



NATION

India attains 'major power' status on Asia Index 2025

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BUSINESS

IMF grades India's GDP, other national data 'C'

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SPORTS

Jharkhand elbow out K'taka, Mhatre slams 110 for Mumbai

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Aadhaar no longer proof of birth in UP & Maharashtra

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra governments said that Aadhaar cards would no longer be used as proof of birth. The Uttar Pradesh government has asked the departments to refer to the letter by Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) dated 31 October, 2025, which had clarified that "Aadhaar card is not the proof of birth, while a Thursday circular by the Maharashtra Revenue and Forest Department said that Aadhaar cannot be accepted as standalone proof of date or place of birth, in line with Central Government guidelines.

"You are requested to direct all concerned that they should not accept Aadhaar Card as the proof of birth," read the order issued by Amit Singh Singhal, special Secretary Planning, to all the additional chief secretaries, principal secretaries and secretaries across Uttar Pradesh. No birth certificate is attached to the Aadhaar card; therefore, it cannot be considered a birth certificate, the order said.

Similarly, in Maharashtra, the government said that certificates issued solely based on Aadhaar are to be treated as defective and cancelled immediately, and corresponding entries on the Civil Registration System (CRS) portal must be deleted.

Uttar Pradesh officials said that birth certificates, high-school mark sheets and other documents can be used as proof of birth.

I Can Sit Till Midnight for the Poor: CJ

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said on Friday that the judiciary exists to deliver justice to the poor and the needy. He stated that he is ready to sit late into the night to ensure justice for such people.

CJI Surya Kant emphasized that the Supreme Court should uphold the rights of the common man. "The poorest person should feel that this is his court," he said, adding that the court should not become a forum for unnecessary and luxurious litigation.

The remarks came while hearing a case involving the pending conviction of a villager named Sukhran Singh from Uttar Pradesh in a murder incident. The CJI directed that the man's case be listed on priority for early resolution, stating that the court must not delay justice for people like him.

He pointed out that cases remain pending for 10 to 15 years, and the accused or victims keep waiting for justice. The Chief Justice warned that if needed, they are ready to hold hearings even at 24x7 to reduce the backlog of cases.

Terrorist Dr. Adil's WhatsApp Chats Revealed

FARIDABAD, 28 NOV

WhatsApp chats of terrorist Dr. Adil, linked to the Delhi blast module, have exposed his coordination with Pakistan-based handlers. Investigators said he received Rs. 26 lakh, including Rs. 8 lakh as salary while working as a radiographer under a fake identity in a Maharashtra hospital. He allegedly shared hospital security details and procured chemicals and electronic components for explosives. Adil and two associates were arrested last month, and more suspects are now under investigation.



India's Q2 GDP is at massive 8.2%, claims govt

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

India's economy grew 8.2 per cent in the second quarter of FY2025-26, a six-quarter high driven by strong manufacturing and services output, according to data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO).

The expansion, up from 7.8 per cent in Q1 and 5.6 per cent a year earlier, helped India retain its position as the world's fastest-growing major economy. China grew 4.8 per cent during the same period. Manufacturing rose 9.1 per cent, sharply higher than 2.2 per cent last year, as factories ramped up production ahead

of festive demand following the September GST rate cut. Services, including banking and real estate, posted robust 10.2 per cent growth compared to 7.2 per cent a year earlier. Agriculture, however, slowed to 3.5 per cent from 4.1 per cent. Real GDP in Q2 stood at Rs 48.63 lakh crore, while nominal GDP rose 8.7

per cent to Rs 85.25 lakh crore. For the first half of the fiscal, real GDP grew 8 per cent, up from 6.1 per cent last year, raising the likelihood of exceeding the FY26 growth target of 6.3-6.8 per cent.

Icra Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said the higher-than-expected print "surpassed forecasts", though she

cautioned that weak government spending, a low GDP deflator and potential external shocks may temper momentum. Deloitte's Rumki Majumdar said festive spending and GST 2.0 reforms could lift Q3 activity but warned that slower nominal growth may complicate fiscal deficit management.

Rajasthan Invites Global Investment Push, Says CM Sharma at FICCI Annual Meet

State highlights rapid progress and global readiness at FICCI annual meet

JAIPUR, 28 NOV

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma on Friday said the state is fully prepared for trade, investment and global partnerships as India advances rapidly toward self-reliance and sustainable growth under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Addressing the 98th Annual Conference of FICCI at Bharat Mandapam, he said Rajasthan has become a key driver of India's economic progress and now offers vast opportunities across multiple sectors. He urged entrepreneurs to invest in the state, saying collective efforts will help build a prosperous Rajasthan and contribute to the vision of a developed India.

Sharma praised FICCI's role as a strong link between industry and government and noted its support for the Rising Rajasthan Summit's global outreach in the UK, Germany, the UAE, Qatar



and Saudi Arabia. He said India has undertaken major reforms over the past decade, with GST and labour law changes strengthening the "one nation, one market" framework. Projects such as Bharatmala, Sagarmala and UDAN have improved connectivity, while initiatives like Make in India, Digital India and UPI continue to shape

Vision 2047. The Chief Minister said Rajasthan, as India's largest state, is set to play a decisive role in national development. He said the ERCP (Ram Jalsetu Link Project) will provide drinking water to 17 districts and added that crimes against women have declined by 9.24 per cent. Rajasthan's GDP growth rate has risen to

12.2 per cent, higher than the national average of 9.7 per cent.

Sharma said the state has established an investment-friendly ecosystem through a single-window system, digital reforms and transparent land policies. MoUs worth Rs. 35 lakh crore were signed during the Rising Rajasthan Global Investment Summit, with projects worth Rs. 7 lakh crore already implemented. He said the state is emerging as India's renewable energy capital and now hosts more than five lakh MSMEs and over 7,000 startups.

He added that Rs. 60,000 crore has been allocated for road development over five years, along with industrial clusters, logistics parks, economic zones and modern airports. Rajasthan continues to lead in tourism, especially weddings and MICE events, strengthened by PPP-based hotel projects, heritage conservation and new tourism infrastructure.

SIR killed 40 in West Bengal: TMC

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

A Trinamool Congress delegation met the full bench of the Election Commission of India here on Friday and said that around 40 SIR-related deaths had occurred in West Bengal so far, and accused the ECI chief of having "blood on his hands."

The 10-member delegation, led by Rajya Sabha leader Derek O'Brien, met the EC officials amid the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal.

The delegation consisted of

Lok Sabha MPs Mahua Moitra, Satabdi Roy, Kalyan Banerjee, Pratima Mondal, Sajda Ahmed, and Rajya Sabha MPs Dola Sen, Mamata Thakur, Saket Gokhale, and Prakash Chik Barik.

After their meeting, O'Brien said that the TMC had raised five questions, but Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar did not respond to them. Moitra said the delegation gave the CEC a list of 40 people. The commission dismissed it as mere allegations and asked the TMC to stop its threats.

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Girl dies by suicide over her AI nudes

KOLKATA, 28 NOV

A Class 10 student was found hanging from the ceiling of her room in Sonarpur in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district after her AI-generated nude images were circulated on social media, police said on Friday. The girl, who had been staying at her maternal uncle's house, was immediately taken to a

nearby hospital, where doctors declared her brought dead, a police officer said. "We have received a complaint that a married man had been harassing her."

Her family alleged that he had collected her photographs and used AI tools to create nude images.

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Trump stops migration from '3rd world countries'

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, 28 NOV

US President Donald Trump on Friday said he will "permanently pause" migration from all "third world" countries and deport foreign nationals who are a "security risk" as his administration intensified crackdown on immigration after two National Guard members were shot at by Afghan national. One of the Guards succumbed to her injuries on Thursday.

The Trump administration said it will conduct a "rigorous" re-examination of all Green Cards issued to immigrants from "every country of concern".

"Even as we have progressed technologically, Immigration Policy has eroded those gains

and living conditions for many. I will permanently pause migration from all Third World Countries to allow the US system to fully recover, terminate all of the millions of Biden illegal admissions, including those signed by Sleepy Joe Biden's Autopen, and remove anyone who is not a net asset to the United States, or is incapable of loving our Country," Trump on his Truth Social.

He said he would end all federal benefits and subsidies to noncitizens in the country, "denaturalise migrants who undermine domestic tranquility, and deport any Foreign National who is a public charge, security risk, or non-compatible with Western Civilization".

>>>More on Page 6

PM hails Udupi-BJP connect, 'Sudarshan Chakra' security

UDUPI, 28 NOV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said Udupi was the "karmabhoomi" of the BJP and its predecessor the Jana Sangh. He also slammed the "no retaliation" after terror attacks by previous governments and hailed Operation Sudrashan Chakra as providing "a wall of security" for the country.

Modi held a road show in Udupi and recited shlokas from the Bhagwat Gita along with 1 lakh devotees at the Laksha Kantha Gita Parayana event at Sri Krishna Mutt.

"Coming to Udupi is very special for me. Udupi has been the karmabhoomi of the Jana Sangh and the Bharatiya Janta Party's model of good governance" Modi said. "In 1968, the people of Udupi elect-

66 Mission Sudarshan Chakra means to build a wall of security around prime locations. If the enemy dared to attack, our Sudarshan Chakra would destroy them

-Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

ed (former Karnataka MLA) VS Acharya of the Jana Sangh to the Udupi Municipal Corporation. With this, Udupi laid the foundation of a new governance model. The cleanliness drive we are witnessing today was adopted by Udupi five decades ago."

