximum period of two months. The order be communicated to the petitioner." The bench directed the court concerned — mandated to give its opinion under sub-section (2) of Section 473 of the BNSS — to forward it within 15 days from the date of receipt of the state's request.

SC to hear case over medical aid to ailing leader Dallewal on January 15

New Delhi

The Supreme Court would hear a matter related to the health of farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who is on an indefinite fast pressing for demands, and other pleas on January 15.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kottiswar Singh would hear a plea filed on behalf of Dallewal for a direction to the Central government for implementing a proposal, including a legal guarantee of MSP on crops, made to the protesting farmers in 2021 after the farm laws were repealed.

The top court had asked the Centre why couldn't the government say its doors were open and it would consider the genuine grievances of farmers protesting over demands, including the legal



guarantee of minimum support price for crops.

The apex court would also hear a plea seeking contempt action against the Punjab government authorities for not complying with its directions issued over moving Dallewal to a hospital on December 20 last year.

On January 12, Dallewal wrote to several religious

leaders to urge the Central government to accept the farmers' demands, which include a legal guarantee to minimum support price for crops. Farmer leaders said the condition of Dallewal, whose indefinite fast entered the day 48 on January 12, was "deteriorating." On January 13, the septuagenarian farmer leader met the apex

Karnataka HC upholds confiscation of Jayalithaa's assets

Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court has dismissed on Monday an appeal by J Deepak and J Deepa, the legal heirs of late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalithaa, seeking the release of her assets confiscated in a 2004 disproportionate assets case.

Jayalithaa was convicted by a special court in 2014 for amassing wealth disproportionate to her known sources of income during her tenure from 1991 to 1996. Following her conviction, her properties were confiscated by the authorities.

Although she was acquitted by the Karnataka High Court in 2015, then congress government in Karnataka appealed against it in supreme court. Case against Jayalithaa was abated due



to her demise in 2016. While convicting late CM's close aide V K Sasikala, and her two relatives V N Sudhakaran and Elavarasi in 2017, Supreme Court upheld the confiscation of Jayalithaa's assets.

Deepak and Deepa, recognized as Jayalithaa's legal heirs by the Madras High Court in 2020, filed an appeal seeking the release of her confiscated assets, arguing that since the proceedings against her were terminated upon her death, she should not be considered a convict, and her properties

should be restored to them. Justice V Srichandana upheld the trial court's July 12, 2023, order rejecting their request, stating that the confiscation order remains valid as upheld by the Supreme Court.

The court noted the absence of detailed evidence indicating which assets were acquired before the investigation period and clarified that any claims regarding such assets must be supported by proper proof and presented before the trial court.

In a concluding remark, the judge encouraged the legal heirs to consider establishing a foundation in Jayalithaa's name to serve the public, suggesting that engaging in charitable work would bring peace to the late leader's soul.

Maha Kumbh confluence of cultures shows unity in diversity UP CM

Maha Kumbh: Global pilgrims turn Sangam into confluence of faith humanity

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday extended his greetings on the commencement of Maha Kumbh, which he described as a confluence of cultures and a message of unity in diversity.

Earlier on Monday, that marked Paush Purnima, Maha Kumbh started on the banks of Sangam - the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati, with around 40 lakh pilgrims taking a dip in the initial hours of the day.

"Greetings on Paush Purnima. The world's largest spiritual and cultural gathering 'Maha-kumbh' is starting from today in the holy city of Prayagraj," Adityanath posted on X.

"All the revered saints, Kalpavis and devotees who have come to experience unity in diversity, to meditate and take a holy bath at the confluence of faith and modernity are heartily welcomed. May Maa Ganga fulfil all your wishes," he said.

"Auspicious wishes for the inauguration and first bath of Maha-kumbh Prayagraj."

"Pride-Maha Kumbh Festival," he added. In another post, the CM said, "Where there is a confluence of cultures, there is also a confluence of faith and harmony."

UP Construction of 51-foot-tall Lord Ram statue nearing completion in Sambhal

Sambhal (UP): A 51-foot-tall statue of Lord Ram is nearing completion in Chaudasi, a town in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal district, and is likely to be unveiled by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in February.

The statue, being built at Ram Bagh Dham's Ramliya Ground, will feature the Hindu god holding a bow in one hand and blessing devotees with the other.

Ram Bagh Dham Trust president Ashok Kumar Fancy said the statue's construction began on May 31, 2023, and is now in its final stages.

"The statue is almost complete, with only the painting work left. It is expected to be ready by February 2025," he said.

Highlighting the unique features of the statue, Ram Bagh Dham Trust's secretary Amit Kumar K S said this grand and divine statue of Lord Ram will be the "tallest of its kind in the country".

"The statue is unique as Lord Ram's gaze is directed downward, symbolizing humility, while he holds a bow in one hand and blesses devotees with the other. Surrounding the main structure is an Ashok Vatika, as well as statues of Hanuman and Garuda," he added.

He said, "We have written to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, requesting him to inaugurate the statue, and we hope the event will take place soon."

Vice president of the Ramliya Parishad at Ram Bagh Dham, Amit Kumar Appu, said, "When the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya began, we thought of establishing the tallest statue of Lord Ram here in Chaudasi's Ram Bagh Dham."

Mahakumbh Nagar: Among a sea of humanity that took the holy dip in the Sangam in their quest for 'moksha' on Monday was a large number of overseas visitors, soaking in the spiritual fervour at the world's largest gathering of humans.

The Maha Kumbh, which began Monday with the 'Shahi Snan' on 'Paush Purnima', has transformed the meeting point of rivers Ganga, Yamuna and the mystical Saraswati into a vibrant confluence of faith, culture and humanity, with its fair share of global attendees experiencing the rare celestial alignment that occurs once every 144 years.

Michael, a former US Army soldier-turned-ascetic now known as 'Baba Mokshapuri', shared his journey of transformation.

"I was an ordinary man with a family and career. But I realised that nothing in life is permanent, so I embarked on a quest for salvation," he said.

Associated with the Juna Akhara, Michael has dedicated his life to propagating Sanatan Dharma.



"This is my first Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, and the spiritual vibes are extraordinary," he said.

The spiritual extravaganza has attracted a diverse set of foreigners -- from South Korean YouTubers filming the festival, to Japanese tourists keenly learning about the traditions alongside European pilgrims.

Expressing her awe at the grandeur of the event, Christina from Spain said, "This is a wonderful moment, unlike anything I've ever seen."

Julie, another inter-national visitor, felt a deep connection at the Sangam.

"I am thankful for the opportunity to take a dip in these sacred waters. I feel fulfilled and blessed," she told PTI Videos. Valeria from Italy described the atmosphere as "exciting and full of

good vibes". She and her husband Mikhail, however, skipped the 'Shahi Snan' owing to the freezing waters.

"My wife threatened to leave me if I went into the water because it's too cold," Mikhail quipped.

The couple through plans to revisit Prayagraj when the mercury rises.

Brazilian yoga practitioner Shiku, a first-timer at Maha Kumbh in search of 'moksha', said,

"India is the spiritual heart of the world. What makes this Maha Kumbh even more special is that it is happening after 144 years. I feel so lucky to be here. Jai Shri Ram."

For Melanie, a journalist from France, the Maha Kumbh is about unanticipated thrill.

"I didn't know about the Maha Kumbh when I planned my trip to India. But once I learnt about it, I knew I had to come here. Meeting sadhus and witnessing this vibrant fair has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience," she said in a Video.

Many foreign visitors also emphasised the event's global fame.

"Travellers around the world know about the Maha Kumbh, especially this one because it's the biggest in 144 years," said an enthusiastic attendee.

The Uttar Pradesh government is expecting a footfall of 40-45 crore people at the Maha Kumbh to be held till February 26, mobilising its resources at an unprecedented scale for the smooth conduct of the event, arguably one of the largest gatherings of faith in the world.

