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MARKET	
SENSEX	74602.12
NIFTY	22547.55
	147.71
	-5.80
GOLD	85,680.00
SILVER	94,000.00
MOONSET	-504.00
	-1,089.00

WEATHER	
Sunrise	6:49 AM
Sunset	6:20 PM
Moonrise	6:23 AM
Moonset	5:42 PM
Today's Prediction	
Maximum	25°C
Minimum	16°C
Tomorrow's Prediction	
Maximum	25°C
Minimum	16°C

## Centre opposes life-time ban on convicted politicians

The Centre said the prayer in a plea, seeking the same, amounted to re-writing of the statute or directing Parliament to frame a law in a particular manner which was wholly beyond the powers of judicial review

New Delhi  
The Centre has opposed in the Supreme Court a plea seeking life ban on convicted politicians, saying imposing such a disqualification was solely within the domain of Parliament.

In an affidavit filed in court, the Centre said the prayer in a plea, seeking the same, amounted to re-writing of the statute or directing Parliament to frame a law in a particular manner which was wholly beyond the powers of judicial review. "The question whether a life-time ban would be appropriate or not is a question that is solely within the domain of the parliament," the affidavit said. By confining the operation of penalty to an appropriate length of time, deterrence was ensured while undue harshness was avoided, it added.

There was said the Centre, nothing inherently unconstitutional in limiting the effect of penalties by time and it was a settled principle of



law that penalties were limited either by time or by quantum.

"It is submitted that issues raised by the petitioner have wide ranging ramifications and clearly fall within the legislative policy of Parliament and the contours of judicial review would be suitably altered in such regard," the affidavit said.

The plea in the top court filed by advocate Ashwin Kumar Upadhyay seeks a life ban on convicted politicians aside from the expeditious disposal of

criminal cases against MPs and MLAs in the country.

In its affidavit, the Centre underlined the apex court had consistently held that the legislative choice over one option or the other couldn't be questioned in courts over its efficacy or otherwise.

Under Section 8 (1) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the period of disqualification was six years from the date of conviction or in case of imprisonment, six years from the date

of release, it added.

"The disqualifications made under the impugned sections are limited by time as a matter of parliamentary policy and it would not be appropriate to substitute the petitioner's understanding of the issue and impose a lifetime ban," it said.

The Centre said as a matter of judicial review, the court could declare the provisions to be unconstitutional, however, the relief sought by the petitioner effectively sought to read "life-long" instead of "six years" in

all sub-sections of Section 8 of the Act.

It said lifetime disqualification was the maximum that could be imposed under the provisions and such a discretion was "certainly within the power of Parliament".

"However, it is one thing to say that a power exists and another to say that it must necessarily be exercised in every case," the Centre argued. The affidavit said the impugned laws were "constitutionally sound" and "did not suffer from the vice of excess delegation" aside from being intra vires the powers of Parliament.

While imposing any penalty, it said, Parliament considers the principle of proportionality and reasonableness as for instance, the entirety of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, or penal law provide for imprisonment or fines up to certain limits and the rationale behind it was that the punitive measures would co-relate with the gravity of offence.

CONTD ON PAGE-2

Nitish Kumar expands cabinet, inducts 7 new faces from BJP



Patna  
With less than a year left for assembly polls, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Wednesday inducted seven new faces into his council of ministers, all from alliance partner Bharatiya Janata Party.

The expansion, which could be the last before the elections are announced, raises the total number of ministers to 36, the maximum permissible in the state with a 243-strong assembly.

The development took place on a day state BJP president Dilip Jaiswal, the former minister for revenue and landforms, gave up his cabinet berth citing the party's policy of "one person, one post". The new ministers include Jibesh Kumar, who was a member of the state Cabinet till August 2022, when the chief minister abruptly quit the NDA, accusing the BJP of trying to "break" his Janata Dal-United. Jibesh Kumar, who returns to the state cabinet with just two days left for the commencement of the budget session, told reporters: "I am ready to discharge the responsibility to the best of my ability". Other inductees are Sanjay Sarangi, a fifth-term MLA from Darbhanga, and Sunil Kumar, who represents Bihar Sharif, in the CM's pocket borough Nalanda, for as many times, thrice on a JD-U ticket before crossing over to the BJP in 2015. Agency

## Woman raped in Shivshahi bus at Pune's Swargate

Pune  
A history-sheeter allegedly raped a 26-year-old woman inside a stationary state transport bus at the busy Swargate bus station in Pune, and multiple teams are looking for the accused who is on the run, the police said on Wednesday.

As Opposition targeted the Home Department held by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis over the incident which took place on early Tuesday morning, the government ordered that all the private security guards at the bus station be replaced.

Dattatraya Ramdas Gade (36), the suspect who is absconding, has cases of theft and chain-snatching registered against him, said a



Swargate police station official. He was out on bail since 2019.

Swargate in Pune city is one of the largest bus depots of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC).

According to the woman, as she was waiting for a bus for Phaltan in Satara district at one of the platforms around

5:45 am on Tuesday, a man approached her and engaged her in conversation, calling her 'Didi' (sister), and said the bus for Satara had arrived at another platform.

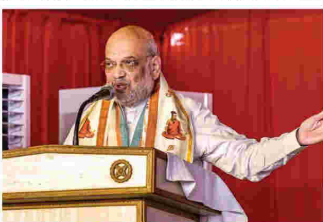
He then took her to an empty 'Shivshahi' AC bus parked elsewhere on the sprawling station premises. Agency

## Southern States won't lose a single seat to delimitation: Amit Shah

Coimbatore  
Union Home Minister Amit Shah asserted on Wednesday that the southern states would not lose even a single Lok Sabha seat due to the delimitation exercise undertaken by the Union government.

Speaking to the BJP workers in the state at an event in Coimbatore, Shah said the southern states will get additional seats on a pro-rata basis when delimitation is carried out.

"Mr Stalin, the Modi government has made it clear in Lok Sabha that after delimitation, on a pro-rata basis, not a single seat will be reduced in any southern state. And I want to reassure



the public of South India that Modi ji has kept your interest in mind to make sure that not even one seat is reduced pro-rata. And whatever increase is there, the southern states will get a fair share, there is no reason to doubt this," Shah said.

Alleging that the people of Tamil Nadu were disturbed by Stalin's statements, Shah said the chief minister and his son Udhayanidhi were trying to distract the public attention from the failure of the state government.

for any state. I take this opportunity to assure the people of South India that the Union government will keep their interests in mind and ensure that they are duly represented in the parliament," he said after inaugurating the new BJP office in Coimbatore.

The home minister criticised the chief minister for "lying" and "misleading" the people of Tamil Nadu and "trying to divert attention" from the failures of his government. "You are lying to Tamil people and misleading them with false claims about delimitation. I demand your reply, why are you making these false claims?"

CONTD ON PAGE-2

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Centre opposes life-time ban on convicted politicians

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There were numerous penal laws that prescribe imposing restrictions on the exercise of rights and freedoms, which in most cases are time-specific, it said.

The Centre said the petition failed to make the crucial distinction between basis of disqualification and effects of disqualification.

"It is true that the basis of disqualification is conviction for an offence and that this basis remains unchanged so long as the conviction stands. The effect of such conviction lasts for a fixed period of time. As stated above, there is nothing inherently unconstitutional in limiting the effect of penalties by time," it said.

The affidavit said the petitioner's reliance on Articles 102 and 191 of the Constitution was totally misplaced. Articles 102 and 191 of the Constitution deals with disqualifications for membership of either house of parliament, legislative assembly or legislative council.

The Centre said Clause (e) of Articles 102 and 191 were enabling provisions that confer on Parliament the power to make laws governing disqualification and it was in exercise of this power that the 1951 Act was enacted.

"The Constitution has left the field open to Parliament to enact such further law governing disqualifications as it deems fit. Parliament has power both to determine the grounds for disqualification and the duration of disqualification," it said.

Southern States won't lose a single seat to delimitation: Amit Shah

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Shah's remarks came a day after the chief minister called for an all-party meeting to discuss and unanimously decide the state's strategy on the delimitation exercise which he termed as "Damocles' sword" hanging above the southern states. Stalin said Tamil Nadu could lose eight seats and the number of Lok Sabha seats might come down from 39 to 31.

Apart from explaining the delimitation exercise and Stalin's claims, Shah accused the DMK and its leaders of money laundering, corruption in sand mining and involvement in scams. He called the DMK a party with a "master's degree in corruption".

Shah urged the BJP workers to work towards establishing the NDA government in Tamil Nadu and said that the 2026 election will be a turning point. Stating that the separatist and divisive ideologies promoted in the state now should be eliminated, he said "All anti-national forces should be destroyed here. Time has come, DMK's anti-people, anti-national government should be sent out of power."

Advt Contact: 9818-799941

# SC appoints ex-apex court judge to head panel on SCBA reforms

New Delhi:

The Supreme Court has appointed its former judge L. Nageswara Rao as the head of a committee on electoral reforms in the apex court bar association.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and K V Viswanathan said Justice Rao had agreed to chair the committee, which would also suggest the eligibility criteria for candidates contesting election of executive committee of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA).

"In continuation of the deliberations held previously and the orders passed from time to time, Justice L. Nageswara Rao, former judge of this court, has graciously agreed to chair the committee to recommend the norms/guidelines/parameters for the reformation and suitable amendments in the bye-laws regulating election of the executive committee to the Supreme Court Bar Association," the



Justice Surya Kant Justice K.V. Viswanathan

bench said in an order on February 24.

The bench added, "The proposed reforms may inter alia include the eligibility conditions for contesting the elections. The committee shall comprise some senior advocates/experienced advocates (from both, advocates-on-record and non-advocates-on-record category), who have never been interested in contesting the elections as office bearers of the Supreme Court Bar Association." The top court has granted two weeks to the members of the bar to suggest member names directly to the retired judge for the committee.

"We leave it to the entire discretion of Justice L. Nageswara Rao to pick the names from that list. Justice L. Nageswara Rao is at liberty to constitute his own team, in case the members of the bar do not provide any names," it added.

The panel headed by the former judge was

granted the liberty to invite suggestions either from the members of the bar or other stakeholders.

The matter would be heard on April 7.

The top court previously sought suggestions on the committee's chair from senior advocate Vikas Singh, who is a former presi-

dent of the SCBA, and the incumbent senior advocate Kapil Sibal.

The bench said it was in favour of a former judge of the Supreme Court, who was elevated from the bar and considered former CJI U U Lalit, aside from former SC judges Indu Malhotra and Rao, who were equally popular among the members of the bar and the bench.

On May 2, 2024, court ordered reservation of 33 per cent posts in the executive committee of the SCBA for women.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and K V Viswanathan said Justice Rao had agreed to chair the committee, which would also suggest the eligibility criteria for candidates contesting election of executive committee of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA).

Voters should boycott Rahul Gandhi, Uddhav for not visiting Kumbh Mela: Athawale



Union minister Ramdas Athawale

Union minister Ramdas Athawale on Wednesday claimed that Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi "insulted" the Hindu community by not visiting the Maha Kumbh, and Hindu voters should boycott them.

Thackeray talks about Hindutva but did not participate in the ongoing Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj, said Athawale, a prominent Dalit leader from Maharashtra and a BJP ally.

"Thackeray and the Gandhi family have insulted Hindutva by not participating in the Maha Kumbh. Being Hindu and not attending the Maha Kumbh is an insult to the Hindus, and Hindus must boycott them," he said.

They should have taken part in the Maha Kumbh considering the people's sentiments, said the Union Minister of State for Social Justice.

"They always want Hindu votes, despite that they skipped Maha Kumbh. I think Hindu voters must boycott them," Athawale added. Hindu voters did teach these leaders a lesson in the recently held elections, he further said, referring to the Maharashtra assembly elections of November 2024.

The 45-day Maha Kumbh at Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj culminates on Mahashivratri.

Illegal US immigration: ED raids visa firms in Ludhiana, Chandigarh

New Delhi:

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday said it raided three visa consultant firms in Ludhiana and Chandigarh as part of a money-laundering investigation linked to alleged fraud in providing immigration services to aspirants who wish to go to the US.

The case emerges from the FIRs filed by Punjab and Delhi police on the complaint by the office of the Overseas Criminal Investigations, US Embassy in Delhi.

In a statement, the federal agency said searches were carried out on Tuesday at five business and residential premises in Ludhiana and Chandigarh. Incriminating documents, digital devices and Rs 19 lakh in cash were seized during the searches, it said.

The accused entities charged "hefty" amounts from visa applicants and proceeds of crime were generated through such criminal activities. These funds were further invested for the purchase of movable and immovable properties and "diverted" into various bank accounts, according to the agency.

Minister alleges Punjabi dropped from Class 10 Board exams draft norms; list indicative: CBSE

New Delhi:

The Punjab government on Wednesday alleged that the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) had dropped Punjabi from the list of subjects for the Class 10 Board exams in the new draft norms while the board officials maintained that the list was only indicative and no subjects would be dropped.

The CBSE officials clarified that the draft norms do not mention 13 other languages and reiterated that they would continue to be offered.

The 13 other languages are Russian, Nepali, Limboo, Lepcha, Sindhi, Malayalam, Odia, Assamese, Kannada, Kokborok, Telugu, Arabic and Persian, they said.

The CBSE on Tuesday approved draft norms for conducting the Class 10 Board exams twice a year.

The draft norms will now be put in the public

"ineligible" visa applicants who were aspiring to study or work in the United States of America.

The transferred funds to the accounts of the visa applicants to show a "minimum" account balance for visa application and "wrongfully" helped such persons to show their eligibility for obtaining a visa for the US by "manipulating" their facts and circumstances, the ED found.

The accused charged commission from the aspirants for this job, it said.

The accused entities charged "hefty" amounts from visa applicants and proceeds of crime were generated through such criminal activities. These funds were further invested for the purchase of movable and immovable properties and "diverted" into various bank accounts, according to the agency.

Stalin's remarks come amidst an intense language row in the state,



domain and the stakeholders can submit their feedback by March 9, following which the policy will be finalised.

Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains alleged that the new policy was attempting to drop Punjabi from the subjects' list and claimed that his government would not tolerate any attack on the language.

"We strongly object to the CBSE's new exam pattern scheme which

Chennai:

The DMK will not oppose Hindi if it is not imposed on Tamil Nadu and forcing the language on Tamils amounts to playing with their self-respect, state Chief Minister and the ruling party's president M K Stalin said on Wednesday.

In a letter to parliament on the issue of alleged Hindi imposition, Stalin said self-respect was Tamils' unique nature. "For those asking why DMK still opposes Hindi, my humble response to them is one among you is—because you still impose it on us."

"We won't oppose if you don't impose; won't blacken Hindi words in Tamil Nadu. Self-respect is Tamils' unique characteristic and we will not allow anyone, whoever it is, to play with it," he asserted.

Stalin's remarks come amidst an intense language row in the state,



with the DMK alleging that the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre was trying to impose Hindi through the three-language formula in the National Education Policy (NEP), a charge denied by the union government.

The issue has led to a war of words between the DMK and the state BJP unit, with the latter party's TN Chief K Annamalai leading the charge.

In his letter, Stalin recalled the anti-Hindi agitations in the state as early as between 1937-39 and said various leaders, including EV Ramasamy Periar actively participating in the agitation.

Some BJP leaders were saying the blackening of Hindi names in railway stations would affect north Indian passengers arriving in the state and said "they should have had such concern for Tamil."

They should rather pose this question to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit

Shah and Education minister Dharmendra Pradhan whether anyone boards in Uttar Pradesh had Tamil and other south Indian languages to benefit passengers from the region travelling there for the Kashi Sangamam and the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj," the DMK chief said.

He also asked if announcements were made in other Indian languages. "How would those, who had joined an organisation that is opposed to Tamil and repeatedly betraying Tamil Nadu's voice concern for Tamils and their welfare. The Dravidian movement has no enmity towards any language. Tamil has not considered any language as enemy and destroyed it. It has never allowed another language if it tried to dominate Tamil," Stalin said.

Celebrating Culmination of Three-Year Pranayama Teacher Training at Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute

Faridabad:

Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute proudly announces the successful completion of its prestigious Three-Year Teachers' Training Course in Pranayama, held under the expert guidance of Sudhir Tiwari. This intensive journey was not just a training but a profound sadhana, where dedicated students immersed themselves in the classical wisdom and scientific understanding of Pranayama. This transformative journey, has equipped a new generation of certified Pranayama teachers to carry forward the rich legacy of yogic breathwork.