He added that Gujarat, where he is from, and Udupi have had a deep relationship because of Krishna.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a gathering during 'Laksha Kantha Gita Parayana' programme at Sri Krishna Mutt, in Udupi, Karnataka

Putin to visit India on 4-5 Dec

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Russian President Vladimir Putin is set to visit India from 4 to 5 December for the 23rd annual summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The visit aims to strengthen the 'Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership' between India and Russia, with significant outcomes expected, particularly in defence and energy cooperation. The MEA announced that both leaders will review bilateral relations and discuss a joint statement along with various interdepartmental and business agreements. Key topics on the agenda include enhancing defence ties, including potential discussions on procuring additional S-400 surface-to-air missile systems and Su-57 fighter jets. The S-400 systems have been effective during recent operations, and procurement plans are being considered.

EARTHQUAKE ALARM

New seismic map places entire Himalayan region in high risk zone

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

India has released an updated seismic zonation map under the 2025 Earthquake Design Code, placing the entire Himalayan arc in a new Zone VI, the highest-risk category.

The overhaul issued by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) marks one of the biggest revisions of national earthquake exposure in decades, with 61 per cent of the country now classified as moderate to high hazard.

Experts say the update brings long-needed uniformity to the Himalayan belt, earlier split between Zones IV and V despite shared tectonic stress. Vineet Gahalaut, director of the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology and former head of the National



Centre for Seismology, said older maps underestimated long-unruptured faults and overlooked the chance of ruptures extending southwards to the Himalayan Frontal Thrust.

The code removes abrupt hazard shifts once aligned with administrative boundaries and includes a rule placing towns on zone borders automatically in

the higher category. BIS said the map is based on probabilistic seismic hazard assessment using data on active faults, maximum magnitudes, seismic-wave attenuation and regional tectonics, replacing earlier reliance on historical epicentres and broad geological groupings.

The revision introduces stricter safety norms for structural and non-structural elements. Heavy components exceeding 1 per cent of a building's weight must be anchored, and projects near active faults must account for strong pulse-like ground motions. Critical infrastructure must remain functional after major quakes. The southern peninsula also saw only minor changes owing to its stable tectonic setting.

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AnteCongress
Members Garland
Phule Statue in
Tribute

AJMER, 28 NOV
On the 135th death anniversary of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, the great leader of the Ajmer social reform movement, a pioneer of women's education, and a lifelong crusader for the rights of the oppressed and deprived, the City Congress Committee, Ajmer, organized a tribute program at Jyotiba Phule Circle. Congress members and workers paid tribute by garlanding Phule's statue. Many Congressmen including City Congress Committee President Dr. Rajkumar Jaipal, Sunil Lara, Mahendra Chaudhary, Fakre Moin, Shailendra Agarwal, Wahid Mohammad, Lakshmi Dholkhadia, Naurat Gurjar, Kushal Komal, Ishwar Tahliyani, Wasim Khan, Nakul Khandelwal, Manish Chaurasia, Nirmal Berwal, Sunil Dhanka, Bharat Dholkhadia, Sumit Mittal, Mahesh Chauhan, Arif Hussain, Munnalal Agarwal Kamal Berwa, Hemant Jasoria, Rajesh Ghorial, Chandrashekhar Chauhan, Anand Prakash Mama, Arif Khan, Ganesh Chauhan, Ghulam Mustafa, Vaibhav Jain, Devendra Chaudhary, Amit Garg, Prince Abidaya, SD Mishra, Chandrashe Suniya, Ashok Pandit were present in the program.

ALWAR STEPS UP
CHILD MARRIAGE
PREVENTION DRIVE

ALWAR, 28 NOV
: Under the ongoing "Child Marriage Free Campaign" of the Women and Child Development Department, the Women Safety Advice Centre, Moti Doongri, organized an awareness session at Anandam Ashram in Vijay Mandir on Friday. Counsellor-coordinator Daya Garg informed the women and staff present about legal rights of women and provisions of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. All attendees pledged not to participate in or support child marriage and to immediately report any such case to the authorities. Emergency helpline numbers 1098, 1090, 112 and 181 were shared for assistance. The programme saw participation from legal aid advocate Phoolwati and social workers Khushboo, Sapna and Neeta, among others.

Shivraj Chouhan
Honors Alwar
Industrial Leaders

ALWAR, 28 NOV
Industrialists from the region were honoured in the national capital for their contributions to development across multiple sectors. In a ceremony held at a private hotel in Delhi, Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan presented mementos to select entrepreneurs for their excellence across three states. Among the awardees were Harsh Trehan, CMD of Trehan Home Developers, and Ashok Saini, Director of Apna Ghar Shalimar, who were recognised for their notable efforts in providing quality housing through the real estate sector.

Jaipur Hosts
Dialogue on OBC
Representation

JAIPUR, 28 NOV
The Rajasthan State Commission for Other Backward Classes (Political Representation) will hold a public dialogue session (Jan Samvaad Program) on December 2 at the District Council Auditorium in Jaipur. The initiative aims to assess the status and challenges of OBC communities in rural and urban local bodies and gather insights to guide future reservation recommendations. The program, scheduled from 11:00 AM to 1:30 PM, will focus on social, economic, and political aspects of OBC representation in Panchayati Raj and municipal institutions. Commission Chairperson Justice (Retd.) Madanlal Bhat said the session will engage elected representatives, experts, community leaders, and stakeholders to obtain practical suggestions for strengthening policy recommendations. Jaipur District Collector Dr. Jitendra Kumar Soni has assigned responsibilities for smooth organization. Additional CEO Sher Singh Lohadia will serve as nodal officer, and Municipal Corporation Deputy Commissioner Kavita Choudhary as co-nodal officer. Findings will help the Commission present effective recommendations to the state government.



MUJ Student Rajawat
Wins Deaflympics Bronze

JAIPUR, 28 NOV
Manipal University Jaipur (MUJ) celebrated a moment of pride as student-athlete Kushagra Singh Rajawat returned to campus after winning a Bronze Medal in the Men's 50m Rifle Prone shooting event at the Deaflympics 2025 held in Tokyo, Japan. His remarkable performance brought international recognition to both the University and the nation, highlighting India's growing presence in global deaf sporting events. Rajawat's achievement not only reflects his personal dedication but also underscores the support and encouragement provided by MUJ to its students in pursuing excellence beyond academics. In Tokyo, Rajawat displayed exceptional precision, focus, and composure in a highly competitive field, securing India a podium finish. His disciplined training, resilience, and consistent practice over the years culminated in this outstanding accomplishment. The medal also signifies the growing strength and talent of Indian athletes in international competitions for differently-abled sports, reinforcing the importance of inclusive sports platforms like the Deaflympics. On his return, the University community extended a warm and enthusiastic welcome to the young athlete. MUJ President Dr. Niti Nipun Sharma, Pro-President Dr. Karunakar A. Kotegar, Provost Dr. Nitu

Bhatnagar, and senior officials personally greeted Rajawat, congratulating him on his exceptional achievement and acknowledging the strong support system provided by his family. Dr. Sharma emphasized that Kushagra's success would serve as an inspiration for young athletes across the University and reaffirmed MUJ's commitment to promoting sports excellence alongside academics. He highlighted the University's efforts to provide advanced training facilities, coaching, and institutional encouragement to ensure students can achieve their full potential in sports. The MUJ fraternity — including students, faculty, and

staff — joined in celebrating Rajawat's accomplishment, reflecting the sense of pride and motivation his success brings to the University. His Bronze Medal at Deaflympics 2025 stands as a testament to his skill, dedication, and perseverance, while also inspiring fellow students to strive for excellence in their respective fields. This achievement not only elevates MUJ's reputation on national and international platforms but also reinforces India's commitment to supporting inclusive sporting events and recognizing the talents of differently-abled athletes. Rajawat's triumph symbolizes a blend of talent, hard work, and institutional support, setting an example for future generations of student-athletes.

Officials from the Directorate General of Taxpayer Services (DGTS), Ahmedabad Zonal Unit, under the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), visited the Alwar Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Friday to conduct a collaborative awareness meeting with Chamber office-bearers. DGTS officers Sanjay Vyas and Anil Sreedharan outlined the department's role in facilitating communication between taxpayers, industry stakeholders, and the indirect taxes wing of the Government of India. They emphasized the DGTS mandate to monitor the implementation of commitments made in the revised Citizen's Charter of CBIC and its responsibility to inspect CGST and Customs formations concerning taxpayer services. During the session, the officers provided detailed guidance on grievance redressal mechanisms for GST and Customs-related issues, helping stakeholders understand procedures for resolving disputes efficiently. They also highlighted initiatives aimed at improving transparency, accountability, and responsiveness

Alwar Chamber
Hosts Tax Awareness
Meeting with DGTS



ALWAR, 28 NOV
in taxpayer services. Vyas and Sreedharan assured the industrial community of the department's commitment to continuous engagement through future outreach programs, workshops, and consultations organized under the Alwar Commissionerate's taxpayer service initiatives. The meeting encouraged dialogue between the DGTS officials and Chamber members, enabling the exchange of ideas and feedback on service delivery and compliance-related challenges. The session reinforced the importance of collaborative efforts between the government and business community to enhance taxpayer awareness, facilitate smooth tax processes, and address concerns promptly. Chamber representatives expressed appreciation for the officers' comprehensive presentation and emphasized the value of such engagements in promoting better understanding of GST and Customs procedures among the local industrial sector. The initiative marks a continued effort to strengthen partnerships with stakeholders, improve taxpayer services, and ensure effective communication of government policies to businesses in Alwar.