HP CM Sukhu visits fire-affected area in Tandi; announces relief



Loveleen Tharmani Kullu:

Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu today visited Tandi village in the Banjar Valley of Kullu district to meet families affected by a recent fire incident. He assessed the ongoing relief operations and instructed officers to expedite the work on a war footing.

The Chief Minister announced that the government will provide financial assistance of Rs. 50,000 per month for six months to families living in rented accommodations due to the fire. If the reconstruction of their houses is not completed within the period, the government

will extend the rent support for an additional six months. Additionally, he announced Rs. 50,000 for the construction of cattle sheds.

For families whose houses were completely destroyed or rendered uninhabitable, the Chief Minister declared financial assistance of Rs. 7 lakh for reconstruction. He also assured free electricity and water connections, provision of timber as per norms for rebuilding, and essential items such as utensils, clothing, and other necessities.

Further, the Chief Minister announced Rs. 75 lakh for constructing a metal road within the village and Rs. 1 crore

for repairing the 4-kilo-meter-long road leading to Tandi.

To enhance safety measures in the region, he announced the establishment of a fire station in Banjar. He also assured efforts to address the local low-voltage electricity problem by exploring the possibility of setting up a solar power project.

MLA Bhuveshwar Gaur, Surender Shourie, former minister Khimti Ram Sharma, Chairman APMC Kullu and Lahaul-Spiti Ram Singh Miyan, Chairman Zila Parishad Panjkaj Parmar, Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police Kullu were also present during the visit.

Seven solar projects of 72 MW to be allotted soon in HP

Sushil Kumar Sharma Top Story News Shimla:

Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said on Monday that the State Government was trying to harness green energy on a large scale. He said that tenders have been invited for setting up seven solar power projects of total capacity of 72 MW, which are being evaluated. He said that their work would be allotted to the concerned companies this month.

Apart from this, survey and investigation of 8 projects of 325 MW is going on. He said that for the first time the government was moving towards developing 200 panchayats of the state as 'Green Panchayats' in which 200 KV ground mounted solar plants would be installed and the income from them would be spent on the development works of the Panchayat.

Chief Minister said that in the solar energy sector, the 32 MW Pekhabela Solar Power



Project in Una district was dedicated to the public on 15 April, 2024 and in the six and a half month period from April to October 2024, 34.19 million units of electricity have been generated through this project, generating an income of Rs 10.16 crore. He said that apart from this, a 5 MW solar power project at Bhanjal in Una district has been started on 30 November, 2024 while the construction work of 10 MW Aghlaur Solar Power Project is also expected to be completed this month.

Sh. Sukhu said that the present State Government is taking several steps towards making Himachal Pradesh the country's first 'Green Energy' by 2026 so that there is no damage to the environment of the state. He said that while harnessing green energy will help in environmental conservation, carbon emissions will also be reduced. He said that green energy sources are renewable and do not get exhausted, which ensures

availability of energy to future generations and plays an important role in reducing the ill-effects of climate change. He said that apart from this, draft DPR of two tonnes per day capacity plant of compressed Bio-gas has been prepared. Apart from this, grid connected roof top solar plants and water heating systems will be installed in the State's Bal and Balika Ashrams, Vrindha Ashrams and Rajiv Gandhi Model Day-Boarding Schools.

Maha Kumbh: Over 250 reunited with families as massive crowds throng Sangam

Mahakumbh Nagar: More than 250 individuals, who were separated from their families in the dense crowd in the early hours of the first day of Maha Kumbh 2025, were reunited through efficient measures by the fair administration, officials said.

The inaugural day of the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj was marked by the Paush Purnima bathing festival, during which millions of devotees converged at the sacred Sangam for a holy dip. The event will conclude on February 26.

To manage the enormous gathering, the Uttar Pradesh government implemented several crowd-control initiatives, including 'Bhula-Bhatka' camps,



digital tools and social media assistance. Loudspeakers placed along the ghats are continuously announcing missing persons' names, allowing quick reunions, while police and civil defence personnel are actively assisting pilgrims on the ground.

Nitesh Kumar Dwivedi, a warden with Uttar Pradesh Civil Defence, highlighted the extensive effort put in on the very first day.

"Hundreds of families have been reunited under the supervision of the department and Mela authorities. In just

the first one-and-a-half hours, our civil defence teams managed to bring back around 200 to 250 individuals to their families," Dwivedi said. Videos, acknowledging the challenge of managing a crowd that exceeded their initial estimates.

The emotional reunions led many attendees to express heartfelt gratitude towards the Mela authorities.

Ajay Goyal, a pilgrim from Delhi, shared his experience of being separated for an hour.

"The announcements made all the difference," middle-aged Goyal said with a smile.

"Just before we got separated, we had joked about how this often happens at Kumbh Mela in old Bollywood films.

Luckily, we were reunited within the same Mela itself," Goyal said.

However, not everyone shared the same fortune. Sujata Jha, who arrived with 13 family members to take a dip at the Sangam, narrated her plight.

"It has been two to three hours, and I still haven't found my family. My name has been announced multiple times, but there's no response."

"My belongings, phone and clothes are with them. I'm waiting here in my wet clothes," she said. Videos near a police assistance centre.

A similar story was shared by Omwati, an elderly woman from Nigohi in Shahjahanpur district.

"I came with two oth-

ers but they got separated from me. Now I am all alone," she said, looking visibly distressed.

Despite these emotional stories, the arrangements by the administration drew praise.

Ajay Goyal noted, "The announcements and the Lost and Found centres are an excellent system. It's great to see such quick responses from the authorities."

The UP government, in its official statement, outlined the various efforts made to ensure the smooth conduct of the Mela. It emphasised that the 'Khoya-Paya' centres have been leveraging technology, including social media platforms, to locate separated individuals.

UP CM Adityanath holds 'Janta Darshan' in Gorakhpur

Gorakhpur (UP):

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath met the public at the Gorakhnath temple here during 'Janta Darshan' on Monday and asked officials to resolve their grievances promptly and sensitively to prevent undue hardship for them.

Emphasising the need for timely financial support for medical treatment, the chief minister instructed the officials to expedite the process of obtaining hospital estimates for those seeking government assistance and ensure that they are promptly submitted for approval, according to an official statement.

During the interaction, Adityanath advised a woman seeking financial assistance for medical treatment to obtain an estimate from PGI Lucknow and assured her that the government would cover the expenses.

When another woman sought help for a family member undergoing treatment at BRD Medical College here, the chief minister promptly instructed the officials present to address the matter and provide the necessary assistance.

CM Adityanath assured all those seeking financial assistance for serious illnesses that his government would ensure that no one is denied medical treatment due to the lack of funds, with support provided through the 'Discretionary Fund,' the statement said.

Adityanath met around 100 individuals during the 'Janta Darshan' at the Mahant Digvijaynath Auditorium of the Gorakhnath temple. He patiently heard their grievances, forwarded applications to the concerned officials, and assured them that their issues would be resolved promptly.

He also instructed officials to adopt a compassionate approach towards those seeking help and resolve their issues diligently, emphasising the need to ensure impartiality and public satisfaction.

Referring to cases of land encroachment or intimidation, Adityanath directed the officials to take strict legal action against wrongdoers and ensure fair and satisfactory resolution for all.

Iran adds 1,000 new sea-capable drones to its military capabilities

New Delhi: The Iranian army on Monday integrated 1,000 new strategic drones into its arsenal, which were showcased in a grand ceremony attended by high-ranking military officials.

The drones, according to IRNA News Agency, are notably designed with the ability to land and take off from sea surfaces, a feature that expands the operational scope of the Iranian military significantly.

During the ceremony, Iran's Defense Minister highlighted the advanced capabilities of these drones, stating, "The new drones which are used in defense and hybrid missions have the ability to land and take off in the sea."