Over the past three years, these students returned to Kaivalyadhama three times each year, undergoing rigorous training in breath regulation, yogic philosophy, and self-discipline. Their unwavering commitment and sincere practice have now shaped them into certified teachers, ready to share and uphold the authentic traditions of Pranayama worldwide.

"We are immensely proud of our graduates, whose perseverance and commitment reflect the highest ideals of yogic discipline," said [Spokesperson's Name], [Designation] at Kaivalyadhama. "They are now well-equipped to spread the transformative power of Pranayama and continue the legacy of our founder, Swami Kuvayalananda."

The institute extends its heartfelt congratulations to all graduates and looks forward to witnessing their positive impact on communities worldwide.

PUBLIC NOTICE

"It is hereby informed to the public at large that my clients Sh. Tarsem Raj Rajput, Sh. Anand Lal, & Son, Anita, Wo Tarsem Raj Rajput, both R/O H. No. A-32, Anand Vihar, Utam Nagar, New Delhi-110059, had a debtors' list of Sh. Sankarsh, through a newspaper/publication advertisement dt.27/03/2023 from all their movable and immovable properties. They have severed all relations with him. However, Son of my clients remain under their control and supervision. My clients hereby informed and declared that they wished to cancel the previous of debtors and disowning of his son with immediate effect."

GIRISH KUMAR Advocate D-143/2011 DELHI HIGH COURT Chamber No.-342, Lawyer's Chamber Block, Dwarka Courts, New Delhi - 110075

PUBLIC NOTICE

"It is known to all that my client Haim Anand, S/o Mohd. Chaudhri Anand, R/O A-37, Gali No.2, Mahavir Enclave Part-2, Utm Nagar, PO D.K. Mohan Garden, East West Delhi, Delhi-110059, has disowned, debarred his son namely Md. Nausad S/o Md. Haim Anand and daughter-in-law namely Rakshat Khaton W/o Md. Nausad both R/O A-37, Gali No.2, Mahavir Enclave Part-2, Utm Nagar, PO D.K. Mohan Garden, East West Delhi, Delhi-110059, from all his movable and immovable properties because both of them named are out of control of my client. My client has severed all relations with them on account of misbehavior. Anyone dealing with them may do so at his/her/their own risks, costs and consequences."

MANOJ KUMAR SINGH Advocate Ch. No.534, Lawyers Chamber Complex District Courts Dwarka, Sector 10, New Delhi-110075, Mob. No. 9999670181

## Delhi CM to propose Mohan Singh Bisht's name for deputy speaker post on Feb 27

New Delhi  
Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta will propose the name of BJP MLA Mohan Singh Bisht for the post of deputy speaker of the Delhi Assembly on February 27, the third day of the session.

With no other contenders in the fray for the post. According to the list of business provided by the Delhi Assembly Speaker's office, two separate motions will be moved to elect Bisht to the post.

The first motion will be moved by CM Gupta and seconded by Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa while the second motion will be proposed by MLA Anil Kumar Sharma and backed by Gajender Singh Yadav.

Bisht, a six-time MLA and veteran BJP leader, won the Mustafabad assembly seat in the February 5 Delhi polls. He defeated AAP's Adeel Ahmad Khan by over 17,000 votes.



**With no other contenders in the fray for the post. According to the list of business provided by the Delhi Assembly Speaker's office, two separate motions will be moved to elect Bisht to the post.**

Before this, he represented Karawal Nagar in the Delhi Assembly multiple times, first winning the seat in 1988 and serving it until 2015. Bisht won the seat again in 2020.

Apart from the election of deputy speaker, the third day of the session will also see discussions under Rule 280, allowing

members to raise matters with the Chair's permission. Additionally, the Assembly will continue debating the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report on the regulation and supply of liquor in Delhi, which CM Gupta had laid before the House on February 25.

## Fire breaks out in cinema hall at Select Citywalk Mall

New Delhi  
A fire broke out at a cinema hall in Select Citywalk Mall here on Wednesday evening during the screening of a movie, an official said.

Panic gripped cinemagoers as a corner of the movie screen of PVR Cinemas at the mall caught fire during the 4:15 pm screening of the film 'Chhava', a witness said.

Another person said as fire alarms started ringing in the hall, everybody rushed to the exit doors. The cinema hall was evacuated, he said.

An officer of Delhi Fire Services said they received a call about the fire at 5:42 pm and six fire tenders were rushed to the spot. However, it was a small fire and no one was injured, he said, adding the blaze was contained by 5:55 pm.

Delhi Police said they received a call about the fire at 5:57 pm from Saket Citywalk Mall.

"We got a call about the fire and the caller informed police that some people are trapped inside.

## BJP MLA Satish Upadhyay Raises Issue of Broken Bhagat Singh Statue at Select Citywalk Mall



Staff Reporter  
New Delhi  
Political tensions in Delhi have risen over the treatment of Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is accusing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of disrespecting these figures by removing their images from the Chief Minister's office after the BJP took power.

In response, the BJP argues that the AAP is using these allegations to divert attention from corruption claims against them.

Amid this controversy,

**The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is accusing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of disrespecting these figures by removing their images from the Chief Minister's office after the BJP took power.**

BJP MLA Satish Upadhyay, representing Malviya Na-

gar, visited a park named after Bhagat Singh. He criticized the previous MLA, Somnath Bharti from AAP, for not addressing the broken statue of Bhagat Singh, which has remained damaged for three years.

Upadhyay claimed that AAP focuses on publicity rather than action and pointed out that if they genuinely valued Bhagat Singh, the park's condition would be better.

He urged the authorities to repair the damaged statue soon, emphasizing the importance of Bhagat Singh and the BJP's commitment to taking real action.

## Devotees throng temples on Mahashivratri



Noida  
Devotees gathered temples on the occasion of Mahashivratri since Wednesday morning. They could be seen in long queues to have 'darshan' of Lord Bholenath and to perform Jalabhishek.

A heavy police force was also deployed on this occasion. The devotees anointed Lord Bholenath with water, milk, curd, ghee and honey. There was a long queue of devotees on the occasion of Mahashivratri at sector-2 Lal Mandir and Sarfabad Prachin Shiv Mandir in Noida. From 4:00 am onwards, a crowd of Shiv devotees started gathering at the temple. People offered water to Lord Bholenath.

Apart from this, people offered prayers at Sanatan Dharma Mandir in sector-19. Barricades were also put up so that devotees could stand in a line here. Apart from this, CCTV cameras were also installed in the temple, which were being monitored.

The Mahant of Siddha Peeth Sai Shani Mandir said that Mahashivratri is the biggest festival of worship of Lord Shiva. It is celebrated on Falgun Krishna Chaturdashi. On this occasion, separate arrangements were made for Jalabhishek in the temple. There is an ancient Shiva temple and Baba Balak Nath Ashram at Chhalera village sector-44.

The festival of Mahashivratri was celebrated with great pomp here. Akhand Kirtan was organised since morning. A huge crowd gathered for Jalabhishek, Rudrabhishek and darshan of Lord Bholenath.

The police made tight security arrangements in all the Shivalayas of Noida. Devotees were made to stand in a queue from the gate to the inside. After this, people worshipped Lord Bhole Nath one by one. At the same time, suspicious people are being monitored. Police is continuously patrolling outside the temples.

## 12% interest to be levied for late payment of property tax in Ghaziabad

Ghaziabad  
The Municipal Corporation will levy 12% interest from those who do not pay the house tax after March 31. Nearly two lakh people have not paid the house tax yet.

The corporation has started taking strict action against the big defaulters who have not paid the dues. Their properties are being sealed.


Municipal commissioner Vikramaditya Singh Malik has ordered the zonal in-charges of all five zones to expedite the collection of house tax. For this, camps are being organised even on holidays.

Chief tax assessment officer Dr Sanjeev Sinha said that after March 31, 12 per cent interest will be levied on the outstanding house tax. To avoid that,

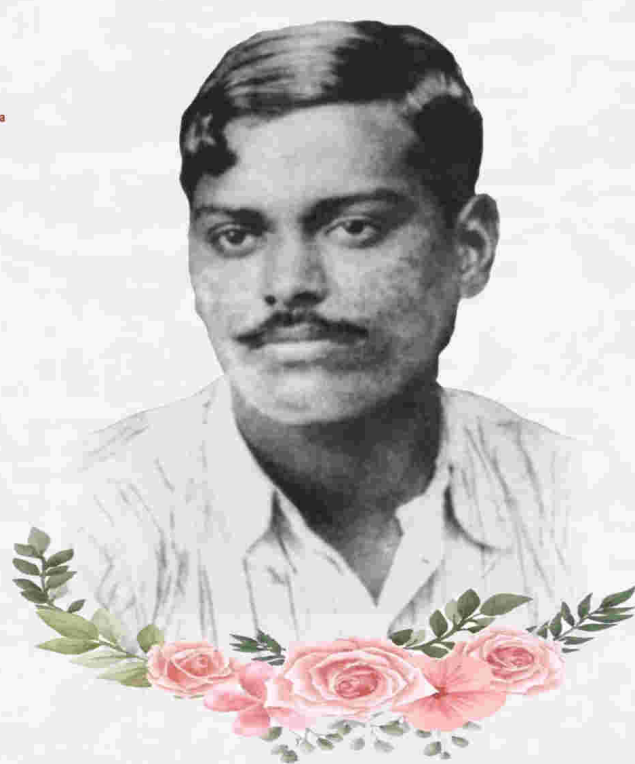


people can pay the house tax.

He said that house tax is the main source of income of the corporation, therefore people are advised to pay the tax on time. He said that it is mandatory for all government building societies, residential colonies, residential townships to pay the house tax. The establishments who do not pay the house tax are being sealed.



Government of Haryana




# Heartfelt tributes to the brave son of Motherland Chandra Shekhar Azad ji on his death anniversary

February 27, 2025

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www.haryana.gov.in

# Sandeep Dikshit demands wider probe into Delhi Liquor scam, questions BJP-AAP role

**New Delhi**  
Delhi Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit has called for a broader investigation into the alleged liquor scam linked to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government.

Dikshit claimed that the Kejriwal government's revenue has suffered a loss of Rs 2,000 crores due to the policy, funds that could have been used for the benefit of the common people.

"Aam Aadmi Party's claims of increasing revenue have been exposed. Revenue has suffered a loss of 2000 crores. This could have helped the common people," Dikshit said.



Chaired by CM Rekha Gupta, where discussions were held regarding the report and the smooth functioning of the House.

He further demanded a wider scope of the investigation into the liquor scam, questioning the role of both AAP and BJP in the matter. "The companies which got the contracts donated to Aam Aadmi Party and BJP. This should be investigated," he added.

Despite the report being tabled, Dikshit noted there was no discussion in the House, and he stressed that the issue should be addressed on a public platform.

He raised further concerns about the involvement of the Lieutenant Governor (LG) and BJP leaders in the liquor policy.

"Why were three excise commissioners appointed at the time of the liquor policy? Why did the LG give the green signal to the liquor policy? Who gave permission to open liquor shops in violation of the master plan? This cannot happen without the permission of the Municipal Corporation. The Municipal Corporation was then ruled by the BJP," Dikshit questioned.

Meanwhile, The Delhi Assembly session witnessed

major drama on its second day as opposition protests continued unabated. Amidst heavy sloganeering, Speaker Vijender Gupta suspended 21 MLAs till February 28.

Speaking to the media, Speaker Vijender Gupta said, "The first CAG report has been tabled today. We will try to present as many reports as possible in the session, which has now been extended till March 3."

He further informed that a Public Accounts Committee (PAC) comprising 12 to 14 members from both the ruling and opposition parties will be formed soon.

"After discussion in the House, the report will be sent to the PAC for examination. Once the committee submits its findings, the House will take appropriate action," he added.

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# Brother of rape convict murders victim's brother in revenge killing in Ghaziabad

**Ghaziabad (UP)**  
In an act of revenge, the brother of a man convicted of raping a minor girl has allegedly murdered the victim's brother, police said on Wednesday.

Sarfraz was arrested in connection with the death of a 27-year-old man whose body was found in a deserted area of Kamla Nehru Nagar on Saturday.

He is alleged to have carried out the murder after calling the girl's brother for drinks at a secluded spot in Kamla Nehru Nagar on Friday.

"During interrogation,

Sarfraz confessed to the killing and revealed that his motive was revenge," said Deputy Commissioner of Police Rajesh Kumar.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Dinesh Kumar S/o Sh. M.S. Yadav R/o 67 B, Block 8, HIG Flat, Sector 105, Near Greater Noida Express Way, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. 201304 had published a public notice dated 06.02.2025 in newspaper Virat Vahbhav & Top Story about purchasing of shares whereas the present Corrigendum is continuation of the same giving clarification that I have purchased the shares of Phoenix Capital India Pvt. Ltd. (Formerly known as Jammu Ess Lee Finance Private Limited) lying with the following companies:

1. M/S Cea Consultants Private Limited
2. M/S Tish Consultants Private Limited
3. M/S Shree Sobhagya Laxmi Marketing Private Limited
4. M/S B R Studs Private Limited
5. M/S Youl Production India Private Limited
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7. M/S Glaring Tradecom Private Limited
8. M/S Idir Tradex Ltd
9. M/S Vandan Technology Private Limited
10. M/S Alameeth Direct Selling Private Limited
11. M/S A V Webtech Private Limited
12. M/S Evgeniya Tradex Private Limited

If any has any objection in this regard, he/she may raise objection to the undersigned within 7 working days w.e.f the date of Publication.

**Dinesh Kumar S/o Sh. M.S. Yadav**  
R/o 67 B, Block 8, HIG Flat, Sector 105, Near Greater Noida Express Way, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. 201304

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Jile Yadav S/o Sh. Tota Ram Yadav R/o H. No. 259, Sector-73, Sharfabad, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. 201304 had published a public notice dated 06.02.2025 in newspaper Virat Vahbhav & Top Story about purchasing of shares whereas the present Corrigendum is continuation of the same giving clarification that I have purchased the shares of Phoenix Capital India Pvt. Ltd. (Formerly known as Jammu Ess Lee Finance Private Limited) lying with the following companies:

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**Jile Yadav S/o Sh. Tota Ram Yadav R/o H. No. 259, Sector-73, Sharfabad, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. 201304**

### PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that my client Sh Arun Kumar Singh S/o Jai Singh is purchasing a property bearing no. Plot no. 39-A, area measuring 62 square yards, out of Khata no. 28/16, situated in the revenue estate of village Hastal area Abadi known as Colony Sainik Enclave Phase-1, Vikas Nagar, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi 110059. The ownership of the said property is in the name of Neeta Rani w/o Sanjay Singh and the same was transferred by Satya Narain through Notarized GPA, Notarized Agreement to Sell and Will, all dated 08/05/2006. If anybody has any objection/s on said property's ownership and title/safe and legitimate, kindly inform the undersigned in writing within 7 days of publication of the Notice, failing which the property would be considered as unencumbered and no objection will be entertained thereafter.

**YASHPAL JOLLY**  
ADVOCATE  
CHAMBER NO 267, WESTERN WING,  
TIS HAZARI COURTS, DELHI-110054

# Excise policy case: Delhi court directs ED to supply papers to accused

**New Delhi**  
A Delhi court has directed the ED to hand over certain documents to the accused persons in a money laundering case against former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and others in relation to alleged excise scam.

Special judge Kaveri Baweja passed the order on February 25 on applications moved by multiple accused persons, claiming that they had not received some documents relating to the chargesheet filed in the case.

The court, which is currently conducting scrutiny of documents, posted the matter — also involving

AAP leaders Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh as accused — on March 3.

"Put up for further proceeding on the next date of hearing, i.e., March 3," the judge said.

The money laundering case stems from a CBI case lodged after Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena recommended a probe into the alleged irregularities in the implementation of the excise policy.

According to the CBI and the ED, irregularities were committed while modifying the policy and undue favours were extended to the licence holders.

AAP leaders Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh as accused — on March 3.

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# Tata Tea Premium Introduces Tata Tea Premium Care – Delicious Tea with goodness of Natural Ingredients

**Ghaziabad/Noida**  
Tata Consumer Products Limited (TCPL) continues to innovate in the premiumization and wellness category, adapting to the evolving needs of today's consumers. Strengthening its commitment to quality and well-being, Tata Tea Premium, Desh Ki Chai introduces Tata Tea Premium Care—an expertly crafted blend with the natural goodness of Tulsi, Ginger, Brahmi, Elaichi, and Mulethi. Through its commitment to consumer-centric innovations, TCPL is redefining everyday beverages, transforming them into purposeful experiences that resonate with the preferences of modern consumers.

