



**Ganguly picks India as "favourites" for Test series against South Africa**

**Japan, China exchange barbs after PM Takaichi's remarks over Taiwan**

**Sunny Deol reaches Breach Candy Hospital to meet father Dharmendra**

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MARKET	
SENSEX	85555.35
NIFTY	25574.35
GOLD	319.07
SILVER	82.05
123,950.00	
153,699.00	
2,883.00	
5,971.00	

WEATHER	
Sunrise	6:41 AM
Sunset	5:30 PM
Moonrise	11:22 PM
Moonset	1:09 PM
Today's Prediction	
Maximum	26°C
Minimum	14°C
Tomorrow's Prediction	
Maximum	26°C
Minimum	14°C

# 8 killed, 9 vehicles gutted in car blast near Red Fort

**The explosion happened in slow-moving Hyundai i20 car around 7 p.m., says Amit Shah; several States on high alert**

Mitali Chandola  
New Delhi  
At least 8 people were killed and over a dozen others injured after a powerful explosion ripped through a slow-moving Hyundai i20 car near Gate No. 1 of the Red Fort (Lal Qila) Metro Station on Monday evening, triggering a massive fire that engulfed several nearby vehicles. The blast, which occurred around 6:50 pm at the Subhash Marg traffic signal, sent shockwaves through the heart of the capital, prompting an immediate security lockdown across Delhi and neighbouring states.



According to officials, three people were inside the car when it exploded at the busy intersection, which was crowded with commuters and shoppers at the time. The car, bearing a Haryana registration number, was later found to be registered in the name of Nadeem Khan. Police sources confirmed that the vehicle was moving slowly when the explosion occurred, leading to a fire that spread rapidly to other vehicles waiting at the signal.

At least half a dozen vehicles — including cars, e-rickshaws, and an autorickshaw — were gutted. Eyewitnesses described scenes of chaos and horror as flames rose high into the evening sky, and bystanders rushed to help the injured. "I saw flames from my house and rushed down. The explosion was so powerful that it shook everything," said Rajdhar Pandey, a local resident. Another resident described the sound as deafening, saying it felt like the "end of the world."

Fire department officials said they received the first distress call at 6:55 pm, and seven fire tenders were immediately dispatched to the scene. The blaze was brought under control by 7:29 pm. A spokesperson for the Delhi Fire Services confirmed that the explosion triggered a chain of fires, damaging several vehicles in the vicinity.

Condolences to those who have lost their loved ones in the blast in Delhi earlier this evening. May the injured recover at the earliest. Those affected are being assisted by authorities. Reviewed the situation with Home Minister Amit Shah Ji and other officials.

-Narendra Modi, PM

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**Woman with AK-47 among 3 docs arrested with 2900 kg of explosives**



Faridabad  
Eight people, including three doctors, were arrested and 2,900 kg of explosives seized with the uncovering of a "white collar" terror module involving the Jaish-e-Mohammed and Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind and spanning Kashmir, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, officials said on Monday. Among those arrested following a 15-day operation were Kashmir's Dr Muzammil Ganai in Faridabad and Lucknow's Dr Shaheen who was brought by air to Srinagar for custodial interrogation, officials said. An AK-47 rifle was found in her car. The joint operation by the police forces of Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana as well as central agencies CONTD ON PAGE-2

## Phase 2 of Bihar polls today, Nitish ministers in fray

New Delhi  
Electoral fortunes of 1,302 candidates, including over half a dozen ministers in the Nitish Kumar government, will be sealed on Tuesday with 3.70 crore voters eligible to exercise their franchise across 122 assembly segments in the second and final phase of the high-stakes Bihar polls.

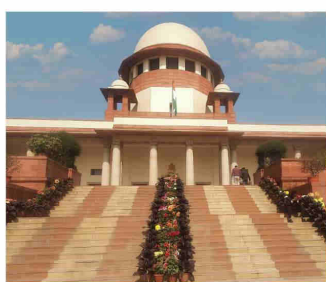


For the ruling National Democratic Alliance and the opposition INDIA bloc, the final round of polling is being seen as a crucial test to retain the support of various groups with complex caste and community dynamics. The districts going to polls on November 11 include West Champaran, East Champaran, Sitamarhi, Madhubani, Supaul, Araria and Kishanganj, and all these share borders with Nepal. Most of these districts

fall in the Seemanchal region, which has a high concentration of Muslim population, making it a high-stakes target for both the INDIA bloc, which banks on the support of the minority community, as well as the ruling NDA, which alleges that the opposition is "protecting infiltrators". Security has been beefed up across Bihar for the second phase of the assembly polls with over 4 lakh personnel engaged in election duties, officials said. Prominent candidates include Bijendra Prasad Yadav, a veteran Janata Dal-United leader and the most senior member of the state cabinet, who seeks to retain his Supaul seat for a record eighth term. Similar is the case of his cabinet colleague Prem Kumar, who belongs to the Bharatiya Janata Party and is trying his luck from Gaya Town, which he has won seven times, on the trot, since 1990. Agency

## SC to take up challenge to EC's pan-India SIR move

New Delhi  
The Supreme Court is scheduled to commence hearing pleas challenging the Election Commission's decision to conduct pan-India Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls on Tuesday.



A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joydeepa Bagchi, which is scheduled to commence hearing pleas challenging the poll panel's decision on the pan-India Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, said any fresh matter needs to be mentioned for listing before Chief Justice of India B R Gavai. "We are only seized of Bihar SIR matters and any fresh petition with regard to other states needs to be mentioned for listing before the Chief Justice of India. "We don't know whether other matters will also

be allocated to us. It all depends on the CJJI, the bench told the counsel appearing for the West Bengal unit of Congress seeking urgent listing of a plea filed by the party. The West Bengal Congress and leaders of other political parties in the state have moved the apex court challenging

DMK challenging the decision of the Election Commission (EC) to conduct the exercise in Tamil Nadu. The CPI-M has also moved the apex court challenging the constitutional validity of the EC's directive to conduct the SIR exercise in Tamil Nadu, terming the process "arbitrary, illegal, and unconstitutional". Meanwhile, the AIADMK has filed an application supporting the poll panel's decision to conduct the exercise in Tamil Nadu, calling it a "legitimate and necessary" exercise to uphold the sanctity of elections and prevent voter fraud. On November 7, the top court agreed to hear pleas challenging the EC's decision to conduct pan-India SIR of electoral rolls on November 11. Agency

## SC seeks Centre's reply on plea for implementation of women's quota law

New Delhi  
The Supreme Court on Monday sought the response of the Centre to examine a plea seeking implementation of the 2023 Nari Shakti Vandan Act which reserves one-third seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the state assemblies. A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and R Mahadevan issued notice to the Centre while observing that women were the largest minority in the country. "Our Preamble to the Constitution of India says all citizens are en-

stituted to political and social equality. Who is the largest minority in this country? It is the women. It's almost 48 per cent. This is about the political equality of women," Justice Nagarathna said. Appearing for petitioner Jaya Thakur,

senior advocate Shobha Gupta said it is unfortunate that women have to move the court for representation after 75 years of independence of the country. She submitted that the Act reserves one-third of the total seats in the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies based on data. The bench said enforcement of the law is the prerogative of the executive and no mandamus can be issued in these matters. "The courts have limitations when interfering with such policy matters," Justice Nagarathna said. Jaya Thakur, in her plea filed through advocate Varun Thakur, has sought the implementation of the Act without waiting for the conduct of a fresh delimitation exercise. She said in her plea, "The petitioner herein

prefers the present writ petition under Article 32 of the Constitution of India for the mandamus direction to declare the clog i.e. after delimitation is undertaken for these purposes after the relevant figures for the first census of One Hundred and Sixth Amendment Act 2023 as 'void-ab-initio' for immediate implementation of the 33 per cent Women Reservation, as per the constitution (One Hundred and Twenty Eight Amendment) Act, 2023 (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam) in its true letter and spirit." Agency

## UP to make singing Vande Mataram compulsory in schools

New Delhi  
A mid an ongoing controversy over the national song, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday said singing Vande Mataram will be made compulsory in every school and educational institution of the state. Addressing an 'Ekta Yatra' (Unity March) event in Gorakhpur, he said this step would inspire feelings of reverence and pride among citizens towards 'Bharat Mata' and the motherland. A political row over the national song erupted after Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently said that dropping key stanzas of the song



in 1937 had 'sown the seeds of Partition' and such a 'divisive mindset' remained a challenge for the country, remarks seen as an attack on the Congress. The Bharatiya Janata Party also accused the Congress of pandering to a 'communal agenda' under Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership by adopting a truncated version of the song that year. The Congress hit back sharply, alleging that Modi had 'insulted' the 1937 Congress Working Committee and Rabi Ray, who had suggested adopting only the first two stanzas. Agency



NEWS IN BRIEF

Tractor manufacturing unit to be set up in Yamuna City

Noida
A tractor manufacturing unit will be set up in the Yamuna Authority area. The Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) has issued a Letter of Intent (LOI) to New Holland Company for 100 acres of land for this purpose.

Tractor engines and other equipment will be manufactured here. YEIDA CEO RK Singh said that many companies are coming forward to invest near the airport. On Monday, tractor manufacturing company New Holland also demanded 100 acre of land to set up its unit in the area. The company will invest Rs 5000 crore in the area which will provide direct and indirect employment to thousands of youth.

An agreement has been reached to give land to the company in sector-8D after which the proposal has been sent to Invest UP and after getting permission from here the land will be allotted to the company.

Earlier an agreement has also been reached to give land to Escort Kabota Company in sector-10. The company will be given 200 acre of land. This company will manufacture tractor engines and other equipment in the area. The company will invest around Rs 6,000 crore in two phases. Till now two companies manufacturing tractors and related equipment have come forward in the area. New Holland also has a plant in Greater Noida.

GreNo Authority to set up open gyms in 17 more villages

Noida
The Greater Noida (GreNo) Authority is going to set up open gyms in 17 more villages including Aichhar, Murshidpur and Gharbara which fall in Jewar assembly constituency.

The authority has started working on this. Space has been identified in the village government school premises and playground. The tender will be issued soon after preparing the estimate. Earlier, tender has been issued for 18 villages. The agency which supplies and installs the equipments will also maintain them for three years.

Jewar MLA Dharendra Singh had also demanded the installation of open gyms in the villages. Nagesh Singh, senior manager of the authority's work circle 8, stated that in the second phase, open gyms will be established in 17 villages in the area. Space has been identified in government schools and playgrounds in the selected villages.

After completing the tender process, work will begin in the next 2-3 months. The selected company will also maintain the equipment for three years. It's worth noting that open gyms have already been installed in parks in most sectors of Greater Noida.

On the lines of sectors, the facility of open gyms will also be provided in the villages of the area. Preparations for this have been started in the villages of Jewar assembly constituency. Open gyms will be set up in all the villages in a phased manner. After 18 villages, now the process of setting up open gyms is going on in 17 more villages.

Instructions have been given to start the work by issuing tender. This will create awareness about health among the villagers, said Ravi Kumar NG, CEO Greater Noida Authority.

Over 1,000 govt schools to go under digital safety scan

New Delhi
From drone surveys and 360-degree imaging, to on-site inspection and AI-based digital analysis, the Delhi government is set to launch an extensive exercise to assess, document and upgrade the infrastructure and safety of more than 1,000 government schools across the city.

According to an official document, the project aims to create detailed digital profiles of 1,086 government schools operating from 799 building premises across the city. Each profile will capture information about existing infrastructure, facilities and their physical condition.

The digital documentation will also integrate records related to the structural stability and safety of school buildings. The project will help the government identify gaps, prioritise repairs and plan long-term improvements in a data-driven manner, officials said.



The selected agency will use advanced tools such as drones, high-resolution imaging and 360-degree room documentation to survey each school. The collected data will be uploaded in real time through a web-based application designed to automatically generate analytical reports and highlight deficiencies against standards set by agencies like the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the document stated.

"The idea is to ensure that information about every government school's infrastructure is available in one place. This will help in better planning, timely maintenance, and improving safety standards," an education department official said.

The web-based application will include features such as GPS tracking, role-based access control, data validation and customised report generation, the document said.

The agency will also be responsible for assessing the condition of assets such as classrooms, toilets, electrical fittings, furniture, laboratory and sports equipment, and other facilities. The assets will be categorised under conditions such as "good", "minor repair", "major repair" or "replacement needed", it highlighted.

In addition to digital profiling, the agency will carry out safety and structural stability assessments of all school buildings. This will include visual inspections and non-destructive tests such as

rebound hammer and ultrasonic pulse velocity tests, under the supervision of qualified structural engineers, the department said.

It further mentions that reports of buildings identified as structurally weak or requiring major repair will be vetted by reputed technical institutions like IITs or NITs and based on the findings, the agency will recommend specific actions such as waterproofing, retrofitting, or demolition where necessary.

The department said the exercise will create a comprehensive digital inventory of Delhi's government school infrastructure, a first-of-its-kind project to support policy decisions and ensure safer, more resilient learning spaces for students.

MCD to launch accrual-based double entry accounting system from Nov 15

New Delhi
The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) will roll out an Accrual-Based Double Entry Accounting System at its headquarters from November 15, marking a major step towards financial transparency and modernisation of civic governance.

The system, which replaces the existing manual and cash-based accounting process, will enable real-time recording and monitoring of all financial transactions, including journal vouchers, bills, and payments.

Officials said the move is expected to significantly improve efficiency, accuracy, and accountability across MCD departments. During a recent review of the system integrator of the Finance and Accounts module of the UP-



YOG Portal under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). MCD successfully prepared the monthly account for September 2025.

This included income and expenditure statements, trial balance, ledger postings, and journal entries -- marking the transition towards accrual-based accounting.

Until now, all accounting and payment processes within the civic body were managed manually. The new online double entry

system is expected to "revolutionize the way financial data is recorded, processed, and monitored", the civic body said in a statement.

MCD Commissioner Ashwani Kumar said the initiative is a "key reform measure" aimed at bringing greater transparency and accountability to the Corporation's financial management.

"The implementation of the Online Double Entry Accounting System will help in better monitoring of funds, improved service delivery, and enhanced trust among citizens and stakeholders," he said.

Delhi government working to resolve legacy problems says Indraj Singh

Staff Reporter
New Delhi

The Social Welfare Minister of Delhi, Ravinder Indraj Singh, on Wednesday, discussed the issues caused by the negligence and corruption of the previous government in sectors such as education, health, and public welfare.

He emphasized that the current Delhi government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, aims to provide lasting solutions to these problems and build a better Delhi with the support of its citizens.

During a roadshow in Chandni Chowk, where BJP candidate Sunil Kumar Gupta filed his nomination for the upcoming Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) by-election, the Minister encouraged residents to support



the BJP for a decisive victory.

He expressed that their backing would contribute to a new vision for Delhi's development and address the community's needs.

Indraj Singh mentioned plans to develop Chandni Chowk into a cultural her-

itage hub, improving accessibility for traders and pedestrians.

He promised to tackle longstanding issues like parking and sanitation and to support local shops and businesses.

The government is also focused on enhancing economic growth by pro-

moting Ease of Doing Business through a Single Window System to simplify processes for traders.

The event was attended by several BJP leaders and local representatives, reinforcing the party's commitment to community welfare and development.

PWD to integrate live monitoring of anti-smog guns to reduce air pollution

New Delhi
As the city's air quality continues to deteriorate, the Public Works Department (PWD) has moved to tighten its monitoring of anti-smog operations, officials said on Monday.

Officials have been directed to enhance the live tracking system of around 200 anti-smog guns deployed across the capital to curb pollution.

"Several companies have provided the anti-smog guns, each having different individual live monitoring systems on different mobile applications, which is making it difficult to navigate," a senior government officer told PTI.

Recently, PWD issued an order to hire water-sprinkling anti-smog guns fitted on a truck and sanctioned a budget of Rs 5.88 crore.

Directions have been given to bring all the trucks onto one single live-tracking platform which can be viewed through mobile phones by senior officers, he added.

As the air quality continues in the city to worsen, the government has been strict on anti-dust norms and taking action against violators.

To tackle road dust and vehicular pollution, around 90 metric tonnes of road dust had been collected through mechanical road sweeping (MRS) machines, while 1988 kilometres of roads have been cleaned through MRS, the govern-



budget of Rs 5.88 crore.

ment has said. According to officials, the PWD has also launched a special drive for deep cleaning and dust control along all its roads, including Right of Way (RoW) areas.