The birth anniversary of Jain spiritual leader and Anushtan Aradhika Sadhvi Dr. Kumudlata Ji M.S. was celebrated on Wednesday at Shri Jain Divakar Kamal Gaushala in Nimbaheera with acts of devotion and service. Devotees offered green fodder to cows and prayed for the Sadhvi's good health and long life. Gaushala Minister Ajit Veerwal noted that Gaushala Committee President and former MLA Ashok Navlakha extended heartfelt wishes, describing her spiritual guidance as an inspiration for society. Former International Secretary of Mahavir International Kamlesh Dhlawat highlighted her lifelong dedication to religious discipline and uplifting people through spiritual practices, while former Minister of Vardhman Shthanakwasi Sangh Anand Salecha also conveyed warm wishes. Amid chants of "Jag Mein Chamke Jain Divakar," shravaks and shravikas participated in cow service as a gesture of devotion. The event was attended by senior community members, youth leaders, and devotees who expressed heartfelt reverence toward Sadhvi Kumudlata Ji, making the ceremony a harmonious and inspiring celebration of her spiritual legacy.



NSUI Hosts
Constitution Day
Dialogue

AJMER, 28 NOV
The National Students' Union of India (NSUI) celebrated Constitution Day at Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati University with a student dialogue session focused on constitutional values and youth awareness. NSUI Rajasthan President Vinod Jakhad, on a one-day visit to Ajmer, was accompanied by State Vice President and Ajmer Division in-charge Mahesh Chaudhary. They were welcomed on campus by Ajmer District President Abhishek Samson and University Unit President Hemanpal Rawal. Addressing students, Jakhad discussed the drafting and implementation of the Constitution and its role in safeguarding democracy. He highlighted NSUI's statewide Constitution Day initiatives, including marathons, seminars, and interactive sessions to increase youth awareness. Criticizing central and state governments, Jakhad alleged that democratic values are under threat and urged students to protect the Constitution and uphold their fundamental rights and duties. He also reiterated NSUI's demand to restore student union elections in Rajasthan, suspended for the past three years, stressing that students' voices must be heard on campuses. Following the programme, former student union president Bhagwan Singh briefed Jakhad on recent university reforms. Impressed by Vice Chancellor Prof. Suresh Kumar Agarwal's student-centric decisions over the past three months, NSUI leaders felicitated him with a turban, garland, and memento. Jakhad praised the move to change examination centres for private colleges to curb malpractice and welcomed the rationalization of PhD fees across institutions. The event was attended by senior NSUI and Youth Congress leaders, including PCC Secretary Sunil Lara, District Council Member Shreelal Tanwar, Youth Congress District President Mohit Malhotra, Vishnu Gurjar, poet Lokesh Charan, and a large number of students, reinforcing the importance of constitutional awareness and active student participation in university governance.

The 40th phase of the Vitamin A supplementation campaign will be conducted across Jaipur district from November 29 to December 29, 2025. Children aged nine months to five years will receive Vitamin A doses at Anganwadi centres, administered at six-month intervals to ensure continued protection. Chief Medical and Health Officer, Jaipur I, Dr. Ravi Shekhawat, said the initiative provides Vitamin A twice a year to safeguard children's health, prevent eye conditions such as night blindness, and strengthen immunity to reduce the severity of illnesses like diarrhoea and pneumonia. Regular supplementation also helps lower mortality among children under five. Acting Deputy Chief Medical and Health Officer (Family Welfare), Dr. Dharmendra Karadiya, explained that children aged one to five years will receive a 2 ml dose, while those between nine and twelve months will receive 1 ml. In centres where the ASHA Sahyogini post is vacant, Anganwadi workers will administer the supplement. If both positions are vacant, the nearest sub-health centre's female health worker will ensure all eligible children are covered.

Vitamin A
Supplementation
Drive Begins in
Jaipur District

JAIPUR, 28 NOV
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Collector Reviews Welfare,
Orders Stray Animal Measures

BHILWARA, 28 NOV
District Collector Jasmeet Singh Sandhu chaired a weekly review meeting on Friday at the Collectorate auditorium to assess the progress of 11 major central and state welfare schemes, including Har Ghar Jal, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban and Rural), and PM Svanidhi. During the meeting, the Collector directed the Municipal Corporation to launch a 15-day special drive to control stray animals in the city, ensuring smooth traffic flow and public safety. Considering the winter season, he also instructed officials to strengthen night shelters and provide tents and essential facilities for attendants of patients at Mahatma Gandhi Hospital. The Collector further emphasized the need for the District Council and

the Women and Child Development Department to address public grievances with greater sensitivity and ensure tangible improvements in citizen satisfaction. He called for proactive measures and better coordination among departments to achieve visible results in welfare implementation. The review meeting was attended by ADM City Pratibha Devtiya, District Council CEO Chandrabhan Singh Bhati, UIT OSD Chimanlal Meena, and senior officials from multiple departments. Officials presented progress reports and outlined the steps being taken to address ongoing issues, including public service delivery, sanitation, and winter preparedness, while the Collector provided guidance and set directives for immediate action to enhance governance and community welfare.

Sadhvi Kumudlata
Anniversary Observed

NIMBAHERA, 28 NOV
The birth anniversary of Jain spiritual leader and Anushtan Aradhika Sadhvi Dr. Kumudlata Ji M.S. was celebrated on Wednesday at Shri Jain Divakar Kamal Gaushala in Nimbaheera with acts of devotion and service. Devotees offered green fodder to cows and prayed for the Sadhvi's good health and long life. Gaushala Minister Ajit Veerwal noted that Gaushala Committee President and former MLA Ashok Navlakha extended heartfelt wishes, describing her spiritual guidance as an inspiration for society. Former International Secretary of Mahavir International Kamlesh Dhlawat highlighted her lifelong dedication to religious discipline and uplifting people through spiritual practices, while former Minister of Vardhman Shthanakwasi Sangh Anand Salecha also conveyed warm wishes. Amid chants of "Jag Mein Chamke Jain Divakar," shravaks and shravikas participated in cow service as a gesture of devotion. The event was attended by senior community members, youth leaders, and devotees who expressed heartfelt reverence toward Sadhvi Kumudlata Ji, making the ceremony a harmonious and inspiring celebration of her spiritual legacy.

Rohit Sharma, Tilak
Verma Invest in
Textile Firm

BHILWARA, 28 NOV
Cricketers Rohit Sharma and Tilak Verma have invested in Bhilwara-based textile SME Swaraj Sunting Limited through a preferential share allotment, receiving 11,000 shares each at Rs. 236 per share. The company is issuing a total of 43.76 lakh shares at the same price, raising Rs. 103.28 crore, with 198 other investors including Kolkata Knight Riders coach Abhishek Mohan Nair and Shreyas Iyer's father participating. Swaraj Sunting plans an Extraordinary General Meeting on December 24 to approve strategic financial decisions and aims to raise an additional Rs. 160.41 crore via convertible warrants as part of a Rs. 263 crore fundraising plan. Listed in March 2022 at Rs. 56 per share, the stock now trades around Rs. 280. The firm seeks shareholder approval to extend loans up to Rs. 75 crore, raise borrowing limits to Rs. 1,000 crore, and mortgage assets equivalently. Despite 59.2% annual growth over five years, market experts caution over accounting practices and dividend policy concerns.

YOUTH PLEDGE FOR SELF-RELIANCE

BJP Youth Urges Swadeshi for Self-Reliant India

BHILWARA, 28 NOV
A massive gathering of young workers from across the district marked the Bharatiya Janata Party's youth conference on Friday, held under the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan' (Self-Reliant India Mission) at the party's district headquarters. Devnarayan Board Chairman and state co-convenor of the campaign Omprakash Bhadana attended as chief guest, while district president Prashant Mewara presided over the event. Senior leaders, including former MP Subhash Bahediya, MLA Udaylal Bhadana, MLA Lalaram Bairwa, former MLA Vitthal Shankar Awasthi, and Mayor Rakesh Pathak, were also present. Addressing the youth, Bhadana emphasized that India can achieve true development only when the

spirit of 'Swadeshi' becomes central to national progress. He highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiatives to promote self-reliance by supporting local industries, workers, artisans, and indigenous technologies, citing India's Covid-19 vaccine and defence advancements as examples. He urged youth to contribute to building a nation powered by indigenous products, rooted in India's soil and identity. District President Mewara criticized the previous Congress government for undermining youth interests through corruption and repeated exam paper leaks, noting that the BJP government has ensured justice and transparency in the last two years. Former MP Bahediya stressed that a developed India requires self-reliant citizens and communities. MLA



Udaylal Bhadana described Bhilwara's energetic youth as vital to India's development, while MLA Lalaram Bairwa called on young people to restore India's pride and join the mission of making the nation a global leader. Former MLA Vitthal Shankar Awasthi highlighted youth's ability to achieve

the impossible, and Mayor Pathak praised PM Modi for recognizing and empowering India's youth. Conference coordinators Raunak Hingad and Piyush Mewara managed proceedings and delivered the vote of thanks. The event saw the participation of numerous BJP Yuva

Morcha office-bearers and workers, including Shivraj Gurjar, Sampat Suthar, Lakhan Mali, Udai Singh, Chetan Vaishnav, Devraj Jat, Gajendra Sahu, Arpit Samdani, Deepak Parashar, and others, reinforcing the youth's pivotal role in driving the self-reliant India mission.