Tata Tea Premium Care is a perfect blend of taste and



wellness, crafted for India's love for strong chai with the added goodness of natural ingredients. Designed for consumers who seek a strong cup of tea, it seamlessly combines kadak chai with the benefits of natural ingredi-

ents. With trust and reliability at its core, this special blend is tailored for today's lifestyle.

Speaking about the launch, Puneet Das, President - Packaged Beverages (India & South Asia), Tata

Consumer Products, said, "Tata Tea Premium Care is a natural extension of our premiumization strategy. Indians have a strong emotional connect with tea, and with this new offering, we are elevating the everyday tea experience by incorporating the goodness of time-tested natural ingredients known for their wholesome goodness in their daily cup of chai. As consumers become more mindful of their wellness choices, we believe this unique blend will resonate deeply with them. With this extension, our presence in the premium wellness category becomes even stronger, reinforcing our commitment to providing purposeful and high-quality beverage choices."

# Rhythm of Marble" A Solo Show by Amit Singh

**New Delhi**  
"Your work is carved out of agony as a statue is carved out of marble" a famous quote said by Louise Bogan "Rhythm of Marble" A grand solo exhibition of marble sculptures by Sculptor Amit Singh is scheduled on Sunday, February 23rd to March 05, 2025 from 11 am to 8 pm at the Sculpture Court, Triveni Kala Sangam, Tansen Marg, Mandi House New Delhi. Due to the pandemic the artist will be showcasing his work after 5 years of a gap.

The formal inauguration happened on Monday 24th Feb, 2025 by Chief Guest Dr Sanjeev Kishor Gaud Director National Gallery of Modern Art, Sunil Tandon Director India Habitat Cen-



tre, Nupur Kundu Senior Artist, Sadhna Shivastav Renowned TV anchor and Rajesh Shivastav eminent media personality.

It is known fact to all that famous young & talented Sculptor Amit Singh, from Udaipur, is an established

name in the field of Marble Stone Art. In a very short span of time Amit has proved himself an artist of combined art work on stone from ancient Indian tradition to modern Indian style. The range of art work of Amit Singh moves from

Nature to Spiritual to various shades of human thoughts & imaginations. All type of carving done on Marble stone is the medium which reflects the visionary concept of the artist along with the different color and texture. Working primarily with marble, Amit's carvings reflect his visionary concepts, enhanced by a nuanced play of color tones and textures. Truly, a remarkable & wonderful body of work.

Amit is a Master of Fine Arts from College of Art, New Delhi. He has done many Solo & Group shows. With National and International awards to his credit the Sculptor Amit Singh's work on marble are showcased in many places in India and abroad.

# Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini performed Jalabhishek of Lord Shiva on Mahashivratri



Shiv Kumar New Delhi

Haryana Chief Minister Naib Singh Saini performed Jalabhishek and Puja-Archana of Lord Shiva on the occasion of Mahashivratri.

The Chief Minister bowed his head in the temple built in Haryana Bhawan premises in New Delhi on Wednesday morning and

wished for the happiness and prosperity of the people of the state.

Wishing the people of the state on Mahashivratri, Naib Singh Saini said that today is an occasion of great fortune. May the blessings of Lord Shiva always remain on all of us. BJP State President Mohan Lal Baroli was also present on this occasion.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Shrishti Yadav D/o Sh. Dinesh Kumar R/o H. No. Me-15, Land 2, Jaypee Green, Jaypee Green Residential, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. 201310 had published a public notice dated 06.02.2025 in newspaper Virat Vahbhav & Top Story about purchasing of shares whereas the present Corrigendum is continuation of the same giving clarification that I have purchased the shares of Phoenix Capital India Pvt. Ltd. (Formerly known as Jammu Ess Lee Finance Private Limited) lying with the following companies:

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**Shrishti Yadav D/o Sh. Dinesh Kumar R/o H. No. Me-15, Land 2, Jaypee Green, Jaypee Green Residential, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. 201310**

# Five killed in separate accidents in Ghaziabad

**Ghaziabad**  
Three Kanwariyas were killed, and two others were injured when an SUV hit their motorcycles on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway in the early hours of Wednesday, police said.

DCP (Rural) Surendra Nath Tiwari said five Kanwariyas were travelling on two motorcycles from Meerut to Faridabad when they were hit by an SUV near the toll tax barrier under Bhujpur police station limits here. The incident occurred on the intervening night of February 25-26.

"Upon receiving the information, the local police immediately reached the spot and rushed the injured to the hospital. However, three of them — Devendra, Harendra and Ajay (all in their mid-thir-

ties) — were declared dead by doctors. Two others, Sunil and Sunder (both around 30), are undergoing treatment," DCP Tiwari said.

The bodies of the deceased were handed over to their families after post-mortem, while the injured were taken to Faridabad for further treatment. "The car driver, who was under the influence of alcohol, had been arrested, and the vehicle has been seized," the DCP added.

In a separate accident in the afternoon, a woman and a child died, and four others were injured after an electric bus lost control and hit a motorcycle and several bystanders near an underpass in the Masuri police station area here.

# Will keep protesting 'removal' of Ambedkar, Bhagat Singh portraits from Delhi CM office, says AAP

**New Delhi**  
The Aam Aadmi Party Wednesday said it would continue with its protest against the 'removal' of Bhimrao Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh's portraits from the chief minister's office after the BJP came to power in Delhi.

In a joint press conference with AAP MLA Sanjiv Jha, his party colleague Kuldeep Kumar claimed his party's legislators were suspended from the assembly for raising the 'Jai Bheem' slogan.

"The BJP MLAs were chanting 'Modi-Modi' but it was AAP MLAs who were suspended from the House for raising 'Jai Bheem' slogan," he said.

"Jha said the 'removal' of the portraits from the chief minister's office will not be tolerated and AAP will continue to protest



against it. He demanded that the portraits of Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh be displayed as it was done when AAP was in power.

Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta Tuesday suspended 21 AAP MLAs, including Leader of Opposition Atishi, for three days for disrupting Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena's inaugural address to the newly constituted House.

Atishi along with other AAP legislators had protested against the alleged removal of B R Ambedkar's portrait from the chief minister's office. The AAP MLAs accused the BJP-led government of disrespecting Ambedkar and raised slogans against the move.

**Jha said the 'removal' of the portraits from the chief minister's office will not be tolerated and AAP will continue to protest against it. He demanded that the portraits of Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh be displayed as it was done when AAP was in power.**

Denying the charge, the BJP has accused the AAP of spreading 'rumour', saying portraits of Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh were displayed at the chief minister's office along with those of Mahatma Gandhi, President Draupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

### EASTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No. OAG/27/206 to 207/24-25 (Open), dated 21.02.2025. E-tenders (Open) are invited for the Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Anasol, Station Road, Anasol, Pin-713301. Tender No. 2, 25, 305/24. Case No. - O-A-C-T-206-24-26. Name of the Work: Open tender for Gradient verification of station yards and sections using LIDAR Survey technology under SD/EN/2/ASB. Tender No. 2, 25, 305/24. Case No. - O-A-C-T-206-24-26. Name of the Work: Open tender for Realigning of Br. No. 20K along with other works in between KPN: DMA in ASN-KAN section. Tender value: Rs. 2,11,82,316.08. Earnest money: Rs. 2,55,905/-.

Completion period for the work: 6 months (for Sl. No. 1) & 12 months (for Sl. No. 2). Date and time of closing: 19.03.2025 at 12.00 hrs. For each. Complete details can be seen in the Highlights website www.ircon.gov.in (ASN-350/2024-25)

Tender Notices are also available at Website: www.ircon.gov.in

Follow us at: @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

Highway connecting all districts of Arunachal to be completed soon: Rijiju

Itanagar:

Union minister Kiren Rijiju on Wednesday said that the Trans-Arunachal Highway, which will connect 26 district headquarters of the state, is nearing completion.

The Union parliamentary affairs and minority affairs minister was addressing a programme on the occasion of Nyokum Yullo, a festival of the Nyishi tribe, at Boasimla in Kamle district. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar was also present at the event.

"The Trans-Arunachal Highway, which is nearing completion, will seamlessly connect all district headquarters of the state, enhancing accessibility and boosting development," Rijiju said.

Underscoring the Centre's commitment to Arunachal Pradesh, the minister said that the government has sanctioned the Rs 42,000 crore Frontier Highway project, a landmark initiative and the first of its kind in India at such a large scale.

Rijiju last week said that the Arunachal Frontier Highway, which will connect 12 districts along the India-China boundary, will be a "game changer" for the border areas of the northeastern state.

He credited this ambitious project to the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Rijiju said that history will remember the visit of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar to Boasimla, a small town situated along the national highway.

"The arrival of the second citizen of the country in Boasimla is a moment of immense pride for the people of Arunachal Pradesh. It

**Punjab, Haryana HC halts auction of industrial plot by HSIIDC in IMT Bawal, Rewari**

# AAP fields Rajya Sabha MP in assembly bypoll, opposition claims Kejriwal will enter Upper House

Chandigarh: AP on Wednesday named Rajya Sabha member Sanjeev Arora as its candidate for the Ludhiana West assembly bypoll, drawing claims from opposition parties in Punjab that party supremo Arvind Kejriwal would enter the Upper House in his place.

Arora will have to resign from the Rajya Sabha if he wins the bypoll, the date for which is yet to be announced.

The passing of AAP's Gurpreet Bassi Gogi, who died of a gunshot injury after his licensed weapon accidentally discharged last month, led to the Ludhiana West seat falling vacant.

Kejriwal faced defeat from his New Delhi constituency as the BJP swept AAP in the Delhi Assembly polls earlier this month.

An AAP spokesperson, however, dismissed the opposition parties' claims, naming the Ludhiana West bypoll candidate as announced



by AAP national general secretary Sandeep Pathak in a post on X.

A Ludhiana-based industrialist who also runs the Krishna Pran Breast Cancer Charitable Trust, the 61-year-old has been

member of the Rajya Sabha since 2022. Arora said he was grateful to the party leadership for fielding him.

"Humbled and grateful to the leadership AAP for reposing faith

in me to contest the Ludhiana West by-elections. As someone deeply connected to my hometown, I look forward to serving my people with dedication and sincerity," Arora said in a post on X.

**The passing of AAP's Gurpreet Bassi Gogi, who died of a gunshot injury after his licensed weapon accidentally discharged last month, led to the Ludhiana West seat falling vacant.**

Following the announcement, Congress MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira claimed that Kejriwal would replace Arora in the Upper House.

"If Rajya Sabha MP Sanjeev Arora is nominated as AAP candidate for the Ludhiana West bypoll, I am sure Arvind Kejriwal will take his Rajya Sabha membership!" Khaira said in a post on X.

Shiromani Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia also claimed that Kejriwal or former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia would replace Arora.

"AAP has nominated Rajya Sabha MP Sanjeev Arora as party candidate from Ludhiana West. Now, he will resign as MP and, in his

place, Arvind Kejriwal or Manish Sisodia will be made a Rajya Sabha member," he said.

"Once again, Punjab has been made to surrender before Delhi. Punjab is paying the price but Bhagwant Mann is unfazed... He is least bothered about Punjab and Punjabis," he added in a post on X.

AAP's Punjab spokesperson Neel Garg, however, dubbed the claims as rumours.

"The bypoll date has not been announced yet. They (opposition parties) have started spreading rumours. There is no truth in it. Who goes to the Rajya Sabha will be decided when the bypoll result comes. The best candidate will be sent to the Rajya Sabha," Garg told reporters.

AAP has seven members in the Rajya Sabha from Punjab — Pathak, Raghav Chadha, former cricketer Harbhajan Singh, Ashok Mittal, environmentalist Balbir Singh Sechewal and industrialist Vikramjit Singh.

Arunachal has potential to generate 50,000 mw of hydro power: Dhankhar

Itanagar:

Arunachal Pradesh has the potential to generate 50,000 mw of hydro-power, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar said on Wednesday, maintaining that the state holds the key to India's energy future.

Dhankhar, who is on a day-long visit to the state, attended the Nyokum Yullo festival at Boasimla in the Kamle district.

Addressing a function there, he underscored the importance of festivals in preserving the cultural heritage of the tribal communities.

Dhankhar hailed India as the fastest-growing country in the world, citing remarkable strides in economic growth, infrastructure, and social welfare.

Speaking on Arunachal Pradesh's vast hydro-power capabilities, he said the sector holds an investment potential of Rs 5 lakh crore.

Accompanied by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, Dhankhar inaugurated a multipurpose indoor hall in Boasimla.

## State song will depict Haryana's glorious history, cultural heritage: Assembly Speaker



Chandigarh:

The work of the Legislative Assembly Committee constituted for the selection of the Haryana State Song is almost complete. Vidhan Sabha Speaker Harvinder Kalyan attended the 10th meeting of the Haryana State Song Selection Committee and listened to the proposed state song with the committee members and officials.

After listening to the proposed song, Kalyan said the song would introduce the state as a whole. The lyrics and music of the song are quite impressive.

The committee will soon submit its report in this regard. The release of

the state song is likely to be announced in the upcoming Budget session.

Kalyan said the hard work of the members of the Legislative Assembly Committee, officials and artists is clearly visible. He said the emotion and language of the song are very impressive.

The subject matter of the song depicts Haryana's glorious history, cultural heritage, geographical structure, and the development journey of the state.

An attempt has been made in the state song to point out the basic characteristics of the state like festive culture and simplicity of the people of Haryana.

It also has a special description of the mutual brotherhood, education and business of the people of the state.

The song depicts the Haryanvi folk life, it also highlights the contribution of farmers, brave soldiers and sports persons who increase the pride of the state.

Officials including the committee's chairman Laxman Singh Yadav, members Geeta Bhukkal, Vinod Bhayana, Principal Secretary of Art and Cultural Affairs Department Dr Amit Agrawal, and Director General KM Pandurang were present in the meeting.

He said his government has given government jobs on merit boosting the morale of the youth. Congress leaders, who talk of giving employment to the youth, are the ones who create obstacles in their employment.

"During the Assembly elections, the Congress leaders went to the Election Commission

## 341 children in Punjab get new lease of life with free heart surgeries

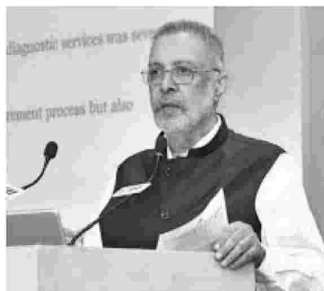
Chandigarh:

In an initiative aimed at safeguarding the health of its youngest citizens and ensuring a healthier future, the Punjab government has successfully provided free heart surgeries to as many as 341 children suffering from congenital heart disease during the financial year 2024-25 so far.

According to Punjab Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Balbir Singh, as per the information, congenital heart disease is a birth defect that affects the heart or blood vessels near it and often requires costly surgeries that are out of reach for many families.

Recognising this challenge, the state government has stepped in to cover the entire cost of treatment, offering these children a second chance at life.

The success of this initiative is part of the broader Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK), a national program aimed at early detection and management of



According to Punjab Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Balbir Singh, as per the information, congenital heart disease is a birth defect that affects the heart or blood vessels near it and often requires costly surgeries that are out of reach for many families.

health issues in children.

Dr Balbir Singh said during the fiscal year 2024-25 (up to December 2024), the government spent an amount of Rs 3.52 crore on these life-saving procedures, performed at prestigious empanelled hospitals across the state.

To ensure effective implementation of the RBSK program, he said the state Health Department has deployed mobile health teams across the state. "Each team comprises four members - two doctors (one male and one female), a nurse, and a pharmacist skilled in data management," he added.

The health minister said that these teams are equipped with all the required testing tools, medicines, and vehicles, and regularly visit government schools and anganwadis to screen children for health issues.

A unique feature of the program is the health card maintained for each child, which tracks their medical history, and development.

Dr Balbir Singh said that these teams are equipped with all the required testing tools, medicines, and vehicles, and regularly visit government schools and anganwadis to screen children for health issues.

"We are determined to make our state a model for healthcare excellence, and this achievement is a significant step toward that goal," he added.

## 18 promises of Sankalp Patra fulfilled in just 100 days, declares Haryana CM

Komal Ramola

Chandigarh:

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini claimed on Wednesday that his government has fulfilled 18 promises of its Sankalp Patra in the first 100 days.

He said the first decision taken after the formation of the government on October 8 was to start a free dialysis service for kidney patients in the state.

"Today, kidney patients are getting the benefit from the free dialysis in government hospitals and PGI, Rohtak," he added.

"The state government has fulfilled 18 promises of its sankalp patra in the first 100 days and in future, the government will leave no stone unturned in fulfilling all its



promises," he asserted while addressing a programme in Bawani Khera of the Bhiwani district.