"Two hundred anti-smog guns have been tasked with deep cleaning at least 200 metres of road daily. The activities include removal of dust from road areas, cleaning of kerb channels and bell mouths, debris removal, and coordination with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi," officials said.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, in a high-level meeting, directed that all work be completed within 45 days, warning that strict action will be taken against any officer failing to meet the targets.

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Delhi's average AQI slightly better this year compared to 2024 CAQM

New Delhi

The average air quality in Delhi has shown a marginal improvement this year, with the AQI recorded at 175 between January 1 and November 9, compared to 189 during the same period last year, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) said on Monday.

The levels of PM2.5 and PM10 have also declined to 75 microgram per cubic metre and 170 microgram per cubic metre respectively, from 87 microgram per cubic metre and 191 microgram per cubic metre in 2024.

The commission in a statement said a sharp decline in farm fire incidents has been observed in Punjab and Haryana.

Punjab reported 4,062 cases between September 15 and November 9 this year,

down by 35.2 per cent from 6,266 during the same period of last year.

Haryana recorded a 65.3 per cent reduction, with only 333 fire events compared to 959 in 2024.

Senior CAQM officials are regularly reviewing the situation with state governments and other agencies to ensure strict enforcement of statutory directions against stubble burning, the panel said.

The statement said over 25 lakh tonnes of legacy waste have been bio-mined in Delhi, while an additional 7,000 tonnes per day of waste-to-energy and 750 TPD of bio-CNG capacity are being developed. Surveillance of landfill sites has been strengthened with CCTV cameras, methane detectors and fire-suppression systems.

Measures under Stages I

and II of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) are in force across NCR since October to prevent further deterioration in air quality.

CAQM said all inter-city buses from NCR states now operate on cleaner fuels and entry of BS-III and below commercial goods vehicles into Delhi has been banned from November 1.

Nearly 96 per cent of NCR industries have shifted to approved fuels and over 1,500 non-compliant units have been shut.

Over 4.37 crore saplings have been planted across NCR so far this year, exceeding annual targets, the commission said.

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PUBLIC NOTICE
That My Client SMT. NIRMA LA DEVI W/O LATE SH. OM PRAKASH R/O, C-27A, VISHNU GARDEN, WEST DISTRICT, NEW DELHI-110018, have severed all their relations with her son Mr. YASHPAL S/O, SMT. Nir-mala Devi and S/o, Late Sh. OM Prakash R/O, C-27A, VISHNU GARDEN, WEST DISTRICT, NEW DELHI-110018. For all purposes and intends being disobedient and disrespectful and further disown him from all their movable and immovable properties and my client are not liable to anybody for his acts and deeds."
SATNAM SINGH
ADVOCATE & ASSOCIATES
CHAMBER NO. 479 NEW LAWYERS CHAMBERS PATIALA HOUSE COURT, NEW DELHI-110001

Man seeking job for sister shoots self dead at Delhi's Jantar Mantar

New Delhi
A 40-year-old Madhya Pradesh man allegedly shot himself dead at the Jantar Mantar here on Monday.

Lokendra, a native of MP's Morena district, had come seeking a job for his sister in the Madhya Pradesh education department on compassionate grounds, police said.

In July as well he had come for a protest here, an officer said.

Abachol, Lokendra ran a grocery store in Morena, and had come to the Jantar Mantar around 7.30 am.

He had tea at Jantar Mantar and around 8.30 am, shot himself dead with a country-made pistol near the metal detector installed by the Delhi Police.



to work as a peon in Madhya Pradesh's Department of Education. When he died in 2019, the deceased wanted the government to give his sister a job in the department on compassionate grounds.

His sister was also ousted by her in-law's house after her husband died," the officer said.

A PCR call was received by the police at 8.40 am informing them that a man had shot himself dead, the officer said.

Police are verifying where the man got the pistol, he said.

Chandni Chowk market to be closed on Tuesday after blast near Red Fort

New Delhi
The Chandni Chowk market will be closed on Tuesday following a powerful blast near the Red Fort that killed at least eight people and injured 24 others, the market association said.

"The shops in Chandni Chowk will be closed on Tuesday as there is fear among traders after the blast," said Sanjay Bhargav, president of the Chandni Chowk Traders Association. Bhargav, whose shop is a few hundred metres from the blast site, said the explosion was so strong that their entire building shook. "There was chaos in the market as people started running," he said.

Following the incident, several traders' associations have sought increased security arrangements in



crowded commercial areas.

The New Delhi Traders' Association (NDTA) said several abandoned cars are parked in Connaught Place inner circle parking lots.

"The parking lots are full of illegal hawkers' goods being used as storehouses. Pedestrian corridors are blocked by big stalls, leaving little room for movement or escape during emergencies. We have requested the NDMC enforcement wing and Delhi Police to take immediate action," Atul Bhargav of the NDTA

Advertisement for Yamuna Expressway Authority (YEIDA) regarding the recruitment of 200 staff members. The advertisement includes details about the recruitment process, eligibility criteria, and contact information for the authority.

# Three-way battle set for MCD bypolls as BJP, AAP, Congress step in

**New Delhi**  
A triangular contest is on cards for the November 30 bypolls to 12 MCD wards, as candidates of all three major parties — the BJP, AAP and Congress — filed their nominations on Monday.

The BJP candidates filed their nominations with much fanfare after performing a 'havan' and taking out roadshows joined by senior leaders, including Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and Union minister Harsh Malhotra, among others.

The chief minister, ministers, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva, and Mayor Raja Iqbal Singh held a meeting at the party office after the nominations to discuss poll preparations and campaigning, party leaders said.

Gupta participated in the 'havan' and attended the roadshows of BJP candidates from Shalimar Bagh



B, Anita Jain, and Veena Asija from Ashok Vihar.

Gupta represented the Shalimar Bagh B ward before being elected as an MLA and becoming the chief minister after the BJP won the Assembly polls in February this year.

The previous governments in Delhi indulged in politics for which development of the municipal wards took a backseat, she alleged.

"We want every ward in



Delhi to be neat and clean. We will contest all the 12 wards with the blessings and affection of the people for the goal of public service," she said.

The chief minister appealed to the people of Delhi to vote in large numbers for the BJP candidates, expressing hope for a "stellar performance" in the bypolls.

The BJP, AAP and Congress are contesting all the 12 wards, of which nine were previously held by the



saffron party and the remaining three by the AAP.

The bypolls are dominated by female candidates with the BJP fielding eight, AAP six and the Congress nine women nominees.

The AAP candidates for the bypolls filed their nominations on the final day of the process, and expressed confidence about their victory. Rajan Arora, the party's candidate for the Naraina ward, was accompanied by former MLA

Durgesh Pathak during the nomination filing process. Other party candidates, including Anuj Sharma from Sangam Vihar A, and Geeta Rawat from Vinod Nagar, also filed their nominations accompanied by senior AAP leaders.

AAP MLA Kuldeep Kumar, who accompanied Rawat, said people will choose the path of honest politics and development by voting for the AAP.

Delhi BJP president Sachdeva said people will vote to ensure the party's victory and strengthen its resolve for "Baddo Dilli, Sanwaro Dilli" (change Delhi, beautify Delhi).

Union Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways, Harsh Malhotra, accompanied Vinod Nagar candidate Sarla Choudhary, while Chandni Chowk MP Praveen Khandelwal joined Suman Gupta from Chandni Chowk and Sunil Sharma from Chandni Mahal.

Delhi Social Welfare Minister Ravindra Indraj also joined the party nominees for the nomination filing process.

New Delhi MP Bansuri Swaraj accompanied BJP candidate Anjum Mandal from Greater Kailash, along with local MLA Shikha Roy.

West Delhi MP Kamaljeet Sehrawat and Delhi Health Minister Pankaj Singh joined the nomination processions of Dwarka B candidate Manisha Sehrawat and Dichaon Kalan nominee Rekha Rani.

Meanwhile, Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav urged the voters to vote for his party candidates to defeat both the BJP and AAP, and show a mirror to their "arrogance and deceitful politics".

"People of Delhi should vote keeping in mind the alarming pollution, worsening law and order, and the heaps of filth all around Delhi due to the failures of the BJP and AAP," he said.

## Delhi Cong appeals to voters for support in MCD by-polls

Staff Reporter  
New Delhi

Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Devender Yadav here on Monday said that now the time had come for the people of Delhi to teach a lesson to the arrogance of both the BJP and the AAP in the MCD by-elections to be held in 12 wards on November 30.

Yadav appealed to the people of Delhi to show the mirror to the BJP and AAP for their arrogance by voting for the Congress in the MCD by-elections. The people were also fed up with the deteriorating law and order condition in the capital.

He said that the Rekha Gupta government was manipulating the pollution to cover up its failures and mislead the people.

The he Congress candidates were on good wickets to win the by-elections to the 12 MCD Wards (MCD) with impressive margins as the people were totally disillusioned with the eight-month old Gupta government of the BJP and

the corrupt the AAP, which only looted the capital over 11 years of misrule, Yadav further said.

He said that both BJP and AAP misled the people with false promises to get their votes, but after gaining power in Delhi and in the MCD, the AAP focused its attention solely on misappropriating the tax payers' money at the expense of people's welfare and development. The Congress selected the candidates after careful consideration of their ground-level works in their respective wards and their popularity among the voters.

Yadav said that Delhi Congress was confident that its candidates would emerge victorious with impressive margins in the by-elections.

The Congress had always focused on good governance in the MCD with massive development works and implemented schemes beneficial to the people, particularly the poor and the downtrodden, when it was in power in the corporation and in Delhi.

## MCD bypolls: 74 women candidates among 133 nominations



New Delhi

A total 133 nominations, including those from BJP, AAP and Congress candidates, have been filed for the bypolls to 12 MCD wards scheduled on November 30, according to a statement from Delhi State Election Commission.

On the final day of filing nominations, 132 candidates submitted their papers, it said.

Out of the total 133 nominations filed for the bypolls, 74 were from female candidates and 59 by male candidates, it said.

The scrutiny of nominations will be held on November 12 and the last date for withdrawal of candidature is November 15. Polling will take place on November 30 and counting of votes will be held on December 3, the Commission said.

The Commission expresses appreciation for the coordinated efforts of all election officials and stake holders for ensuring a smooth, orderly and transparent nomination process. The State Election Commission reaffirms its commitment to conduct free, fair, transparent and peaceful elections across all wards of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi," it said.

The BJP previously held the nine of the 12 wards of Municipal Corporation of Delhi that fell vacant as the sitting councilors were elected MLAs in the Assembly polls held in February. The remaining three were held by the AAP.

## Fake KYC racket busted in Greater Noida, two held for defrauding government

Amar Saini  
Greater Noida

The BISRAKH police have uncovered a fraud racket that used fake Know Your Customer (KYC) documents to register firms and siphon off government revenue. Acting on intelligence inputs, the police arrested two members of the gang who allegedly used forged Aadhaar and PAN cards to open and operate multiple company bank accounts for fraudulent transactions.

According to officials, the accused—Praveen Kumar, a resident of Sasrauni village under Bahadurgarh police station in Hapur district, and Satendra Singh, a resident of Biharaz village under Syana police station in Bulandshahr district—had been running several firms under fake identities. The companies included Ridhi Sidhi Enterprises, Bhawani Impex, Jhalak Enterprises, Gaurav Enterprises, and Damini India International. These entities were reportedly used to process transactions worth crores of rupees, primarily to claim fake GST refunds and input



tax credits. During the operation, the police recovered a mobile phone, ten rubber seals, and several forged documents from the possession of the accused. Preliminary investigations suggest that the duo created multiple fictitious firms to manipulate tax records and cheat the government exchequer of substantial sums.

DCP Central Zone Shakil Mohan Awasthi said the arrests mark a significant step in dismantling a wider network engaged in tax fraud and forgery. "The accused were using fake KYC documents to open accounts in the names of different firms and were involved in fraudulent financial activities under the guise of legitimate business operations," he said.

## Noida Police Nab Bike-Borne Chain Snatchers, Recover Gold and weapons

Amar Saini  
Noida

In a swift and well-coordinated operation, the Sector-113 police in Noida have arrested two members of an active chain-snatching gang that had been terrorizing residents across the city and the NCR region. The arrests mark a major breakthrough in curbing a series of street crimes that had left several people, especially women, living in fear.

According to officials, the gang primarily targeted women and pedestrians traveling alone. Riding on motorcycles, the accused



would approach unsuspecting victims, snatch gold chains from their necks, and flee within moments, making it difficult for police or bystanders to react.

Police launched the operation after receiving a tip-off about the gang's movements

in the area. Acting swiftly, officers set up checkpoints and managed to apprehend the suspects before they could escape. During the search, police recovered four broken gold chains valued at around ₹3 lakh, a motorcycle without a registration

number, ₹500 in cash, a 315 bore country-made pistol, and live cartridges.

Investigators revealed that the gang had been active for a long time, operating across multiple neighborhoods and frequently shifting hideouts to evade capture. "They would strike in one locality and move to another the very next day," said Additional DCP Sumit Kumar Shukla of the Noida Zone. He added that police are now interrogating the accused to identify other members of the network and trace their previous crimes.

## Doctors at Apollo Fertility Help Delhi Couple Conceive After 4-Year Wait

Doctors help 38-year-old woman with complex health issues conceive on the first attempt of IVF treatment

New Delhi

Apollo Fertility has successfully helped a Delhi-based couple achieve pregnancy after four years of infertility, using advanced medical expertise and personalized care. Despite several overlapping health challenges, the team at Apollo Fertility Rohini ensured a positive outcome, reinforcing their commitment to providing compassionate and effective fertility solutions.

When 38-year-old Astha (name changed) first visited Apollo Fertility Rohini with her husband in April 2025, she was in a state of anxiety and had lost hope after two previous failed IVF cycles elsewhere. Her earlier doctors had advised her to consider IVF with donor eggs at another clinic in Lucknow. However, Astha was determined to try once more with her own eggs, which led her to seek treatment at Apollo Fertility.

"We were informed of Astha's previous laparoscopic myomectomy - a minimally invasive procedure



to remove uterine fibroids—and her treatment for hydrosalpinx, a condition in which one or both fallopian tubes are blocked and filled with fluid, preventing fertilization," shared Dr. Pooja Jain, Infertility and IVF Specialist, Apollo Fertility, Rohini.

"But these were not her only challenges. Initial evaluations revealed a severely diminished ovarian reserve, with an Anti-Müllerian Hormone (AMH) level of 0.31. Additionally, she was diagnosed with uncontrolled diabetes, a condition she was previously unaware of," Dr.

Jain said. With a clear understanding of her medical condition, Dr. Pooja Jain formulated a personalized treatment plan. Astha was offered an individualized IVF stimulation protocol based on her medical history, with counselling for IVF using her own eggs and embryo pooling if required. Two good-quality blastocysts were successfully developed in single stimulation cycle. Following the embryo transfer, Astha conceived in the very first attempt—using her own eggs.

"Testicular Sperm Aspiration (TESA) was not required for her husband which was used at other centres in previous IVF cycles," Dr. Jain added. "Astha is now 28 weeks pregnant. This case is a powerful reminder of the many health challenges couples may face while trying to conceive. With her strong determination to be her own gametes, we provided the most sensitive and advanced care possible. Apollo Fertility remains at the forefront of managing complex fertility issues with next-generation technology and comprehensive treatment support."

## Spiritual dialogue at Maitreyi College inspires conversations on Mental Well-Being

Staff Reporter  
New Delhi

A thought-provoking lecture on "Indian Spiritual Traditions and Mental Well-Being: Perspectives on Stress and Suicide Prevention" was held at Maitreyi College, University of Delhi, drawing an enthusiastic audience of students, faculty, and guests. The event, organized under the guidance of Principal Prof. Haritima Chopra, marked the first academic initiative of the newly established Vidushi Arundhati Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems (VAC-IKS). It was jointly conducted by VAC-IKS and the National Service Scheme (NSS) Unit of the college, in collaboration with the Council of Indian Studies and Research (CISIR), New Delhi.

The session opened with the Mangalacharan, Ganesh Vandana, and lamp-lighting, setting a reflective tone for the day. Prof. Jyoti Singh, Vice Principal, welcomed participants and spoke about the growing importance of emotional balance in academic and professional life. Dr. Pramod Kumar Singh, Coordinator and Nodal Officer of VAC-IKS, highlighted the Centre's vision of integrating Indian philosophical



wisdom with modern interdisciplinary education. The keynote address was delivered by motivational life mentor MAATERG, who shared an engaging perspective on managing stress through self-awareness and spiritual introspection. He explained that stress is not a flaw but a signal from the mind seeking rest and realignment. Outer circumstances, he said, are ever-changing, and true peace must be found within. Emphasizing conscious living, he guided the audience through techniques such as mindful breathing, self-dialogue, and reflective attention, urging participants to adopt these practices in everyday life.