CAZRI, Jodhpur
Agriculture
University Sign
MoU for Research

JODHPUR, 28 NOV
The Central Arid Zone Research Institute (CAZRI) and Agriculture University, Jodhpur have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen agricultural research, education, and innovation in western Rajasthan. The MoU was formalized by Agriculture University Vice Chancellor Dr. Virendra Singh Jaitawat and CAZRI Director Dr. Suresh Pal Singh Tanwar. Dr. Jaitawat said the collaboration will enhance academic coordination, student training, exposure visits, and support for postgraduate and research scholars. Dr. Tanwar noted both institutions will guide students and researchers on multiple projects, promote technologies suited to arid conditions, and benefit farmers. The partnership also includes student exchange programs in education, research, and skill development. The signing ceremony was attended by University Finance Controller Anjali Yadav, Director Research Dr. M.M. Sundaria, Director Education Surendra Kumar Moond, and senior CAZRI faculty including Dr. Dheeraj Singh, Dr. Rajesh Kankani, Dr. H.L. Kushwaha, Dr. R.N. Kumawat, Dr. B.S. Rathore, and Surendra Kumar, marking a key step in advancing agriculture in the region.

Jodhpur Electricity
Employees Protest
Cadre Restructuring
Delay

JODHPUR, 28 NOV
Employees of all five power companies under the Rajasthan Energy Department protested on Thursday, wearing black bands to express anger over the government's delay in implementing cadre restructuring for ministerial staff. Employee representatives said the Finance Department had issued orders 32 months ago directing restructuring of ministerial posts across all state departments, but while other departments complied, the energy sector has not acted. Staff alleged that instead of following directives, the Energy Secretary asked the five power corporations to submit proposals, which were reportedly flawed, leading to the abolition of the establishment officer post and failing to align with the mandated framework. Protesting employees warned their repeated requests have been ignored and urged prompt action. They stated that if orders are not implemented soon, they would escalate their agitation. The unions announced a major demonstration at Urja Bhawan in Jaipur on January 9 if the government does not act in time.

Rajya Sabha MP
Gehlot: Phule's
Ideals Build
Strong India

JODHPUR, 28 NOV
Rajya Sabha MP Rajendra Gehlot led a tribute ceremony at Mahamandir Park on Thursday to mark the death anniversary of social reformer Mahatma Jyotirao Phule. Floral tributes were offered at Phule's statue as leaders and citizens honored his contributions to social equality and education. Speaking at the event, Gehlot said Phule devoted his life to social justice, equality, women's education, and upliftment of marginalized communities. He noted that Phule and Savitribai Phule, who established the nation's first girls' school, continue to inspire society with progressive reforms. Highlighting government welfare initiatives, Gehlot said Prime Minister Modi's mission of "Antyodaya" ensures the last person benefits from development. He added that the Phule couple fought social evils, championed women's empowerment, promoted education as a right, and worked for Dalits and the underprivileged. Their teachings remain a guiding force for youth, social workers, and nation-builders committed to creating an inclusive, just India.

BJP's Radha Mohan Das Agarwal Says SIR
Crucial for Transparent Democracy

JODHPUR, 28 NOV
BJP's Rajasthan in-charge Radha Mohan Das Agarwal on Thursday strongly defended the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, calling it a vital process for ensuring transparency, accuracy, and integrity in India's democratic system. Speaking to the media at Jodhpur Airport, Agarwal emphasized that maintaining an updated and error-free voter list is essential for a "pure and fair democracy," as it helps prevent irregularities and upholds the credibility of elections. He questioned the Congress party's objections to the current SIR exercise, pointing out that most revisions carried out after 2003-04 occurred during Congress governments, and no opposition was raised at that time. He accused the Congress of adopting contradictory

stands based on political convenience. "Congress should decide what it really wants. If elections are happening, they oppose SIR. If elections are not happening and the process is being carried out smoothly, they still object," he remarked. Agarwal cited the example of Bihar, where he claimed that earlier revision drives helped remove duplicate names, migrated individuals, and deceased voters from the rolls. According to him, these corrections contributed to peaceful and credible elections in the state. He argued that similar benefits would be achieved through SIR in other states as well, as the revision process helps eliminate fraudulent entries and strengthens electoral integrity. Referring to West Bengal, Agarwal said that visuals emerging from the state underline the nationwide need for accurate voter lists. He

asserted that SIR is not just a routine administrative process but a matter of national interest, as it ensures that only eligible voters participate in elections. Agarwal also highlighted what he described as Congress's contradictory approach in Rajasthan. Despite publicly objecting to the revision of voter lists, the party has appointed booth-level agents and is training them to monitor the process. "On one side, they oppose SIR, and on the other, they are preparing their BLA workers. This clearly shows their confusion," he said. He further noted that the Supreme Court has already clarified that the Election Commission may continue its constitutional duties irrespective of political objections. Agarwal described the resistance to SIR as baseless and motivated by fear rather than genuine concerns about the democratic process.



Ashwini Vaishnaw
Flags Off Jaisalmer
Express

JAISALMER, 28 NOV
A new express train service connecting Jaisalmer and Shakur Basti in Delhi will be inaugurated on November 29. Union Railway Minister, Information & Broadcasting Minister, and Minister of Electronics & IT Ashwini Vaishnaw, along with Union Culture and Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, will flag off the inaugural run of the "Jaisalmer Express" from Jaisalmer Railway Station. According to Shashi Kiran, Chief Public Relations Officer of North Western Railway, the inaugural special train (Train No. 04805) will depart from Jaisalmer at 11:20 AM on Friday and reach Shakur Basti at 4:30 AM the following day. The train will halt at Ashapura Gomath, Ramdevra, Phalodi, Marwar Lohawat, Osian, Jodhpur, Merta Road, Degana, Makrana, Kuchaman City, Nawa City, Phulera, Jaipur, Dausa, Alwar, Rewari, Gurugram, and Delhi Cantt. The special service will consist of 16 coaches, including one general class coach, four sleeper coaches, one AC First Class coach, two AC 2-Tier coaches, six AC 3-Tier coaches, and two guard vans. Railway officials said the new service will enhance connectivity between western Rajasthan and the national capital, benefiting both passengers and tourism in the region.

Kota University Launches Indian
Knowledge Tradition Courses

KOTA, 28 NOV
Kota University has announced a major academic expansion aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, introducing new undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Hindu Studies, Astrology and Vastu Shastra from the 2026-27 academic session. The proposal was approved during the 25th meeting of the Academic Council chaired by Vice Chancellor Prof. B.P. Saraswat. According to university officials, these programs aim to integrate India's ancient knowledge systems with modern higher education, strengthening cultural heritage while ensuring compliance with contemporary academic standards. In an effort to enhance professional and industry-oriented education, the university has also established three new departments: Commerce, Management Studies and Tourism & Hospitality. To broaden opportunities in social sciences, new departments of Geography, Economics and Public Administration have been set up, reflecting a multidisciplinary expansion across key disciplines. The university will conduct its convocation ceremony on January 23, 2026. Updated syllabi for several courses were approved during the meeting, mark-



ing an important step toward modernizing academic content. Significant curriculum reforms have been introduced in subjects such as Banking, Tourism Management, Yoga Science and Pharmaceutical Chemistry. To further strengthen tourism education and global employability, a five-year integrated dual degree program in Tourism & Travel

Management will be launched. Additionally, several new academic programs have been approved to meet industry-driven skill requirements. These include a Master's degree in Tourism & Travel Management, an MA in Yogic Science, a Postgraduate Diploma in Income Tax - Law & Practice, multiple M.Pharm specializations and

PG Diplomas in Agri-Tourism, Event Management and Medical Tourism. Officials emphasized that the new programs are designed to align with evolving industry trends and promote employment-focused learning. Starting from the 2025-26 academic session, the university will implement regular inspection and academic evaluation of affiliated colleges under new state government guidelines. It will also enforce strict adherence to UGC enrollment rules for colleges established after 2023-24, ensuring academic discipline and transparency. Reforms have also been introduced in the MCA program, including changes in the first-semester examination structure to better support students preparing for competitive exams like the CSI tests. The minimum passing requirement has been set at 50 percent. To maintain strong academic standards, the university has reconstituted the Dean Committee, which will oversee continuous review and development of programs, including the General Purpose Education Module (GPEM). University officials say these initiatives will promote innovation, enhance employability and revive India's traditional knowledge systems within mainstream higher education.

Top Leaders
to Attend BJP
Chief's Son's
Wedding

PALI, 28 NOV
The wedding of Shreyansh, son of BJP Rajasthan President Madan Rathore, is set to take place in Pali on November 30 and has generated considerable buzz in political circles across the state. Preparations are in full swing, with confirmations pouring in from top leaders. The guest list reportedly features the Chief Minister and governors including Haribhau Bagade and Om Prakash Mathur, along with several other prominent political figures. Pre-wedding festivities began with mehendi and women's music rituals, while the main ceremony and reception are scheduled for November 30. Senior BJP leaders have already started arriving in Pali, with Rajasthan in-charge Radha Mohan Agarwal participating in the early celebrations. According to reports, Governor Haribhau Bagade is expected to arrive by helicopter on the day of the wedding, landing at Bhansali Girls College near the venue, where a dedicated helipad has been prepared. Sikkim Governor Om Prakash Mathur is also slated to arrive in the evening from Falna. The Chief Minister, several cabinet ministers, and senior BJP leaders are among those likely to attend and bless the couple. Given the high-profile nature of the gathering, the local administration and police have made extensive arrangements to ensure smooth crowd management and tight security. Traffic diversions, security checkpoints, and deployment of additional personnel are part of the precautionary measures. The wedding, while a family celebration, has also become a major political event, highlighting how such occasions often serve as informal networking platforms for leaders across the state. The presence of top dignitaries underscores Rathore's influence within the party and the political significance attached to the gathering.