He said his government has given government jobs on merit boosting the morale of the youth. Congress leaders, who talk of giving employment to the youth, are the ones who create obstacles in their employment.

"During the Assembly elections, the Congress leaders went to the Election Commission



there is no hope of a Congress government being formed in the future.

The chief minister said people living in houses built on panchayat land in the rural areas of the state, who were stuck in litigation for a long time, have been given relief by the government to get them ownership rights. Apart from this, more than 15 lakh women are being given gas cylinders for Rs 500.

## Srinagar Police arrest 4 highway robbers impersonating as police commandos

Srinagar:

Srinagar Police on Wednesday cracked down on a gang of highway robbers who were impersonating police commandos to loot trucks during nighttime.

The arrests came after a complaint from Chanchal Singh, a truck driver from Haryana, who reported being stopped and robbed at gunpoint in Maloora, Shalteng, on February 22.

Srinagar Police has apprehended a gang of robbers who were posing as Police Commandos to loot trucks during nighttime. The operation led to the recovery of dummy guns, a vehicle, black uniforms, and other incriminating materials used in the crime. "Srinagar Police said in a statement on social media platform X on

Wednesday.

"On February 22, 2025, Police Station Shalteng received a complaint from Chanchal Singh, son of Sher Singh, a resident of Haryana, stating that during the night hours, unidentified individuals stopped his vehicle at Maloora, Shalteng, and robbed him of cash and valuables at gunpoint. Based on this complaint, an FIR (No. 15 U/S 307, 126(2), 35(5)) was registered, and an investigation was launched," added the post.

The police swiftly registered an FIR and launched an investigation, which led to the arrest of four suspects from different areas of Srinagar. The accused, identified as Sahil Ahmad Sheikh, son of Mehraj-U-Din Sheikh, resident of Narakh Budgam; Aqib Ahmad Sheikh, son of Mehraj-U-Din Sheikh, resident of Narkarah Budgam; Arbaz Ahmad Wani, son of Hilal Ahmad Wani, resident of SD Colony Batmaloo, and Faisal Ahmad Shah, son of Azad Ahmad Shah, resident of Nowhatta, read the post.

specifically targeted trucks with out-of-state registration numbers, choosing isolated stretches of the highway to carry out their crimes.

"Acting swiftly, Srinagar Police formed multiple teams and conducted an extensive search operation. Within days, 04 accused persons were identified and arrested from different areas of the city. They have been identified as: Sahil Ahmad Sheikh, son of Mehraj-U-Din Sheikh, resident of Narakh Budgam; Aqib Ahmad Sheikh, son of Mehraj-U-Din Sheikh, resident of Narkarah Budgam; Arbaz Ahmad Wani, son of Hilal Ahmad Wani, resident of SD Colony Batmaloo, and Faisal Ahmad Shah, son of Azad Ahmad Shah, resident of Nowhatta," read the post.



Dr Anil Singh, Editor, STAR Views

# “Narendra Modi: Architect of New India – A Decade of Transformational Governance”

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decade-long tenure has been a watershed moment in India's political, economic, and diplomatic history. His leadership has ushered in an era of structural reforms, economic resurgence, and a dynamic foreign policy, positioning India as a formidable global power. Modi's governance has been defined by a commitment to transforming India into a self-reliant, technologically advanced, and economically robust nation while ensuring inclusive growth and strategic global influence.

My forthcoming book, *The Prime Minister: Discourses in Indian Polity*, set to be released next month, delves deep into Modi's leadership in comparison to his predecessors. It critically examines his domestic policies, economic strategies, and foreign policy initiatives that have shaped India's trajectory over the past decade. This article provides a comprehensive analysis of his governance model, highlighting key achievements and the road ahead.

**Domestic Policy: A Vision for a New India**

Modi's domestic policy has been anchored in governance reforms, infrastructure expansion, digital transformation, and social welfare. His administration has sought to create a self-sufficient India (Atmanirbhar Bharat) by empowering marginalized communities, enhancing economic participation, and ensuring last-mile connectivity for welfare programs.

**Revolutionizing Governance and Institutional Framework**

One of Modi's most significant contributions has been improving governance efficiency and transparency. His administration has dismantled bureaucratic red tape, introduced technology-driven reforms, and placed a strong emphasis on accountability.

**Digital India Initiative** – Aimed at transforming governance through e-governance, digital literacy, and online services, making government processes more transparent and accessible.

**Abolition of Redundant Laws** – Over 1,500 obsolete laws have been repealed, simplifying compliance and improving the ease of doing business.

**Crackdown on Black Money** – The demonetization of ₹500 and ₹1,000 notes in 2016, though controversial, was a bold move aimed at curbing black money, formalizing the economy, and promoting digital payments.

**Social Welfare and Inclusive Development:**

Modi's governance model has been deeply rooted in pro-poor policies, ensuring direct benefits reach the underprivileged without bureaucratic hurdles.

**Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)** – Over 50 crore bank accounts were opened, ensuring financial inclusion for millions previously excluded from the banking system.

**Ayushman Bharat** – The world's largest health insurance scheme, benefiting over 50 crore Indians by providing free healthcare access to low-income families.

**Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** – A massive cleanliness campaign that led to the construction of over 10 crore toilets, making India Open Defecation Free (ODF) and significantly improving public health.

**Ujjwala Yojana** – Over 9 crore free LPG connections were provided to women in rural households, reducing dependence on traditional cooking fuels and improving indoor air quality.

**Infrastructure and Urban Transformation:**

India's infrastructure has witnessed unprecedented growth under Modi's leadership, with a focus on connectivity, urban modernization, and sustainable development.

**Bharatmala and Sagarmala Projects** – Strengthened road and port connectivity, boosting trade and regional development.

**Railway Modernization** – Introduction of Vande Bharat Express, electrification of railway tracks, and station modernization have enhanced travel efficiency.

**Smart Cities Mission** – Over 100 cities are being developed with world-class urban infrastructure, incorporating sustainability and technological advancements.

**Jal Jeevan Mission** – Aiming to provide piped water supply to every rural household, significantly improving water security.

**Economic Policy: A Decade of Stability and Expansion,** India's economic resurgence under Modi has been driven by structural reforms, an emphasis on domestic manufacturing, and financial inclusion. His administration's focus has been on creating a business-friendly environment while ensuring equitable growth.

**Transformative Economic Reforms:**

**Goods and Services Tax (GST)** – Introduced as a landmark reform, replacing a complex web of taxes on the construction of over 10 crore toilets, making India Open Defecation Free (ODF) and significantly improving public health.

**Agri-Infrastructure Fund** – A ₹1 lakh crore fund allocated for modernizing farm-related infrastructure.

**Foreign Policy: Strengthening India's Global Footprint:**

**Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)** – Streamlined insolvency resolution, strengthening investor confidence and improving India's ease of doing business rankings.

**Make in India** – Designed to boost domestic manufacturing, attracting global investments in sectors such as electronics, automobiles, and defense.

**Start-up India & Stand-up India** – Encouraging entrepreneurship, fostering a robust start-up ecosystem, and providing financial support for MSMEs.

**Sustaining Economic Growth and Employment:**

Despite global uncertainties, India has maintained strong economic growth under Modi's leadership.

**India becoming the 5th largest economy in the world, surpassing the UK in 2022.**

**Record FDI inflows, making India a preferred investment hub.**

**Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes** – Encouraging domestic production in high-value sectors such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, and textiles, creating millions of jobs.

efficiency.

**Foreign Policy: Strengthening India's Global Footprint:**

**Quadrilateral Alliance (India, US, Japan, Australia)** – Strengthening Indo-Pacific security to counterbalance China's influence.

**Leadership in BRICS & G20** – Playing a crucial role in shaping global economic policies.

**Defence Diplomacy** – Strengthened military ties with France, Israel, and the US, enhancing India's defense procurement and indigenous capabilities.

**Diplomatic Achievements and Global Influence:**

**UN Security Council Aspirations** – Persistent push for India's permanent membership in the UNSC.

**Global Vaccine Diplomacy** – Under the Vaccine Maitri initiative, India supplied COVID-19 vaccines to over 90 countries, showcasing its humanitarian leadership.

**Gulf Engagement** – Strengthening ties with Gulf nations to secure energy supplies and ensure the welfare of Indian expatriates.

**Managing India-China & India-Pakistan Relations**

**Firm Stance Against China** – The strong response to the Galwan clash reinforced India's military resolve.

**Revitalizing the Rural Economy and Agriculture:**

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**Foreign Policy: Strengthening India's Global Footprint:**

**Narendra Modi's foreign policy** has been a blend of strategic autonomy, economic diplomacy, and proactive engagement with global powers. His administration has focused on strengthening India's geopolitical standing through alliances, trade partnerships, and defense collaborations.

**India's Strategic Position in Global Affairs**

**Quadrilateral Alliance (India, US, Japan, Australia)** – Strengthening Indo-Pacific security to counterbalance China's influence.

**Leadership in BRICS & G20** – Playing a crucial role in shaping global economic policies.

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## 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 correct solution.

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

## Solution, Sudoku

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

## THE WISDOM TREE BY SUVEEN KUMAR

### STORY OF HAPPINESS

This moment. The moment that you have right now. The moment that is passing right now is the only moment you own. The rest of the moments are far away in the future that you have no access to. The moment you can spend is 'this' and the only thing you can buy it 'now'. If you not sure how to live this moment, let this moment live in you. If you are not sure how to feel at this moment feel you deep. If happiness can't convince you to follow it, let also sadness not trick you to shallow it. I know you have heard enough about happiness, you have learned enough about happiness, you have lived enough around happiness, you have slipped enough surround happiness. I accept it did not stand with you when you need it the most, it did not bond with you when you wanted it the most, it did not play with you when you thought about it, it did down with you when you

when you were flooded in sorrow. Yet, keeps coming to you, yet it keeps begging to you, yet it keeps fighting with you, to come with it, to sit understand with it that it is bonded by its nature, it comes and goes it can't stay, it walks so wide it can be late. It is happiness but it has its own sorrow, it makes you smile but it also cries. It cries like a baby because everyone wants it, a few of them have it but no one can keep it. It is happiness it has its own story, its own fate, its own language its own state. Some laugh with it some laugh at it, some swing with it some check at it.



One who is child lives in it, one who is young sings in it and one who is old bleeds in it. Some who are high stay in it, some who are wise stay away from it, some who are wrong dies for it and some who are right sighs for it.

**Moral : Happiness makes your story and you make it.**

## TOP STORY

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By Priyanka Saurabh

# An important change in education is the increasing number of women teachers

According to the UDISE+ 2023-24 report, women now comprise 53.34 percent of Indian school teachers, reflecting their growing role in education. In higher education, only 43% of faculty are women, with their representation in leadership roles even lower. Gender equity in academia is still hindered by ingrained biases, professional barriers, and institutional constraints. Increasing the percentage of women in India's teaching workforce represents a paradigm shift in the quality of education, inclusiveness, and social equality. Gender biases in pedagogy are challenged, inclusive education is promoted, and female teachers increase the number of female students. To ensure wider student participation, female teachers encourage greater classroom participation and gender-sensitive teaching.

According to a 2022 UNESCO report, inclusive participation is 20% higher in classrooms run

by women. By addressing social barriers and safety concerns, the presence of female teachers enhances educational opportunities for girls. The increase in the number of female teachers led to a significant increase in female enrollment in Bihar's Kanya Uthyan Yojana. By normalizing conversations about gender roles, child marriage, and menstrual hygiene, female teachers promote equality. Under the Udaan scheme, adolescent girls are encouraged to seek guidance from female teachers. Female teachers are more likely to provide emotional support, improving student well-being.

Significant gender disparities in higher education faculty positions are due to the low representation of female faculty members. According to the All India Survey on Higher Education, despite a higher number of men holding teaching positions, women constitute only 43% of higher education faculty. Women faculty representation in IITs and NITs is still less than 20%, reflecting gender disparities in due universities. Women's role in academic leadership is limited to the associate profes-

sor and professor level, where their percentage drops sharply. Less than 25% of full professors in public universities are women, which limits their ability to influence decisions. Less than 10% of vice-chancellors in India's top 50 universities are women. Due to socio-cultural barriers, women's participation is higher in southern states such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu, while it is lower in rural and north Indian universities. More than half of the professors in Kerala's public universities are women, while the percentage is less than 30% in Bihar and Rajasthan. Women are less likely to take up leadership roles due to unconscious biases in appointments and promotions. Academic women often lack the mentorship and strong professional networks necessary for research opportunities and career advancement. Many women take career breaks due to the dual responsibility of household chores, which impacts their advancement and research prospects.

Ensuring equal career advancement opportunities, establishing gender quotas, ensur-

ing fairness of selection committees, and implementing clear promotion standards by mandating 40 percent female representation on academic appointment committees. Germany's DFG program encourages more women to enroll in higher education. Increasing women in academia's access to mentorship and networking opportunities: Establishing formal mentorship programs to connect female faculty members with senior academics, advising on funding opportunities, research, and leadership development. As evidence of the value of focused mentorship and support networks, the US "Women in Science and Engineering" program has been instrumental in increasing the number of women in leadership roles. Promoting work-life balance, providing on-campus child care services, increasing paid maternity leave, and implementing flexible tenure paths helps female faculty members continue their research careers by providing a one-year tenure extension after maternity. Providing special funding to improve the administrative and academic

visibility of women and running leadership development courses for them, India's "Women Scientists Scheme" helps women researchers return to academia after a career break by providing funding. Women make up only 43% of higher education faculty, limiting their influence outside the classroom. The percentage of women faculty in IITs and IIMs is less than 20%.

UGC's Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI) program encourages women faculty to take up leadership positions. Establish equal pay guidelines, enforce labor laws more stringently, and regularize contract teachers. Strong enforcement of the Equal Remuneration Act 1976 is essential in private education. Improve campus safety protocols, transport options, and grievance procedures. The establishment of women's safety measures in educational institutions has been funded by the Nirbhaya Fund (2013). A gender-balanced teaching staff will reduce feminization in early education and normalize caregiving responsibilities. In ear-

ly childhood education, Finland and Sweden aggressively encourage the recruitment of men. Establish anonymous grievance redressal procedures, ensure that internal complaints committees (ICCs) are functional, and implement stringent anti-harassment policies in all universities. ICCs are mandatory in universities as per the UGC's 2023 directive; however, there are still gaps in implementation, especially in smaller and rural institutions. Strong mentoring programs, inclusive hiring practices, institutional change, and multi-pronged strategies are needed to reduce the gender gap in academia. Promoting family-friendly workplaces, guaranteeing transparent promotions, and strengthening anti-discrimination laws can help empower women in higher education. A paradigm shift toward gender-sensitive, merit-based policies will improve representation and strengthen India's economy.

(Priyanka Saurabh, Research Scholar, UNESCO Science, Policy, freelance journalist, and columnist)

# SC stays order asking Centre to procure drugs for patient with rare disorder

New Delhi  
The Supreme Court has stayed in the interim a Kerala High Court order directing the Centre to provide an additional Rs 18 lakh worth of medicines to a patient suffering from spinal muscular atrophy, beyond its Rs 50 lakh cap.



A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjay Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar on February 24 issued notice to the respondents on Centre's plea.

Issue notice returnable in the week commencing April 17, 2025, till the next date of hearing, there will be a stay of the order of the impugned judgment." Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) is a rare genetic disorder characterised by progressive muscle weakness and wasting, affecting the nerve cells responsible for controlling voluntary muscle movement.

## Iran Navy's warships on goodwill and training visit to Mumbai

Mumbai  
Two Iranian warships are currently on a goodwill and training visit to Mumbai, in a step towards enhanced cooperation in the maritime domain and strengthening mutual friendship, the Indian Navy said on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, the Mission Commander and the Commanding Officers of the two ships, IRIS Boushehr and IRIS Lavan, called on Rear Admiral Vidyadhar Harker, Chief Staff Officer (Operations) at Headquarters Western Naval Command.

## Australia unveils ambitious roadmap to boost trade investment ties with India

New Delhi  
Australia on Wednesday unveiled an ambitious roadmap to deepen and diversify its trade and investment ties with India.



The roadmap identified four "superhighways of growth" — clean energy, education and skills, agribusiness, and tourism. Broadly, it sets out a pathway to focus on ongoing efforts, including to boost two-way investment, and work with Indian-Australian communities and businesses.

of significant consultation with businesses and the community, offers a blueprint for Australian businesses to seize this extraordinary opportunity," he added. The Australian government also announced plans to invest an "extra USD 4 million" for its Maitri ('friendship') Grants programme to enhance the people-to-people, business-to-business and cultural links between the two nations.