The drones' capability to operate from sea platforms introduces a new dimension to Iran's military strategy, particularly in the volatile regions of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

The ability to launch and recover drones from maritime environments can provide Iran with strategic advantages, including extended surveillance reach, rapid deployment for defensive operations, and the potential for surprise tactical strikes. The new additions also offer Iran a flexible and less predictable approach to military operations.

China launches new warship with drone warfare capability

Beijing: The Chinese navy has launched an amphibious assault ship which will double up as a drone carrier, integrating the battleship with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), a Chinese naval official said.

China's newly launched Type 076 amphibious assault ship will play a key role in boosting uncrewed combat capabilities, a navy commander has said in the first official acknowledgement of the warship's widely speculated role as a drone carrier.

In an interview aired by state broadcaster CCTV on Sunday, People's Liberation Army (PLA) naval commander Chi Jianjun said efforts to integrate uncrewed or UAV systems into military training were already underway across the fleet, the Hong Kong-based South China



Morning Post reported on Monday.

Chi is commander of the PLA's large destroyer, the domestically built Type 055

stealth guided-missile destroyer Nanchang. The warship marked its fifth anniversary in service on Sunday. In comments un-

derscoring the growing role of drones and attack robots on the battlefield, Chi said: "It's not just us destroyers. Aircraft

Chi is commander of the PLA's large destroyer, the domestically built Type 055 stealth guided-missile destroyer Nanchang.

carriers, the newly launched Type 076, the earlier Type 075 [amphibious assault ship], and other vessels are and will all be involved. Uncrewed operations are an undeniable trend in modern warfare."

China currently has two aircraft carriers in operation - the Liaoning, a refit of the Soviet-era ship commissioned in 2012 and Shandong, an indigenously built and aircraft carrier commissioned in 2019.

China's third aircraft carrier Fujian, which is larger than the two carriers with a displacement of 80,000, is currently undergoing trials.

Biden says he was steady hand world needed after Trump

Washington: President Joe Biden strode into the White House four years ago with a foreign policy agenda that put repairing alliances strained by four years of Republican Donald Trump's "America First" worldview front and center.

The one-term Democrat took office in the throes of the worst global pandemic in a century and his plans were quickly stress-tested by a series of complicated international crises: the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan, Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, and Hamas' brutal 2023 attack on Israel that triggered the ongoing war in the Middle East.

As Biden prepares to leave office, he remains insistent that his one-term presidency has made strides in restoring American credibility on the world stage and has proven the US remains an indispensable partner around the globe. That message will be at the center of an address he will deliver Monday afternoon on his foreign policy legacy.

Yet Biden's case for foreign policy achievements will be shadowed and shaped, at least in the near term, by the messy counterfactual that American voters are returning the country's stewardship to Trump and his protectionist worldview.

"The real question is: Does the rest of the world today believe that the United States is the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world when it comes to our reservoir of national strength, our economy, our innovation base, our capacity to attract investment, our capacity to attract talent?" White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said in an Associated Press interview. "When we took office, a lot of people probably would have said China... Nobody's saying that anymore."

After a turbulent four years around the globe, the Democratic administration argues that Biden provided the world a steady hand and left the United States and its allies on a stronger footing.

Thailand's Cabinet approves draft bill to legalise casinos to boost tourism economy

Bangkok: Thailand's Cabinet approved on Monday a draft bill legalising casinos with the aim of boosting tourism and a sluggish economy.

Some forms of gambling, such as betting on boxing and horse racing, are allowed but casinos remain illegal in the Southeast Asian country. Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra told reporters following the cabinet meeting the



bill would also help attract more investments and solve issues of illegal gambling.

"It will benefit society as a whole in the future,"

Paetongtarn said. "This is part of the government's policy to support sustainable tourism, or man-made destinations, which was addressed in Parliament."

She said the Finance Ministry, which sponsored the bill, would later provide more details about the plans, which are being promoted as "entertainment complexes."

The current government, which took of-

office in September, has pledged to make the country's economic woes their top agenda.

The draft of the law, which was published online for public viewing, says a casino would be allowed to operate within a complex that also houses other businesses such as a hotel, convention hall, mall or theme park. Those younger than 20 years old will not be able to access the casinos, which will be

open to foreigners for free but Thai citizens must pay 5,000 baht (USD 148) for an entrance fee, according to the draft.

The bill will be submitted to the Office of the Council State for review and then to Parliament to be discussed and voted on by members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, said government spokesperson Jirayu Hoangsub.

"Isn't it time for Thailand to acknowledge that there are gambling places, both legal and illegal, in the country and also the neighboring countries? This project aims to generate revenue for the country's tourism sector," he said in a statement.

Tourism is the main drive of the Thai economy and has always been the focus of the different administrations to improve the economy.

BUSINESS

Market Slump Wipes Out Rs 24.69 Lakh Cr

New Delhi: Investors lost Rs 24.69 lakh crore in market valuation in the last four days of severe drubbing in the equity market. Spike in global crude prices, unaltered foreign fund outflows, a strong US jobs data diminishing early rate cut expectations, and the rupee logging its steepest single-day fall in nearly two years dampened investors' sentiment.

The BSE Sensex tanked 1,869.11 points, or 2.39 per cent, in the past four trading sessions. Falling for the fourth straight session on Friday, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex tumbled 1,048.90 points, or 1.36 per cent, to finally settle at 76,330.01. During the day, it plunged 1,129.19 points, or 1.45 per cent, to 76,249.72.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded by Rs 24,69,243.3 crore to Rs 4,17,05,906.74 crore (USD 4.82 trillion) in

four days. With Monday's sharp fall in equities, the market cap of BSE-listed firms dived below the USD 5-trillion mark.

On Monday alone, investors' wealth dropped Rs 12.61 lakh crore. "Continued foreign institutional investor selling crossed Rs 20,000 crore this month, contributing to the negative sentiments. Indian rupee touched a fresh low against the dollar during the session, pressured by stronger-than-expected US non-farm payrolls data which further dampened the sentiment, resulting in a firm dollar index."

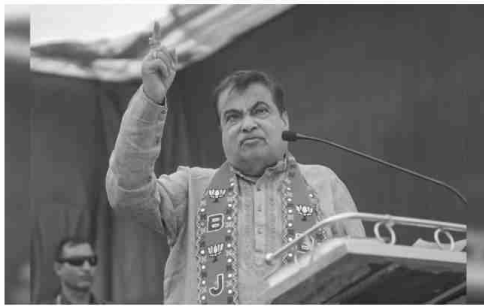
"Meanwhile, oil prices hit their highest level in over three months amid expanded US sanctions disrupting Russian crude supplies, further adding to global uncertainties," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Infrastructure Development Key to Viksit Bharat: Gadkari

Sonamarg: Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Monday said infrastructure development is imperative to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat, as the economy depends on good transport and communication facilities.

"The Prime Minister has given us a mission of developed and prosperous India. If we have to achieve a Viksit Bharat, we will have to improve the country's infrastructure. "Until water, power, transport, and communication do not develop, industry, business, and tourism will not get a boost," Gadkari said, addressing a rally after Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Sonamarg tunnel here.

The Union Minister said Modi has taken a pledge to develop J-K along with the country



"He has given us the task of developing this infrastructure. Good roads make a country developed and prosperous. We are working on a mission to make J-K developed and prosperous so that industries are established here, tourism increases, employment opportunities are created for the youth

and poverty is eradicated. With that view, we are developing the infrastructure in J-K," he added.

Gadkari said the inauguration of the Sonamarg tunnel, which was previously known as the Z-Morh tunnel, was historic and would provide all-weather connectivity to the tourist resort

town.

"Today is a historic day that the Sonamarg tunnel is being inaugurated by the Prime Minister. Due to the closure of this road (due to heavy snowfall), some areas remained closed for five to six months per year. "It was started in 2012, but there were several

Direct Tax Collection Surges 16% in FY25

New Delhi: The net direct tax collection grew 15.88 per cent to about Rs 16.90 lakh crore so far this fiscal, according to government data released on Monday.