An interactive Q&A session followed, where students

openly discussed academic pressure, emotional health, and personal growth. MAATERG's responses, marked by empathy and practical wisdom, resonated deeply with the young audience.

The programme also saw participation from a Major-ranked Indian Army officer currently posted in Jammu and young entrepreneurs from South India. Faculty members including Dr. Meenu Kumari, Dr. Kamal Rani Garg, Dr. Neelima Ojha, Dr. Nupur Chawla, and Dr. Hemlata Rani were among those present. The event concluded with a Vote of Thanks by Prof. Smriti Singh, NSS Programme Officer, who expressed gratitude to all collaborators and participants for making the initiative a meaningful success.

## Body parts scattered everywhere sky turned red Eyewitnesses of blast near Red Fort

New Delhi

Mangled bodies lying on vehicles and road, pieces of flesh scattered on the streets and flames rising up to the sky. Witnesses recalled in graphic detail the aftermath of a high-intensity explosion that ripped through a slow-moving car close to the Red Fort metro station here on Monday.

While I was standing and talking to someone, a body part... a hand, with the man's

shirt still on it, fell right behind me. Amit Mudgal (36) said.

Recalling the terrifying moments following the explosion, he said, "About 20 minutes ago, the situation was unbelievable. There was a huge blast, and within seconds, the sky was covered in red smoke," he said.

"Everyone was screaming and running for cover," Mudgal recalled. He said the impact was so

severe that human remains were scattered across the street. "As I moved towards the fire, I helped several people get into ambulances."

An injured eyewitness, who had a wound on his forehead, said the explosion appeared to have originated from a car parked nearby. "I am an auto rickshaw driver. There was a car in front of my auto, most probably a Maruti Swift. I don't know how it happened, but

something in that car suddenly blasted," he said.

A high-intensity explosion ripped through a car near the Red Fort metro station on Monday evening, gutting several vehicles and killing at least eight people, officials said.

Twenty-four people were injured in the blast that took place on a busy evening when the area was milling with people. The injured were taken to the LNJP hos-

pital, a few kilometres away. Eyewitnesses said several vehicles were destroyed and glass panes of shops and even those at the nearby metro station were shattered.

"I was at the guardwara when I heard a strong sound. We couldn't make out what it was, it was that loud," said another resident.

A shopkeeper said the tremors were powerful enough to shake entire buildings.

Echoes of past Red Fort blast brings back memories of Delhi's dark days

New Delhi  
Delhi was jolted once again after 14 years, as a powerful explosion near the Red Fort metro station on Monday evening killed at least eight people and injured 24 others.

The high-intensity blast gutted several vehicles and triggered panic in the busy area, which was teeming with commuters and visitors at the time. The injured were rushed to LNJIP Hospital, located a few kilometres away.

For a city that has often been at the heart of the country's most terrible terror strikes, the sound of another explosion felt like an unwelcome echo from the past.

Delhi's historic markets, monuments and public spaces have, time and again, found themselves on the frontline of violence, each incident etching deep scars in its collective memory.

# Delay negligence in delivery of civic amenities won't be tolerated: CM Saini

Komal Ramola Gurugram  
Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Monday said Gurugram is the fastest-growing city in the state and emphasised that any laxity or negligence in operation of civic amenities would not be tolerated.

He directed officials to submit a detailed report on the status of water supply, sewerage systems, and sewage treatment plants in the city at the earliest.

The chief minister said this while chairing a meeting of the District Public Relations and Grievance Redressal Committee in Gurugram. Pataudi MLA Binli Chaudhary, Sohna MLA Tejpal Tanwar and Gurugram MLA Mukesh Sharma were also present in the meeting.

According to an official statement, a total of 17 complaints were taken up during the meeting. Of these, the chief minister addressed 15, while two were kept pending



Haryana Chief Minister, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini presiding over the meeting of District Public Relations and Grievance Redressal Committee in Gurugram on November 10, 2025. M.L.A. Sh. Mulesh Sharma and Deputy Commissioner, Gurugram Sh. Ajay Kumar are also seen in the picture.

for further consideration. He directed officials to submit a status report on the pending cases at the next meeting.

During the meeting, the chief minister directed stringent action against the tanker mafia operating in the city. He asserted that those involved in the illegal supply of water in Gurugram would not be spared, saying if anyone is found illegally supplying or purifying water, the concerned department must take immediate action in accordance

with the rules.

He also instructed the police commissioner to promptly address citizens' complaints in such cases and ensure the station house officer of the concerned area acts on a priority basis.

Saini took serious note of complaints regarding builders and directed officials that builders must ensure residents of their projects receive the basic amenities specified in the agreement such as water, electricity, sewerage, roads, and security, on time. He said any

builder failing to comply or acting contrary to the agreement would face strict action.

The chief minister also immediately addressed a complaint regarding delays in online Intkal (change of land ownership) registration and ordered an investigation against the Naib Tehsildar.

During the meeting, Manveer Singh, sarpanch of Bhoran Kala village, reported that the work of laying sewer lines in the village has been ongoing for the past three years but re-

**He directed officials to submit a detailed report on the status of water supply, sewerage systems, and sewage treatment plants in the city at the earliest.**

mains incomplete. During this period, the department had dug up the entire route, causing significant inconvenience to villagers.

Officials explained that the delay was due to pending permissions and no-objection certificates from various departments.

Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini took serious note of the situation, stating that delays in public-related work are unacceptable and directed that immediate action be taken against the officer responsible for the delay and his increment should be stopped, so that such pendencies do not recur in the future.

# Sonipat Jhajjar corridor emerges as Haryana's pollution hotspot

TSN/Chandigarh  
A month-long hyperlocal analysis by Respirometer Living Sciences, using its AtlasAQ platform that integrates data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and Google AirView+, has identified the Sonipat-Jhajjar corridor near the Delhi border as Haryana's most polluted zone in October 2025. The state exceeded national air quality limits on 16 of 31 days, with PM2.5 levels fluctuating between Satisfactory and Poor across most districts.

Using a detailed 10x10 km mapping grid, the study uncovered pollution hotspots often invisible to conventional monitoring networks.

The most polluted sites were Sakhoti-R (Sonipat, 122.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup>), Sankhol (Jhajjar, 108.8 µg/m<sup>3</sup>), and Sasroli (Jhajjar, 106 µg/m<sup>3</sup>), followed by Jhanj Khurd (Jind, 83.1 µg/m<sup>3</sup>) and Karnal (74.3 µg/m<sup>3</sup>).

"Our analysis shows that Haryana's border towns share the same

**Official CPCB data also listed Gurugram (154.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup>), Charkhi Dadrli (140.7 µg/m<sup>3</sup>), and Sonipat (127.8 µg/m<sup>3</sup>) among Haryana's most polluted cities during the month.**

airshed as Delhi. The Sonipat-Jhajjar corridor mirrors Delhi's pollution peaks, underscoring the urgent need for joint monitoring and coordinated action between the two states," said Ronak Setia, Founder and CEO, Respirometer Living Sciences.

The study recorded peak pollution episodes on October 20-21, when PM2.5 concentrations soared to 287 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, more than four times the national safe limit of 60 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. These spikes were attributed to stagnant weather, festive activities, and emissions from crop residue burning across the region.

# Punjab Farmers Lead 'Stubble Revolution' as Centre Lauds 85% Drop in Farm Fires

TSN/Chandigarh  
Punjab's fields are making headlines for all the right reasons this harvest season. The Centre has hailed the Aam Aadmi Party government and the state's farmers for achieving what was once thought impossible—an 85 percent reduction in stubble burning incidents over the past three years, marking a major environmental turnaround for North India.



During his recent visit to the Rajpura Thermal Power Plant, Rajesh Verma, Chairman of the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), praised Punjab's farmers for leading what he described as a "stubble revolution." Instead of burning paddy residue, he said, farmers are now turning it into a source of income and a tool for sustainable energy generation.

"Rice straw has now become a source of income for farmers," Verma noted, highlighting how crop residue once seen as waste is now being used as biomass fuel in thermal plants. The initiative, he said, is helping reduce pollution while powering industries—an example of environmental and economic progress working hand in hand.

# Marengo Asia Hospitals makes Gurugram stroke ready with new emergency helpline

Gurugram  
In a unique initiative to raise awareness about stroke and the importance of timely treatment, Marengo Asia Hospitals, Gurugram has launched the city's first 24x7 Brain Stroke Helpline 1800-309-0247, under its campaign "Strike Out Stroke (SOS)".

The helpline aims to provide immediate medical assistance to patients and their families when every second counts.



The campaign began with a special Sufi music concert designed to spread awareness about the early symptoms of stroke and the critical importance of the "golden hour" in treatment.

Renowned Sufi singer Ustadfa Zila Khan performed at the event, touching hearts and conveying a message of healing through her soulful renditions. The concert was held at Orana Conventions, Gurugram.

Dr Praveen Gupta, Chairman, Marengo Asia International Institute of Neuro and Spine (MAINS), Marengo Asia Hospitals, Gurugram, said, "Many patients reach hospitals late because their families fail to recognize the early signs of stroke. This helpline connects patients instantly with neurologists and emergency teams, leading to better treatment outcomes."

Dr Raajiv Singhal, Founding Member, Neuro sciences remain a core strategic priority for us, and we are consistently strengthening our capabilities — from infrastructure and technology to research and skill enhancement. This journey is rooted in effort, discipline, and an unwavering belief in our purpose — to make world-class neurological care accessible, outcomes-driven, and future-ready for every patient we serve."

Dr Saurabh Lal, Vice President and Facility Director, Marengo Asia Hospitals, Gurugram added, "Our vision is to make Gurugram a 'Stroke-Ready City'. With a 250-bed multi-specialty hospital, stroke ICU, rehabilitation unit, and a 24x7 expert neuro team, we are equipped to deliver comprehensive and advanced stroke care."

With these initiatives, Marengo Asia Hospitals has not only strengthened the landscape of advanced neuro care but has also used the power of music to deliver a strong message of health awareness to the community.

# UP on high alert after Delhi blast Adityanath orders strict policing



Lucknow:  
Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday ordered the police to remain on high alert in the wake of a blast at Red Fort that killed at least eight and wounded several.

The chief minister sought details of the incident from Director General of Police (DGP) Rajeev Krishna, an official statement issued here said.

Krishna issued a series of instructions to district police chiefs, asking them to stay on the ground and personally supervise security at sensitive and crowded areas.

Quick Response Teams (QRT), Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS), bomb disposal squads, and dog squads have been kept on standby, while foot patrol has been intensified, he said.

Police have been told to ensure strict checking of vehicles and keep a vigilant eye at metro stations, bus stands, railway stations, malls, and cinemas without causing inconvenience to the public, the DGP said in his directive.

Real-time analysis of CCTV feeds and active engagement of intelligence and local information networks have been ordered to ensure prompt reporting of any suspicious persons or activities.

In Aayodhya, Inspector General Praveen Kumar took to street checking vehicles.

In Varanasi too, police teams patrolled crowded areas, including Kashi Vishwanath temple, the railway station, and Sankat Mochan temple, officials said.

The police in Lucknow were seen in alert mode with senior officers on the ground.

Ghaziabad Additional Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) Alok Priyadarshi said that security has been beefed up at railway stations, bus stands, metro stations, and malls.

# Harivansh highlights Centre's Infrastructure and Connectivity Drive for Northeast Growth

TSN/Kohima:  
Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Harivansh, on Monday underlined the Union government's strong push for infrastructure and connectivity in the North East, calling it a cornerstone of the region's rising development story. Speaking at the inaugural session of the 22nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) India Region Zone III Conference in Nagaland, he said that over the past decade, focused investments and policy initiatives have begun transforming the social and economic landscape of the region.

"The commitment to spend 10 percent of the national budget in this region looked ambitious at the start, but year after year, this focus has shown us what can be achieved," he said. Harivansh noted that



the budgetary allocation for the North East, which stood at about ₹4,500 crore in 2014, has increased more than sevenfold to ₹1.8 lakh crore in the current financial year.

Citing significant progress in physical connectivity, he said that the region's national highway network has expanded by nearly 6,000 kilometres in the past

nearly 70 visits to the region and the frequent presence of Union Ministers reflect the government's emphasis on integrating the North East into India's broader development framework. "These visits and the focused attention on the region show that the North East is central to India's growth priorities," he said.

At the same time, the Deputy Chairman acknowledged the unique challenge faced by the northeastern states in balancing rapid development with environmental preservation. Though the region comprises only 8 percent of India's land area, it accounts for nearly 21 percent of the country's forest cover. He stressed the need for sustainable policies that ensure a reconciled development goals with climate commitments.

# Punjab Emerges as India's Litchi Powerhouse, Farmers reap fivefold profit under Mann Govt

TSN/Chandigarh  
Punjab has dethroned Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhnad to become India's new litchi hub, marking a breakthrough in fruit cultivation and export under Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's leadership. The state has recorded a surge in production, export, and farmer income, positioning itself as the country's emerging center for premium litchi exports.

According to official data, Punjab produced 71,490 metric tons of litchi in 2023-24, accounting for 12.39 percent of India's total production. This figure remains consistent in the current year. The fruit is now cultivated across 3,900 hectares in the districts of Pathankot, Gurdaspur, Navanshahr, Hoshiarpur and Ropar, with Pathankot alone contributing nearly 2,200 hectares. The Mann



government's push for crop diversification has provided farmers a viable alternative to the traditional wheat-paddy cycle, ensuring steady year-round income.

Punjab's litchi has now made its mark on global shelves. In 2024, the fruit reached London for the first time, where 10 quintals fetched prices five times higher than domestic rates. The following year, Punjab expanded its export

footprint with 1.5 metric tons shipped to Qatar and Dubai. Export orders for 600 quintals have already been secured for the current season, valued between ₹3 crore and ₹5 crore. The state's success is propelling it toward becoming India's foremost litchi export center.

The Mann government has introduced a series of support measures for litchi growers, including a 50 percent subsidy on packing boxes and crates, up to ₹50,000 per hectare for polyhouse sheet replacement, and ₹10,000 per acre assistance for drip irrigation systems. An investment of ₹50 crore is also being made in developing cold chain infrastructure. Newly established packhouses in Pathankot and Gurdaspur have cut logistics costs by up to 10 percent, boosting farmer profitability.

# Belém's Moment of Truth as the World Confronts Its Climate Promise

**T**housands of diplomats, scientists, and climate advocates are converging in Belém, Brazil, for COP30 — the thirtieth United Nations Climate Change Conference — amid rising urgency to bridge the gap between lofty climate pledges and real-world action. The gathering at the edge of the Amazon rainforest, the planet's largest tropical carbon sink, is far more than symbolic. It represents a defining test of global solidarity and political will to keep the Paris Agreement alive.

The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, was built on a simple premise: shared responsibility, differentiated by capacity. Developed countries would provide financial and technological support to developing ones to help them mitigate and adapt to climate change. Articles 9 and 10 of the Agreement enshrine these commitments, setting out frameworks for climate finance and technology transfer. Yet nearly a decade later, progress has fallen dramatically short.

The promised US\$100 billion a year in climate finance by 2020 never fully materialised, eroding trust between rich and poor nations. Now, as the world aims higher — tripling the goal to US\$300 billion a year by 2035 — the challenge is not just about ambition but credibility. For many in the Global South, this is a "broken political compact." Without sufficient and predictable funding, developing countries like India are left to shoulder climate responsibilities at the cost of diverting scarce domestic resources from pressing development needs.

## A Call for Predictable and Fair Climate Finance

Heading into COP30, India has been clear: climate finance must be transparent, non-debt-creating, and predictable. Grants and highly concessional funding are essential to avoid burdening emerging economies with additional debt. One-off pledges or ad hoc disbursements do not provide the confidence needed for long-term transformation. Predictability is more than a technical issue — it is an economic imperative.

Stable and reliable finance lowers risk for green investments and enables countries to plan ambitious projects in renewable energy, resilient infrastructure, and sustainable agriculture. When funding is uncertain, investors perceive higher risks, inflating the cost of capital and deterring large-scale climate projects. This perpetuates a vicious cycle where poorer nations pay more to finance climate action, despite contributing least to the crisis.