# Wings of Legacy: Sergey Bogdan and the Su-57E

Sayan Chatterjee  
New Delhi



Aero India, Asia's foremost biennial air show, stands as an illustrious stage where global air power takes centre stage, unveiling groundbreaking technology, state-of-the-art engineering, and the relentless quest for aerial supremacy. Spanning five electrifying days, the event highlights India's formidable air defence capabilities and serves as a strategic nexus for aviation giants, defence conglomerates, and government entities to cultivate alliances and secure pivotal contracts — overcoming obstacles even before the first jet takes flight. The 15th edition, held at Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru, Karnataka, culminated on February 14th, leaving an indelible mark on the future of military aviation.

Alongside these aerial juggernauts, a formidable array of next-generation platforms from across the globe stood as testaments to human ingenuity and the enduring strategic significance of air power. Aero India 2025 was more than an exhibition — it was a living, breathing crucible of innovation where alliances were forged, technologies stress-tested, and the sky itself felt like an invitation to the future. Welcome to the cutting edge of military aviation. Welcome

yielding commitment to progress. Born on April 21, 1966, in Novosibirsk, Bogdan graduated from the Yeysk Higher Military Aviation School in 1988. His service included deployments across the Leningrad Military District and Mongolia, but by 1993, he had found his true calling at the Gromov Flight Research Institute. By 2000, he had ascended to become Sukhoi's chief test pilot — a role in which he would shape the evolution of Russian fighter jets for decades to come. Bogdan's legacy is one of relentless dedication and unparalleled skill. He has piloted and tested over 50 combat aircraft, including the MiG-29, Su-30, and Su-35, and cemented his place in history as the first pilot to fly the T-50 (later christened the Su-57) on January 29, 2010. His fearless execution of complex, high-risk test flights earned him Russia's highest honour in 2011, immortalizing his name in aviation history.

up to three bottles, making long-term treatment financially unfeasible. The Centre argued while the high court had clarified its ruling was not a binding precedent, granting individual exceptions could set one by default. "There are more than 3,000 patients across India with varying facts and circumstances and if each case were considered unique, it could create an unsustainable financial burden," it added. The Centre's counsel said the government policy set a firm cap at Rs 50 lakh for all patients, regardless of available resources.

Senior advocate Anand Grover, appearing for Seba, said the government could have taken steps to reduce the cost of SMA treatment by either negotiating with the drug manufacturer or invoking provisions under the Patents Act, 1970. Grover said countries like China and Pakistan had successfully negotiated with the manufacturer to lower the price of SMA treatment and questioned why India had not taken similar steps. The bench, however, suggested that the Indian government might be refraining from such measures due to "international ramifications". "Why would the Indian government not be interested? They will be very much interested. It's easy to be critical on that. They would have tried their level best to get the prices down," the bench said. The bench asked the Centre to explore the possibility of approving expenditures beyond Rs 50 lakh on a case-by-case basis.

## Ayush Ministry confers 'National Dhanwantari Ayurveda Award'



New Delhi  
The Ministry of Ayush conferred the prestigious National Dhanwantari Ayurveda Awards for the current year on three distinguished practitioners for their exceptional contributions to the field of traditional Indian medicine.

Ayush Secretary Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha remarked, "Through decades of research and innovation, these practitioners have modernized Ayurveda practices while maintaining their authentic essence. Their work exemplifies how traditional knowledge can be adapted to address contemporary health challenges."

This year's recipients of the coveted award are Vaidya Tara Chand Sharma, renowned Nadi Vaidya and author; Vaidya Maya Ram Uniyal, a distinguished scholar of Dravyaguna Vigyana with six decades of service; and Vaidya Sameer Govind Jamadagni, founder of the Vishwa Vidyakram national conference. Each recipient receives a citation, a trophy featuring a statue of Lord Dhanwantari, and a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh.

Equally inspired is the journey of Vaidya Maya Ram Uniyal from Uttar Pradesh, a visionary in Dravyaguna Vigyana. With over six decades of unwavering dedication, his prolific writings and stellar administration have inspired many, the statement added. His recognition with the Vanoushadhi Vanaapati and Lifetime Achievement Awards further cements his legacy in raising Ayurveda's stature worldwide. His work exemplifies how tradition, when blended with modern insight, can become a global force for wellness, the statement said.

## India moving from women's development to women-led development, says Prez

Bhopal



President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday noted that as the country is now moving from women's development to women-led development, everyone in society must empower and strengthen our daughters and sisters. She was addressing a mass wedding function of 251 girls, organised by Hindu seer Pandit Dharendra Shastri at Bageshwar Dham in Garha village of Chhatrapur district in Madhya Pradesh.

The President lauded Indian saints, saying they have always played a major role in eradicating social evils and ensuring a respectable place for women in society. She noted that India has now shifted gears to women-led development. Recalling the contribution of noted saints, she said, "In Indian tradition, saints have been guiding the masses with their actions and words for centuries. They have made people aware of the superstitions prevalent in society and taught them to shun untouchability and caste-based discrimination."

"Saints have shown the path to society, be it Guru Nanak, Ravidas, Tukaram, or Mirabai. They have guided people on the right path and inspired them to move forward," the President stated. In his address, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav said that the newly-wed couples will be provided financial assistance of Rs 51,000 each as part of the state government schemes. Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai Patel and Bageshwar Peeth's seer Dharendra Shastri also attended the function.

Mahakumbh devotees spread message of national unity: CM Yogi

Gorakhpur

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath extended heartfelt greetings and best wishes to the people of the state and devotees from across the country and the world on the auspicious occasion of Mahashivratri.

He specifically acknowledged the devotees gathered at the Prayagraj Mahakumbh, Baba Vishwanath Dham in Kashi, Ayodhya, and various temples and Shivalayas across the state.

The Chief Minister emphasised the significance of the ongoing Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, stating that approximately 66 crore devotees have participated in the holy event, sending a powerful message of national unity and dedication to the spirit of nationalism.

During his visit to major Shiva temples in Gorakhpur for darshan, puja, and Jalabhishek on Wednesday, CM Yogi spoke to the media at Mukteshwar Nath Temple. He highlighted the spiritual importance of Mahashivratri, calling it a special day dedicated to the worship of Devahidewi Mahadev, the goddess of welfare.

He remarked that all arrangements function smoothly by Lord Shiva's divine grace and that the unwavering faith of devotees symbolises India's unity.

"The faith that devotees are expressing today in Prayagraj Maha Kumbh, Baba Vishwanath Dham in Kashi, and other major Shiva temples across the state is a testament to India's unity. I bow to this faith," CM Yogi stated.

Congress govt in Himachal a symbol of corruption and scams: BJP

Shimla

Leader of Opposition and former Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has alleged that the Congress government in Himachal Pradesh has become a symbol of corruption and scams.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, Thakur alleged that rampant corruption prevails in the state under the leadership of Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu. "Today, it has come to light that an NGO has been favoured with Rs 97 lakh despite being under scrutiny for irregularities," he charged, questioning why the government is favouring the NGO and what is its motive behind it.

"The decision to favour the NGO is questionable, Thakur said, alleging, "While the government, on the one hand, imposes tax on people citing economic difficulties, on the other, it wastes central government funds on its favorites."

Thakur demanded that the government investigate this matter and take action against those responsible.

"The government should stop protecting corruption and scams. This is not the first instance of central funds being misused. Earlier, a scam of Rs 2.5 crore was uncovered in the IGM's trauma centre, and Rs 8.75 crore was misused for constructing a private company's security wall," he alleged.

Thakur advised the state government to stop wasting central funds and focus on development work.

## Tragedy-hit Mahakumbh concludes with the final holy dip on Mahashivratri

■ The festival began with the Paush Purnima Snan on 13 January and concluded with the Mahashivratri Snan on 26 February.

MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

The Maha Kumbh, billed to be the world's largest gathering, ends on Wednesday as it began 45 days ago - with lakhs of devotees surging towards the waters of the Sangam, the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati, for a dip on the auspicious day of Shivratri.

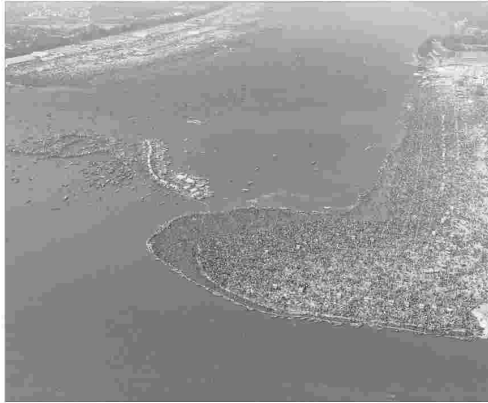
The mega religious carnival wound to a close in a montage of images of the stampede that killed at least 30 people, the devout across every spectrum taking a dip in the belief it would cleanse their sins, huge crowds jostling not just at the Sangam but also stations and bus stands in north India and many a political slugfest over contested numbers and how clean the waters were.

According to the Uttar Pradesh government, 1.44 crore people took a holy dip till 6 pm on Wednesday. It said 66.21 crore people have visited Prayagraj since January 13, a number that exceeds the populations of all countries except China and India.

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, top ministers and film stars were among those who went to the Kumbh.

"From January 13, when the Maha Kumbh began, Paush Purnima till today on the occasion of Mahashivratri... in 45 days, more than 66 crore 21 lakh devotees have taken a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam. This is unprecedented in world history and truly unforgettable," Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said in a post in Hindi on X.

It was a gathering of the faithful and believers



but also of those driven by interest in the fabled Kumbh, where religion meets culture, where spirituality and tradition fuse, and where AI and modern-day technology this time blended with ancient stories of gods and miracles. The stars were aligned too with seers claiming that celestial permutations and combinations during the event took place after 144 years.

"The religious fair witnessed unprecedented security measures, including anti-drone systems and AI-enabled cameras, to man the Mahakumbh Nagar's UP's makeshift 76th district set up for the event. It was spread across 40 hectares which remained abuzz with activity 24x7 over the past six weeks.

As tourists and pilgrims from distant corners began returning home and vendors, from across the country, readied to shut shop, many were seen trying to take

a dip before the Kumbh finally ended. The ritual bath is at the centre of the pilgrimage. Devout Hindus believe the coveted sacred dip at the Sangam leads to 'moksha' or salvation, especially during the once-in-12-year planetary alignments.

"To me, the Maha Kumbh would conclude when the last devotee has taken a dip. Put differently, you can say that the mela would end with the start of the new day at 'Brahm Muhurt' or early morning on Thursday," Chidanand Saraswati, the president of Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh, who is camping at Prayagraj, said.

While pilgrims took a holy dip on the last day of the mega religious event, Sukhoi fighter jets, AN-32 transport aircraft, and Chetak helicopters of the Indian Air Force performed thrilling aerial manoeuvres in the sky above them, leaving the spectators

spellbound.

As part of the closing ceremony of the Mahakumbh, the IAF's skilled pilots showcased incredible aerial acrobatics as the roar of the aircraft drew every eye skyward.

According to an IAF official, the event was specially organised to salute the millions of devotees who had gathered for the Maha Kumbh.

Held every 12 years, the Maha Kumbh showcased India's age-old spiritual traditions, from the grand processions of akharas (monastic orders) and the ash-smear Naga sadhus to modern tech-savvy basics, all of whom camped by the Sangam banks, drawing devotees from across the globe.

The akhara seers participated in three of the total six 'snans', known as Amrit snans - Makar Sankranti (January 14) Matri Amavasya (January 29) and Basant Panchami (February 3). Though not an Amrit Snan, Maha Shivratri

dip was among the last of the total six 'snans', the other two being Paush Purnima (January 13) and Maaghi Purnima (February 11-12).

The second Amrit snan on January 29 is when chaos - and tragedy - broke out. The stampede near Sangam banks led to 30 deaths allegedly due to over-crowding.

The tragedy triggered a political slugfest with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee slamming the Adityanath-led government to say it was a 'Mrityu Kumbh' and the BJP hitting back.

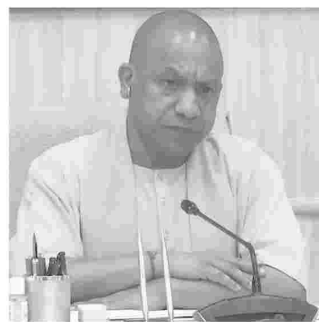
The Samajwadi Party and the Congress accused the Adityanath-led government of concealing the stampede toll.

But the devotees driven by faith, remained undeterred and kept growing in numbers even as a Central Pollution Control Board report on Ganga water quality triggered another controversy.

As millions took a dip in the confluence of rivers, the water quality also came under question amid claims of high levels of faecal bacteria and total coliform. Chief Minister Adityanath rejected the claims and said in the state assembly that Ganga water at the Sangam was fit for both "Snan and aachman" (bathing and ritual drinking).

The opposition, including the SP, also questioned the pilgrim football cited by the government but the government cited the source of the numbers - over 3,000 cameras, including 1,800 AI-enabled ones, underwater drones and 60,000 personnel. Agency

CM Yogi addresses problems of 200 people at Janata Darshan



Gorakhpur

On Mahashivratri, the final bathing festival of the world's largest religious gathering, Prayagraj Mahakumbh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath closely monitored arrangements online from early morning. While observing religious rituals from the Control Room set up at Gorakhnath Temple, he remained committed to public service, addressing concerns during Janata Darshan on Wednesday morning.

During the interaction, the Chief Minister directed officials to resolve public grievances swiftly, ensuring transparency and efficiency. He issued a stern warning against miscreants who harass, threaten, or illegally encroach upon public or private property, emphasizing that strict legal action must be taken without any leniency. He stressed that the government's priority is ensuring justice and relief for every citizen.

CM Yogi reached out to people seated outside Mahant Digvijaynath Smriti Bhawan at the Gorakhnath Temple complex, listening attentively to their grievances. He assured nearly 200 individuals that no injustice would

be tolerated and directed officials to expedite case resolutions. Special emphasis was laid on cracking down on illegal land grabbers and those exploiting the weak.

Several individuals sought financial assistance for medical treatment. CM Yogi assured them of full government support, instructing officials to expedite the necessary estimates and process their applications without delay.

He also directed authorities to handle revenue and police-related matters with utmost transparency and impartiality, ensuring that every victim receives fair treatment. He emphasized the need for sensitivity in dealing with public grievances and ensuring justice.

During his visit to Gorakhpur, the Chief Minister also paid respects at the Samadhi Sthal of his Guru, Brahmachari Mahant Avedyanath, and took a tour of the temple premises.

Amid his busy schedule, CM Yogi interacted warmly with children visiting the Gorakhnath Temple. He inquired about their studies and, as a token of his blessings, gifted them chocolates, while wishing them a bright future.

UP govt showers devotees with flowers on Maha Shivratri Snan at Sangam

Mahakumbh Nagar

On the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivratri, the final snan of Mahakumbh 2025, the Yogi government ensured an unforgettable experience for devotees by showering them with flowers from a helicopter. Continuing its tradition from previous bathing festivals, the government arranged for 20 quintals of rose petals to be showered upon devotees at the Sangam Ghat.

The floral shower began at 8 AM, just as thousands of devotees were taking a dip at the sacred confluence. Overwhelmed by the sight of rose petals raining from the sky, devotees chanted 'Jai Shri Ram', 'Har Har Mahadev', 'Ganga Maaya Ki Jai', and 'Tirthraj Prayag Ki Jai' in reverence. Many expressed their gratitude towards the Yogi government, appreciating



the grand gesture that honored their faith.

With the Maha Shivratri Snan marking the last major bathing event of Mahakumbh 2025, a massive influx of devotees began arriving at the Sangam shores from Tuesday night. Krishna Mohan Choudhary, Deputy Director of the Horticulture Department, Prayagraj Division, confirmed that preparations for the floral shower were made in advance under the instructions of CM Yogi Adityanath to accommodate the overwhelming number of pilgrims.

CM Yogi watches live arrangements, issues necessary directives to officials

Mahakumbh Nagar/ Gorakhpur

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath remained highly active during the early hours of the auspicious occasion of Mahashivratri, the final bathing day of the ongoing Mahakumbh 2025. Like every previous Amrit Snan and bathing festival, CM Yogi began his day early at 4 am to oversee the arrangements.

Due to his ongoing visit to Gorakhpur, a control room was set up at

the Gorakhnath Temple, where he closely monitored the event, watching live feeds of devotees bathing at the Sangam on TV. From the control room, he gave real-time instructions to senior officials.