Governor Bagde Says Geeta
Spreads Peace, Brotherhood

KOTA, 28 NOV
Rajasthan Governor Haribhau Bagde on Thursday emphasized that the message of the Bhagavad Gita should reach every individual, calling it a scripture of devotion, love, harmony and peace. He said the Gita continues to remain relevant across time and inspires people to move forward in life with the right values. The Governor was speaking during a meeting with a delegation from the "Jio Geeta Parivar," led by Rajasthan State Convenor Kishan Pathak, at Raj Bhavan in Jaipur. The delegation sought the Governor's support for a global initiative — a one-minute collective recitation of the Gita on December 1, observed as Gita Jayanti. They requested that all higher education institutions across Rajasthan participate in the campaign. Governor Bagde accepted the request and assured



complete support. Pathak informed that the campaign is inspired by Geeta scholar Swami Gyananand Maharaj. This year, nearly five crore participants from India and abroad, including over eleven lakh people from Rajasthan, are expected to join the global call for a simultaneous one-minute recitation dedicated to spreading peace, goodwill and duty-conscious living. During the meeting, the delegation honored Governor Bagde with a shawl and presented him with the book Geeta

Prerana, authored by Swami Gyananand Maharaj. The Governor also unveiled the official poster of the nationwide initiative. Jio Geeta Parivar officials said the objective is to ensure that the Gita's teachings reach every household and unite the world through its message of universal welfare. The event was attended by State Co-convenor and Yoga Acharya Manish, Jaipur President Anand Poddar, D.P. Gupta, Basant Jain and other members of the organization.

KTM, Triumph Unveil
New Motorcycle
Showroom

UDAIPUR, 28 NOV
Sneha Sales inaugurated a state-of-the-art KTM and Triumph motorcycle showroom on Shobhagpura's 100-Foot Road on Thursday, marking a major boost to premium motorcycling facilities in Udaipur. The grand opening was attended by prominent guests, media representatives and biking enthusiasts, with Udaipur City MLA Tarachand serving as the chief guest. Sneha Sales representatives — Ashok Mehta, Tarun Jain, Ashish Mehta, Sanjay Vaya and Lakshya Jain — said the new showroom is designed to offer an international-standard experience, featuring the complete KTM and Triumph lineup from Bajaj Auto along with an advanced service center and modern customer amenities.

Siddharth Sherpa, Circle Head for KTM and Triumph, highlighted Triumph's strong growth in India over the past year, supported by an expanding retail network, new experience stores and a rapidly increasing riding community. He praised the success of the modern-classic 400cc series and described the newly launched Thruxton 400 as a perfect blend of café-racer styling, performance and premium build quality. Area Sales Manager Saman Khan said the showroom aims to provide maximum convenience to customers and will serve as a major hub for premium motorcycles in the region. KTM models start at Rs.1,71,000 and Triumph motorcycles at Rs.1,93,300. The centrally located facility ensures easy accessibility for riders across Udaipur.

HERITAGE-DRIVEN LITERATURE
'Anubhuti' and 'Batori Hui Virasat' Released

UDAIPUR, 28 NOV
The autobiography Anubhuti by social worker Dr. Laxman Singh Karnawat and the heritage collection Batori Hui Virasat, compiled by Pushpa Karnawat, were formally released at a ceremony held at Mahapragya Vihar, Rajasthan Vidyapeeth Vice Chancellor Col. (Prof.) Dr. S.S. Sarangdevot presided as chief guest, joined by Dr. Dev Kothari, Padamchand Patawari and Madan Tated as special guests. The program was chaired by Dr. Basantilal Babal, with Dr. Pradeep Kumawat as editor and keynote speaker. Dr. Sarangdevot praised Karnawat's lifelong service, noting that both books reflect cultural values, sensitivity and mean-



ingful human experiences. He described the works as a blend of creativity, heritage and purposeful living. Keynote speaker Dr.

Kumawat said autobiographies require depth and honesty, adding that Anubhuti mirrors a life of strong character.

Author Dr. Karnawat shared that the book captures visits of three Acharyas to Udaipur and draws from his personal journey of service, inspired by elders and guided by Sadhvi Pramukha. Pushpa Karnawat also spoke about her experience compiling Batori Hui Virasat. Legal expert Basantilal Babel compared heritage documentation to "picking grains from a heap of hay," praising the book for chronicling spiritual traditions. Scholars including Prof. Uma Shankar Sharma, Dr. K.L. Kothari, Mahendra Karnawat and others appreciated the couple's literary contribution. The event featured a devotional invocation, welcome addresses and a vote of thanks by Kamal Karnawat.

Minister Nagar Orders
24-Hour Dam Repairs

KOTA, 28 NOV
Rajasthan Energy Minister Hiralal Nagar on Friday inspected the Sawan-Bhadau Dam in the Kanwas region following repeated complaints from local residents and ordered urgent repairs to a damaged gate. After assessing the technical situation, he directed officials to complete the work within 24 hours to ensure uninterrupted irrigation for farmers. Specialist engineers and divers from Mumbai and Kanpur have been deployed for the operation. Divers will descend 8-9 meters underwater to remove the faulty gate, weld the broken flange and reinstall it. A full regulation shutdown will be imposed on Saturday to facilitate the repairs. Nagar said the dam is the lifeline of the Kanwas agricultural region,

and the government is committed to ensuring timely water supply. He noted that Rs.15 crore has already been sanctioned for repair and maintenance, with an additional Rs.8 crore proposal submitted for approval. Monsoon conditions had previously delayed repairs when heavy machinery became stuck, forcing temporary arrangements to maintain canal water flow. During the visit, the minister reviewed the drone survey, technical maps and condition reports, instructing officials to prepare a long-term solution to prevent future issues. He also directed the Mukundra Tiger Reserve administration to improve access by building a gravel road. Nagar added that introducing tigresses in Mukundra and Ramgarh reserves will boost both conservation and tourism.



Arunachal allows
poll staff to vote
on-the-spot

ITANAGAR, 28 NOV
For the first time in Arunachal Pradesh, the State Election Commission (SEC) will allow polling personnel to vote on-the-spot in the upcoming municipal elections, replacing postal ballots. Poll staff from Itanagar and Pasighat must apply to their municipal returning officer (MRO) three days before polling with their election duty order. MRO will verify identities, mark names on the electoral roll, and provide ballot papers, with voting conducted under supervision. The 12th panchayat and third municipal polls are scheduled for 15 December, covering 27 zilla parishads, 2,103 gram panchayats, and municipal wards. Over 40,000 personnel will be deployed, with EVMs for municipalities and ballot boxes for panchayats.

Security forces
hunt for terrorists
in J&K's Udhampur

JAMMU, 28 NOV
Security forces launched a cordon and search operation on Friday after getting information about suspicious movements in the higher reaches of Udhampur district in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. Searches are underway in the Chigla-Balotha area of the Basantgarh belt of the district. Basantgarh is located along a traditional infiltration route often used by Pakistani terrorists who cross the border in Kathua and move through the higher reaches towards Doda and Kishtwar districts before heading into the Kashmir Valley. Officials said the army and the police have launched a joint operation after receiving information about the movement of three people in the Balotha area.

Haryana STF foils
Karnal attack,
arrests gangster

CHANDIGARH, 28 NOV
Haryana Police's Special Task Force (STF) arrested Amar Singh a key member of the Lawrence Bishnoi-Kala Rana/Nauni Rana gang, on 25 November from the Karnal-Indri road. Acting on intelligence, the team recovered a foreign-made automatic pistol and ammunition. During police questioning, Singh admitted bringing explosives to Karnal on orders from gang leader Nauni Rana, intending a major attack. STF recovered two hand grenades and an improvised explosive device near Jhinjhar village, which were safely disposed of by the Bomb Disposal Squad. Singh, involved in multiple murders, kidnappings, armed robberies, and illegal weapons cases across Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab, has been linked to high-profile crimes, including the killing of a political leader on the Noida-Ghaziabad border.

Modi announces
assistance for
cyclone in SL

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV
India on Friday delivered essential relief supplies to cyclone-battered Sri Lanka with Prime Minister Narendra Modi conveying to the island nation that New Delhi stands ready provide more aid to it to deal with the situation. New Delhi launched 'Operation Sagar Bandhu' to assist Sri Lanka in its hour of crisis and the first tranche of relief materials were handed after the consignments were transported by Indian Navy's aircraft carrier INS Vikrant and frontline ship INS Udaigiri. At least 56 people have been killed in Sri Lanka due to floods and landslides. Over 43,900 people from 12,313 families have been hit by the extreme weather conditions, according to Sri Lankan authorities.

CEC has blood on his
hands for BLO deaths: TMC

Two more BLOs died in Gujarat & West Bengal in two days

KOLKATA/MEHSANA, 28 NOV

With West Bengal reporting the fourth (booth-level officer) BLO death since the exercise began in the state on 4 November, a Trinamool Congress (TMC) delegation on Friday met the full bench of the Election Commission (EC) in Delhi and accused the poll panel chief of having "blood on his hands".

Two primary school teachers deployed as booth-level officers in the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls died of cardiac arrest in West Bengal's Murshidabad and Gujarat's Mehsana, sparking accusations of tremendous work pressure on them.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav also made a fresh attack on the EC over the SIR, claiming it was a "big conspiracy" against the people of the country that could push citizens into a state "worse than the colonial era".

SIR is currently underway in 12 states & Union territories.