COP30 must therefore move beyond reaffirming past promises. It needs to institutionalise mechanisms such as multi-year funding commitments or automatic financing instruments that guarantee predictable inflows. Only then can developing countries plan multi-decade transitions with confidence.

## The Expanding Climate Finance Gap

Even if the long-missed US\$100 billion target were met today, it would barely scratch the surface of what is needed. At COP29 in Baku, negotiators agreed to a New Collective Quantified Goal — the NCOG — setting a minimum of US\$300 billion annually by 2035. Yet analyses by UNCTAD suggest that developing nations will need nearly US\$900 billion a year by 2025, rising to about US\$1.46 trillion by 2030, just to stay within reach of the 1.5°C limit.

This gap is most pronounced in adaptation finance.



The Glasgow Climate Pact of 2021 called for doubling adaptation funding by 2025, but progress remains negligible. As climate-related disasters intensify — from floods in Pakistan to droughts in the Horn of Africa — losses have already crossed US\$300 billion annually. Without front-loaded investment in resilience, these costs will only escalate, further widening the inequality between nations that can absorb shocks and those that cannot.

Belém's challenge, then, is not to issue another round of declarations but to outline a credible delivery pathway. The proposed "Baku-to-Belém Roadmap" aims to mobilise up to US\$1.3 trillion a year by 2035 through a mix of public, private, and multilateral channels. It also advocates for "country platforms," where developing nations coordinate donor contributions around nationally defined climate priorities.

Redirecting existing financial flows could also make a difference. In 2023, wealthy countries collectively spent about US\$378 billion subsidising fossil fuels. Repurposing even a fraction of that toward clean energy could unlock transformative potential.

## Breaking Structural Barriers

Beyond the numbers, developing countries face structural handicaps in accessing finance. The global financial architecture is tilted against them. Credit rating agencies routinely downgrade nations for climate vulnerability or political instability, driving up borrowing costs by as much as 1.5 percentage points. This bias forces climate-stressed economies to pay more for green investments, effectively punishing them for risks they did not create.

By Santosh Sharma



The writer is a senior journalist and research scholar

electric mobility, and resilient agriculture are often locked behind intellectual property rights (IPR). This creates artificial scarcity in what should be a global public good. India has called for the removal of such IPR barriers, advocating models like patent pooling or open licensing — similar to how essential medicines were shared during global health crises.

For the world to meet its climate goals, technology transfer must move from pilot projects to full-scale deployment. COP30 can seize the opportunity to make this shift. The creation of open-access innovation platforms or regional technology hubs could accelerate diffusion across developing regions.

## A Decade of Promises and a Moment of Reckoning

As delegates gather in Belém, the symbolism of location is striking. The Amazon rainforest, both a sanctuary and a battleground in the fight against deforestation, embodies the tension between economic growth and ecological preservation. It is also a reminder that global climate goals cannot succeed without protecting ecosystems that regulate the planet's carbon balance.

COP30 opens against a sobering backdrop. The planet is poised to temporarily breach the 1.5°C threshold set by the Paris Agreement. Scientists warn that while this overshoot might be reversible, it would require unprecedented acceleration in emissions cuts, adaptation, and finance mobilisation.

Under Brazil's presidency, the conference will revolve around 30 key goals driven by collaborative "activation groups." The concept draws from the Indigenous idea of *mutirão* — a collective task undertaken by a community. Brazil's approach seeks to integrate Indigenous voices, civil society, and business leaders into the climate process, turning pledges into participatory action.

At the same time, the conference will review updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) — the national climate plans that define each country's emission reduction targets. So far, only 64 of 196 Parties have submitted new NDCs, far short of what is needed. Current pledges would cut global emissions by just 10 percent by 2030, while the Paris target requires at least a 60 percent reduction. Closing that ambition gap will be one of Belém's most contentious tasks.

## Building Resilience and a Just Transition

Adaptation and equity are emerging as core themes. The UN Environment Programme warns that adaptation funding must rise twelvefold by 2035 to meet the needs of developing countries. To make progress measurable, COP30 is expected to approve a new set of 100 global indicators to track adaptation outcomes. These metrics will help nations design more effective, evidence-based strategies and share best practices.

Another critical track is the Just Transition Work Programme, which seeks to ensure that climate policies do not deepen social inequality. Brazil is championing a "Belém Action Mechanism" to coordinate these efforts, emphasising inclusion, jobs, and technology access for the most vulnerable communities. The idea is to make climate action a pathway to fair-

# More Students pick Arts, but India's Jobs still belong to Science

**M**ore Indian teenagers are choosing the Arts stream after Class 10, signalling a shift in career preferences. This trend challenges STEM dominance but calls for better support from policymakers and employers.

In the past decade, a quiet transformation has been unfolding in India's classrooms. More teenagers than ever are opting for the Arts stream after Class 10. According to a Ministry of Education report, the number of students choosing Arts rose from around 30.9 lakh in 2012 to nearly 40 lakh in 2022. The Humanities once considered the "last resort" for those who couldn't make it in Science or Commerce are now a conscious choice for thousands of students drawn to fields like psychology, media, law, and design.

Yet, while classrooms are filling up with future sociologists, writers, and policy analysts, India's biggest career milestones still revolve around STEM. The most sought-after exams JEE, NEET, CAT, and GATE continue to dominate coaching centres and parents' dinner-table conversations. The question, then, is not why students are taking Arts but what happens to them after they do.

## A GENERATION CHOOSING PASSION OVER PRESSURE

Career counsellors say the shift is driven by access and awareness. The rise of social media and new-age universities has shown teenagers that success doesn't only wear a lab coat. "Students today are more aware of unconventional careers. They see psychologists, filmmakers, and communication strategists making a mark and earning well," says a Delhi-based school career advisor.

Parents, too, are slowly coming around. The pandemic, which blurred the boundaries between stable and unstable jobs, made many rethink the Science-equals-security formula. Meanwhile, the ex-



By Vijay Garg

Vijay Garg Retired Principal Educational columnist Eminent Educationist street kour Chand MHR Malout Punjab

plosion of liberal arts colleges has given Humanities a prestige makeover. Their graduates are landing jobs in consulting, research, journalism, and public policy.

## THE POST-ARTS CAREER MAP

So, where do Arts students go after Class 12?

Many opt for psychology, law, mass communication, design, international relations, and English literature. A growing number are joining civil services preparation straight after graduation UPSC remains the holy grail for Humanities students. Others are entering digital-first sectors: content creation, influencer marketing, brand strategy, and UX research all areas that prize creativity and emotional intelligence.

## THE STEM DREAM STILL RULES

Yet, India's education and job ecosystem remains skewed toward Science. JEE and NEET together see over 30 lakh applicants annually, while MBA entrances like CAT continue to attract graduates from every stream including Arts students who see it as their ticket into the corporate world.

Experts say this imbalance is cultural as much as economic. Engineering, medicine, and management still define "success" in middle-class households. A recent survey by TeamLease found that STEM graduates make up nearly 70% of campus placements in top firms, reflecting the economy's bias toward technical skills.

"Even Arts students eventually gravitate to MBAs because that's where the hiring and salary ecosystem is strongest," says a Bangalore-based career counselor. "The Humanities are gaining respect, but they haven't yet caught up with India's obsession with quantifiable outcomes."

## NEW AVENUES, OLD PERCEPTIONS

Despite these challenges, Humanities graduates are slowly reshaping India's professional landscape. They are entering public policy, social entrepreneurship, climate communication, and behavioral design fields that didn't even exist a decade ago. Recruiters in consulting, edtech, and sustainability say that Arts-trained graduates bring in critical thinking and empathy skills that AI can't easily replicate.

However, a mismatch remains between education choices and national prestige. The top-ranked exams and institutions IITs, AIIMS, IIMs continue to define aspiration. Until that changes, the Arts boom will remain a cultural rather than an economic shift.

India's Gen Z may be writing a new script one where "creative" is not the opposite of "successful." The Arts stream is no longer a backup plan; it's a foundation for flexible, purpose-driven careers in a world where emotional intelligence and storytelling matter as much as equations and algorithms.

But for this boom to translate into equal opportunity, policymakers and employers will have to catch up. The future, after all, won't be purely about STEM or Arts it will belong to those who can blend both.

# Rajnath inaugurates Defence PSU Bhavan at the World Trade Centre in New Delhi

New Delhi Defence Minister Rajnath Singh today inaugurated the Defence PSU Bhavan at the World Trade Centre in New Delhi, marking a major step toward strengthening coordination among India's Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs). The announcement was shared by the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, on X.

According to the post, "Raksha Mantri Shri @rajnath Singh today inaugurated the Defence PSU Bhavan, a state-of-the-art central facility at the World Trade Centre, New Delhi. Envisaged as a hub of synergy, innovation & collaboration among all Defence PSUs under @DefProdIndia, the Bhavan features advanced conference halls, display zones & a Simulation Room using AR/VR to recreate real battlefield



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh today inaugurated the Defence PSU Bhavan at the World Trade Centre in New Delhi, marking a major step toward strengthening coordination among India's Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs). The announcement was shared by the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, on X.

conditions." The Ministry said the new facility symbolises the Department of Defence Production's (DDP) commitment to Atmanirbharata, sustainable growth, operational excellence and global competitiveness. Advertisement

Raksha Mantri Sanjay Seth and Secretary (Defence Production) Sanjeev Kumar were also present at the inauguration and review meeting. The inauguration came ahead of the Defence Minister's annual performance re-

view of the 16 DPSUs. The Ministry of Defence, in a press release, stated that Rajnath Singh had declared 2025 as the 'Year of Reforms', underscoring the importance of development of new technology by DPSUs and the need for enhancing exports

and indigenisation. To achieve this objective, he exhorted them to increase their investment and manpower for R&D. Since then, all the DPSUs have prepared their R&D roadmap for the next five years. Over the last 10 years, a total sum of Rs 30,952 crore has been invested in R&D by the 16 DPSUs. The pace of R&D is now proposed to be doubled with projected expenditure of Rs 32,766 crore over the next five years. While most of the R&D investment over the last 10 years was made by old DPSUs notably Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Bharat Electronics Limited and Bharat Dynamics Limited, the thrust on R&D is now spread across all DPSUs.

In next five years, the seven new DPSUs formed upon corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board will invest over Rs 3,000 crore for

R&D, while defence shipyards have planned an investment of over Rs 1,300 crore.

During the event, a compilation of D&D/R&D projects carried out in the last 10 years, and the plan for the next five years will be released. In addition, the new R&D Manual of HAL, providing flexibility, speed, risk assessment, and allocation in R&D projects will be unveiled.

Notably, the performance of DPSUs in 2024-25 has been commendable. The total turnover stood at Rs 1.08 lakh crore, up 15.4 per cent from that in 2023-24. The DPSUs recorded cumulative Profit After Tax in 2024-25 of Rs 20,021 crore, registering a growth of 19.5 per cent over the previous year. In 2024-25, DPSUs achieved an increase of 51 per cent in exports over the previous Financial Year.

## Gadkari asks cane cultivators to increase yield through use of tech AI

Latur Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Monday urged sugarcane cultivators to increase yield for higher income and said they must use modern technology, including artificial intelligence, for this purpose.



For the sugar industry to remain profitable, production must exceed 60 tonnes per acre, he said.

"Sugarcane cultivators must increase yield using minimum water and fertilizers, and reducing costs. Farming is a science, and without using technology effectively, productivity cannot rise. Use of modern technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the agricultural sector has become essential if farmers are to get their due," he said.

"The sugar sector should not remain limited to sugar production. Factories must also focus on producing ethanol, biofuel, and aviation fuel. Only when the industry becomes an energy provider will the future of farmers and factories shine," Gadkari added.

The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways was speaking at an event to mark the start of the 42nd crushing season of Shri Nilkantheshwar Shekari Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana in Killari in Aushahi here.

Local MLA Abhimanyu Pawar, who played a role in boosting the prospects of the factory, said farmers will receive Rs 3.01 per tonne of sugarcane this season.

## Pavithra Gowda fails to get relief from SC in bail review

New Delhi The Supreme Court recently dismissed a plea filed by actor Pavithra Gowda, an accused in the Renukaswamy murder case along with actor Darshan and five others, seeking review of the apex court's August 14 decision cancelling her bail.

A bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Maheśwari noted that after carefully going through its August 14 order, no case for review is made out.

"These review petitions have been filed by the petitioner seeking review of the Order dated 14-8-2025 passed in the captioned Criminal Appeals, whereby the appeals filed by the State of Karnataka were allowed. We have carefully gone through the said Order and the record. In our opinion, no case for review is made out. Consequently, the review petitions are dismissed", the Court noted.

The Supreme Court had, on August 14, cancelled the bail of Pavithra Gowda, Darshan Thogudeepa and five others by setting aside the Karnataka High Court's order of granting bail to them in the Renukaswamy murder case.

The Karnataka High Court had, in December 2024, granted bail to Pavithra, Darshan and five others in the Renuka Swami murder case.

While overturning the High Court's decision granting bail to the accused persons, the apex court had reasoned that the High Court, in its order, had overlooked serious evidence and relied on inadequate grounds contrary to established legal principles in murder cases.

Additionally, the top court had noted that, as per the record, actor Darshan made clear attempts to interfere with the investigation, including being involved in arranging false surrenders by co-accused persons, making payments to conceal the crime, and leveraging connections with police to manipulate the FIR and postmortem process.

Actor Darshan and six others were named in the chargesheet in the Renukaswamy murder case, where the 33-year-old resident of Chitradurga was murdered. The victim's remains were discovered in Bengaluru's Kamakshipalya on June 9, 2024.

## SC refuses to entertain Punjab MP Amritpal Singh's plea challenging NSA detention

New Delhi The Supreme Court has refused to entertain a plea filed by Akali Dal (Waris Punjab De) MP (Member of Parliament) from Punjab's Khadoor Sahib, Amritpal Singh, challenging his April 2023 detention under the National Security Act (NSA).

A bench of Justices Arvind Kumar and NV Anriya has, however, allowed Amritpal Singh to approach the jurisdictional High Court seeking the same relief.

The apex court requested the High Court to decide Amritpal's plea within six weeks, taking into account Singh's prolonged detention.

"We are requesting the High Court to dispose of it (Amritpal's plea) expeditiously, preferably within six weeks", the Court observed.

During the hearing, Senior Advocate Colin Gonzales,



appearing for Singh, submitted that the Waris Punjab De leader has been under detention for more than three years now. Thus, the senior lawyer sought the apex court to hear the matter, considering his clients' prolonged detention under the NSA.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) SV Raju, representing the Central government, argued that six weeks' time is less for the High Court to deal with the mat-

ter, as there will be replies filed by either party.

However, the apex court was of the view that in habeas corpus pleas where detention is challenged, there is a need to proceed expeditiously.

"In habeas corpus and detention matters, time is of the essence", the Court remarked.

Thus, it permitted Singh to approach the High Court seeking the same relief.

## New data shows decline in campus placements, says Jairam Ramesh

New Delhi Congress MP Jairam Ramesh on Monday slammed the Modi government for allegedly "hiding" the data from the IITs showing a "significant decline" in the percentage of students getting placements and the average salary package drawn by final-year B Tech students through campus placements.

The Congress MP referenced a media report and wrote on X, "New data from the IITs - which the Modi Government compiled but chose not to publish - show a significant decline in the percentage of students getting placements and the average salary package drawn by final-year B Tech students through campus placements".



"Between 2021-22 and 2023-24 - The seven oldest IITs saw a decline of 11 percentage points in students getting placed and a dip of the 0.2 lakhs in the salary. The next oldest set of eight IITs saw a decline of 9 percentage points in students getting placed and a drop in the salary package by Rs 2.2 lakhs. The eight newest IITs saw a decline of 7.3 percentage points in students getting placed and a drop in the salary package by Rs 1 lakh," Ramesh alleged.

"The twin problems of mass unemployment and wage stagnation have clearly reached even the students

from India's most prestigious higher educational institutions," the Congress MP said.

Earlier, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Tuesday raised concern over the "Halting International Relocation of Employment Act" or "HIRE Act," introduced in the US Senate, saying it could have far-reaching consequences for India's IT and services sectors.

In a post on X, he said that HIRE Act reflected a growing mindset in the US that white-collar jobs should be "lost" to India, just as blue-collar jobs were "lost" to China. This protectionist sentiment could have far-reaching implications for the India-US economic relationship.

## Court asks Centre to justify repeat of invalidated tribunal law

New Delhi The Supreme Court on Monday asked how the Centre can bring the same Tribunals Reforms Law, whose several provisions were quashed by it earlier, with some minor changes and that too without taking away the basis of the judgment.