As per the data by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), mop-up from net non-corporate taxes, which include mainly personal income tax, stood at over Rs 8.74 lakh crore.

The net corporate tax collection between April 1, 2024, and January 12, 2025, was around Rs 7.68 lakh crore.

"Net collections from securities transaction tax (STT) stood at Rs 44,538 crore so far this fiscal.

Refunds worth over Rs 3.74 lakh crore were issued during the period, a 42.49 per cent increase over the year-ago period.

Gross direct tax mop up between April 1 and January 12 grew 20 per cent to over Rs 20,64 lakh crore.

The government has budgeted to collect Rs 22.07 lakh crore in the current fiscal from direct taxes.

This includes Corporate tax collection of Rs 10.20 lakh crore, personal income tax and other taxes of Rs 11.87 lakh crore.

Mutual Funds Raise Rs 1.18 Lakh Cr via NFOs in 2024

New Delhi: Asset management companies launched 239 new fund offerings (NFOs) mobilising Rs 1.18 lakh crore in 2024, with sectoral or thematic equity funds emerging as the top choice of investors, according to a report by Germinate Investor Services Research.

This was higher than 212 NFOs collecting Rs 63,854 crore in 2023 and 228 NFOs garnering Rs 62,187 crore in 2022.

The NFO landscape expanded from 21 offerings in 2020 to 839 in



2024, besides, the funds raised through the space more than doubled from

Rs 53,703 crore in 2020. The trend suggests a strong growth trajectory

and heightened investor confidence.

Usually, NFOs come during a surging market when investor sentiments are high and optimistic. The NFOs were floated to capitalise on the mood of investors and attract their investment as they were willing to invest at that time.

Industry experts said the stock market performance along with the positive investor sentiments led to higher fund mobilisation through NFOs in 2024. In the entire 2024, Sensex jumped 5,898.75

points or 8.16 per cent, and the Nifty surged 1,913.4 points or 8.80 per cent.

Overall, thematic/sectoral funds, index funds and exchange traded funds (ETFs) captured significant investor interest.

"With 53 NFOs raising Rs 79,109 crore, these funds emerged as the top choice for investors," the report said.

Tailored to specific sectors or themes, sectoral or thematic equity funds resonated with investors for their focused approach and alignment with market

trends. Notable examples include funds targeting sectors like manufacturing, technology, and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) themes.

Individually, HDFC Manufacturing Fund NFO led the pack, with a record inflow of Rs 12,500 crore in April 2024.

In terms of month, the highest number of NFO launches was recorded in December, marking a strong year-end momentum. Going ahead, the report said the mutual fund industry is likely

to face a recalibration in 2025 after the strong gains of recent years.

"While extraordinary returns may not sustain, the focus will shift to ensuring stability, maintaining liquidity, and achieving reasonable returns in line with market trends. Investors must adapt to a more balanced approach, safeguarding capital while managing expectations. This calls for strategies that align with changing market dynamics and ensure steady performance even in uncertain times," it added.

For Advt Contact: 9818-799941

Cricket

You cannot compare one generation of cricketers with another, says Kapil

New Delhi

It is needless to compare two generations of players and pass a judgement on who was better, legendary cricketer Kapil Dev said on Monday and refused to get into a debate if BCCI selectors were right in excluding Yashasvi Jaiswal and Rishabh Pant from the T20I squad for the five-match series against England.

Kapil bowled nearly 300 overs during the 1991-92 Test series against Australia and in the same rubber he became the first Indian to take 400 wickets in the traditional format apart from contributing with the bat in the team's cause.

India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah could not bowl in the second innings of the fifth Border-Gavaskar Test recently because of back spasms. India lost the five-match series 1-3. The 31-year-old Bumrah bowled more than 150 overs and emerged the highest wicket-taker on both sides with 32 scalps.

"Please don't compare. You cannot compare one generation with another. That is not required. Today, players are scoring 300 runs in a day. It didn't happen during our time. So don't compare the two (generations)," said Kapil during an event hosted by the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) of which he is the president.

The 1983 World Cup-winning skipper also added that one should not question the judgement of the selectors as they would have arrived at the decision to not play Jaiswal and Pant after giving it a thought.

The two cricketers played all five Tests during the gruelling Australia series, with Jaiswal (391) emerging the second-highest run-getter, second only to Travis Head (448).

Asked if it was the right decision to drop two for the home series, Kapil said, "How can I comment on the



judgement of others? I think the selectors would have thought about it." "So, if I say something it would be criticising them. I don't want to criticise them. I don't want to criticise them. They (selectors) are a group of people who must have planned and thought about that." With batting stalwarts Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli dishing out below-par performances in Australia, and talks of whether it's time for them to retire swirling, Kapil said the decision should be left to them. "They are very big players. Let's hope when they think it's the right time to play, when they think it's not, they will call it off," said Kapil, in response to a question whether they should be there for the Test series in England later this year.

With Bumrah taking over the captaincy from Rohit in the fifth BGT Test at Sydney and talks on whether he should be given a long stint to prove himself going forward, Kapil said, "If he has been given the opportunity (to lead the side), then give him some time also."

Give Bumrah time as captain, says Kapil Dev

It is needless to compare two gen-

erations of players and pass a judgement on who was better, legendary cricketer Kapil Dev said on Monday and refused to get into a debate if the national selectors were right in excluding Yashasvi Jaiswal and Rishabh Pant from the upcoming five-match T20I series against England.

Kapil bowled nearly 300 overs during the 1991-92 Test series against Australia and in the same series he became the first Indian to take 400 wickets in Tests apart from contributing with the bat in the team's cause.

India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah could not bowl in the second innings of the fifth Border-Gavaskar Test recently because of back spasms. India lost the five-match series 1-3. The 31-year-old Bumrah bowled more than 150 overs and emerged the highest wicket-taker on both sides with 32 scalps.

"Please don't compare. You cannot compare one generation with another. That is not required. Today, players are scoring 300 runs in a day. It didn't happen during our time. So don't compare the two (generations)," said Kapil during an event hosted by the Profes-

sional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) of which he is the president, in Delhi.

The 1983 World Cup-winning skipper also added that one should not question the judgement of the selectors as they would have arrived at the decision to not play Jaiswal and Pant after giving it a thought.

The two cricketers played all the five Tests during the recent series in Australia, with Jaiswal (391) emerging the second-highest run-getter for India, and overall he was second only to Travis Head (448).

Asked if it was the right decision to drop two for the home series, Kapil said, "How can I comment on the judgement of others? I think the selectors would have thought about it."

"So, if I say something it would be criticising them. I don't want to criticise them. They (selectors) are a group of people who must have planned and thought about that."

With batting stalwarts Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli dishing out below-par performances in Australia, and talks of whether it's time for them to retire swirling, Kapil said the decision should be left to them.

"They are very big players. Let's hope when they think it's the right time to play, when they think it's not, they will call it off," said Kapil, in response to a question whether the duo should be picked for the Test series in England later this year.

With Bumrah taking over the captaincy in the fifth and final Test against Australia in Sydney after Rohit dropped himself, there are talks on whether the fast bowler should take over the captaincy on a permanent basis.

When asked if Bumrah should be given a long stint as the captain to prove himself, 1983 World Cup winning captain Kapil replied, "If he has been given the opportunity (to captain India in Tests), then give him some time also."



“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

Ngidi, Nortje included in CT squad post pacers' recovery from injuries



Johannesburg

South Africa on Monday included Lungi Ngidi and Anrich Nortje in the Temba Bavuma-led squad for next month's Champions Trophy after the pacers recovered sufficiently from their respective injuries.