During the day, the 10-member TMC delegation, led by Rajya Sabha leader Derek O'Brien, met the EC officials. The delegation also consisted of Lok Sabha MPs Mahua



TMC delegation, including MPs Derek O'Brien, Kalyan Banerjee, and other party leaders, arrives for a meeting with the Election Commission, outside Nirvachan Sadan, in New Delhi, on Friday

Moitra, Satabdi Roy, Kalyan Banerjee, Pratima Mondal, Sajda Ahmed, and Rajya Sabha MPs Dola Sen, Mamata Thakur, Saket Gokhale, and Prakash Chik Barik.

"We started the meeting by stating that the CEC has blood on his hands. We raised five questions. After this, Kalyan Banerjee, Mahua Moitra, and Mamata Thakur spoke and shared whatever they had to in about 40 minutes," O'Brien said.

Additionally, in Mehsana, Dinesh Raval, 50, who was a

teacher in a government primary school in Sudasana village, died of heart attack at his home in the intervening night of Thursday and Friday, Satlasana police station sub inspector Udaysinh Zala said.

While the opposition Congress and teachers' union linked the BLO's death to excessive work pressure and lack of facilities, police denied the allegations.

In West Bengal's Murshidabad district, Zakir Hossain, a teacher at a state-run primary school who was

deployed as a BLO, collapsed on Thursday afternoon after complaining of severe chest pain and was rushed to a nearby hospital, where he died later that night, family members said.

Relatives claimed Hossain had been under "tremendous pressure" juggling SIR duties and regular teaching work.

TMC leaders, including Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, have accused the EC of burdening BLOs with an "inhumane" and "unplanned" workload.

Sengottaiyan is BJP's
sleeper cell: TN Minister

PUDUKKOTTAI, 28 NOV

Tamil Nadu Minister S Regupathy on Friday claimed that KA Sengottaiyan was a "sleeper cell member" of the BJP sent on a specific assignment to join actor Vijay-led TVK. He also alleged that the former minister, who had a long stint with the AIADMK, was being remotely controlled by the BJP.

Sengottaiyan joined the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam in the presence of its founder Vijay, after his expulsion by AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami, recently.

"I see Sengottaiyan as BJP's sleeper cell member. This will be proved soon," Regupathy told reporters here.

When pointed out that he had joined the TVK, as the BJP had let him down, he replied that he would not have gone if the BJP had not deceived him. "He is the BJP's agent. He is at the beck



Vijay has commenced his political journey like MGR. He keeps photos of MGR and (former CM) Annadurai ... Vijay commenced his political journey like MGR, and he will surely succeed,

-KA Sengottaiyan

and call of Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Sengottaiyan joined the TVK to bring the TVK into the BJP's alliance," he said.

On Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Minister PK Sekar Babu's invitation to Sengottaiyan to join the DMK, he said it was but natural to invite someone if he quits a party.

Rohit Pawar seeks probe into
₹111 cr PWD embezzlement case

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

NCP (SP) leader Rohit Pawar has called for an investigation following an alleged attempt by officials from the Public Works Department (PWD) to embezzle approximately Rs 111 crore from contractors' security deposit accounts in Palghar district.

In a social media post, Pawar noted that the attempt was thwarted due to the vigilance of bank employees, raising serious concerns about state bureaucracy accountability.

A PWD employee reportedly submitted a request at a nationalised bank for a demand draft of Rs 111.65 crore, drawing from a PWD



account holding contractors' deposits.

Bank staff detected the unusually high value of the request, prompting immediate checks that revealed no authorisation for the transaction.

Pawar highlighted, "At a time when contractors are struggling... this is shocking."

- A PWD employee reportedly submitted a request at a nationalised bank for a demand draft of Rs 111.65 crore, drawing from a PWD account holding contractors' deposits.

He demanded a criminal case against the involved officials and called for a review of mechanisms governing security deposits.

PWD officials have launched an internal inquiry, with the employee in question currently untraceable.



GUWAHATI, 28 NOV

An Assam Rifles patrolling party came under fire from unidentified militants along the Indo-Myanmar border on Friday, a defence spokesperson said here.

The security personnel "immediately retaliated with control and caution" considering civilian safety, the official added.

The spokesperson, however, did not specify the exact location of the incident.

"Operations are currently underway, with additional troops being deployed in the area," he said.

It was not immediately known whether there were any casualties, the spokesperson added.

MUKHYAMANTRI MAHILA YOJANA

Bihar CM to
distribute ₹1,000 cr
to 10 lakh women

PATNA, 28 NOV

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has announced the disbursement of Rs 1,000 crore under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana, benefiting 10 lakh women entrepreneurs in the state. Each beneficiary received Rs 10,000 via the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system, with the event held at his official residence and attended by cabinet colleagues and senior officials.

Speaking to reporters after the event, Rural Development Minister Shrawan Kumar remarked, "A total of 1.56 crore women have received the money so far." He encouraged beneficiaries to utilise the funds for self-employment, stating that those who demonstrate progress could eventually qualify for additional assistance of Rs 2 lakh each.

The scheme was launched in September, shortly before the assembly elections, during a virtual event featuring Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Disbursement took place in batches, which led to accusations from opposition parties of vote-buying as elections approached.

Despite criticism, the programme appeared to resonate



- The scheme was launched in September, shortly before the assembly elections, during a virtual event featuring Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

with voters, as evidence shows an unprecedented turnout of women at the polls, contributing to the ruling NDA's robust majority.

Responding to queries about complaints from women who had not received their funds, the minister noted, "The scheme makes it clear that recipients of the aid must get registered with a Jeevika self-help group in their area. Those who have not done so are being persuaded to do the needful, and they will get the benefit."

PM unveils 77-foot-tall
Lord Ram statue in Goa

PANAJI, 28 NOV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said India is witnessing a "cultural renaissance", and the construction of the Mahakal Mahalok in Ujjain reflect the "awakening" of the nation.

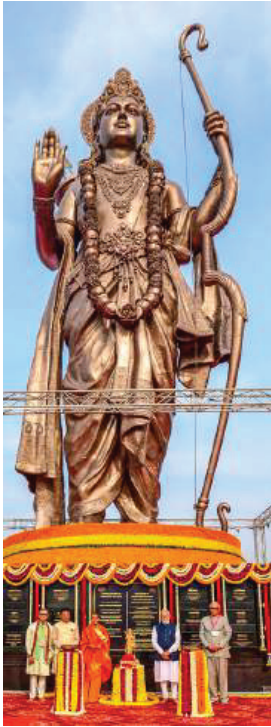
The prime minister was addressing a gathering after unveiling a 77-foot-tall bronze statue of Lord Ram as part of Shree Samsthan Gokarn Jeevottam Mutt's 550th year celebrations at Partagali, in Cancona, South Goa. It is the tallest statue of Ram in the world, as per the Goa government.

"The restoration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, grand redevelopment of Kashi Vishwanath Dham, and expansion of the Mahakal Mahalok in Ujjain, all these reflect the awakening of our

nation, which is advancing its spiritual heritage with renewed strength," Modi said. Referring to Goa's history, Modi said there were times when Goa's temples and local traditions had to face destruction.

Goa governor Ashok Gajapathi Raju, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and Shrimad Vidhyadheesh Teerth Swami of the Mutt were present at the event. The Ram statue, made by renowned sculptor Ram Sutar whose past projects include the Statue of Unity in Gujarat, is the tallest Ram statue in the world, claimed Goa PWD minister Digambar Kamat.

Shree Samsthan Gokarn Jeevottam Mutt is among India's oldest monastic institutions, known for its spiritual, cultural and social contributions, and holds a prominent place in the Saraswat community.



PM Narendra Modi with Goa CM Pramod Sawant at the unveiling of a 77-foot-tall bronze statue of Lord Ram, in Goa, on Friday

'NUMBERS KEEP DISAPPOINTING'

Cong calls GPD rate unsustainable
without reviving private investments

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Congress party has expressed dissatisfaction with the latest GDP figures, labelling them as "disappointing" and warning that high growth rates are unsustainable without a revival in private investment.

This criticism follows the Indian economy's robust growth of 8.2 per cent for the July-September quarter, the highest in six quarters.

Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh remarked, "The numbers continue to be disappointing. There has been no upswing in Gross



Jairam Ramesh

Fixed Capital Formation. High GDP growth rates are simply not sustainable in the absence of any renewed momentum in private investment. That is clearly not in evidence."

He also highlighted concerns regarding the "unrealistically low GDP deflator," which indicates an inflation rate of only 0.5 per cent, contrasting sharply with the rising costs faced by households nationwide.

The latest government data revealed a GDP growth of 8.2 per cent, surpassing the 7.8 per cent from the previous quarter and showing significant improvement from the 5.6 per cent recorded in 2024.

The manufacturing sector, contributing 14 per cent to the GDP, surged by 9.1 per cent in the second quarter, up from just 2.2 per cent during the same period last year.

PNB fraud: Court denies
Choksi's plea to drop FEO

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

In a significant blow to absconding diamond trader Mehul Choksi, a special court has rejected his application to dismiss proceedings declaring him a Fugitive Economic Offender (FEO) in the Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud case.

Following his arrest in Belgium in April, Choksi sought to quash Enforcement Directorate's (ED) FEO application, arguing he is in custody for pending cases in India and an extradition request has been filed by Indian authorities. The ED opposed Choksi's plea, contending he is reluctant to return to India as he contests extradition proceedings in Belgium. The agency argued, "The FEO proceedings terminate only when an



absconding accused appears, so it cannot be terminated now."

Under the FEO Act, an individual can be declared an FEO if a warrant exists against them for an offence exceeding Rs 100 crore. This declaration allows the probe agency to confiscate their assets. A Belgian court upheld India's extradition request for Choksi on 17 October, though he has appealed the decision in the India's Supreme Court.