A bench comprising Chief Justice B R Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran was hearing a batch of petitions, including the one filed by the Madras Bar Association, challenging the constitutional validity of the Tribunals Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Act, 2021.

The 2021 Act abolishes certain appellate tribunals, including the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal, and amends various terms related to the appointment and tenure of judicial and other members of various tribunals.

"The issue is how Parliament can enact the same law (which was set aside) with some minor changes here and there. You cannot enact the same law," the CJ observed when Attorney General R Venkataramani urged the bench that Parliament is not precluded from enacting a law based on its experience.

"We are not saying that Parliament cannot enact. But the point is that the same law cannot be enacted again without dealing with the issues raised in the judgment," the bench said.

The petitions have challenged the provisions of the Act on grounds that they violate the principles of judicial independence and the



doctrine of separation of powers.

The attorney general defended the legislation, asserting that it was the result of "detailed deliberations" within the government and not "a figment of imagination".

"Parliament has applied its mind to the issues of accountability, trust and efficiency," he said.

Venkataramani said that the 2021 Act represents a balance between judicial independence and administrative efficiency, and that Parliament is within its powers to legislate on the framework governing tribunals.

The top law officer maintained that executive control over appointments, as structured under the Act, was not excessive.

"There is executive participation in appointments, but the veto lies with the chief justice," he noted, underscoring that "there is predominance of judicial members in both the selection and reappointment process".

Addressing concerns over eligibility and reappointment norms, the attorney

general said that "experience alone cannot become the sole or rational criterion".

On the issue of short tenure, the law officer said that the Act's provision for a five-year tenure with a single reappointment addressed the Supreme Court's earlier concerns in Roger Mathew (2019), which had criticised short tenures as a deterrent to attracting competent professionals.

"If five years is recognised as a reasonable period and comes with a provision for one reappointment, that would be a good practice to follow," he said.

Venkataramani added that the Act's framework prevents indefinite extensions while still encouraging experienced advocates to join tribunals.

He pointed out that performance, not executive discretion, would determine reappointment.

"There is no question of lack of assurance. Your performance as a judicial member will always tell the story," the attorney general said.

On the broader issue of

**The 2021 Act abolishes certain appellate tribunals, including the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal, and amends various terms related to the appointment and tenure of judicial and other members of various tribunals.**

judicial independence, he said that the law seeks to create a "reasonable balance" between independence and accountability.

"If minimal independence is assured and the executive is observed in a way that is larger than one would visualise, then it is not in non-conformity with judicial independence," Venkataramani said.

He further urged the bench not to "substitute Parliament's understanding with another set of indeterminate criteria".

"Parliament arrives at its understanding on the basis of long experience. To say that these provisions must be replaced without a clear rational basis would not be justified," the top law officer remarked.

The Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021 replaced the earlier Tribunals Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Ordinance, 2021, which had drawn similar constitutional challenges.

Earlier, the bench expressed strong displeasure over the Centre's request to

adjourn the hearing on a batch of pleas. It took strong note of the Centre's application seeking a direction to refer to a five-judge bench the pleas challenging the provisions of the 2021 law, saying that it did not expect this from the government at the final end of the final hearing.

The top court had struck down the provision of the ordinance that reduced the tenure of tribunal members and chairpersons to four years, noting that a short term of office could encourage executive influence over the judiciary.

It had held that the tenure must be five years to ensure security of service, with a maximum age of 70 for chairpersons and 67 for members.

The bench had also struck down the minimum age of 50 for appointments to tribunals.

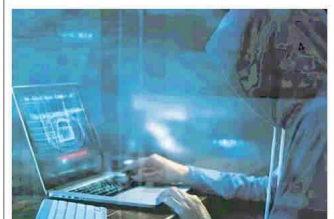
It stressed the need to induct younger members to ensure the judiciary remains robust and vibrant, stating that a minimum of 10 years of practice should be a sufficient qualification for judicial members, similar to what is required for high court judges.

The verdict had also rejected the government's power to make appointments from a panel of two names recommended by the Search-cum-Selection Committee.

The ordinance was promulgated in April 2021.

After the apex court verdict, the government in August introduced and passed the Tribunals Reforms Act with provisions almost identical to those that were struck down.

## Cyber cell cracks down on multiple cyber fraud syndicates operating across India



New Delhi In a major breakthrough, the cyber cell of the Crime Branch has conducted multi-state raids in Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab and cracked down on several cyber fraud syndicates.

Several key masterminds of Digital Arrest and Investment Fraud racket have been arrested, and at least Rs. 5 crore of cryptocurrency trail linked to Dubai-handlers was recovered.

Along with this, fake firms, mobile accounts, and e-commerce front operations were also uncovered during the operation.

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Key syndicate operator working under the Dubai-based handler Sumit Garg was arrested in the Investment Scam.

Rahul Manda was arrested in a Digital Arrest fraud

case, where a victim lost Rs. 30 lakh after falling prey to his scam.

Varun Anchal was apprehended for managing several mobile accounts and fund transfers, while Amit Kumar Singh, who is an ex-bank employee, helped facilitate the transactions.

The Supreme Court has also cancelled the bail of another accused, Lakshay Nanda of Ludhiana, involved in a Rs. 48.35 lakh investment fraud case.

The Cyber Cell of the Crime Branch recovered mobile phones, SIM cards, laptops, cheque books, and three cryptocurrency wallets holding approximately 552,944 USD (approx Rs. 5 crore) in a raid in Gurugram. The scammers used fake police and agency identities to intimidate victims into surrendering to a Digital Arrest. They also created fake investment platforms promising high returns to fish victims for investment fraud.

They recruited financially weaker students, PG residents, and unemployed youngsters to open mobile accounts.

**Gehlot slams BJP over renaming of Jaipur landmarks calls it 'politics of guilt'**

Jaipur: Former Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot on Monday accused the state BJP government of engaging in "politics of guilt" by proposed renaming of Jaipur's Central Park after his predecessor, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, and the Bharat Jodo Setu after Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Gehlot said the move reflected the BJP's "attempt to erase the Congress government's legacy," and said that both projects were developed during his tenure.

"If the BJP truly wanted to honour Shekhawat and Patel, it should have named new infrastructure projects after them instead of renaming Congress initiatives," he said in a post on X.

Gehlot alleged that during Shekhawat's rule, the land for the Central Park was being allotted to jewelers and later considered for a golf club, and the moves were opposed by the Congress before it developed it as a public park.

Gehlot said the government was renaming the Bharat Jodo Setu after Patel to cover up the criticism the BJP drew after renaming Ahmedabad's Sardar Patel Stadium as the Narendra Modi Stadium.

Gehlot also questioned naming city landmarks after RSS ideologues K B Hedgegar and M S Golwalkar. "The people of Jaipur want to know what contribution these individuals made to nation-building."

**Three sentenced to life imprisonment in 2002 Azamgarh murder case**

Azamgarh (UP): A local court on Monday sentenced three men to life imprisonment in a 2002 murder case related to a political violence incident during an election rally here.

The court has imposed a fine of Rs 82,000 on each convict, directing that half of the fine amount be given to the complainant.

District and Sessions Judge Jai Prakash Pandey delivered the verdict following the conviction of Kamlesh Yadav, Indrasan, and Dinesh Singh under relevant sections of the IPC after examination of 12 witnesses.

Assistant district government counsel Deepak Mishra said Dinesh Singh, who is currently lodged in Bareilly jail, attended the hearing via video conferencing. He was earlier convicted in the murder case of former MLA Sarvesh Singh alias Sipu.

According to the prosecution, on February 17, 2002, during the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, complainant Harishankar Singh alias 'Jhinku Singh' then a candidate of the Rashtriya Kranti Party from Gopalpur constituency — was campaigning with his supporters when his convoy was attacked near Kudhi Dhalva by a group led by Shivdas Yadav and other miscreants armed with guns and bombs.

In the attack, Rajesh Singh of Pipraha village was shot dead while trying to shield Singh and others.

Several people, including Singh himself, were injured. A case was registered at Mharajganj police station in this regard.

# Birla opens CPA conference in Kohima, calls Legislatures 'Engines of Change'

Staff Reporter Kohima: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday inaugurated the 22nd annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) India Region Zone III Conference in Nagaland's capital, urging legislative institutions to act as powerful instruments of change and inclusive development.

Addressing Speakers, Deputy Speakers, Presiding Officers, and legislators from across the North Eastern states, Birla underscored the crucial role of legislatures in shaping policies that drive progress and ensure good governance. He said legislative bodies must focus on regional development, industrial growth, and empowerment of local communities, while promoting India's rich indigenous art, culture, and traditional crafts on national and global platforms.

"Our Legislative Assemblies should work



towards policies that promote regional development and industrial growth," Birla said. "Policy decisions must empower local communities and give national and international recognition to indigenous art, culture, and traditional crafts."

The Lok Sabha Speaker lauded the North Eastern states for their deep-rooted democratic traditions, unity in decision-making, and technological adoption. He noted that most legislative assemblies in

the region have already transitioned to paperless functioning, which reflects their commitment to innovation and efficiency.

Highlighting the region's growing infrastructure and improved connectivity, Birla said these were laying a strong foundation for new avenues of progress. "Through collective dialogue and public participation, our legislatures can frame policies that lead to inclusive and sustainable development," he added, ex-

pressing confidence that the two-day conference would deliver a roadmap to strengthen legislative institutions and make them more accountable. Birla also extended his greetings to the people of Nagaland ahead of the Hornbill Festival, describing it as a vibrant celebration of the state's cultural richness and unity. He unveiled a commemorative monolith within the Nagaland Legislative Assembly complex, marking the third time the state has hosted the conference—

previously in 1997 and 2007. Held on the theme "Policy, Progress & People: Legislatures as Catalysts of Change," the conference aims to enhance the effectiveness of democratic institutions and promote responsive governance in the Northeast. The plenary sessions will deliberate on two key sub-themes: "Role of Legislatures in Achieving Viksit Bharat" and "Climate Change — In the Light of Recent Cloudbursts and Landslides in Parts of the Northeast Region." A tree plantation drive has also been scheduled to commemorate the event and encourage environmental awareness.

## Sukhu Extends ₹81 Crore Relief to Disaster-Hit Families, Launches Beekeeping Drive in Mandi

Rajan Panchhi MANDI: Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu today disbursed ₹81.28 crore in financial assistance to 4,914 disaster-affected families through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), providing much-needed relief to those who lost their homes during recent natural calamities.

The distribution event was held at the Paddal Ground in Mandi. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said the government was committed to rebuilding lives and livelihoods in disaster-hit regions and ensuring that affected families received timely and transparent assistance. Out of the total beneficiaries, 1,513 families whose houses were completely destroyed received the first installment of ₹4 lakh each, out of the sanctioned ₹7 lakh. Among them, 781 belong to Mandi district, 631 to Kullu, and 101 to Bilaspur.

Another 3,401 families whose houses were partially damaged received ₹1 lakh each, including 1,547 from Mandi, 1,541 from Kullu, and 313 from Bilaspur. The Chief Minister said that the government was expediting rehabilitation



work to restore normalcy in disaster-stricken regions.

So far, Mandi district alone has received ₹14.46 crore in relief assistance distributed among 4,375 affected families. Sukhu added that the state government is currently implementing 27 disaster mitigation projects in Mandi with a total investment of ₹72 crore. Five additional projects worth ₹18.84 crore have been approved by the State Executive Committee, while proposals for seven more are under preparation.

In a bid to promote sustainable livelihoods, the Chief Minister also launched the "Madhu Mandav" initiative, which aims to empower families in disaster-affected areas by encouraging beekeeping as an

alternative source of income. Under the program, beneficiaries will receive training, financial aid, and equipment to set up beekeeping units. The honey produced through this initiative will be marketed under the brand name Him-Era Mandav.

During the function, Sukhu also extended personal support to Nikita, a young girl from Panglury in the Seraj Assembly constituency, who lost her parents in the floods. He handed over a cheque of ₹7.95 lakh to her and announced an additional assistance of ₹21 lakh. Expressing empathy, the Chief Minister said the state government stood firmly with children like Nikita, ensuring that no orphaned child in Himachal Pradesh felt alone or unsupported.

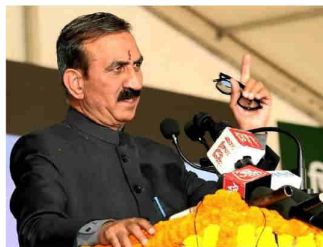
Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said that education remains one of the top priorities of the state government, which is committed to strengthening the sector through systemic reforms. He emphasized that the goal of opening new institutions should extend beyond constructing buildings—it should ensure that students gain quality education, confidence, and the ability to face future challenges with courage.

Highlighting the reforms undertaken over the past three years, Sukhu said a separate Directorate of School Education had been established to enhance the quality of education from Classes 1 to 12. He expressed satisfaction that Himachal Pradesh had improved its na-

## Sukhu Hits Out at Jairam, Demands White Paper on Disaster Funds

Rajan Panchhi Mandi: Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu launched a sharp attack on former Chief Minister Jairam Thakur, accusing the Bharatiya Janata Party of politicizing the recent natural disaster and misleading the public in the name of relief efforts. Speaking at a disaster relief distribution ceremony held at the historic Paddal Ground in Mandi, Sukhu said BJP leaders were engaging in "drama" instead of contributing meaningfully to the rehabilitation process.

The Chief Minister challenged Jairam Thakur to issue a white paper detailing the funds received and spent in the name of disaster relief. "The BJP must clarify how much money came and where it was spent,"



Thakur and other BJP MLAs from Mandi district did not attend the ceremony, allegedly citing a lack of invitation. "Had they come, everyone would have been given a chance to speak from the stage," he said. "Defending his government's response to the calamity, Sukhu said the Congress government had displayed sensitivity

and commitment by offering the most comprehensive relief package in the country. The state, he said, had amended the central relief manual to raise compensation for fully damaged houses from ₹1.3 lakh to ₹7 lakh. "Around 23,000 families were on the streets during this disaster. We provided them with rations, gas cylinders, and even rent support—₹5,000 per family in rural areas and ₹10,000 in urban areas—," he said.

The Chief Minister announced further relief enhancements, stating that the compensation for loss of utensils and household items would now be ₹1 lakh. The total compensation for a completely damaged house, which was previously ₹7 lakh, would now rise to ₹8 lakh.

## Wave of patriotism and unity sweeps UP under CM Yogi's leadership

Gorakhpur: A sea of tricolors fluttered in countless hands, and chants of "Vande Mataram" and "Bharat Mata ki Jai" echoed through the air as petals rained down, as Gorakhpur witnessed an extraordinary celebration of patriotism and unity on Monday.

This vibrant spectacle unfolded during the Ekta Yatra led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of the Iron Man, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The Chief Minister flagged off the historic march from his home constituency, Gorakhpur City, with the Yatra proceeding from the Municipal Corporation premises to Vishwambar Pathak Park near Geeta Vatika, resonating with national pride and the spirit of "Nation First."

Before beginning the march, the Chief Minister paid floral tributes to his revered guru, the late Mahant Avedyanath, at the Municipal Corporation, and garlanded the statue of Rani Lakshmi Bai, the heroine of the First War of Independence.

On reaching the stage, he also offered tributes to Bharat Mata and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, the creator of "Vande Mataram." Addressing the gathering, CM Yogi recalled inspiring episodes from Sardar Patel's life and the legacy of "Vande Mataram." He then formally inaugurated the Ekta Yatra by garlanding the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the Town Hall.

Accompanied by several public representatives, including the Jal Shakti Minister, the Chief Minister walked alongside citizens holding tricolors and chanting patriotic slogans. The entire route glowed in the colors of the national flag, symbolizing unity and collective pride.

People from all walks of life—students, traders, cultural groups, and social organizations—lined the streets from Town Hall to Patel Square, showering flowers and cheering the Chief Minister. In a heartwarming moment, CM Yogi called a young boy holding Sardar Patel's portrait near Gandhi Ashram, accepted the picture, and blessed him.

## Sukhu opens new Govt college building in Panarsa, Unveils Plans for Skill-Based Courses

Rajan Panchhi MANDI: Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu inaugurated the newly constructed building of Government College, Panarsa, in Mandi district today. The college building, built at a cost of Rs. 14 crore, marks a key addition to the state's higher education infrastructure.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said that education remains one of the top priorities of the state government, which is committed to strengthening the sector through systemic reforms. He emphasized that the goal of opening new institutions should extend beyond constructing buildings—it should ensure that students gain quality education, confidence, and the ability to face future challenges with courage.