Under the guidance of CM Yogi, top officials were on high alert and promptly took charge of the situation. Earlier, on the occasions of Basant Panchami and Magh Purnima Amrit Snan, the Chief Minister had

N.Shivkumar Prayagraj

The Maha Kumbh Mela, one of the world's largest religious gatherings, served as the latest experiential learning ground for the pioneering MBA Disaster Management students of the Institute of Land and Disaster Management (ILDM), Kerala. Crowds are on the rise globally because of urbanization, mass gatherings, and tourism, which makes crowd-related disasters more likely. Crowd management is crucial to avoid stampedes, manage panic, and ensure order during emergencies. India, in particular, witnesses a high number of pilgrimage gatherings, which come with associated hazards.

A total of 19 members, including 17 students, accompanied by a Deputy Collector and an Assistant Professor, embarked on this field

study from February 16 to 19, delving deep into crowd management, communication dissemination, and emergency response mechanisms deployed during mass gatherings.

This course is the first-ever MBA Disaster Management program in India, initiated by ILDM. This AICTE-approved and University of Kerala-affiliated program has set a benchmark in disaster management education. Under the leadership of Executive Director A. Geetha IAS and the guidance of Kerala's Revenue Minister K. Rajan, the program continues to advance the field by integrating academic excellence with practical field exposure.

The extensive study focused on understanding the intricacies of crowd dynamics, identifying hazard, vulnerability, and risk factors in dense-

ly populated areas, and evaluating emergency preparedness measures. In addition to studying the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, the team also visited Varanasi to examine its cultural and ritual practices, identifying the inherent risks posed by high footfall in heritage-rich urban settings.

At the Maha Kumbh Mela, the team observed multiple disaster management aspects, including crowd movement patterns, medical preparedness, fire safety measures, and sanitation management. They interacted with key officials involved in crowd control, safety enforcement, and emergency response. A major highlight was their visit to the police command control room, where they gained insights into real-time monitoring, rapid response systems, and coordination

strategies among law enforcement agencies.

The team also explored the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) exhibition at the Kumbh Mela, which showcased advanced technologies, emergency equipment, and best practices in disaster mitigation, broadening their understanding of national-level preparedness strategies.

Following their study at the Maha Kumbh Mela, the students continued their fieldwork in Varanasi, assessing how a densely populated heritage city manages disaster risks. Their focus was on the intersection of cultural resilience and disaster risk reduction, evaluating how urban planning, crowd control measures, and emergency response mechanisms function in such a historically significant area.

Mahakumbh 2025 on Wednesday, CM Yogi closely assessed the security measures at all ghats and traffic management, ensuring that the millions of devotees attending the Mahakumbh could bathe at the Triveni Sangam without any issues.

He also ensured that all essential services and arrangements were in place, with the administration remaining alert throughout the day to manage the large crowds and maintain safety.



also held meetings with officials at the war room from early morning, ensuring smooth operations through constant

monitoring. On this significant day of Mahashivratri Amrit Snan, which also marks the closure of

Ayodhya witnesses surge of pilgrims on Mahashivratri



On the occasion of Mahashivratri, a huge crowd thronged the Ram temple in Uttar Pradesh district, putting the authorities on high alert.

A large number of devotees gathered to worship Lord Ram at Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Temple on the Mahaparva Shivratri of Lord Bholeshankar. The Shiva temple at Kuberla Tila was also decorated attractively where people paid obeisance.

All preparations in the pilgrimage area had already been made based on prior assessment with the administration, so there was no problem in crowd management.

Ram temple Trustee Dr Anil Mishra, senior officials of Vishwa Hindu Parishad, and Mahant Nritya Gopal Das, the president of the Ram Mandir trust, worked round the clock in making arrangements for darshan.

The locals and people staying nearby also gathered at the Saryu River and Nageshwar Nath Temple for bathing. A large number of devotees also offered prayers at all the major temples, including Hanuman Garhi, Kanak Bhawan, and Dasaratha Mahal.

Trump plans \$5 million 'gold card' visa for US citizenship

Washington: President Donald Trump said that he plans to offer a "gold card" visa with a path to citizenship for USD5 million, replacing a 35-year-old visa for investors. "They'll be wealthy and they'll be successful, and they'll be spending a lot of money and paying a lot of taxes and employing a lot of people, and we think it's going to be extremely successful," Trump said in the Oval Office. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said the "Trump Gold Card" would replace EB-5 visas in two weeks. EB-5s were created by Congress in 1990 to generate foreign investment and are available to people who spend about USD1 million on a company that employs at least 10 people. Lutnick said the gold card — actually a green card, or permanent legal residency — would raise the price of admission for investors and do away with fraud and "noise" that he said characterize the EB-5 program. Like other green cards, it would include a path to citizenship. About 8,000 people obtained investor visas in the 15-month period ending Sept. 30, 2022, according to the Homeland Security Department's most recent Yearbook of Immigration Statistics. The Congressional Research Service reported in 2021 that EB-5 visas pose risks of fraud, including verification that funds were obtained legally.

# 46 killed, 10 injured in Sudan military plane crash in residential area

PORT SUDAN: Forty-six people were killed when a Sudanese military transport plane crashed into a residential neighbourhood on the outskirts of Khartoum, the regional government said Wednesday. The Antonov aircraft went down on Tuesday night near Wadi Seidna air base, one of the army's largest military hubs in Omdurman, northwest of the capital. The army, which has been at war with the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since April 2023, said the plane crashed during takeoff, killing and injuring both military personnel and civilians. "After a final tally, the number of martyrs reached 46, with 10 injured," the Khartoum regional government's media office said in a statement. The army-aligned health ministry had previously reported at



least 19 dead. Witnesses described hearing a loud explosion and seeing several homes damaged in the area. The crash also caused power outages in nearby neighbourhoods. The ministry said emergency teams rushed injured civilians, including children, to a nearby hospital. A military source cited a technical malfunction as the cause of the crash, speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to comment to the media. Army advances The crash came a day after the RSF claimed responsibility for shooting down a Russian-made Ilyushin aircraft over Nyala, the capital of South Darfur. The paramilitary group said the plane was destroyed with its crew onboard. The recent escalation follows significant advances by the army in central Sudan and the capital Khartoum in its multi-front offensive

**The Antonov aircraft went down on Tuesday night near Wadi Seidna air base, one of the army's largest military hubs in Omdurman, northwest of the capital.** against the RSF. Late on Saturday, RSF signed a charter with allied political and armed groups in Nairobi, Kenya, paving the way for the formation of a parallel government in rebel-held areas. Since April 2023, army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy and RSF commander Mohamed Hamadan Daglo, once allies, have been locked in a deadly power struggle. The war, which has claimed tens of thousands of lives, erupted after a rift emerged between Burhan and Daglo over the future structure of the government.

# Bosnia court sentences separatist Bosnian Serb President to 1 year in prison

Sarajevo: A court in Bosnia on Wednesday sentenced pro-Russian Bosnian Serb President Milorad Dodik to one year in prison and banned him from engaging in politics for six years over his separatist actions. The landmark ruling by the court in Sarajevo came after a yearlong trial against Dodik on charges that he disobeyed the top international envoy overseeing peace in the Balkan country. The leader and his lawyers were not in the court during the sentencing. Dodik has said that he would disobey any conviction and threatened "radical measures" in response, including eventual secession of the RS-run entity in Bosnia called Republika Srpska from the rest of the country. Dodik's separatist threat stoked fears in Bosnia, where a 1992-95 war left 1,00,000 people killed and displaced millions. The US-sponsored Dayton Accords ended the war nearly three decades ago and created two regions, Republika Srpska and the Bosniak-Croat Federation. The two regions were given wide autonomy, but kept some joint institutions, including the army, top judiciary and tax administration. Bosnia also has a rotating three-member presidency made up of Bosniak, Serb and Croat members. Dodik was in the Bosnian Serb administrative capital Banja Luka, where thousands gathered Wednesday in his support. "They say I am guilty, but now here they say I am not guilty," Dodik told the crowd shortly after the verdict was announced. "There is no reason to worry. I have learned to deal with tougher situations. It is important that you are here." In neighbouring Serbia, pro-government media reported that populist President Aleksandar Vucic called an urgent session of the national security council there.

# Donald Trump's AI-Generated 'Trump Gaza' video sparks global outrage

Washington: Former US President Donald Trump has sparked widespread controversy with an AI-generated video posted on his official Instagram account, showcasing a fictional vision of the war-ravaged Gaza Strip transformed into a luxury metropolis called "Trump Gaza." The video, laden with opulence, bizarre imagery, and self-aggrandizing symbolism, has been widely criticized as insensitive, offensive, and tone-deaf, given the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the region. Noted journalist



Faye D'Souza, taking to Facebook, strongly condemned Trump's post, calling it an unprecedented act of disregard by a global leader. "Donald Trump has uploaded an AI-generated video on his social media page that shows a fictional land called 'Trump Gaza', complete with a golden statue of him, money raining from the sky, and bearded belly dancers. Never before in the history of global politics has any Head of State behaved in this manner with the world quietly standing by. I haven't reproduced the

video because it's deeply offensive," she wrote. The AI-generated video begins with grim footage of present-day Gaza, depicting ruins and destruction with the text "Gaza 2025" in bold green letters. This is followed by the phrase "What's Next" in red and blue, hinting at Trump's supposed future plans for the region. As the video progresses, the devastated landscape is rapidly replaced by high-rise buildings, extravagant hotels, luxury resorts, sports cars, nightclubs, and pristine beaches. A techno soundtrack plays in the background with lyrics such as, "Donald Trump will set you free. No more tunnels, no more fear. Trump Gaza is finally here." The song continues with more exaggerated claims, calling the fictional development "golden" and "brand new," as visuals of a child holding a gold balloon with Trump's face appear on screen.

Adding to the surreal imagery, the video includes scenes of a man tossing money in the air as children scramble to collect it, luxury yachts on the coastline, and a massive golden statue of Trump towering over the city. Further into the video, Tesla CEO Elon Musk is seen while money rains from the sky in the background, before a final bizarre scene featuring "Trump and Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sipping cocktails in shorts."

## BUSINESS

# India's GDP Growth Recovers: Q3 Expansion Seen at 6.2% - Report

Mumbai: The worst seems to be over for the Indian economy's growth trajectory, a German brokerage said on Thursday. GDP growth, which had slipped to a seven-quarter-low of 5.4 per cent in the September quarter leading to a lot of concerns over the economy's strength, is likely to rise to 6.2 per cent in the December quarter, the report by Deutsche Bank said. "We think the worst is over as far as India's growth trajectory is concerned but, even with the improvement of momentum, overall GDP growth is likely to remain below the potential growth rate of 7 per cent in FY26," the bank's analysts said. In the report which comes a day ahead of the release of official data on economic performance, the analysts also said that we have to be cautious about the forecasts as there can also be a re-

vision in previous years' data. The brokerage added that its leading indicator derived from 65 high-frequency indicators is also pointing towards a 6.2 per cent growth. The Reserve Bank is likely to deliver another rate cut of 25 basis points at the upcoming review of the monetary policy in April to help growth. Minutes of the last policy reveal that all the members on the six-member monetary policy panel feel that rates remained at restrictive levels, it said. After the April rate cut, RBI will focus more on the liquidity measures to ensure transmission of the 0.50 per cent rate cut to the real economy, it said, adding that more cuts are unlikely in the current cycle. The central bank is already cognizant about the liquidity needs, and the recent USD 10 billion swap announcement is "encouraging", it said.

# EU President's India Visit: Trade, Tariffs & Security

New Delhi: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will begin a two-day trip to India on Thursday to expand two-way cooperation in areas of trade, investment and clean energy amid increasing global concerns over US President Donald Trump's economic policies. Von der Leyen, to be accompanied by the European Union (EU) College of Commissioners, or senior political leaders of the 27-member states of the bloc, will hold extensive talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to firm up a new strategic agenda to shore up cooperation in several critical areas. The two leaders are expected to take stock of ongoing negotiations for an ambitious India-EU free trade deal. The EU is looking at en-



hancing the trade ties with India with an aim to de-risk its relations with China, an EU official said. The EU is likely to call on India to bring down tariffs on cars, wine and agricultural products, he indicated. As the high-level visit comes days after the third anniversary of Ukraine war, Von der Leyen is likely to urge India to help effective implementation of Western sanctions against Russia. The EU is also keen to expand defence and security ties with India, especially in the Indo-Pacific — a region

# Rs 4,800 Cr for Assam Waterways Development: Sonowal

Guwahati: Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal said on Wednesday that the Centre will spend Rs 4,800 crore for developing waterways and related infrastructure in Assam in the next five years. The ports, shipping and waterways ministers speaking at a session on the state's road, railway and riverine infrastructure at the 'Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment and Infrastructure Summit' here. "I want to announce that in the next five years, Rs 4,800 crore will be spent by my ministry in Assam," Sonowal said. The amount will be spent on various works, like building a ship repair facility, construction of alternate roads for ports and development of terminals. Sonowal said a centre of excellence in maritime education will also be established in the state, which will provide 5,000 skilled youth to the shipping industry annually. The union minister also highlighted the importance of waterways in economic development and maintained that the sector has received a major boost since the BJP-led government took over in 2014. "We are planning to become a leading maritime nation by 2030 and also one of the top five shipping nations," he added.

# Dabur Amla Celebrates the Strength of Indian Women at Maha Kumbh with 'Mazbooti ki Triveni' Campaign

New Delhi: Dabur Amla, the legendary brand synonymous with strong, nourished hair, has honoured the spirit of Indian women and their inspiring strength at the Kumbh Mela 2025. The sacred Triveni Sangam, where three rivers meet, serves as the perfect backdrop for Dabur Amla's new campaign, "Mazbooti ki Triveni," celebrating the powerful bond between tradition, unity, and strength. The "Mazbooti ki Triveni" campaign draws inspiration from the Triveni braid, a traditional three-knotted



hairstyle that has become a symbol of resilience and unity. Just as the Triveni Sangam represents the harmonious meeting of three rivers, the Triveni braid is a symbol of strength born from unity. Dabur Amla, known for empowering women with strong, healthy hair, connects the enduring power of the Triveni braid to the inner strength of every Indian woman. "We are thrilled to showcase our campaign at the Kumbh Mela, one of India's largest gatherings that represents not just spirituality but the collective strength and

unity of people," said Ankur Kumar, Head of Marketing, Dabur India Ltd. "Through 'Mazbooti ki Triveni', Dabur Amla salutes the timeless tradition of the Triveni braid, which reflects the strength, beauty, and resilience of Indian women, just as our brand has always stood for nourishing and strengthening hair." The Kumbh Mela, held at the confluence of the sacred rivers, continues to serve as a profound symbol of unity and strength, and Dabur Amla's "Mazbooti ki Triveni" campaign aligns beautifully with the values celebrated at

this iconic event. This unique initiative will further elevate Dabur Amla's mission of empowering women to embrace their natural beauty and strength. Pramod Sharma, NCD, Rediffusion: "At Rediffusion, we take immense pride in bringing to life campaigns that resonate with deep-rooted cultural symbols and values. The 'Mazbooti ki Triveni' campaign is a celebration of the strength that lies within every Indian woman. We are honored to have collaborated with Dabur Amla to create this meaningful activation at such a prestigious platform like the Kumbh Mela." Tarun Chaudhry, Executive Vice President, Rediffusion: "The Kumbh Mela is a gathering that brings together millions of people, united by their faith and the strength of their shared culture. Dabur Amla's campaign celebrates this unity and strength through the Triveni braid, and we are delighted to have helped bring this activation to life. Rediffusion's focus is always on creating campaigns that engage and inspire, and this initiative is a testament to that vision."

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# Cricket

## "He's that good, can go on for as long as he can...": Herschelle Gibbs lauds Virat Kohli

New Delhi

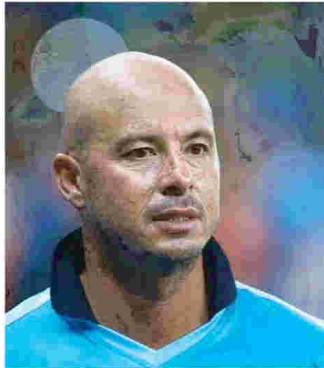
Former South Africa batter Herschelle Gibbs believes India stalwart Virat Kohli can play for "as long he wants to," considering his knack for scoring runs and staying fit is intact at the age of 36.

Virat lived up to his reputation as "Chase Master". He orchestrated a flawless route for India to chase a 242-run target against arch-rivals Pakistan in Dubai on Sunday in the Champions Trophy.

With Virat roaring back to form with his imposing swagger and mojo, Gibbs believes the 36-year-old can go and mesmerise the spectators with his on-field performances for as long as he wants to.