Cyclone Ditwah
forces flights to
land in T’puram

T’PURAM, 28 NOV
In a recent development, five flights heading to Colombo were diverted to Thiruvananthapuram International Airport because of adverse weather conditions linked to a Cyclone Ditwah warning over Colombo, informed the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport Ltd (TIAL). Among the diverted flights were two SriLankan Airlines services, one from Dubai, one from Doha, an Etihad Airways flight from Abu Dhabi, and an AirAsia flight from Kuala Lumpur, as well as an Indigo flight from Mumbai. Notably, the Etihad Airways aircraft landed at 3.44am, with the last flight arriving at 9.49am. TIAL officials indicated that more diversions may occur due to the persistently poor weather conditions in Colombo.



Abhijit Mitra moves
Delhi HC over suit
filed by journalists

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV
Abhijit Iyer Mitra has approached the Delhi High Court seeking dismissal of a defamation suit filed against him by nine women journalists from Newslandry, who claim he made abusive remarks about them. Justice Purushendra Kumar Kaurav queried Mitra’s counsel on the basis for the application, who stated that the main advocate was unavailable and requested a deferment. The case has been rescheduled for hearing on 26 February 2026. The journalists seek an injunction, a written apology, and damages amounting to Rs 2 crore for what they describe as “defamatory, false, malicious and unsubstantiated allegations” made by Mitra on X (formerly Twitter). His lawyer conceded that the language used was inappropriate and committed to deleting the posts in question.

Kashmir’s coldest
Nov since 2007,
Srinagar hits -4.5°C

SRINAGAR, 28 NOV
Kashmir is experiencing its coldest November since 2007, with minimum temperatures plummeting below freezing across many areas, according to officials. Srinagar recorded a chilling minimum temperature of minus 4.5 degrees Celsius last night, a slight drop from the previous night. Officials noted that Srinagar’s temperatures are over four degrees below the seasonal norm. Konibal in Pulwama district reported the valleys’ lowest temperature of minus 6 degrees Celsius. Other significant readings included minus 4.4 degrees in Qazigund and minus 4.8 degrees in Kupwara. Additionally, the IMD forecasted dry conditions across Kashmir until 10 December.

Scientists discover
13 new amphibian
species in NE India

SHILLONG, 28 NOV
Researchers at the Wildlife Institute of India have identified 13 new amphibian species in Northeast India, six in Arunachal Pradesh, three in Meghalaya and one each in Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur. The 2019-24 study, supported by the National Geographic Society and the Meghalaya Biodiversity, focused on the Raorchestes bush frog genus. Key finds include R lawngtalaiensis (Mizoram), R barakensis (Assam), R narpuhensis and R boullengeri (Meghalaya), R monolithus (Manipur) and R khonoma (Nagaland). Led by Scholar Bitupan Boruah with herpetologists Dr Abhijit Das and Dr Deepak Veerappan, the research used acoustic, genetic and morphological analyses across different sites and protected areas. It also refined distributions and synonymised four species.

India attains ‘major power’
status on Asia Index 2025

Index credits economic growth and Op Sindoor’s success

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

India has attained “major power” status for the first time in the Asia Power Index-2025, driven by strong economic growth and rising military capability, the Australia-based Lowy Institute said on Friday.
The upgrade is partly attributed to India’s performance in Operation Sindoor, launched in May 2025, which contributed to favourable expert assessments of its combat readiness.
The annual Asia Power Index measures resources and influence across the region to determine relative power. India, which scored 38.1 points and ranked among “middle powers” in 2024, rose to 40 points this year, crossing the threshold into the “major power” category. It remains third overall, behind the United States (80.5) and China (73.7), with Japan in fourth place at 38.8 points.



India, which scored 38.1 points in 2024, rose to 40 points this year, crossing the threshold into the “major power” category

India also ranks third in economic capability and future resources. A rise in inward investment pushed it to ninth place in economic relationships, overtaking Japan in economic capability for the first time. The index says

India surpassed China as the top destination for inward investment after the US, reflecting global supply-chain diversification and India’s growing appeal to investors. The institute said India’s economic momentum has

been matched by improvements in military capacity and gains in geopolitical relevance, measured through international leverage, connectivity and technological influence.

However, it noted that India’s diplomatic influence and defence networks have not kept pace with its expanding resources. Its defence-network ranking slipped two places to 11, overtaken by the Philippines and Thailand, widening what the index terms the “Power Gap”, the difference between a nation’s expected power based on its resources and its realised influence.

The report concludes that while India’s economic and military strengths have consolidated its position as a major power, narrowing the gap between ambition and actual influence will require stronger regional partnerships and more cohesive diplomatic engagement.



Delhi police detain
40 foreign nationals
linked to drug case

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

In a swift operation, the Delhi Police, in collaboration with Telangana Police and the Narcotics Control Bureau, apprehended ten alleged drug peddlers and confiscated narcotics worth Rs 12 crore during coordinated raids across Delhi-NCR.

Among those arrested were three foreign nationals, while forty other foreign accomplices have been detained for deportation proceedings. According to Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) Surender Kumar, the police action follows the dismantling of a drug trafficking network based in Hyderabad that utilised courier services to distribute narcotics. Investigations revealed the drugs were sourced from Delhi and supplied to Telangana.

SC ASKS LAW PANEL TO REVIEW

Plea questions
Hindu personal law’s
reach over Buddhists

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Law Commission of India to consider a petition by a Buddhist group challenging the application of Hindu personal laws to the Buddhist community.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi directed that the plea be treated as a formal representation claiming several existing provisions violate the fundamental rights and cultural practices of Buddhists, requiring statutory and constitutional review.

Buddhists are presently governed by the same personal laws as Hindus under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956, and the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956. Article 25 includes Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs within the definition of “Hindu” for the purpose of these laws.

At the outset, the CJI questioned whether the petitioner expected a mandamus to amend constitutional or personal law provisions. The petitioner’s counsel said Buddhists constitute a distinct community and had repeatedly made representations.

The bench said the Law Commission is the country’s expert legal-reform body and noted a December 2024 communication stating that the 21st Commission is examining related issues during its deliberations on the Uniform Civil Code. Directing the registry to forward the complete case record, the court said the panel may allow a representative of the petitioner to assist it.



SC fumes as H’yana
women asked for
proof of periods

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Supreme Court on Friday issued notices to the Centre and other authorities over a plea alleging that female sanitation workers at Haryana’s Maharishi Dayanand University were asked to submit photographs of their private parts to prove menstruation.

A bench including Justices BV Nagarathna said the incident “reflects the mindset” of those involved. “In Karnataka, they are giving period leave. Will proof now be demanded?” Justice Nagarathna asked, noting alternative staff could have been deployed.

SC Bar Association president Vikas Singh called it “a gross criminal case.” Three MDU staffers were booked on 31 October. The university suspended two contract supervisors and ordered an internal probe. The plea seeks a detailed inquiry. The matter is listed for 15 December.

India Gate agitation: Court
grants bail to 9 protesters

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

A Delhi court on Friday granted bail to nine protesters arrested after a scuffle with police outside the Parliament Street police station. The judicial magistrate allowed their release on a bond of Rs 20,000 each while hearing bail pleas of nine of the 17 people detained in the case.

However, some protesters will remain in custody as they also face separate charges for



allegedly using pepper spray on police personnel during the confrontation. A day earlier, the court had sent four protesters to two-day police custody and remanded the remaining 13 to one-day judicial custody.

Sanjauli Mosque: Samiti vows to
halt Friday prayers, awaits talk

SHIMLA, 28 NOV

The Devbhoomi Sangharsh Samiti on Thursday said it would not permit Friday prayers at the Sanjauli mosque, which a court has declared illegal, and urged the Muslim community to refrain from visiting the site to maintain communal harmony. Members of the samiti, protesting in Sanjauli for the past 10 days, also performed Shastra Puja as part of their ongoing agitation.

Co-convenor Vijay Sharma said the group is awaiting its meeting with the administration on November 29, after which it will decide its next steps. “If the meeting



Protest against illegal construction of Sanjauli mosque in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

fails to produce positive results, we will intensify our agitation against the mosque,” he said.

Sharma alleged that prayers were still being

offered at the structure despite a court order deeming it illegal and directing its demolition. He termed the continuation of prayers “very unfortunate.”

SC bins Byju’s plea over
BCCI’s claim settlement

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea by Byju Raveendran, promoter of Think and Learn Pvt Ltd, challenging an NCLAT order that required the settlement of the BCCI’s claim to be placed before the Committee of Creditors (CoC).

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and KV Viswanathan upheld the 17 April ruling of the NCLAT and asked senior advocate Navin Pahwa, appearing for Raveendran, to proceed in accordance with the directions ordered by the tribunal body.

The NCLAT had held that CoC approval was mandatory for the BCCI’s application seeking withdrawal

of insolvency proceedings against Byju’s.

The Supreme Court noted that it had already dismissed similar appeals filed by the BCCI and Riju Raveendran in July.

The court observed that the CoC was constituted during the pendency of the matter and that any withdrawal or settlement must comply with the statutory framework governing CIRP.

Pahwa argued that the earlier petition was filed before the CoC was formed and that Raveendran had personally paid the BCCI dues, altering the nature of the dispute.

The bench disagreed, stating that accepting this argument would “frustrate the entire process.”



BOTH NABBED IN UP

2 men try to cremate mannequin for insurance

HAPUR, 28 NOV

Two Delhi-based traders were arrested in Uttar Pradesh after they allegedly attempted to cremate a mannequin to fraudulently claim a Rs 50-lakh insurance payout, police said on Friday.