Nortje sustained an injury on his big toe last month which ruled him out of the series against Pakistan while a groin strain in November forced Ngidi to miss the series against Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

South Africa, the semifinalists of the 2023 ODI World Cup, are placed in group B of the Champions Trophy. They will start their campaign against Afghanistan in Karachi on February 21 before meeting Australia in Rawalpindi on February 25 and their final group game is against England on March 1.

However, frontline pacer Gerald Coetzee was not picked because of the groin injury that he suffered during the first Test against Sri Lanka in Durban last year.

Subsequently, he missed the second Test at Gqeberha and the entire home rubber against Pakistan.

Pacer Nandre Burger, who suffered a lumbar stress reaction, ahead of the

Nortje sustained an injury on his big toe last month which ruled him out of the series against Pakistan while a groin strain in November forced Ngidi to miss the series against Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

ODI series against Ireland in early October too was not considered for selection.

However, the Proteas trusted the improving fitness of all-rounder Wiaan Mulder, who broke his middle finger in the series against Sri Lanka, but he played in the second Test against Pakistan after the physios gave the green signal. Keshav Maharaj and Tabraiz Shamsi are the specialist spinners, who will be assisted by Aiden Markram's part-time off-spin.

South Africa squad: Temba Bavuma (captain), Tony de Zorzi, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Wiaan Mulder, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs, Rassie van der Dussen.

India PD Team defeats England PD by 29 runs in Champions Trophy clash

Colombo

In a gripping encounter at the PD Champions Trophy 2025, the Indian Physical Disability cricket team secured an impressive 20-run victory over England PD in their second league match. The game, held at the FTZ Cricket Grounds in Katunayake, highlighted India's strong form and determination to dominate the tournament, according to a release from the Differently Able Cricket Council of India (DCCI).

Batting first, India set a commanding target of 191 runs in their allotted 20 overs. Rajesh Kannur created history by becoming the first-ever PD cricketer to score a century in a multi-nation tournament, dazzling with a sensational 100-run knock. He was ably supported by Ravindra Sante, who played a quick-fire innings of 45 runs off just 24 balls, providing the perfect finishing touch to the innings.

Defending the target, India's bowlers displayed exceptional discipline, restricting England to 162 runs. Radhika and Jithendra struck early, claiming two crucial wickets in the powerplay and putting England under immediate pressure. The standout performance with the ball came from Ravindra Sante, who shone with his spin bowling, delivering figures of 2 for 24 in his four overs.

England's standout batter, Will Flynn, gave India a mini heart attack with a blistering knock of 87 runs off just 41 balls, including eight towering sixes. Despite his valiant effort, England's other batters failed to provide sufficient support, leaving the team 29 runs short of the target.

After the match, centurion Rajesh Kannur expressed his emotions and said that he was proud to create history in such a prestigious tournament. "It's a proud moment to create history in such a prestigious tournament. More importantly, this victory reflects our teamwork and preparation. I dedicate this innings to my teammates and our supporters who inspire us to perform at our best," Rajesh Kannur was quoted in the release as saying.

Shammi Silva takes over ACC presidency role from Jay Shah



Dubai

Sri Lanka's Shammi Silva has taken over as the president of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), succeeding India's Jay Shah, who recently became the chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Shah had vacated the position after three terms as ACC President.

It won't be Silva's maiden role with the ACC, having previously functioned as the chairman of the organisation's Finance & Marketing Committee.

"It is a great honour to lead the Asian Cricket Council. Cricket is the heartbeat of Asia, and I look forward to working closely with all member nations to elevate the game, provide opportunities for emerging talent, and strengthen the bonds that

unite us through this beautiful sport," said Silva in a statement.

On behalf of the ACC, Silva also extended heartfelt gratitude to Shah for his exemplary leadership and significant contributions during his tenure.

"Under Mr Shah's stewardship, the ACC achieved remarkable milestones, including the successfully achieving highest value for its commercial rights of ACC Asia Cup tournaments for 2024-31, the introduction of a new pathway events structure, and the continued development and growth of cricket across its member nations," the ACC said.

Silva's tenure begins at a pivotal time, with the ACC focusing on the upcoming Asia Cup and striving to strengthen Asia's position as a powerhouse in global cricket.

Pat Cummins, Hazlewood in Australia CT squad despite injury concerns

Sydney

Pat Cummins was on Monday named captain of Australia for next month's Champions Trophy. At the same time, fellow pacer Josh Hazlewood too was included in the squad despite lingering injury concerns surrounding both players.

Cummins was managing an ankle injury throughout the recent Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India, which played a part in him missing the upcoming tour to Sri Lanka along with the pacer wanting to stay back at home to welcome his second baby.

Hazlewood, side lined from the Melbourne and Sydney Tests due to a calf niggle, was similarly not picked for the Sri Lanka series but has been named in the preliminary 15-player Champions Trophy squad.

The Aussies, a two-time winners in the event and the reigning ODI world champions, also picked all-rounder Mitchell Marsh, who was dropped for the fifth Test at SCG against India after media outings in the first tour matches.

"This is a balanced and experienced squad with the core having been involved in the previous one-day World Cup, the West Indies series, last year's successful tour of the UK and the more recent Pakistan home series," said Chair of Selectors George Bailey.

"It offers a variety of options for touring management depending on



opposition and the conditions that may present in Pakistan," he added.

The squad will assemble, prepare and play a one-off ODI against Sri Lanka following the Test series before heading to Pakistan for the group stage matches of the ICC showpiece.

Australia gave prominence to all-rounders in the squad selection as Matthew Short and Aaron Hardie were drafted in ahead of out-of-form Jake-Fraser McGurk.

Adam Zampa is the lone specialist spinner in the squad. He will be supported by part timers Short and Glenn Maxwell.

Pacer Nathan Ellis has also earned a berth after leading Hobart Hurricanes into the Big Bash League final as there were three changes to the

squad that did duty in last year's ODI World Cup in India.

David Warner retired from international cricket and Cameron Green is recuperating from a back surgery, while pacer Sean Abbott was not considered.

Australia have been drawn in Group B alongside Afghanistan, England and South Africa, and their round robin matches will be played at Lahore and Rawalpindi.

Australia squad: Pat Cummins (c), Alex Carey, Nathan Ellis, Aaron Hardie, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Marnus Labuschagne, Mitchell Marsh, Glenn Maxwell, Matthew Short, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Adam Zampa.

Delhi keeper-batter Anuj Rawat in trouble after skipping Ranji camp to attend IPL net session

New Delhi

Delhi's senior wicketkeeper-batter Anuj Rawat on Monday joined his new IPL team Gujarat Titans' training session in Surat despite the state team's ongoing camp at the Arun Jaitley Stadium ahead of its next round Ranji Trophy match against Saurashtra at Rajkot.

At a time when the BCCI brass is adamant that players should give precedence to red-ball cricket during the season, Rawat attending an IPL camp only a week before the commencement of red-ball season is a clear indication of where his priorities lie.

"Gujarat Titans have commenced their preparations for the IPL 2025 with a training camp in Surat. Players like Anuj Rawat, Ishant Sharma, Jayant Yadav, Kumar Kushagra, Mahipal Lomror



and Arshad Khan have joined the team in the camp along with the coaches and

support staff," Gujarat Titans said in a statement.

It must be mentioned here that veteran bowler Ishant Sharma has already told DCCA that he won't play red-ball cricket anymore now that he is no longer in contention for a national comeback.

When DCCA secretary Ashok Sharma, who is also the convener of the senior state team selection committee, was asked if the player in question had sought permission to join his IPL team's pre-season conditioning camp, he replied in negative.

"I have no knowledge that Anuj has skipped the ongoing Ranji Trophy camp to attend the IPL team's camp. Ideally, he needs to take permission from the state association. We have two Ranji games left and the camp is on at the Kotla. I don't know who gave him

the permission to skip the Ranji Trophy camp," Sharma said.

"Ishant's case is different as he doesn't need DCCA's permission since he doesn't play Ranji Trophy." It is learnt that normally, if an IPL pre-season conditioning camp coincides with a state team camp, one normally takes permission from either the president or the secretary before attending an IPL net session.