Highlighting the reforms undertaken over the past three years, Sukhu said a separate Directorate of School Education had been established to enhance the quality of education from Classes 1 to 12. He expressed satisfaction that Himachal Pradesh had improved its na-



tional ranking in education from 21st to 5th position, reflecting the state's focus on continuous improvement.

He noted that English medium instruction had been introduced from the first grade and 100 new schools were being set up on the CBSE pattern, out of which 40 had already secured affiliation. This initiative, he said, would help bridge the quality gap in education between rural and urban areas.

The Chief Minister added that a separate Directorate had also been formed at the college level, with structural changes in higher education underway. Some decisions, he said, might seem tough

initially but were essential for long-term reform and public benefit. Stressing the need to move beyond traditional teaching models, he said technology-driven education was now vital to prepare students for the demands of the future.

Sukhu shared that pre-primary classes had been started in 6,297 primary schools, and the government was setting up Rajiv Gandhi Government Model Day-Boarding Schools in every assembly constituency. These institutions will feature smart classrooms, libraries, sports facilities, and other modern amenities to ensure holistic development.

To support econom-

ically weaker students, the Chief Minister highlighted the Dr. Y.S. Parmar Vidyarthi Rin Yojana, which provides education loans of up to Rs. 20 lakh at just one percent interest for studies in India and abroad.

Announcing new opportunities for students in Panarsa, Sukhu said the college would introduce Bachelor of Vocation (B.Voc) and Bachelor of Computer Applications (B.C.A.) classes on a self-financing basis from the next academic session. These courses, he added, aim to equip students with employable skills and align education with the needs of the modern workforce.

## Wanted criminal carrying Rs 50 000 bounty shot dead in encounter in Hapur

Shahrukh Khan Hapur: A notorious history-sheer, Hasseen, carrying a bounty of ₹50,000, was shot dead in an encounter with police in Hapur's Kapurpur area late Sunday night.

The exchange of fire took place after Hasseen and his associates, allegedly involved in cow slaughter, opened fire on a police team led by Kapurpur Station House Officer (SHO) Vinod Kumar Pandey.

According to Superintendent of Police Kunwar Gyananjay Singh, the incident occurred when the UP-112 emergency helpline received a tip-off about cow slaughter activity in the forest area near Sapanawat village. Acting swiftly, SHO Pandey and his team reached the location. On spotting the police, the suspects tried to escape in their car. As the police surrounded them, one of the



men fired at the SHO, prompting retaliatory action.

During the crossfire, Hasseen was hit by a police bullet and sustained serious injuries. He was rushed to the Community Health Center in Dhaultala and later referred to Rama Hospital in Pikhua, where doctors declared him dead.

Police later identified the deceased as Hasseen, a resident of Mainota village under Samauli police station in Sambhal district. He had a long criminal record with around 25

cases registered against him in various districts, including Muzaffarnagar, Sambhal, Amroha, and Gautam Buddha Nagar, for offenses such as cow slaughter, attempted murder, and under the Gangster Act.

Officers recovered an illegal pistol, several cartridges, empty shells, and the car used by the accused from the scene. SP Singh said that teams have been deployed to locate and apprehend other members of Hasseen's gang who managed to flee during the encounter.

Nepal to seek logistic support from India for upcoming general election

**Kathmandu:** Nepal's electoral body on Monday said that it will approach neighbouring countries, mainly India, to seek logistic support for the upcoming general election.

"The Election Commission has sent its demand list to the government to be handed over to the neighbouring countries, India and China, through diplomatic channels," acting Chief Election Commissioner Ram Prasad Bhandari said.

During a meeting with government officials and the commission staff, the representatives from the two countries have expressed their willingness to extend logistic support for elections scheduled for March 5, 2026.

A couple of weeks ago, there was a meeting between the government and representatives of diplomatic missions and development partners, in which Prime Minister Sushila Karki had sought their support for the upcoming elections.

India had provided 200 vehicles as logistic support to the Nepalese government during the general election in 2022, which were used by the Election Commission and the various security agencies.

However, during the September Gen Z movement, nearly 600 government vehicles were either vandalised or burnt, hence, five vehicles are needed this time.

**BUSINESS**

**KT&G Initiates Strong Legal Action Against Illegal "ESSE" Cigarettes**

**New Delhi:** KT&G has engaged S.S. Rana & Co., a leading law firm, to launch a decisive legal initiative to tackle the counterfeit and illicit ESSE products across India. SS Rana and KT&G has issued over 130 legal notices to the people and retailers doing illegal trade of Esse in Delhi NCR Region. KT&G will also be planning a nationwide crackdown in states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Hyderabad beginning from this month.

Globally, 11.6% of cigarettes consumed are illicit, causing \$40.5 billion in tax losses. In India, the challenge is particularly acute, with illicit and smuggled cigarettes accounting for nearly one-fifth of the market.

KT&G has expressed serious concern over the unauthorized use of the ESSE brand and the infiltration of illegal trade channels that harm both consumers and the company's reputation. These counterfeit products fail to meet national health and safety standards and pose significant risks to public health.

Commenting on the

**Japan, China exchange barbs after PM Takaichi's remarks over Taiwan**

**Tokyo:** Japan was involved in a war of words with China on Monday after Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's said a Chinese attack on Taiwan could constitute "a survival-threatening situation" for Japan requiring the use of force. Takaichi, who is known to be pro-Taipei, said Friday that Chinese use of force around Taiwan would qualify as "an existential threat".

Her comment sparked sharp criticisms from Beijing over the weekend.

"We have no choice but cut off that dirty neck that has been lunged at us without hesitation. Are you ready?" Chinese Consul General Xue Jian said in a message posted on X, which was later deleted. Xue also criticised past remarks made by former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and other Japanese lawmakers that of "Taiwan emergency" as "blatant interference of Chinese internal



**Takaichi, who is known to be pro-Taipei, said Friday that Chinese use of force around Taiwan would qualify as "an existential threat".**

affairs and violation of sovereignty" that require a retraction and apology. On Monday, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said Tokyo had protested to Beijing over Xue's X message.

"While the intent of (Xue's) post is not entirely clear, we must say the comment... was extremely inappropriate," Kihara said. Japan's Foreign Ministry has

since lodged a "strong protest" and demanded the post deleted. Kihara urged China to provide an explanation. The row suggests that Japan-China relations may not be smooth under Takaichi, despite what appeared to be a cordial meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping in South Korea during the recent Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit.

The new Japanese leader has committed to beefing up the military and met Taiwan's representative to the summit the day after she met Xi, angering China.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said Xue's post was a personal one "directed at the erroneous and dangerous remarks that attempt to separate Taiwan from China's terri-

tory and advocate military intervention in the Taiwan Strait."

He blamed some Japanese politicians and media for hyping the issue to confuse public perception and divert attention.

China has lodged "solemn complaints and protests" with Japan over Takaichi's remarks, Lin said.

"Is Japan attempting to challenge China's core interests and obstruct the great cause of China's reunification?" he said. "Where does Japan intend to take China-Japan relations?"

China regards Taiwan part of its territory and has not renounced the use of force to bring the self-governing island under its control.

**Vast opportunities for India Angola to deepen economic ties: Prez Murmu**

**Luanda:** President Droupadi Murmu on Monday said India and Angola have extensive opportunities to deepen their economic ties by exploring avenues in various sectors, including digital technology, defence, agriculture and food processing.

Addressing members of the Angolan Parliament on the third day of her state visit to the African country, Murmu said trade and economic co-operation are an "important pillar" of the bilateral ties between the two countries.

"There are vast opportunities available for cooperation between the two countries in digital technology, defence, agriculture and food processing."

"Going forward, we are committed to take benefit of these possibilities to deepen our economic relations," she said.

The President added that the collaboration of the two nations in the energy sector is "continuously" mak-

ing our economic ties stronger. Murmu is the first Indian President to visit the energy-rich country located along the Atlantic Ocean.

She said the relations between India and Angola are based on "mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit" for the people of the two nations.

Murmu said she was happy to note that the Angolan Parliament has 39 per cent women members, which is a true example of gender equality and inclusive governance.

She recalled that India too has enacted a historic law providing one-third reservation to women in the Parliament and state assemblies.

The President, before the visit to the Parliament, paid floral tributes at the memorial of Dr Antonio Agostinho Neto, the first President of the country, who played a prominent role in Angola's struggle for independence.

**Pakistan's Senate passes controversial 27th Constitutional Amendment**

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's Senate, the upper house of parliament, on Monday gave a nod to the controversial 27th Constitutional Amendment to create a new post of Chief of Defence Forces and set up a constitutional court.

The bill, which had stirred controversy for weeks, was presented in the Senate by Law Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani pre-



while Senate Chairman Yusuf Raza Gilani presided over the proceedings.

The government and its coalition partners secured a two-thirds majority of 64 in the vote after it received the support of two opposition members.

Under the amendment bill, the President will appoint the Army Chief and the Chief of Defence Force on the advice of the Prime Minister. It also proposes that the post of Chairman of

the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee will expire on November 27, 2025.

The Chief of Army Staff, who will also be the Chief of Defence Forces, will appoint the head of the National Strategic Command in consultation with the Prime Minister, and the head of the National Strategic Command will be from the Pakistan Army.

The government will be able to promote individuals from the armed forces to the ranks of Field Marshal, Marshal of the Air Force and Admiral of the Fleet.

The rank and privileges of Field Marshal will be for life, meaning that Field Marshals will remain Field Marshals for life.

The bill also proposes to set up a Federal Con-

stitutional Court to deal with matters related to the constitution, while the existing Supreme Court would deal only with traditional civil and criminal cases.

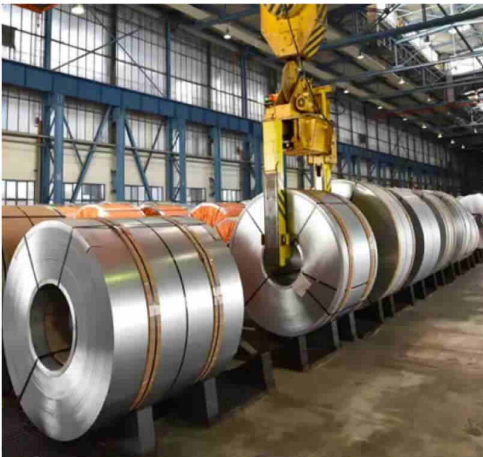
Earlier, the Senate conducted a clause-by-clause vote on the bill. Later, voting by division was conducted, with the entry and exit gates of the Senate closed as per the protocol.

**EEPC India: Steel in US Trade Talks, EU Status Quo**

**Kolkata:** Engineering exports promotion body EEPC India has called for the inclusion of key steel and aluminium products, primarily from MSMEs, in the ongoing bilateral trade agreement (BTA) negotiations with the United States.

It also advocates maintenance of the current tariff structure in talks with the European Union. The group has formally raised the exporting community's concerns with the government's FTA negotiating teams, according to a statement. EEPC India Chairman Panjaj Chadha stated that the 50 per cent tariff imposed by the US under Section 232 has significantly hampered engineering exports, making it imperative to address this issue in the BTA talks.

"The 50 per cent tariff imposition by the US increases the tariff differential with our competitors to an average of 30 per cent. This definitely impacts our position in



the US market," Chadha said.

He suggested a "special support package" to absorb at least 15 per cent of this differential to help secure India's

market position.

Regarding the EU, Chadha expressed concern over the bloc's new proposal to reduce quotas and increase out-of-quota tariffs to 50 per cent.

"The existing quota already poses a challenge for the exporters as our volumes are much higher. Our suggestion is to maintain the status quo

**The group has formally raised the exporting community's concerns with the government's FTA negotiating teams, according to a statement.**

in terms of both quota and the out-of-quota tariffs," he noted.

He further emphasised that this issue should be brought under the purview of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, with tariffs being phased out gradually once the pact is implemented.

On the specific issue of the EU's Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ), the EEPC India chairman sought an exemption for stainless-steel long products, citing MSME dominance and strategic importance.

For other product categories, the body recommended increasing quota volumes and ensuring that out-of-quota tariffs do not exceed 25 per cent, with a phased elimination over five to six years.

**Shakti Pumps Rides High on Strong Q2 Performance**

**Indore:** Shakti Pumps (India) Limited (SPL) reported a robust performance for Q2 and H1 FY26, delivering one of the highest quarterly revenues in its history despite operational challenges posed by an extended monsoon and raw material cost increases.

**Financial Performance:** The company posted consolidated revenue of Rs. 666.4 Crores in Q2 FY26, a 5% YoY growth, taking H1 FY26 revenue to Rs. 1288.9 Crores, up 7.2% YoY. EBITDA stood at Rs. 136 Crores for the quarter with margins at 20.4%, impacted by a 3-4% rise in prices of copper, steel, and solar panels. PAT came in at Rs. 90.7 crores in Q2 and Rs. 187.5 crores for H1 FY26.

**Operational Highlights:** Solar pump installations remained strong with 22,304 units deployed in Q2 and 39,861 units in H1—growth of 21% and 19%, respectively. Installations could have been higher, but prolonged rainfall in key markets and transitions under the GST 2.0 framework moderated execution.

The export division maintained the momentum, delivering Rs. 102.9 crores revenue in Q2 and Rs. 200 Crores in H1, supported by continued traction in Haiti, Uganda, Bangladesh, Nepal, the Middle East, and the USA.

Emerging businesses also performed well. Cash sales rose 67% YoY to Rs. 4.28 Crores, supported by over 100 exclusive outlets nationwide. The Solar Rooftop segment expanded into Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra, marking strong early traction.

**Lord's Mark Delivers First \$1 Million MedTech Shipment to the US**

**Mumbai:** Lord's Mark Industries Limited, one of India's fastest-growing diversified business groups, has announced the successful completion and shipment of its first Med-Tech order, worth USD 1 million, to the United States of America, executed through Lord's Mark Industries Ltd. The milestone cements the company's global foray and reinforces India's growth



next-generation healthcare solutions conceptualised, developed, and manufactured entirely in India. These systems combine real-time patient monitoring, predictive analytics, and Electronic Health Record (EHR) integration to enable proactive, data-driven clinical care.

"This milestone reinforces India's position as a hub for high-quality MedTech innovation," said Sachidanand Upadhyay, Managing Director, Lord's Mark Industries Ltd. "Our first US shipment is more than an export — it marks India's MedTech leadership taking shape globally. We are building world-class healthcare technologies that meet the world's toughest standards, positioning Lord's Mark Industries Ltd. as a global force and Indian innovation as a trusted benchmark in

international markets." Lord's Mark Industries Ltd. operates through key subsidiaries, including LordsMed, Lord's Mark Biotech Pvt Ltd. & Lord's Mark Microbiotech Pvt Ltd. Committed to innovation and excellence, the company continues to expand while upholding the highest quality standards. Diversification remains the foundation of Lord's Mark Industries' sustained

growth and success.

Incorporated in 1998, Lord's Mark Industries Ltd. (Lord's) has emerged as a dynamic force in the healthcare and diagnostics sector. Building on a strong legacy of innovation, the company has strategically expanded into medical diagnostics, pharmaceuticals, and genomics testing, establishing a robust presence across the healthcare value chain.

Ireland's Harry Tector urges teammates to keep open mind ahead of Bangladesh Test

New Delhi: Ireland batter Harry Tector has urged his teammates to keep an open mind when assessing the conditions in Sylhet during the upcoming first Test against Bangladesh, according to the ICC website.

The European side faces the difficult prospect of taking on Bangladesh away from home, with spin expected to play a significant role in determining which team comes out on top during the two-Test series that commences on Tuesday.

While Tector acknowledged the quality of Bangladesh's spin attack, the Ireland right-hander said it was important his fellow batters didn't place too much emphasis on this fact alone.

"Everyone seems to have a take on what the pitches will be like in Bangladesh, but I think you can get caught up in that too much," Tector said.

"I think it's important as players - and particularly as batters - to just assess conditions on the morning of the game, what it looks like, what it's like overhead. Once you're out there reacting to what you think the pitch is doing, you that the practice you've put in is going to hold you in good stead for whatever the conditions and the bowlers dictate to you," he noted.

"I think you have to be prepared for everything. I'm not too concerned with what they produce. I back us to perform on it and, hopefully, outperform them on those wickets," he added.

### Ranji Trophy: Sikkim gets massive first innings leads against Bihar

New Delhi: Sikkim tightened the grip on their Ranji Trophy clash with a gritty and determined lower-order display that stretched the first-innings total to 429 all out, securing a massive 164-run lead over Bihar on Monday.