"Look, he can go on for as long as he can. His fitness is not an issue. His desire and his hunger to score runs are still very much there. It's up to him how long he wants to play. He's that good. And as I said, he's kept himself in fantastic condition, and it's lovely," Gibbs said during the India Corporate T20 Bash league.

Virat paced his knock well, frustrated Pakistan with constant strike rotation and put the final nail in the coffin with a picture-perfect shot to hit the winning runs and celebrate his record-extending 51st ODI century.



Not only did he better his record, he became the fastest to reach 14,000 ODI runs during the process. With a record-breaking century, Virat sent his critics to bed, who questioned his place in the squad after an underwhelming Test tour of Australia.

"I think India is a happy place when Virat Kohli scores runs. He's such a

huge favourite amongst everybody in the world in cricket. I hope he scores many more hundreds," he added.

Virat isn't the only Indian who has grabbed the headlines with his swash-buckling display. Shubman Gill has found his groove and exhibited consistency after putting in hard yards in the Indian domestic circuit.



Cut to a frail figure in Australia like many Indian stars, Gill returned to the ODI format and raised the bar with his rollicking performances during the buildup to the Champions Trophy.

He ended the three ODIs against England as the leading run-getter with a whopping 259 runs to his name. Gill

continued his scoring form in Dubai and scored 101 against Bangladesh. In the high-stakes clash against Pakistan, Gill topped up his eighth ODI ton with a solid 46.

Gill's recent display has left Gibbs in love with his approach.

"Look, I love his approach. I love the way he uses his feet to the fast bowlers. Obviously, he's learned a lot from Rohit (Sharma) and Virat, but he's embraced the opportunity to play international cricket and is thriving. I like the way he approaches it. He's also very hungry for runs. Once they get 100, they want to get big hundreds, irrespective of what format you play," he said.

"He's got that approach and got that attitude. And as I said, I've said it many times at the moment, India, in regards to all the formats, is in a very healthy space with the amount of depth they have as far as the talent is concerned. So it's a nice place for them to be in, I think. It's going to be difficult to make the squad. So, yeah, I think there are exciting times for Indian cricket," he added. Actor Sonu Sood, who was also present during the event, hoped India would continue its dominant performances in the Champions Trophy. "India against Pakistan is always exciting. Virat scored an incredible century. I hope he keeps on playing like that."



See some of my childhood heroes...: Jasprit Bumrah delighted on sweeping ICC honours



## Malewar, Nair lead recovery on Day one of Ranji Trophy Final

Nagpur

At different stages of their careers, Danish Malewar and Karun Nair came together to script a remarkable Vidarbha fightback on the opening day of the Ranji Trophy final against first-time finalists Kerala in Nagpur, as per ESPNcricinfo.

At just 21, Malewar is in his maiden season, having made a name for himself in his age-group cricket. At 33, Nair, a seasoned campaigner and two-time Ranji Trophy champion with Karnataka, is experiencing a resurgence in form that could even lead to an unexpected Test recall eight years after his last international appearance.

On Wednesday, the duo combined for a 215-run fourth-wicket stand, dragging Vidarbha from 24/3 in the first hour to a commanding 254/4 by stumps. However, a moment of miscommunication saw Nair dismissed for 86—run out after Malewar hesitated while attempting to sneak a fly. Despite that setback, Vidarbha finished the day in control on a VCA Stadium pitch that flattened as the play progressed, leaving Kerala struggling to reverse the relentless bowling display they had showcased in the semi-final against Gujarat.

A key highlight of Vidarbha's recovery was how Malewar and Nair neutralized Kerala's spin duo of Falaj Saxena and Aditya Sarwate—the latter, a former Vidarbha stalwart, having switched sides ahead of the 2024-25 season.

Saxena did create one opportunity when he beat Malewar in flight and induced an outside edge while the batter was on 110, but a crucial mistake by Kerala saw the slip cordon removed just a few covers earlier. The ball flew past the vacant slip position, allowing Malewar to survive.

Nair's dismissal, in contrast, was a moment of brilliance from Rohan Kunnummal. Standing in the slips, Kunnummal reacted swiftly to a deflection off the wicketkeeper's pads, sprinted to his right, and fired a direct hit to catch Nair well short of his crease after Malewar sent him back.

At the close of play, Malewar remained unbeaten on 138—his highest first-class score—alongside night-watcherman Yash Thakur, who finished on 52 not out.

Vidarbha's decision to shuffle their batting order raised eyebrows and could have drawn scrutiny had Malewar and Nair not staged a recovery. Instead of regular opener Atharva Taide, they promoted Parth Rekhade, a lower-order batter, to face the new ball. The experiment failed spectacularly, as Rekhade was trapped low—just two deliveries into the match—dismissed via DRS after a successful Kerala review.

## "Will make decisions in best interest of team": Aaqib Javed



Rawalpindi

Pakistan's interim head coach, Aaqib Javed, assured that the management will take steps in the best interest of the national team following their surprise early exit from the ongoing Champions Trophy.

Backed as one of the hot favourites, the defending champions, Pakistan, crashed out of the Champions Trophy after surrendering two defeats on the trot. Pakistan's dreadful run started with an imposing six-wicket defeat against New Zealand in the tournament opener. It continued with a six-wicket hammering at the hands of arch-rival India in Dubai.

A major cricket tournament returned to Pakistan for the first time in 29 years, but the hosts' journey will end on Thursday against Bangladesh in the group stage.

Even before Pakistan began its title defence, the Men in Green were surrounded by questions and criticism over the team selection, especially the inclusion of Faheem Ashraf and Khushdil Shah from fans and former cricketers.

Ahead of their final group stage match in Rawalpindi, Aaqib rejected the notion that players were selected without merit. He shed light on the "belief" behind the selection and claimed the players selected made the "best possible" team they could have had.

"Not a single player in the squad was included without performance. We cannot simply replace the entire team with the Under-19 squad just because we lost," Aaqib told reporters in a press conference, as quoted from Geo News.

"You can never be fully satisfied, but this was the best possible team we had. The belief behind the selection was to create the strongest squad," he added.

Aaqib addressed Pakistan's symbolic performances in the tournament and claimed that decisions in the future must be made in the "best interest" of the team.

"The selection committee's job is

**Despite winning the crucial toss, Pakistan's blueprint to bat first and put runs on the board was spoiled by the Indian spinners. After limping to 241, 'Chase Master' Virat Kohli entertained the crowd with one of his special batting master-class. He orchestrated a flawless route to steer India to a six-wicket win.**

to field the best players. Moving forward, we will make decisions in the best interest of the team. Our focus remains on preparing for the next match."

After living through a nightmare against New Zealand, Pakistan's title defence became more intricate. The hosts had to outwit their bitter rival, India, a team that had always held the upper hand over them.

Despite winning the crucial toss, Pakistan's blueprint to bat first and put runs on the board was spoiled by the Indian spinners. After limping to 241, "Chase Master" Virat Kohli entertained the crowd with one of his special batting master-class. He orchestrated a flawless route to steer India to a six-wicket win.

According to Aaqib, India's experience against Pakistan played a decisive role in the do-or-die clash for the defending champions.

"The Indian team was highly experienced. When defending 240 runs, taking wickets and attacking are crucial. Planning is not limited to just playing against India; it applies to every match," he remarked.

## Australia left-arm spinner Matthew Kuhnemann cleared of suspect bowling action by ICC

Dubai

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday confirmed Australia's left-arm spinner Matthew Kuhnemann's bowling action has been found to be legal, and he will continue bowling in international cricket.

Kuhnemann was reported for a suspected illegal bowling action during the second Test against Sri Lanka in Galle that ended on February 9. He subsequently underwent an independent bowling assessment at the National Cricket Centre in Brisbane on February 15.

"It was revealed that the amount of elbow extension for all his deliveries was within the 15-degree level of tolerance permitted under the ICC Illegal Bowling Regulations," ICC said in a media release.

According to ESPNcricinfo, Kuhnemann went through a session that lasted more than one hour. During the session, he was asked to bowl at a similar speed and with similar revolutions as he did in the second Test against Sri Lanka in Galle.

ICC experts observed Kuhnemann's bowling action. The Australian left-arm spinner wore markers on his body and was surrounded by several high-speed cameras and a 3D motion analysis



system. "We are pleased for Matt that this matter is now resolved. It has been a challenging period for Matt; however, he has carried himself exceptionally well. He has had the full support of Australian cricket, and he can now move forward to the next phase of his international career with great confidence," Ben Oliver, CA executive general manager of national teams, said in a statement as quoted from ESPNcricinfo.

After Kuhnemann was reported for his bowling action, Steve Smith, Australia's stand-in captain during the series, had rallied behind the 28-year-old and said, "It's come as a bit of a surprise to me. He has been playing for eight years in professional cricket, and nothing has been said in that amount of time."

"We're confident he will pass. He will go through that process back home. We wish him all the best," he had said.

Kuhnemann has represented Australia in five Tests and boasts 25 wickets at an average of 22.20 and a strike rate of 41.0.

## Jess Jonassen reveals Sourav Ganguly's advice after match-winning knock for Delhi Capitals

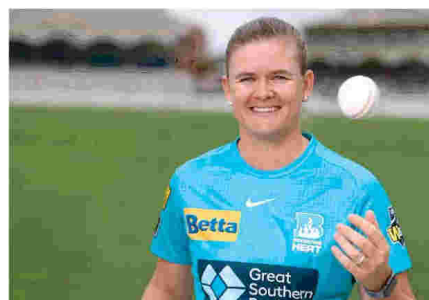
Bengaluru

Australian all-rounder Jess Jonassen played a crucial role in Delhi Capitals' (DC) emphatic six-wicket victory over Gujarat Giants in the Women's Premier League (WPL). Jonassen's unbeaten 61 off 32 deliveries, featuring nine boundaries and two sixes, helped her team chase down the 128-run target in just 15.1 overs at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

Following her match-winning performance, Jonassen revealed the valuable advice she received from former Indian captain Sourav Ganguly before the game.

Speaking on JioHotstar, she said, "He reminded me to focus on playing good cricket shots and to capitalize on the shorter boundary, particularly if the bowling was straight or on the leg stump. He encouraged me to back myself and take advantage of those opportunities. I was pleased that I could implement his advice. Yes, I hit a few sixes, but I also played some solid cricket shots, though there were a few streaky ones in there too!"

Jonassen's knock proved to be the difference in the game as Delhi Capitals registered their third win of the tournament. The Gujarat Giants bowlers struggled to contain her aggressive stroke play, with her ability to find gaps and clear the ropes making



the chase look effortless.

Delhi Capitals' victory was set by a scorching display from their seamers in the first innings. In pursuit of a 129-run target, the Capitals lost skipper Meg Lanning cheaply for 3(13). DC seized control through Shafali Verma and Jess Jonassen.

After exercising caution initially, Shafali and Jonassen shifted gears and exploded at the right time. In the final over of the powerplay, the duo took Ashleigh Gardner and garnered 13 runs from the over to lift DC to 46/1.

Shafali then chose Priya Mishra as her target and dispatched the ball for two towering sixes, taking the partnership past the 50-run mark. It was a fusillade of boundaries in the next overs, with Shafali smashing Gardner, smoking the ball past the boundary line for a six and topping it up with a four.

However, the Giants skipper had the last laugh after she trapped Shafali in front of the stumps to end her fiery display on 44(27) and the 74-run partnership.

**Delhi Capitals' victory was set by a scorching display from their seamers in the first innings. In pursuit of a 129-run target, the Capitals lost skipper Meg Lanning cheaply for 3(13). DC seized control through Shafali Verma and Jess Jonassen.**

Jonassen stayed on the pitch to ensure the Capitals didn't suffer any hiccups for the rest of the chase. He raced to her maiden fifty in WPL with a sublime cover drive off Tanuja Kanwar, a release said.

The Giants tried to orchestrate a late comeback by dismissing Jenmin Rodrigues and Annabel Sutherland in a cluster, reducing DC to 115/4 but the damage was done by that point. Marizanne Kapp struck the winning shot to seal a win for DC with a handful of overs to spare.

With this win, Delhi Capitals further strengthened their position in the WPL standings, while Gujarat Giants continue to search for form in the competition.



## India U20 women end Pink Youth Cup campaign with defeat against Russia

**Manavgat**  
The India U20 women's team ended their Pink Ladies U20 Youth Cup campaign with a 0-3 defeat to Russia at the Emirhan Sport Center in Manavgat, as per the official website of All India Football Federation (AIFF).

Russia scored twice inside the first 17 minutes and added another soon after the restart before India created a handful of opportunities to get on the scoresheet but ultimately came out empty-handed. The Young Tigresses had beaten Jordan 2-1 and Hong Kong 1-0 last week.

For India, these friendly matches were part of their preparations for the SAFF U20 Women's Championship and the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers, which will take place in July and August, respectively.

It was an end-to-end start, with both India and Russia having a go at each other's defence in the first 10 minutes. While Lhingdeikim saw her 20-yard effort dip on top of the net, Arina Shuba forced Moirangthem Monalisa Devi to make a one-on-one save.

Gradually, Russia began to exert control and India was pinned inside



their defensive third. Getting on the end of a free-kick from Tatiana Danilochkina, Mariia Nachaeva headed into the far corner to open the scoring in the 15th minute. Less than two minutes later, Polina Pavlova doubled the lead with a solid 20-yard half-volley that rocketed into the top corner.

After that blitz, India regrouped and dished out a better defensive per-

formance until the end of the first half. However, Natalia Perminova got Russia on the scoresheet again just two minutes after the restart, side-footing a cutback from 10 yards out.

India became desperate to get something from the game and ventured forward more frequently. That turned out well for Joakim Alexandersson's side as they were not only able to create a

host of chances, but also prevent any further damage as Russia were kept busy inside their half.

Lhingdeikim, who scored against Jordan, came the closest to getting a goal for India. The 17-year-old turned her marker inside out and took a low shot with her left foot. The goalkeeper was beaten but Iuliana Kamorina produced a superb goal-line clearance to deny her.

Lhingdeikim also saw a curling right-footed free-kick saved at the far corner by Uliana Obukhova. Sibani Devi and Pooja, who scored the match-winners against Hong Kong and Jordan, respectively, missed the target by a whisker.

Sibani showed good presence of mind to intercept a ball in the Russian box but sent a left-footed shot over the crossbar. Pooja got a first-time shot on the turn just outside the box but it sailed inches over the target.

In the dying minutes of the match, Neha's corner landed perfectly for Toijam Thoubisana Chanu, who volleyed it over from six yards. Ultimately, there was no consolation goal for the Young Tigresses, who wrapped up the Turkey tour with two wins and a defeat.

## Battle 'Royale' in Copa as Real Sociedad entertain Real Madrid



**Manchester City**  
Real Sociedad entertain Real Madrid in the first leg of their Copa del Rey semifinal on Wednesday night in a tie from which Carlo Ancelotti's side is the favourite to come out unscathed and play either FC Barcelona or Atletico Madrid in the final.

The game comes with Real Madrid in arguably the best form of the season after knocking Manchester City out of the Champions League and a comfortable 2-0 win at home to Girona.

But Real Sociedad have drastically improved their home form in recent months, with 11 wins in their last 13 games in the Reale Arena, and their last win was a comfortable 3-0 at home against Leganes, whom Real Madrid beat in the Copa quarter-finals.

Real Sociedad coach Imanol Alguacil will be able to call on forwards, Sheraldo Becker and Take Kubo, who are both suspended for this weekend's game away to Barcelona, reports Xinhua.

Kubo scored his side's second goal against Leganes and Real Madrid would still take 50 percent of any profit from a future sale of their former player.

Jude Bellingham's suspension after his red card for swearing at referee Jose Luis Munuera Montero in Pamplona just over a week ago is only applicable in La Liga and he will return to the side on Wednesday, with Brahim Diaz likely to step down to the subs' bench.

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti is also likely to make changes in his defence, with Antonio Rudiger back in action, while Fran Garcia steps in at left-back.

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One player who looks likely to miss out is midfielder Fede Valverde, who was rested at the weekend with muscle fatigue and is also likely to rest on Wednesday.

"Bearing in mind the ridiculous calendar that we have, we are doing well," said Ancelotti in his pre-game press conference, in which he pointed out his side has played 17 games in the 50 days since the Christmas break.

"It's incredible, I feel tired, you (the press) are tired and from what I see and hear, we need a break," he added.

"Real Sociedad are always hard to play against, they are in a good mood of form, it's a semi-final and it is going to be a very competitive game, that's even and entertaining," said Ancelotti.