"We have received a few official e-mail requests from certain players asking for permission to join their respective IPL camps but I can confirm that we have received no written request from Anuj Rawat. In that case, he shouldn't have joined the IPL camp," a senior DCCA official, who looks after cricket operations, said on condition of anonymity.

Satwik-Chirag working on defence after reuniting with Tan Kim Her

New Delhi

Chirag Shetty, one half of Indian badminton's famed doubles pair, on Monday said the focus has been on shoring up their defence since reuniting with well-known coach Tan Kim Her, as they seek more silverware.

In the upcoming season, Chirag and his partner Satwiksairaj Rankireddy are aiming to compete in more events and clinch major titles, including the World Tour Finals.

Credited for bringing Chirag and Satwik together during his first stint in India between 2015 and 2019, Malaysian doubles specialist Tan returned to the country for a second innings last month.

Chirag said Tan had provided them with direction when they were young players but now their relationship is more conversational.

"To have Tan back as our coach after 5-6 years is great. A lot of credit goes to him for our achievements. We were still youngsters when he paired us up, and it was much more directional back then. But the approach is very different now; it's much more conversational," Chirag said.

"We're already established now, so we discuss what we need to do, and as a coach, he shares his opinion."

Since Tan's return, the duo has been working on improving their defence and net play.

"It's the minor changes that really matter. Everybody knows how to smash, but it's the tactical details and small improvements that we need to focus on. I think we'll work on that with Tan, especially improving our defence, which is good but not yet the best in the world," Chirag said.

With Tan by their side, the duo also reflected on their shock quarterfinal loss at the Paris Olympics.

"He shared his thoughts on our quarterfinal loss, where he felt we fell short. It was similar to our own assessment.



We should have been better at the net, especially during crucial stages. They challenged us well at the net, and that's one area we hope to improve upon," Chirag added.

"We've been consistent, but in the last two tournaments, especially the China Open, we came back after a long gap, and to even reach the semifinals was unexpected. In Malaysia, we had some good wins but lost in the semifinals."

"Winning a tournament is always the goal when we enter, and I wouldn't say we're satisfied with just the semifinal finish. We want to go as deep as possible in the tournament here in India."

World Tour Finals is one of the targets in 2025
With the Paris Olympics looming, Chirag and Satwik didn't compete in too many tournaments last year, but they plan to play in more events this season. "We played very few tournaments last year, less than 10. We hope to compete in more this time around and go as deep into the tournaments as possible to secure big title wins," Chirag said.

"The World Tour Finals is definitely one of our targets this year. There are also the World Championships, All England, and other major tournaments, and we hope to go as deep as possible in them," he added.

Reflecting on their Olympic loss, Chirag shared that he was back on court after two weeks, knowing that playing was

the only way to overcome the pain of their defeat.

"Going into the Olympics, I was even training on Sundays, so it was very tough. But I took a two-week break to visit my hometown and spend time with friends."

"When I returned, I was sitting on the sofa, watching TV all day. It didn't feel right. I knew I needed to get back to training," he said.

"I was watching the World tour begin in two weeks, with tournaments like the Japan Open and Korea Open coming up, and I thought, 'This is not me. I need to get back into training.'"

"The only way to get over this is by playing tournaments. Winning or losing doesn't matter; it's about playing and I think that sadness, that sorrow would go away."

"There are plenty of things to achieve in the future. And there's always one more chance."

Brazilian Douglas Tardin scores hat-trick in Shillong Lajong's 5-0 win over SC Bengaluru

Shillong

Brazilian striker Douglas Tardin scored a hat-trick inside 15 minutes – the fastest of the season – as Shillong Lajong thrashed Sporting Club Bengaluru 5-0 in an I-League match here on Monday.

At the SSA Stadium, Lajong ran riot with goals from Daniel Goncalves (40th minute), Figo Syndai (45+2) and Tardin (60th, 67th, 75th) while it was utter humiliation for the newly-promoted Bengaluru side.

Lajong's third win of the campaign and fourth consecutive clean sheet at home lifted them to fourth place with 12 points.

SC Bengaluru, meanwhile, remained rooted to the bottom of the table with just five points in eight games so far.

It was a rough start to the match with plenty of crunching tackles flying around. Referee Shantanu Agrawal brandished cards and Shillong Lajong's Kynsailang Khongit and Aman Ahlawat, and SC Bengaluru's Manoj Kannan were already in the book after just 17 minutes.

There weren't many clear cut chances despite the action being end-to-end because of some wasteful finishing from both sides.

However, Lajong changed that trend in the 40th minute as Goncalves scored with a crisp volley from a Hardy Cliff Nongbri corner. The Brazilian defender, left unmarked by the visitors' defence, opened up his body and side-footed it with his left boot.

Japanese goalkeeper Yuya Kuriyama, making his debut for the Golden Tigers, could have done better as he got a big part of his glove to the ball but could not keep it out.

At the stroke of half time, Figo Syndai doubled the lead after a solid team effort from the hosts. Prarangkhi Bsum slipped a setback from the right that landed perfectly outside the six-yard box for Syndai, who converted with ease.

The second half only belonged to one man – Tardin. The first of his 15-



minute scoring spree was a tap-in from close range in the 60th minute after a howler from Kuriyama.

The Japanese keeper what should have been a rather comfortable save from Damaithang Lyngdoh's long-range strike and Tardin duly punished it.

Seven minutes later, the Brazilian scored with a fine header into the bottom corner after a peach of a cross from the right by Khongit.

Tardin completed his hat-trick in the 75th minute, capitalising on a poor headed pass by Chongtham Kishan Singh. He raced into the box and deftly dinked it over an onrushing Kuriyama to make it five for Lajong.

At Sri Bhaini Sahib in Punjab, hosts Namdhari FC beat Inter Kashi 2-0 to rise to second place in the I-League table.

Namdhari, who played with 10 men for almost the entirety of the second half, scored through Bhupinder Singh (13th) and Francis Addo (85th).

Harpreet Singh's team are now level on 14 points with Inter Kashi, but ahead on head-to-head.

Inter Kashi's second defeat of the campaign meant that Churchill Brothers regained top spot in the league with 16 points.

Jayden Daniels leads Commanders to first playoff win in nearly 7,000 days

Tampa

New owners. New general manager. New coach. New franchise quarterback.

That's the formula – with an emphasis on the QB – that Washington rode to playoff success after nearly two decades of futility.

Jayden Daniels ran for a critical first down to set up Zane Gonzalez's 37-yard field goal that clanged off the right upright and went through as time expired, and the Commanders beat the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 23-20 in an NFC wild-card game Sunday night for the franchise's first playoff win in 6,945 days.

Daniels, playing with a bandage beneath his right eye after his face was bloodied, became the third rookie quarterback in three years to win a playoff game.

The Commanders (13-5) will face the No. 1 seed Detroit Lions (15-2) in the divisional round.

"It means a lot, man," Daniels said. "You could just see all the fans over here, man, they're waiting for us. They've waited a long time for this moment and this feeling, so I'm just so happy for them."

Baker Mayfield and the Buccaneers (10-8) missed several opportunities and the veteran quarterback committed a costly turnover in the fourth quarter. The Bucs couldn't get 1 yard on two tries from the Commanders' 12 and settled for a field goal to tie the game before Washington's winning drive.

Daniels threw for 268 yards and two touchdowns, joining C.J. Stroud and Brock Purdy as rookie QBs to win playoff games in the past three seasons.

Washington hadn't won in the post-season since beating the Buccaneers in Tampa Bay 17-10 in a wild-card game on Jan. 7, 2006.

The turnaround for the organization began when Daniel Snyder sold the team in 2023 to a group led by Josh Harris that includes NBA Hall of Famer Magic Johnson. They hired GM Adam Peters and coach Dan Quinn after their first season in control and selected Daniels with the No. 2 pick in the draft in April.