Resuming at the overnight score of 307-8 on Day Sikkim's tail wagged magnificently. Kranti Kumar brought up a splendid 137 and stitched together a 77-run ninth-wicket stand with skipper Lee Yong Lepcha (28), who provided valuable support before being dismissed.

But even though it couldn't top the Sikkim surge. The last-wicket pair of Kranti and Bijay then frustrated Bihar further, adding another 62 runs.

In response, at lunch on Day 3, Bihar has powered to 38 for no loss, trailing by 126 runs with Mangal Mahrouf 27\* and Sharman Nigrodh 10\* on the crease.

Earlier in the match, Bihar had won the toss and opted to bat. Spinner Ankur Malik's five-wicket haul squared off Bihar's first innings for 265. Ayush Loharuka and Bihar skipper Sakibul Gani were two batters to cross the 50-run mark, while Himanshu Singh made a vital contribution of 41 runs in the back for his side.

# Ganguly picks India as "favourites" for Test series against South Africa

Kolkata: Former India captain Sourav Ganguly backed the Indian team as favourites ahead of the upcoming Test series against South Africa, citing the strength of their spin attack and recent impressive performances by the young squad.

The two-match Test series between India and ICC World Test Champions South Africa will commence on November 14, with the first Test at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata. The second Test will take place at ACA Stadium in Guwahati.

In the white-ball leg, Proteas will also play three ODIs and five T20Is, starting from November 30.

Speaking on the upcoming Test series between the two sides, Ganguly said during the event, "India are favourites because their spin attack is very good. This young team went to England three months ago and played exceptionally well. It was a fantastic series to watch. Exceptional cricket performances by Shubman Gill, Yashashvi



Jaiswal, KL Rahul, and Rishabh Pant. "Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep, and Ravindra Jadeja have been exceptional too. India is a

bundle of talent. South Africa, I know they've played well in Pakistan, but India in India is a different kettle of fish, and they'll have to play real-

ly, really well to compete with India," the 53-year-old added.

The return of wicket-keeper-batter Rishabh Pant and pacer Akash

Deep were the highlights as the Indian squad for the two-match Test series against South Africa at home was announced on Wednesday.

Pant returns after healing from his injured foot suffered during the fourth Test in England, and got himself some game time as India's captain during the recently concluded two-match series against South Africa A in Bengaluru, which ended at 1-1.

Test Squads: India: Shubman Gill (C), Rishabh Pant (WK) (VC), Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul, Sai Sudharsan, Devdutt Padikkal, Dhruv Jurel, Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah, Axar Patel, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Mohammed Siraj, Kuldeep Yadav, Akash Deep.

South Africa: Temba Bavuma (capt), Aiden Markram, Ryan Rickelton, Tristan Stubbs, Kyle Verreynne, Dewald Brevis, Zubayr Hamza, Tony de Zorzi, Corbin Bosch, Wiaan Mulder, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Senuran Muthusamy, Kagiso Rabada, Simon Harmer.

### Starc gears up for Ashes with four-wicket haul against Victoria

Sydney: Australia seamer Mitchell Starc showcased his bowling skills, claiming a four-wicket haul for New South Wales in the ongoing Sheffield Shield match against Victoria in Sydney, as he gears up for the upcoming Ashes series against England.

Starc struck early, dismissing four of Victoria's top six batsmen, while his Australia teammate Nathan Lyon chipped in with 2-65, removing the other two top-order batsmen.

Josh Hazlewood bowled 18 wicketless overs, conceding 54 runs, whereas Sean Abbott picked up a solitary wicket, as Victoria stumbled to 340-7 at stumps on day one.

After the end of the day play, Starc said he's working on getting his rhythm back after a long injury-free layoff and is "reasonably happy" with his performance, feeling like he's getting close to finding his groove.

"I've been working on a few things, getting that rhythm back. Probably my longest layoff injury-free for a long time, so I'm trying to find that rhythm through the ODIs [against India]. Just felt like some-

thing wasn't quite clicking there, and it felt pretty close today. So, yeah, reasonably happy," Mitchell Starc said as quoted from ESPN-cricinfo.

"I tend to be someone for whom continuous bowling keeps me in rhythm. It was a quick return to playing...I wasn't going into the ODI series thinking I was cherry ripe," he added.

Australia will take on England in the opening fixtures of the Ashes on November 21 in Perth. Steve Smith will lead the side as Pat Cummins is not in the team due to injury.

The Ashes series in Australia will be an extremely crucial one for England. For England, this will be their chance to win the first away Ashes series since 2011 and their first overall since 2015.

Australia's First Test squad: Steve Smith (c), Sean Abbott, Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Brendan Doggett, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Mitchell Starc, Jake Weatherald, Beau Webster.

### Will never celebrate series loss as coach: Gambhir's

New Delhi: India head coach Gautam Gambhir declared that he would "never celebrate" a series loss, citing the Men in Blue's recent 2-1 ODI series defeat in Australia.

The Indian fan base was in jubilation after batting bigwigs Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli pulled off a chase masterclass in the third ODI in Sydney last month. Rohit dropped his fearless approach, took the game deep and fired an unbeaten 121(125). Virat turned back the clock and delivered one of his vintage performances straight out of the vault and returned with 74\* off 81.

India gunned down the 237-run target with 69 deliveries to spare and salvaged a win as the series concluded with a 2-1 defeat. Despite enduring a series defeat, fans felt a wave of euphoria after witnessing the two stalwarts making Australia's fierce attack dance to their tunes. However, for Gambhir, who was delighted with the way Virat and Rohit delivered, the bottom line



remained that his side ended up on the losing side. "No, I don't think so. Honestly, I think I've always been a believer that it's not about the individual performances. Yes, I can be very happy with the individual performances, yes, and I will always remain happy with individual performance, but ultimately, we lost the one-day series," Gambhir said in a video posted by the BCCI on Monday.

"That's the bottom line, and I can never celebrate a series loss as a coach. As a player, I can appreciate individuals, but as a coach, I think it is my moral responsibility that we as a nation and we as

individuals should never, never celebrate a series loss. Ultimately, we are representing the country," he added.

India shifted its focus to T20Is and secured a 2-1 series triumph over Australia, with the opening and last fixtures washed out due to incessant rain in Canberra and Brisbane. India will host World Test Champions South Africa for two Tests, starting on Friday, at the famed Eden Gardens in Kolkata. Following the conclusion of the two Tests, India will face the Proteas in three ODIs, marking the return of Rohit and Virat, which will commence on November 30 in Ranchi.

### Don't see any reason why Shami can't keep playing for India: Ganguly

Kolkata: Former captain and ex-BCCI President Sourav Ganguly doesn't see any reason why veteran speedster Mohammed Shami should not represent India across all formats in the international circuit.

Shami, 35, was left out of India's 15-member squad for the two home Tests against South Africa, scheduled to commence on Friday at the famed Eden Gardens in Kolkata. Before his most recent snub, Shami had openly expressed his disappointment about being sidelined from India's recent Test fixtures.

The reason behind Shami's absence was pinned to his lack of fitness. The seasoned quick made a case for his return with a sizzling performance for Bengal in the Ranji Trophy against Gujarat. Shami returned with figures of 5/38 in the second innings at Eden Gardens, his 13th five-wicket haul for Bengal and inspired his side to a commanding 144-run victory.

With 15 wickets at 10.46 after four innings, Shami knocked on the



selectors' door. However, Shami was left out once again, which indicated management's intention to move on from him. Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) President Ganguly advocated for Shami's return to international cricket for the first time since India's victorious title-winning run in the Champions Trophy in March. According to Ganguly, Shami is completely fit and remains an asset with his "enormous skill".

"Mohammed Shami is fit. He is bowling ex-

ceptionally well. We saw in the three Ranji Trophy matches where he's won Bengal on his own. I'm sure the selectors are watching. I'm sure there is communication between Shami and the selectors. If you ask me in terms of fitness and skill, it's Mohammed Shami we know of. I really don't see any reason why he can't keep playing Test matches, One-Day cricket, and T20 cricket for India because that skill is enormous," Ganguly said while speaking during an event on Monday.

During India's squad announcement for the home Test against the West Indies last month, chief selector Ajit Agarkar spoke about Shami's availability and stated that he had not played enough cricket. In response, Shami hit back at the selection committee, declaring that informing the selectors about his business wasn't his job. Later, Agarkar stood firm and stated that Shami wasn't selected for the recently concluded ODI series in Australia due to fitness concerns.

### Makes us win powerplay: Gambhir explains rationale behind Bumrah's Asia Cup strategy

New Delhi: Head coach Gautam Gambhir explained the rationale behind using the team's premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah extensively in the T20i powerplay, stating that it was a way of expressing that India can be an aggressive side with both bat and ball.

During India's unbeaten run to the Asia Cup title in September, the Suryakumar Yadav-led side attempted to dominate the opposition sides on the UAE's sluggish surface by deploying Bumrah for a three-over spell. Bumrah attacks relentlessly with his variation in the first six overs, looking to rattle his opponent's batting unit early. Under the new strategy, the 31-year-old finished with seven wickets in five matches at an average of 19.38.

After the victorious campaign, India em-



barked on a tour of Australia for a white-ball series, comprising three ODIs and five T20Is. Bumrah missed the 50-over fixtures as part of his workload management and fine-tuned his impeccable technique for the pulsating series.

Across the five T20Is, India adjusted its approach with Bumrah, utilising his two in the powerplay and using the remainder according to the circumstan-

es. While returning to his usual plan of attack, Bumrah returned with three wickets at 26.33. Gambhir explained India's plan for Bumrah was a statement about their tenacious approach with the ball.

"Look, I'll tell you one thing. I think a lot of people relate to this T20 side as a very aggressive batting lineup. For me, I think bowling Jassie's three in the first six was an even more aggressive

option with the ball. We don't want to be a side which is only known as an aggressive batting order. We want to be a side which would be known as an aggressive side overall. So imagine, no one has ever bowled Jassie's three overs in the first six," Gambhir said in a video posted by the BCCI.

Gambhir labelled Bumrah's three-over spell in the first six overs as successful, considering the presence of the premier spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Varun Chakravarthy. India's two viable wicket-taking options in the middle overs. The Indian head coach underscored that the rest of the bowlers had more freedom to scalp wickets after Bumrah intimidated the batters in the first six overs, which was one of the reasons behind the three-over strategy.

### We're still not at our target for the T20 World Cup: Gautam Gambhir

New Delhi: Indian head coach Gautam Gambhir emphasised the importance of transparency and honesty in the team's dressing room. He believes the team still has work to do to reach their target for the T20 World Cup and stresses the need for players to prioritise fitness.

The T20 World Cup is scheduled to be held in India and Sri Lanka next year, with defending champions India looking to retain their title.

"Our dressing room has been very transparent and honest, and we aim to maintain that. I think we're still not at our target for the T20 World Cup. Hopefully, the players understand the importance of being fit. We have three months left to reach where we need to be," Gautam Gambhir said in a video posted by BCCI



on X. Gambhir also believes in testing players under pressure to bring out their best. He cited Shubman Gill's appointment as Test captain as an example.

Gill's remarkable batting prowess shone bright in his debut Test series as captain against England earlier this year, leading his team to a 2-2 draw. During the five-

match series, Gill scored a massive 754 runs at an average of 75.40, with four centuries and a career-best score of 269.

Gill led India to a convincing 2-0 Test series win over West Indies at home last month. He then took charge of the ODI team, replacing Rohit Sharma, but faced a tough challenge in Australia, where India suffered a 1-2 series defeat.

World Super Kabaddi League appoints Ravindra Shetty as Technical Director

New Delhi: The World Super Kabaddi League (WSKL) has announced the appointment of Ravindra Shetty as its Technical Director, marking a significant step in strengthening the league's competitive and operational framework ahead of its global rollout in 2026.

A highly accomplished international kabaddi coach and technical visionary, Ravindra Shetty brings over two decades of experience shaping the sport across national and global platforms, according to a press release from WSKL.

As Technical Director, he will lead the league's technical and competitive framework, overseeing game structure, referee and coach development, and innovation in playing formats. His appointment reinforces WSKL's commitment to global standards of excellence and its mission to redefine kabaddi for international audiences.

Shetty's distinguished career includes leading roles with multiple national teams. He served as head coach of the Karnataka State Team (2001-2019) and guided India's Junior Team at the Junior Kabaddi World Cup (Iran, 2023). Internationally, he currently heads the Thailand National Team (2023-present), having coached them at major tournaments such as the 20th Asian Games (Hangzhou, 2023), Bangladeshu Cup (Bangladesh, 2024), and the Women's Kabaddi World Cup (Dhaka, 2025).

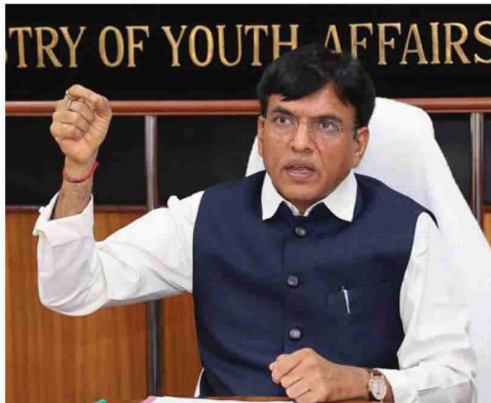
Aishwarya Gautam, CEO, SJ Uplift Kabaddi, said as quoted by the WSKL press release, "Ravindra Shetty brings a new dimension of technical leadership to the World Super Kabaddi League. His vast experience across India and Southeast Asia, coupled with his innovative approach to modern kabaddi formats, will play a crucial role in shaping the future of Kabaddi internationally. We welcome him on this journey and are confident that he will reinforce our vision of taking kabaddi from grassroots to global audiences."

## Mandaviya announces historic recruitment drive for assistant coaches in SAI

New Delhi: The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) on Monday approved a historic recruitment drive for the post of Assistant Coach (Level-06, Pay Matrix as per 7th CPC) in the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

"This will mark the first major induction since 2017 and represents the largest recruitment exercise ever undertaken for this vital cadre in Indian sports. The decision was announced by the Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment, Mansukh Mandaviya, in an interaction with the media today.

"To ensure fairness, transparency, and merit, a comprehensive selection process is being established to identify and induct the best available coaching talent. This strategic recruitment will play a key role in advancing India's sporting ambitions in the years ahead," Dr. Mandaviya



Mandaviya launches major recruitment drive for SAI assistant coaches

said as quoted by the MYAS press release.

"The initiative aligns with the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to make India a global sporting

powerhouse and to strengthen the nation's sporting ecosystem through transparent, merit-based systems and institutional capacity building," the Union

Minister further added.

More than 320 vacancies across over 25 sports disciplines will be filled through direct recruitment. The Assistant Coach cadre forms a

crucial link in the country's sports development framework -- serving as the foundation for identifying and nurturing sporting talent from the grassroots to the elite level. Strengthening this cadre will ensure structured, high-quality coaching support to athletes across India.

The recruitment process is being designed in line with the Government's Medal Strategy for the Olympic and Asian Games, focusing on disciplines with strong medal potential such as aquatics, cycling, and others. At the same time, emphasis is also being placed on sports that contribute to building a broader sporting culture and a holistic sports ecosystem in the country. Special efforts are being made to recruit coaches in certain sports disciplines that have received less attention in the past, such as lawn tennis, kayaking, and canoeing, recognizing their growing importance and potential.

## Monyul Super League being held at altitude of about 10,000 feet

Tawang: Former Indian Football Team skipper Baichung Bhutia declared the Monyul Super League (MSL) on Sunday, marking the beginning of a new sporting chapter in Arunachal Pradesh. The league aims to promote football and foster the spirit of unity, discipline, and sportsmanship among the youth of the Monyul region, a release said.

The league was kicked off today at the GTC High Altitude Stadium in Tawang, with Indian football icon Bhutia headlining the grand inaugural ceremony. Bollywood actress Daisy Shah and several noted singers were present at the sporting event.

Speaking at the launch event, Baichung Bhutia termed Arunachal as the top football player destination and said the Monyul Super League will serve as a vibrant platform for local players to showcase their talent, while encouraging healthy competition and cross-district camaraderie.

"Sports has the power to unite people, and this league will not only nurture young talent but also strengthen Arunachal's identity as a rising sporting state," Bhutia said.