## Nitish unveils logo, mascot for Sepaktakraw World Cup in Patna

**Patna**  
Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has announced a major sporting event for the state as he unveiled the logo and mascot for the Sepaktakraw World Cup 2025. The World Cup will be a significant milestone, being held from March 20 to 25 at the Patliputra Sports Complex, marking the first time the event takes place in Bihar.

The logo, designed to reflect Bihar's rich culture and sporting spirit, was presented alongside its mascot, symbolizing the state's strength and pride, using innovative 3D hologram technology. This prestigious event is set to welcome players from more than 25 countries, showcasing their talents on an international stage.

In addition to gearing up for the Sepaktakraw World Cup, Kumar celebrated local athletic achievements by honoring the state's medal winners from the 98th National Games, where Bihar excelled with a total of 12 medals, including one gold, six silver, and five bronze.

## Luka Doncic's Mavericks reunion was 'so weird'

**Los Angeles**  
Although Luka Doncic speaks four languages, he struggled for the words to express just how strange it was to play against the Dallas Mavericks on Tuesday night.

Just 23 days after his world was upended by Dallas' shocking decision to trade him, Doncic was on the Los Angeles Lakers' home court to face those same Mavs. His feelings of betrayal and uncertainty are still fresh, and they affected a performance that was inconsistent, occasionally brilliant and altogether fraught with anxiety.

"It was just a lot of emotions I was feeling," Doncic said. "I can't even explain. It was a different game. Sometimes, I don't know what I was doing. I'm just glad it's over, honestly."

Doncic's game was all over the place — just like his head.

He posted his first triple-double in a Lakers uniform, but he also missed 11 of his 17 shots and was wild from 3-point range. He made a dozen sublime passes and at least that many big defensive plays, yet he could only score two points in the fourth quarter of a tight game.

"It was so weird," Doncic said. "There were moments I felt like I don't know what I was doing. I'm glad we got a win."

Fortunately for Doncic, he now has LeBron James for a teammate — and the top scorer in NBA history simply wouldn't let Luka lose.

In that fourth quarter, the Lakers' eager fans saw another glimpse of what Doncic and James can become.

## Job cuts at Man Utd are due to 'lack of success' at the club: Ruben Amorim

**Manchester United**  
On Monday, announced that they will be making 200 additional job cuts, after 250 Manchester United, had already been let go by the club last season, as part of a series of additional measures to improve the club's financial sustainability.

The transformation plan aims to return the club to profitability after five consecutive years of losses since 2019.

The Red Devils currently sit in 15th place in the Premier League table and head coach Ruben Amorim led the job redundancies have to be credited to lack of success at the club.

"We have to address all the problems in the club but one important piece is how we got into this situation. It has to do a lot with the lack of success of the football team. We are the engine of the club. I want to help the team with my job which is to help the team, help the



players and the success," said Amorim in a press conference.

Last week the club revealed a loss of 27.7 million pounds in their second quarter financial results and the Red Devils have lost more than 300 million pounds over the past three years.

## Diana Taurasi of the Phoenix Mercury retires after 20 WNBA seasons

**Phoenix**  
Diana Taurasi is retiring after 20 seasons, ending one of the greatest careers in women's basketball history.

The WNBA's career scoring leader and a three-time league champion, Taurasi announced her retirement on Tuesday in an interview with Time magazine. The Phoenix Mercury — the only WNBA team she played for — also confirmed her decision.

"Mentally and physically, I'm just full," Taurasi told Time. "That's probably the best way I can describe it. I'm full and I'm happy."

With her taut hair bun and supreme confidence, Taurasi inspired a generation of players while racking up records and championships.

Taurasi led UConn to three straight national titles from 2001-04 and kept on winning after the Mercury selected her with the No. 1 overall pick of the 2004 WNBA draft.

"It's hard to put into words, it really is, what this means. When someone's defined the game, when someone's had such an impact on so many people and so many places. You can't define it with a quote," UConn coach Geno Auriemma said. "It's a life that is a novel, it's the life of an extraordinary person who, I think, had as much to do with changing women's basketball as anyone who's ever played the game."

The 42-year-old won her sixth Olympic gold medal at the Paris Games and finishes her WNBA career with 10,646 points, nearly 3,000 more than second-place Tina Charles.

"I thank Diana for everything that she has brought to the WNBA — her passion, her charisma and, most of all, her relentless dedication to the game," WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert said in a statement. "She leaves a lasting legacy and the future of the WNBA is in a great position because of her impact, that will be felt for generations to



come."

In addition to her three WNBA championships with the Mercury, Taurasi won six Euroleague championships while playing year-round most of her career. She was the 2009 WNBA MVP and is one of four players to earn WNBA Finals MVP honors more than once (2009, 2014).

"Diana is the greatest to have ever played the game. I've been a fan of her my entire life, she is the ultimate leader and teammate," Mercury owner Mat Ishbia said in a statement. "She's had an incredible impact on our franchise, our community and the game of basketball. Her name is synonymous with the Phoenix Mercury and she will forever be part of our family."

Taurasi made the all-WNBA first team 10 times and was on the first or second team a record 14 times. She's also an 11-time WNBA All-Star, four-time USA Basketball female athlete of the year and was the 2004 WNBA rookie of the year.

"In my opinion, what the greats have in common is, they transcend the sport and become synonymous with the sport," Auriemma said. "For as long as people talk about college basketball, WNBA basketball, Olympic basketball, Diana is the greatest winner in the history of basketball, period."

## Bengaluru secure playoffs spot with 1-0 win, push Chennaiyin out of race

**Bengaluru**  
Rahul Bheke struck the lone goal as Bengaluru FC defeated Chennaiyin FC 1-0 at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium on Tuesday night to qualify for the playoffs of the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25.

The Blues cemented their position at the third spot courtesy of 37 points as a result of this triumph. Chennaiyin FC, who now have 24 points from 22 games, will not make the playoffs.

The Gerard Zaragoza-coached Bengaluru held 57.1% of the possession and was constantly in the hunt for goals, though their only strike of the night came through Bheke's emphatic finish inside the box in the first half.

Before that though, Chennaiyin FC got the first chance when they cracked open the Bengaluru defence calmly in the ninth minute, with Jiteshwar Singh leading the move down the centre of the park before distributing the ball to the flanks to try and spot openings inside the home team's defensive third.

The Marina Machans moved the ball slickly on the up from the right flank, before Connor Shields glided in and hurled a cross to Lalrinliana Hnante. The latter had ample time to collect the ball and curl it into the net, but his effort appeared slightly rushed, as he sent it off-target past the right side of the post.

The Blues discovered an opening in the 37th minute by maximizing a flawless set-piece move as Alberto Noguera stepped up for a free-kick from distance on the right side of the field. Noguera took a bit before delivering the cross, and it was perfectly executed as the ball surpassed the entire Chennaiyin FC wall and instead met Rahul Bheke, who had made a dashing decoy run from the left side of the six-yard box. Bheke used his right foot to drill the ball into the top right corner to break the deadlock as



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their supporters erupted with joy in the stands.

Noguera kept testing the Chennaiyin FC defence with his set-piece prowess as he unleashed another impressive effort from a corner kick in the 50th minute. But another goal eluded them. Bengaluru FC were equally effective

from open play too as Ryan Williams sparked a quick run displaying his fine footwork to make a cross into the box from the right flank in the 73rd minute. The ball was hurriedly cleared away but Lalrethunga Fanai pounced upon the loose ball outside the box and made a left-footed shot that missed the top left corner of the net, handing a goal-kick to the opposition.

Chennaiyin FC had a chance to level scores in the 83rd minute as they hit Bengaluru FC on a fast break that culminated with Irfan Yadav breaching past the Blues' backline and smashing in a powerful cross for Daniel Chima Chukwu, placed extremely near to the goal. Chukwu could not position properly to gather and bury the ball though, instead landing it off target and bringing curtains down to Chennaiyin FC's playoff aspirations.

Bengaluru FC will next play East Bengal FC on March 2, whereas Chennaiyin FC are slated to feature against North East United FC on March 3.



# Preity Zinta visits Maha Kumbh Mela, takes holy dip

**Mahakumbh**  
 Actor Preity Zinta visited Maha Kumbh Mela for the third time and said her experience has been magical, heartwarming and a bit sad.

Zinta shared a video post on her X handle on Wednesday featuring her visit to the festival where she took the holy dip at triveni sangam. The actor expressed her experience in the caption.

"This was my third time at the Kumbh Mela & it was magical, heartwarming & a bit sad. Magical because no matter how hard I try, I cannot explain how I felt. Heartwarming because I went with my mom & it meant the world to her. Sad, because I wanted to be liberated from the various cycles of life & death only



to realise the duality of life & attachment. Am I ready to let go of my family, my children & the people I love? No! I'm not," she wrote. "It's deeply moving & humbling when it dawns on you, that the strings of attachment are strong & mighty & no matter what your attachment is, eventually your spiritual journey

& the journey ahead is solo." "I came back with the notion that - we are not human beings having a spiritual experience but spiritual beings having a human experience. Beyond this I don't know, but I'm confident, my curiosity will definitely pave the way towards all the answers I seek till

then, har har mahadev," she concluded. Maha Kumbh Mela commenced on January 13 and concludes on Wednesday. Millions attended the festival over the last month including several celebrities like Akshay Kumar, Vicky Kaushal, Katrina Kaif, Raveena Tandon and others.



## Sanjay Dutt-starrer 'The Bhootnii' to release on April 18

**Mumbai**  
 The project, which comes from Soham Rockstar Entertainment and Three Dimension Motion Picture, will be released in theatres on April 18.

"This Good Friday, fear gets a new date—#FridayThe13th! Get ready for horror, action, and comedy like never before!" Soham Rockstar Entertainment posted on Instagram along with a teaser of the movie. The film is produced by Deepak Mukut and Dutt. Hunar Mukut and Maanayata Dutt serve as co-pro-

ducers. On Wednesday, Soham Rockstar Entertainment took to Instagram to share the announcement video of The Bhootnii. The video begins with a powerful voiceover by Sanjay Dutt as the footage focuses on spirits and a haunted tree. It also shows Sunny Singh screaming to get back his love (Palak Tiwari) from a supernatural being (Mouni Roy). However, what caught everyone's attention was Sanjay's look at the end—he was seen holding two swords, ready to fight spirits.

## Faith an important part of 'Suzhal' season one and two: Director duo Gayatri and Pushkar

**Mumbai**  
 Commonality between seasons one and two of Suzhal is that both have specific geographies and are set in times of significant festivals. While season 1 was set in the mountain village of Sambaloor amidst the Mayana Kollai festival, season 2 is set in the coastal town of Kaali pattanam amidst the Ash-takali festival. The writers and creators of the series,



Pushkar and Gayatri, speak about the importance of festivals and their myths as the underlying themes in Suzhal. Gayatri revealed that the festivals portrayed in the

series are not well documented. The director highlights that the team went into documenting the festivals' history primarily through oral traditions, conducting interviews—espe-

cially with the elderly—to piece together their significance. Pushkar recounts that while in pre-production for season two, they decided to choose the Ashtakali festival, which is a off-shoot of Dusshera. Pushkar goes on to say that the story of Dusshera's roots lies in the legend of Ashtakali, which refers to eight Kalis. He says that, in turn, this led to season two's narrative being formed on the basis of eight women as the prime suspects of a crime, which sparks the events of this season. Pushkar and Gayatri produced the series under

their Wallwatcher Films banner. The second season is directed by Brama and Sarjun KM, with an ensemble cast that includes Kathir and Aishwarya Rajesh returning in lead roles, along with Lal, Saravanan, Gouri Kishan (Muthu), Samyuktha Vishwanathan (Naachi), Monisha Blessy (Muppi), Rini (Gaandhari), Shrishta (Veera), Abhirami Bose (Senbagam), Nikhila Sankar (Sandhanam), Kalaivini Bhaskar (Ulagu), and Ashwini Nambiar, along with Manjima Mohan and Kayal Chandran making special appearances.



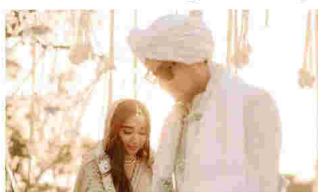
## Abhishek Bachchan's 'Be Happy' to debut on Prime Video in March

**Mumbai**  
 Abhishek Bachchan's career has been a testament to his dedication to choosing roles that allow him to showcase his versatile acting skills. From the intense and layered characters in Yuva, Raavan, and Sarkar to the lighthearted comedic roles in Dostana and Dumyaur Bahi, and the emotional depth of his role in Paa, Bachchan has consistently embraced a diverse range of performances.

His most recent film, I Want to Talk, was hailed by critics as one of his best performances to date, receiving widespread acclaim from both audiences and reviewers. Continuing his trend of selecting roles that challenge him and allow him to push his boundaries as an actor, Abhishek will next be seen in Be Happy, a heartfelt father-daughter drama. In the film, he plays Shiv, a dedicated single father who lives for the happiness of his daughter Dhara, played by Inayat Verma.

The story revolves around the special bond between father and daughter, with Dhara aspiring to perform on a major dance reality show. However, when an unexpected crisis threatens her dream, Shiv is faced with a heart-wrenching decision. Determined to support his daughter's ambition, Shiv embarks on a journey of self-discovery, battling against fate and finding deeper meaning in life and happiness.

## Prajakta Koli marries Vrishank Khanal in intimate wedding ceremony



**New Delhi**  
 Social media personality and actor Prajakta Koli has tied the knot with her longtime boyfriend Vrishank Khanal. Koli, 31 and Khanal 35, dated for several years before getting engaged in 2023. The couple got married in an intimate wedding on Tuesday. The "Mismatched" star shared a series of pictures from the wedding ceremony on her Instagram handle.

"25.2.25," she wrote in the caption. Koli opted for a custom-designed golden lehenga adorned with floral embroidery and played the lead role in 'Swatantrya Veer Savarkar,' spoke about the influential figure's role in India's independence and also mentioned how the leader's contributions shaped India's freedom movement. Calling him a "pioneering figure," the actor wrote, "On his death anniversary, we re-

## Randeep Hooda pays tribute to Veer Savarkar on his death anniversary

**Mumbai**  
 Actor-director Randeep Hooda remembered freedom fighter Vinayak Damodar Savarkar on his death anniversary. The 'Highway' actor took to his Instagram account on Wednesday to share a series of pictures as he remembered the revolutionary leader. Hooda, who directed and played the lead role in 'Swatantrya Veer Savarkar,' spoke about the influential figure's role in India's independence and also mentioned how the leader's contributions shaped India's freedom movement. Calling him a "pioneering figure," the actor wrote, "On his death anniversary, we re-

member Veer Savarkar, a pioneering figure in India's struggle for independence. His work, The History of the First War of Indian Independence, redefined the 1857 uprising as a nationwide fight for freedom, inspiring generations of revolutionaries." "As the actor and director who had the privilege of portraying him, I've witnessed the depth of his commitment. Despite being sentenced to 50 years of life imprisonment and enduring Kaala Paani, Savarkar stayed steadfast in his belief that armed resistance was key to India's independence. Though his contributions are often overlooked and misjudged, his vision of self-reliance, national pride, and a

strong defense laid the foundation for India's rise as a global power today. Savarkar's legacy remains as relevant today as it was then," he added. The film 'Swatantrya Veer Savarkar,' released on March 22, 2024, aimed to bring Savarkar's story to the big screen. Along with Hooda, the movie also featured Ankita Lokhande and Amit Sial. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, born on May 28, 1883, in Bhagur, was sentenced to 50 years in the Andaman Cellular Jail in 1911 for his resistance against British policies. He was released in 1924 after multiple petitions. Veer Savarkar passed away on February 26, 1966.



## Patrick Wilson joins Amy Adams starrer 'Cape Fear' cast

**Washington**  
 The 'Conjuring' fame actor Patrick Wilson has joined the cast of Amy Adams starrer series 'Cape Fear,' reported Deadline. Apart from Amy, the series also stars Javier Bardem in the lead role.

Apple TV+ series Cape Fear is based on John D MacDonald's novel The Executioners - which inspired the 1962 feature of the same name directed by J Lee Thompson from storyboards devised by original director Alfred Hitchcock - and the 1991 remake directed by Mar-

tin Scorsese. As per Deadline, the 10-episode series is described as a tense, Hitchcockian thriller and an examination of America's obsession with true crime in the 21st century. In Cape Fear, a storm is coming for happily married attorneys Amanda (Adams) and

Steve Bowden when Max Cady (played by Bardem), a notorious killer from their past, gets out of prison. Patrick Wilson gained fame through The Conjuring series. He has also starred in the Insidious franchise and directed 2023's Insidious: The Red Door.