Frances Tiafoe picks up a tough victory after throwing up at the Australian Open



Melbourne
Frances Tiafoe threw up during his first-round match at the Australian Open on Monday along the way to a five-set victory and said afterward he might have quit if this had been just a run-of-the-mill tournament.

The 17th-seeded Tiafoe, who turns 27 in a week, managed to win the topsy-turvy match against Arthur Rinderknech of France 7-6 (2), 6-3, 4-6, 6-7 (4), 6-3 in 4 hours, 8 minutes.

"If it was any other, probably, event, I probably would have let it go," Tiafoe said about getting sick late in the fourth set. "But here, you got to lay it all on the line."

His Grand Slam breakthrough came at Melbourne Park in 2019, when he made it to the quarterfinals before losing to Rafael Nadal.

Since then, Tiafoe has taken more steps forward, including making it all the way to the semifinals at the U.S. Open in 2022 and 2024.

While the temperature was about 80 degrees and it was sunny on Monday – a stark contrast to the thunderstorm that delayed play for more than six hours Sunday – Tiafoe said the heat was not the issue for him during a match that began at 11 a.m.

Instead, he said he probably was over-hydrated.

"It's a tough time... I feel like it's really tough to prepare," Tiafoe said. "I'm happy I got through, happy everyone came out and enjoyed the four hours of tennis that was way longer than it should have been."

"I'm obviously thrilled to have him in my corner," Djokovic said about Murray.

Naomi Osaka says she sent someone to grab her daughter's birth certificate from her LA home

Melbourne

While Naomi Osaka is busy competing – and winning – at the Australian Open, she needed to send someone to retrieve her 1 1/2-year-old daughter's birth certificate from their California home in case it got caught up in the wildfires ravaging the greater Los Angeles area.

After a 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 victory against Caroline Garcia of France in the first round at Melbourne Park on Monday night, Osaka said during an on-court interview at Rod Laver Arena that she had learned that there was a fire burning three blocks from her house.

Osaka said she figured it would be a good idea to keep the birth certificate safe. Her daughter, Shai, was born in July 2023 and has traveled with Osaka on the tennis tour.

Osaka announced this month on social media that she and Shai's father, rapper Cordae, had ended their relationship.

"Honestly I don't think I've been doing the greatest keeping focus, but obviously I won, so I think it's an acceptable job," Osaka said about dividing her thoughts between Los Angeles and the tournament where she's competing.

"It's really difficult for me... because I find now my home is more of a home because I have memories with my daughter. There's so many things – keepsakes and stuff like that."

Osaka wore a black Dodgers hat with "LA" and a red headband on her head, along with a purple Lakers jersey by her



news conference.

"I'm not there, so I don't know how bad it is or how bad it's going to get," she said. "But I think the biggest thing that I am grateful for is that everyone in my family is safe."

Osaka added that she doesn't think she will head to Los Angeles right after the Australian Open because, she said, "I don't feel like it's safe enough to go back there. It's kind of a little bit in a limbo – but also motivating me to hopefully stay here as long as I can."

She is a former No. 1-ranked tennis player who has won four Grand Slam titles – two at the Australian Open and two at the U.S. Open.

Osaka was born in Japan and her family moved to the United States

when she was 3. She's been based in Los Angeles for several years.

"Sending all my love to LA. We hear about fires, but I didn't know how devastating it could be," Osaka said on court. "I hope everyone's doing well."

She then threw "LA" and drew a heart in blue ink on the lens of a court-side TV camera. Other Australian Open athletes, including Coco Gauff and Donna Vekic, have done similar after their matches.

This was the second year in a row that Osaka and 2022 U.S. Open semifinalist Garcia have played each other in the first round at Melbourne Park. Last year, though, Osaka had only recently returned from maternity leave and she lost that match to Garcia.

Novak Djokovic and new coach Andy Murray get a win against US teen in debut

Melbourne
Novak Djokovic's first match with former rival Andy Murray as his coach did not start all that well, even against a 19-year-old making his Grand Slam debut.

Still, after dropping his opening set at the 2025 Australian Open on Monday night to Nishesh Basavareddy, an American who left Stanford University and turned pro last month, Djokovic eventually asserted himself for a 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 victory to begin his bid for an 11th championship at Melbourne Park and a record 25th major title overall.

"I'm obviously thrilled to have him in my corner," Djokovic said about Murray.



outsider in my box. We played for over 20 years against each other at the highest level. Great to have him on the same side of the net. He gave me some great advice mid-match."

Before heading out into Rod Laver Arena, Djokovic and Murray chatted in the gym. They wrapped up the conversation with a fist bump, before Djokovic hopped on the treadmill to warm up.

During the match, apart from an extended conversation before the fourth set, there was only the occasional interaction between player and coach – a pairing between 37-year-olds born a week apart, and opponents from the age

of 12, including in a series of Slam finals as pros. Murray retired at the Paris Olympics in August; Djokovic proposed teaming up in November.

As a player, Murray was known for mid-match dramas, plenty of gesticulating and muttering, often directed at his entourage. Djokovic does similar.

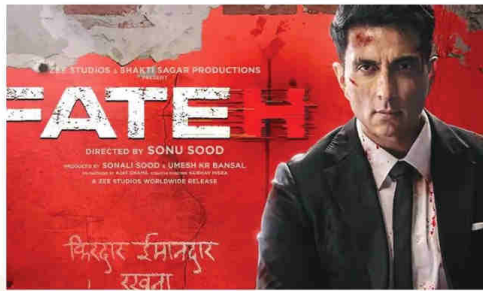
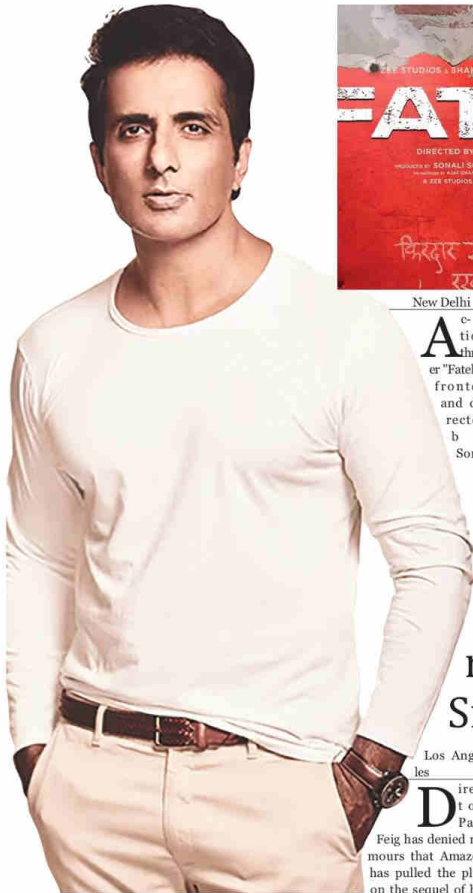
Djokovic showed some of his usual fire when that vital break came at the 1 1/2-hour mark. He watched the 107th-ranked Basavareddy's forehead land wide and let out a yell, clenched a fist, pointed a finger at his ear. That was the beginning of the end for Basavareddy, who started stepping gingerly between

points and grabbing at his legs, and took a medical timeout before the third set.

On a busy and warm Day 2, which included nine Grand Slam champions with a combined 43 major trophies in action plus another half-dozen players with runner-up showings, the winners included No. 2 Iga Swiatek, No. 3 Coco Gauff, No. 7 Jessica Pegula and Naomi Osaka among the women, and No. 1 Jannik Sinner and No. 3 Carlos Alcaraz among the men.

Osaka, who won two of her four major titles in Australia, defeated Caroline Garcia 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 in Monday's last match at Rod Laver Arena.