Tawang MLA Namgye Tsering informed that the league will feature seven teams from West Kameng and Tawang districts, with matches scheduled to run for 13 days from November 9. He added that the initiative reflects the government's commitment to promoting sports infrastructure and youth engagement in the border districts.

The Monyul Super League, envisioned as a community-driven event, is expected to bring together players, fans, and cultural enthusiasts -- blending sportsmanship with the rich traditions of the Mon region.

Tsering said this kind of sports event is happening for the first time on the Tibet-India border. "We are organising this for the first time at an altitude of 10,000 feet.

## Arshi Gupta becomes India's first female National Karting champion

Bengaluru:

Nine-year-old Arshi Gupta of Delhi Public School, Faridabad, created history by becoming the first-ever female racer to win a National Karting Championship title in India. Competing in the Micro Max class in a mixed grid of boys and girls, Arshi clinched the 2025 FMSCI National Karting Championship at the Meco Kartopia circuit at Bengaluru, a release said.

Born on October 18, 2016, in Faridabad, Arshi races under Leapfrog Racing and has achieved this extraordinary feat in just her second year of competitive racing. Earlier in the season, she stunned the motorsport fraternity by winning Round 3 at the Madras International Karting Arena (MIKA), the FIA-homologated track at Irungattukottai, on August 31, 2025. And later won a double at Coimbatore too.

Displaying remarkable poise and precision in the final round, Arshi won both the Pre-Final and the Final in the Micro Max class (8 to 12 years) and won the Na-



tional crown.

She charged from mid-grid to victory in the Pre-Final, then entered her pole start into a big win in the Final. This triumph makes Arshi the first girl to win a National karting championship in the 21-year history of the Indian Rotax series. And she was also the youngest to do so.

Arshi made her National debut in karting in early 2024 after her father, Ankit Gupta, a Faridabad-based businessman, noticed her love for speed while cycling and took her to a local Gurugram track run by coach Rohit

Khanna in 2023. "She loved karting from day one and would insist on going every weekend, then on. If I skipped once, I had to make it up the next week," recalled her father. Her mother, Deepthi Gupta, a practising doctor, ensures Arshi balances studies and sport.

Starting with the Meritus Cup in 2024, Arshi soon moved into the Rotax Nationals, making her the youngest female to compete in the National Karting Championship. A five-month racing and training stint in the UAE, from July to December 2024, sharpened her skills.

### Breaking Time

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.

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

### Solution, Sudoku

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

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## Bezzecchi pulls clear to beat Marquez and Acosta in Portimao

Portimao: It was perfection from start to finish from Marco Bezzecchi (Ducati Racing), who led every one of the 25 laps at Portimao for the Portuguese GP. A vital victory saw him move comfortably clear in the race for third overall in the Championship, although he'll need just a few points to secure it next week in Valencia. Behind the Italian on the track, Alex Marquez (BK8 Gresini Racing MotoGP) resisted a late surge in pace from Pedro Acosta (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing) with the podium being reshuffled on Saturday's Sprint.

Getting an excellent start, Acosta was dynamite off the line but couldn't overcome Bezzecchi, who got the holeshot from pole. Alex Marquez replied that his Sprint start to move up to third, but there was drama behind. Franco Morbidelli (Pertamina Enduro VR46 Racing Team) was caught up in a bundle at Turn 5 but was OK, ending a weekend which had been a struggle. Onto Lap 6 and Marquez made his move to get P2 from Acosta



and set off in pursuit of Bezzecchi. Elsewhere, a disaster for Sepang's P3 finisher Joan Mir (Honda HRC Castrol), who retired with a technical issue at the end of Lap 2.

Francesco Bagnaia (Ducati Lenovo Team) held fourth ahead of Fabio Quartararo (Monster Energy Yamaha MotoGP), as the 2021 World Champion was once again putting in a great performance. "El Diablo" had his hands full with Bred Binder (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing), who in-turn was under attack from

Indonesian GP winner Fermin Aldeguer (BK8 Gresini Racing MotoGP). The rookie made a bold move at Turn 5 on the South African with contact and taking some aero - as well as P7 - away from the #33. Aldeguer then passed Quartararo and then inherited fourth when Bagnaia crashed at Turn 10 on VR 11. A fourth successive Sunday DNF for the #63, a huge dent into his third-place goals overall in the standings.

At the front, Bezzecchi was edging ever further away from Marquez be-

hind and by Lap 15, had a 2.2s advantage over the #73. Acosta was a further 2.4s away but had a comfortable 6.4s margin over Aldeguer. The main battle heading into the closing stages was for sixth, as Quartararo continued his excellent defensive ride ahead of fellow countryman Johann Zarco (CASTROL Honda LCR) and an impressive Ai Ogura (Trackhouse MotoGP Team).

Whilst things had looked settled at the front, Acosta found a second wind with just four laps to go, taking three-quarters of a second out of Marquez up ahead of him as 2025's runner-up struggled in the closing stages. With two to go, the gap was a second and whilst an uphill challenge, nothing is considered impossible for the #37 KTM. Further back in the pack, there was a late drop in pace for Zarco as Ogura got ahead of him for P7, whilst Fabio Di Giannantonio (Pertamina Enduro VR46 Racing Team) pinched eighth.

Onto the last lap, and Marquez had responded, minimising the damage even if the gap continued to come down. An inspired ride from Acosta meant he came close but not close enough in a familiar story to yesterday but nobody could lay a glove on Bezzecchi. From lights to flag, the #72 made Portimao his own with a majestic victory, becoming the sixth different winner in as many Grands Prix. Marquez and Acosta rounded out the podium behind the Aprilia rider, who gave the Italian manufacturer a third victory in 2025, the first time ever they've enjoyed three wins in a single season.

Aldeguer held on to clinch fourth place ahead of Binder, who took his third top six of the season ahead of Quartararo, who took his best Portuguese GP finish since 2022. Ogura's P7 makes it his first back-to-back top ten finishes since Jerez and Le Mans earlier in the year. Di Giannantonio resisted Zarco's fingertip in the scrap for eighth, whilst Pol Espargaro (Red Bull KTM Tech 3) was the third KTM in the top ten.

## Mumbai's Kiaan, Krish excel in last two rounds to finish second in National Karting Championship

Mumbai: Mumbai's Kiaan Shah (Rayo Racing) dominated the Junior category of the FMSCI National Karting Championship with back-to-back wins in round 5 and round 6.

Krish Gupta (also from Mumbai and Rayo Racing) finished third and second in the last two rounds in the Senior Category.

The stellar run over the weekend saw Kiaan and Krish jump on the leaderboard to finish second overall in their respective categories.

Rounds 5 and 6 were held together, requiring significantly more energy and fitness from the racers. Junior qualifying for Round 5 didn't go as per plan for Kiaan, who could only manage fifth in qualifying, 0.355 seconds off Chennai's Shivaan Karthik (MSport), who bagged pole.

Kiaan made a good start from fifth, though, and quickly climbed up the order, finishing second behind Karthik, who won by 1.45 seconds. The Pre-Final was straightforward, with Kiaan start-



Mumbai's Kiaan & Krish shine, secure 2nd place in National Karting Championship

ing and finishing second, once again behind Karthik.

Kiaan made a good start in the final, soon getting into the lead. However, he was soon challenged for Round 5 didn't go as per plan for Kiaan, who could only manage fifth in qualifying, 0.355 seconds off Chennai's Shivaan Karthik (MSport), who bagged pole.

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Madesh (Peregrine Racing) bagging pole ahead of Krish Gupta (Rayo Racing) by 0.216 seconds. Kiaan Shah, making his Senior debut, was a mere 0.055 behind in third.

Madesh comfortably won Heat 1 ahead of Sheikh and Gurgaon's Aarav Dewan (Leapfrog Racing). Madesh also won the Pre-Final ahead of Gupta, who raced well, climbing from fourth. Kochi's Laksh Bafna (Kartrew Motorsports) was third.

The exciting final for the seniors had Madesh win ahead of Dewan, while Krish came in third.



# Salman Khan arrives at Breach Candy Hospital to check on Dharmendra's health

Mumbai

Veteran actor Dharmendra was admitted to Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital a day earlier to-



leaving fans concerned about his health.

On Monday evening, his family members, including Sunny Deol, Bobby Deol and his wife Tanya, were spotted arriving at the hospital. A while ago, Bollywood superstar Salman Khan reached the hospital to check on Dharmendra's

health.

As per the statement shared by Dharmendra's family, "Mr. Dharmendra is stable and under observation. Further comments and updates will be shared as available. Request everyone to pray for his speedy recovery and respect the family's right to privacy."

The "He-Man" of Bollywood has a cinematic career spanning over six decades, and he has worked in more than 300 films.

Dharmendra is known for his memorable performances in films such as 'Aaye Milan Ki Bela', 'Phool Aur Patthar', 'Aaye Din Bahar Ke', 'Seeta Aur Geeta',

'Raja Jani', 'Jugnu', 'Yaadon Ki Baaraat', 'Dost', 'Sholay', 'Pratigya', 'Charas', 'Dharam Veer', among others.

In 2023, he was seen in 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani', directed by Karan Johar, which was a blend of comedy and romance starring Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt as the lead couple, Rocky and Rani.

The story centres on their contrasting personalities and their decision to spend three months living with each other's families before marriage. The film explores the cultural clashes, personal growth, and the evolving relationship between the couple.

He also starred in Shahid Kapoor and Kriti Sanon's 'Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya'. He will be next seen in 'Ikki's'.



## Sunny Deol reaches Breach Candy Hospital to meet father Dharmendra

Mumbai

Actor Sunny Deol arrived at Breach Candy Hospital to meet his father Dharmendra.

In the videos captured by paps, Sunny was seen covering his face with his hands as he reached the hospital with his sons to check on his father's health.

As per the statement shared by Dharmendra's family, "Mr. Dharmendra is stable and under observation. Further comments and updates will be shared as available. Request everyone to pray for his speedy recovery and respect the family's right to privacy."

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# Hajmola Turns 'Chatkarebaazi' into a Profession with India's No. 1 Chatkarebaaz Finale

New Delhi

Dabur Hajmola has wrapped up its unique digital reality show India's No. 1 Chatkarebaaz, redefining the influencer landscape by celebrating everyday humor and wit. Hosted exclusively on Instagram, the show marked India's first social media reality format, blending news commentary with comedy and rewarding creators who turned headlines into 'chatpata' entertainment.

The grand finale crowned Shivam Pal as India's No. 1 Chatkarebaaz, followed by Aryan Vaish as the first runner-up and Divya as the second runner-up. The winners shared



a total prize pool of ₹3 lakh. Conceptualised and executed by Schbang Delhi, the show gave India's funniest minds a bold plat-

form to showcase their creativity.

"With India's No. 1 Chatkarebaaz, we wanted to celebrate people who

find humour in headlines and spark laughter through everyday news. The engagement and creativity we've seen have been phenomenal—a true reflection of young India's bold, witty spirit," said Ajay Parihar, Vice President, Marketing, Dabur.

Abhishek Mehta, Digital Marketing Lead—Healthcare & Foods at Dabur, added, "This wasn't just a contest; it became a conversation. Creators from across India turned their scrolls into stories, transforming trending headlines into shareable, hilarious moments." The finale featured a jury comprising RJ Raunac, Shubham Gaur, and Aaditya Kulshreshtha (Kultu), who judged the

entries on wit, originality, and the 'chatkara' quotient. Commenting on the campaign's success, Yashasvi Tickoo, Creative Lead at Schbang Delhi, said, "We wanted to blur the line between content and commentary. What started as a platform for humor became a stage for cultural expression—proving that comedy can be both relevant and real-time."

Through organic amplification via meme pages, micro, and nano-influencers, India's No. 1 Chatkarebaaz captured the pulse of digital India, cementing Hajmola's position as the brand that celebrates bold, chatpata humor.

## Abhishek Bachchan mourns loss of his makeup artist Ashok Sawant

Mumbai

Bollywood actor Abhishek Bachchan mourned the loss of his make-up artist, who has been associated with him for over 27 years.

Taking to his Instagram handle, actor Abhishek Bachchan shared an emotional tribute to his long-time make-up artist, Ashok Sawant, who passed away last night.

In a heartfelt note, the actor remembered his decades-long association with 'Ashok dada', describing him not just as a team member but as "part of the family."

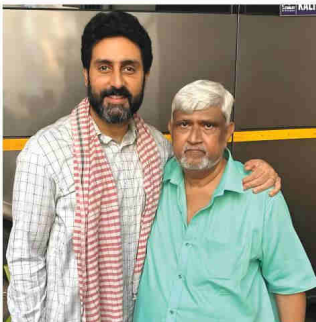
"Ashok dada and I have worked together for over 27 years. He has been doing my make-up since my very first film. He wasn't just a part of my team, he was part of my family. His elder brother Deepak has been my father's make-up man for close to 50 years," wrote Abhishek Bachchan.

Abhishek Bachchan re-

membered his makeup artist by recalling the love and affection showered by 'Ashok Dada' during his shoot.

"The last couple of years was ailing so he couldn't always be on set with me. But whenever I was shooting, there wasn't a single day he wouldn't check on me. Making sure his assistant was taking care of how my make-up was done. He was the most loving, gentle and affable person. Always a smile on his face, a ready warm embrace and some amazing namkeen chivda or bhakar wadi tucked away in his bag. Last night we lost him," wrote Abhishek Bachchan.

"Thank you dada, for your love, your care, your dignity, your talent and for your smile. It's heartbreaking to even think of going to work and knowing that you won't be with me. I pray you are in peace and I look forward to the bear-hug when we meet again. Rest in peace and happiness, Ashok Sawant," concluded Abhishek Bachchan.



## Thalapathy Vijay's son Jason Sanjay directorial debut is titled 'Sigma'

Chennai

Thalapathy Vijay's son Jason Sanjay's directorial debut has finally got a title. The movie is produced under the banner of Lyca Productions.

Lyca Productions has announced the title of Jason Sanjay's directorial feature. It is titled 'Sigma'. The makers have also released the first look poster of the film. The movie stars Sundeeep Kishan in the lead role. In the first look poster, the actor was seen sitting on a pile of gold bars and bundles of money.

The music of the movie is composed by Thaman S. The editing of the film will be done by Praveen KL.

As for Thalapathy Vijay, the actor is back to entertain his fans with his upcoming film Jan Nayagan. The makers recently released a single titled 'Thalapathy Kacheri'.

Composed and sung by Anirudh Ravichander, the



upbeat number also features vocals by Vijay and Arivu.

With catchy beats, a lyrics focus on Vijay's strong connection with his fans.

Soon after its release, fans of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) chief were seen celebrating on the streets of Madurai.

Many danced to the song while wearing posters of Vijay, making the release of the song no less than a festival celebration.

# Blenders Pride Fashion Tour Sets Fashion's Next Move

Karnal

Blenders Pride Fashion Tour, India's most definitive voice in fashion, returns in 2025 with yet another spectacular edition where fashion, creativity and culture converge, and create 'The One and Only' stage that will set the tone for what's next in fashion.

In a world where trends are often fleeting, the Fashion Tour takes it boldest stride yet and reimagines what it means to lead fashion forward and define 'Fashion's Next Move'. This isn't just a theme—it's a declaration, a definitive statement that fashion's next chapter doesn't begin on just any runway; it begins on the stages of Blenders Pride Fashion Tour.

Joining forces once again with Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI), the Fashion Tour brings together the India's leading designers and celebrated style icons to presale experiences that break-



through the realms of fashion, like never before.

The tour will set the course in Gurugram with 'The Futureverse of Fashion' featuring designers Falguni and Shane Peacock, with Shahid Kapoor and Tamannaah Bhatia, unlocking the future of fashion experiences. It'll redefine what a runway can be—an immersive, visual spectacle blurring lines between technology and couture, transforming the dimensions in which fashion is experienced.

The finale in Kolkata will witness 'Breaking the moulds of Fashion Craft' with the return of iconic designer Anamika Khanna, joined by Ishaan Khatter. This chapter will shine the spotlight on the sublime power of craftsmanship and bridge a connection where it meets contemporary vision, giving audiences not just fashion to admire, but craft to revere.

Debasree Dasgupta, CMO, Pernod Ricard India, said, "Blenders Pride Fashion Tour has been Indian fashion's most iconic stage. Guided by our 'The One and Only' ambition, we continue to set new benchmarks shaping the evolution of fashion & style in collaboration with India's finest designers & FDCI. With 'Fashion's Next Move', we're making a bold foray into showcasing the future of fashion and what it means to lead with style and curate a future where creativity, culture and innovation converge."