Sonu Sood's 'Fateh' earns Rs 10 crore at box office in three days



New Delhi
Sood, has collected Rs 10.71 crore at the domestic box office in its opening weekend.
Also starring Jacqueline Fernandez, the film released in theatres on January 10 alongside Ram Charan and Kiara Advani's "Game Changer".
Sood shared the three-day collection of the film on his X handle.
According to the post, "Fateh" opened at Rs 2.61 crore and went on to earn Rs 3.97 crore at the box-

office on day two. The film earned Rs 4.13 crore on the third day, taking the total collection to Rs 10.71 crore.
"Fateh", which marks the directorial debut of Sood, follows the story of "an ex-special ops operative who investigates a cybercrime syndicate after a young woman falls victim to a scam".
Also starring Vijay Raaz and Naseeruddin Shah, the film is backed by Shakti Sagar Productions and Zee Studios.

Disney+ Hotstar sets release date of 'Sweet Dreams'

New Delhi
"Sweet Dreams", starring Mithila Palkar and Anmol Parashar, will be available for streaming on Disney+ Hotstar from January 24, the makers said on Monday.
Written and directed by Victor Mukherjee, the film is described as an "extraordinary tale of two strangers linked by the surreal world of dreams." Disney+ Hotstar shared the film's release date on its official X handle.
"Jahaan sapne shuru hote hain, wahin se shuru hoti hai Kanny aur Dia ki kahani!" Streaming from Jan 24

#SweetDreamsOnHotstar," the caption read.
"A tale that blurs the line between fantasy and reality, 'Sweet Dreams' captures the magic of serendipity and the intensity of love that transcends the ordinary," a press release stated.
"Sweet Dreams" also stars Meiyang Chang and Sauraseni Maitra. It is produced by Jyoti Deshpande, Neha Anand and Pranjali Khandhdiya.
Mukund Suryawanshi, Shubham Shirur, Dev Arijit and Akashdeep Sengupta have composed the soundtrack of the upcoming film.



'Bareilly Ki Barfi' to re-release in the theatres on February 7

New Delhi
Ashwini Iyer Tiwari's "Bareilly Ki Barfi" is set to return to big screens on February 7.
Starring Kriti Sanon, Ayushmann Khurrana, and Rajkummar Rao, the romantic comedy originally released on August 18, 2017 and emerged as a hit, earning over Rs 60 crore worldwide at the box office.
Production house Junglee Pictures shared the film's re-release announcement on its X handle.
"This Valentine's, celebrate love and friendship and fill mithaas in your life with our barfis, #BareillyKiBarfi re-releasing in cinemas on 7th Feb," the banner wrote in the post.
"After all the love I got for #BAREILLYKIBARFI. With a lot of gratitude re-living the love for cinema and audience.
Re-releasing #BAREILLYKIBARFI on 7th Feb 2025 in cinema halls," Iyer Tiwari wrote on her Instagram Stories.
"Bareilly Ki Barfi" also starred Pankaj Tripathi and Seema Pahwa.

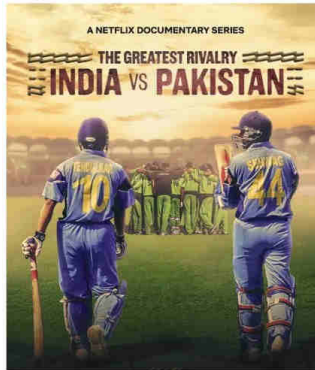
Paul Feig shuts down rumours claiming 'A Simple Favor 2' got shelved

Los Angeles
Director Paul Feig has denied rumours that Amazon has pulled the plug on the sequel of his 2018 movie "A Simple Favor" due to the controversy surrounding one of the lead stars Blake Lively.
Lively is in the middle of a legal fallout with her "It Ends With Us" co-star and director Justin Baldoni. There are also reports of a feud with her "A Simple Favor" co-actor Anna Kendrick.
The comments by Feig, who directed the 2018 crime thriller "A Simple Favor", come after an "internet investigator" posted a thread on X about the studio shelving the sequel.
In his response, the filmmaker said the shooting on the film is complete and the project is in the post-production stage.
"This is total BS. Sorry. The movie is finished and coming out soon. Don't believe anything you read on social media these days," he wrote.
When the investigator asked Feig to "clarify" why Amazon had not yet set a

release date for the film when it wrapped last April, the director said post production usually takes over half a year to finish.
"Our post schedule always had us finishing everything by mid-January. Movies don't come out the second they're finished because the studio spends the previous year deciding the best date to release it. We've always planned on something in the spring/summer of this year. That's how movies work. I hope this helps," he added.
"A Simple Favor" was based on the 2017 novel of the same name by Darcey



Netflix's 'The Greatest Rivalry: India vs Pakistan' to premiere on Feb 7



Mumbai
The Greatest Rivalry: India vs Pakistan is set to premiere on Netflix on February 7, ready to reignite every ounce of passion, pride, and adrenaline that makes India-Pakistan cricket legendary. For fans of cricket in the subcontinent, there is no bigger face-off than India vs Pakistan.
The series explores the drama, passion, and high-stakes intensity of the rivalry on the home soil of both nations with footage including nail-biting finishes, unforgettable sixes, and unforgettable drama.
The documentary not only delves into a thrilling saga of sport and history but also fuels the rising excitement to see what chapter unfolds next, making it as relevant today as it is

Aubrey Plaza deactivates Instagram account post husband Jeff Baena's death

Los Angeles
The White Lotus star Aubrey Plaza's Instagram account is no longer active after the death of her husband, writer-filmmaker Jeff Baena.
The 40-year-old actor's verified page has been deactivated as of Sunday, reported Page Six.
When one searches for Plaza's profile on the social media app, an error message reading, "Sorry, this page isn't available," appears.
While it is unclear exactly when the actor deactivated her account, the development occurred after Baena died by suicide at his Los Angeles home. He was 47.
Plaza and Baena began dating in 2011 and tied the knot in a small wedding ceremony in 2021.
The actor featured in his directorial debut film, the 2014 zombie comedy "Life After Beth". She also appeared in Baena's other directorials "Joshy" (2016), 2017's "The Little Hours" and 2022's romantic comedy "Spin Me Round".



Masaba Gupta, Satyadeep Mishra Name Their Daughter Matara



Mumbai
Actor and designer Masaba Gupta recently embraced motherhood as she welcomed her baby girl with husband Satyadeep Mishra. The "House of Masaba" head recently used social media to reveal the name of her little bundle of joy.
Masaba Gupta and Satyadeep Mishra have decided to name their little munchkin Matara. Taking to her official IG handle, she dropped a photo of her hand with a golden bangle, along with her daughter's little hand.
"The bangle had 'Matara' inscribed on it. Explaining the meaning of the name, Masaba Gupta wrote in the caption, "3 months with my Matara. The name embodies the divine feminine energies of 9 Hindu goddesses, celebrating their strength and wisdom. Also, the star of our eyes."
Reacting to the post, soon-to-be mom Athiya Shetty shared two red hearts and an evil eye emoji in the comment section. Others also flooded the comment section with lovely remarks. The designer recently conducted an AMA session on her Instagram, during which a user asked the new mother if she was 'healing okay after delivery'.
Replying to this, Masaba Gupta revealed "I wish I gave myself some more time." She added that she wished she had not gotten back to work before her 40 days of postpartum.
For those who do not know, Masaba Gupta and Satyadeep Mishra welcomed their firstborn on 11th October 2024. Announcing her pregnancy on 18th April 2024, the happy couple penned a joint post that read, "In our news - Two little feet are on their way to us! Please send love, blessings and banana chips (plain salted ONLY) #babynboard #momkdad (sic)." Masaba Gupta tied the knot with actor Satyadeep Mishra on 27th January 2023. On another front, Masaba Gupta last appeared on the screen in the romantic anthology series, "Modern Love Mumbai". Other than that, she also owns her fashion label called "House of Masaba".