The incident took place on Thursday at Brighat, where four men arrived in a Haryana-registered car carrying what they claimed was a corpse. After purchasing ghee and other items for the last rites, they quietly placed the “body” on a pyre.

Their suspicious behaviour alerted Nitin, a municipal employee at the cremation ghat. When he lifted the sheet, he discovered it was a mannequin. He immediately informed the municipal authorities, who then alerted police.



Incident in Brighat area of UP

A police team rushed to the spot and recovered the car along with three mannequins. Two accused, Kamal Somani and his associate Ashish Khurana, both residents of Delhi, were arrested, while two others fled.

During questioning, Somani,

a textile trader, confessed he had a debt of Rs 50 lakh and devised the plan to repay it. He allegedly obtained the Aadhaar and PAN cards of Anshul, brother of his employee Neeraj, took out a Rs 50-lakh Tata AIA life insurance policy in Anshul’s name nearly a

- Delhi-based traders’ suspicious behaviour alerted municipal employee, who then lifted the sheet, and discovered that it was a mannequin

year ago, and paid premiums regularly. The plan was to send Anshul out of town, cremate a mannequin as his “body”, secure a receipt and death certificate, and claim the payout.

Police video-called Anshul, who was in Prayagraj, and he confirmed he was unaware his death was being faked. Circle Officer Stuti Singh said a case of insurance fraud has been registered and efforts are underway to track the absconding suspects.



Virginia’s sons seek control of her estate

MELBOURNE, 28 NOV
In an Australian court, the two sons of Virginia Giuffre, best known for her allegations against Jeffrey Epstein and Prince Andrew, are petitioning for control of her estate following her death by suicide in April at the age of 41. Giuffre’s sons, Christian, 19, and Noah, 18, filed their case in June, aiming to manage her estate which includes property in Western Australia and potential earnings from her memoir, ‘Nobody’s Girl’. The brothers’ request is contested by Giuffre’s former housekeeper Cheryl Myers and her former attorney Karrie Loudon, who also seek administrative control. A temporary administrator has been appointed, with further proceedings scheduled for next year. Discussions on adding Virginia’s estranged husband and daughter to the case are ongoing.

22 TTP ultras killed in Pak’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PESHAWAR, 28 NOV
At least 22 TTP terrorists were killed by security forces during an intelligence-driven operation in Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the military said. The operation was conducted on Wednesday in the Dera Ismail Khan district of the north-western province after receiving reports of the presence of terrorists of the ‘Fitna Al-Khawarij.’ The term Fitna al-Khawarij is used by Pakistani authorities to refer to militants of the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Security forces attacked the terrorists’ hideout, and after an intense exchange of fire, 22 were eliminated, the military said. A combing operation is being conducted to eliminate other terrorists present in the area, it added.

Belarus leader makes goodwill visit to Myanmar

BANGKOK, 28 NOV
Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko arrived in Myanmar on a goodwill visit, becoming only the second foreign leader to visit the country since the 2021 military takeover. The trip comes weeks before Myanmar’s election that critics dismiss as neither free nor fair. They view Lukashenko’s presence as lending legitimacy to the polls. Belarus, along with China and Russia, have been a key supporter and arms supplier to Myanmar’s junta, providing radar technology and missile systems. Lukashenko is expected to meet military leader Min Aung Hlaing. Myanmar’s military government has been sanctioned by Western nations over rights abuses.

Afghanistan says sorry after 3 killed in Tajikistan

KABUL, 28 NOV
Afghanistan expressed “deep regret” and strongly condemned a cross-border attack into neighbouring Tajikistan that killed three Chinese workers and wounded a fourth. An initial assessment on Friday indicated that “this incident involves elements that are trying to create chaos, instability, and distrust between countries in the region,” said Foreign Ministry deputy spokesman Hafiz Zia Ahmad Takal. On Thursday, Tajikistan’s Foreign Ministry said the attack was carried out the previous night from inside Afghanistan using a drone carrying grenades and firearms. The Chinese Embassy in Tajikistan urged its citizens to “refrain from investing or working on the Tajik-Afghanistan border,” and advised those there to “evacuate as soon as possible.” Pakistan also condemned the killings.

Reverse migration needed in the US: Trump

Trump says the Afghani shooter was a nutcase, orders crackdown on Green Card holders

WASHINGTON, 28 NOV
US President Donald Trump said that only “reverse migration” can cure America after two National Guard members were shot at near the White House. “Only REVERSE MIGRATION can fully cure this situation,” Trump wrote on Truth Social. “Other than that, HAPPYTHANKSGIVING TO ALL, except those that hate, steal, murder, and destroy everything that America stands for — You won’t be here for long!” Trump said the official United States foreign population stands at “53 million people, most of which are on welfare, from failed nations, or from prisons, mental institutions, gangs, or drug cartels”. The shooter, Afghan national Rahmanullah Lakanwal, 29, had arrived in the US through a Biden-era immigration programme called ‘Operation Allies Welcome’ for Afghan nationals fleeing their country after the August 2021



Emergency personnel gather in a cordoned off area where National Guard soldiers were shot near the White House in Washington

Countries facing a travel ban
Here’s the list of “countries of concerns” which will face a full or partial travel ban to the US: Afghanistan, Burma, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan and Venezuela.

Taliban takeover. To a question that Lakanwal had worked with the CIA in Afghanistan and had been vetted, Trump said the person “went cuckoo. I mean, he went nuts. And that happens too often with these people”. Meanwhile, US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Joseph Edlow said that Trump has “directed a full scale, rigorous re-examination of every Green Card for every alien from every country of concern”. The policy guidance is effective immediately and applies to requests pending or filed on or after 27 November. In another post, Trump

said, “This refugee burden is the leading cause of social dysfunction in America, something that did not exist after World War II (Failed schools, high crime, urban decay, overcrowded hospitals, housing shortages, and large deficits, etc.).” He also said that hundreds of thousands of refugees from Somalia are “completely taking over” the state of Minnesota. Trump also posted a photo of hundreds of Afghan nationals huddled in an American military plane and brought to the US under the Biden administration in the wake of Taliban takeover in 2021. “This is part of the horrendous airlift from Afghanistan.”



One N’tl Guard member shot at dies

WEST PALM BEACH, 28 NOV
US President Donald Trump said that one of the two West Virginia National Guard members shot had died. As part of his Thanksgiving call to US troops, Trump said that that Specialist Sarah Beckstrom, 20, had died, while Staff Sgt Andrew Wolfe, 24, was “fighting for his life.” “She’s just passed away,” Trump

said. “She’s no longer with us. She’s looking down at us right now. Her parents are with her.” The President called Beckstrom an “incredible person, outstanding in every single way.” The Veterans of Foreign Wars post in Webster Springs, where Beckstrom is from, will hold three prayer vigils Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, according to the Webster County Veterans Auxiliary.



‘Will take Venezuela by land, soon’

FLORIDA, 28 NOV
US President Donald Trump said that said that military operations to stop alleged Venezuelan drug traffickers “by land” would begin “very soon”. Speaking from the Mar-a-Lago during a Thanksgiving video call with US service members, he claimed that smuggling was “about 85 per cent stopped by sea” and warned the alleged traf-

fickers to “stop sending poison to our country”. “And we’ll be starting to stop them by land also. The land is easier, but that’s going to start very soon,” Trump said. His remarks come amid a stepped-up US military campaign in international waters of the Caribbean and Pacific. Since September, American forces have carried out at least 21 strikes on alleged drug-smug-

Zelensky’s aide raided amid graft row

KYIV/BUDAPEST, 28 NOV
In a concerning development for Ukraine’s leadership, anti-corruption units have raided the home and office of President Volodymyr Zelensky’s Chief of Staff, Andrii Yermak. This incident comes as Ukraine faces ongoing challenges during Russia’s invasion and works to secure support from US officials for its peace proposals. Yermak confirmed on Telegram that investigators had searched both his office and apartment, stating, “The investigators are facing no obstacles,” while declaring his



full cooperation with the proceedings. This investigation forms part of a larger inquiry into a USD 100 million corruption scandal in the energy sector involving senior officials. Meanwhile, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is visiting Moscow for energy discussions with Russian President Vladimir Putin, marking a rare engagement by a European leader amid Russia’s ongoing war in Ukraine. Orbán aims to ensure Hungary’s access to “cheap Russian oil and gas,” resources that have been subject to US sanctions.”



Pope Leo XIV waves at people as he arrives at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, in Istanbul, Turkey, on his first foreign trip on Friday. Prior to departure, he warned that conflicts across the globe were endangering humanity

Cyclone Ditwah toll rises to 56 in Lanka; 145 die in Thailand

COLOMBO, 28 NOV
The death toll due to floods and landslides caused by cyclonic storm Ditwah has risen to 56 and 21 remain missing in Sri Lanka as it announced a public holiday on Friday other than for those involved in essential services. Meanwhile, the death toll from flooding in southern Thailand has reached at least 145 as receding waters started to reveal devastating damage across the region. At least 46 deaths were recorded between Tuesday and Friday alone in Sri Lanka leading as adverse weather conditions continue to affect the island, the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) said. At least 43,991 people have been affected by the extreme weather conditions. Ditwah is located near Sri Lanka’s eastern district of Trincomalee, the meteorology department announced on Friday morning. Heavy showers, thunderstorms and strong winds will continue island-wide, with very heavy rainfall above 200mm expected in several provinces, and up to 150mm in areas, including Trincomalee in the east, Badulla in central Galle and Matara in the southern province, the weather bureau said. Winds of 60-70kmph, gusting up to 80-90kmph, are likely across much of the country. India said it would deploy its indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant to help Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, rescuers were hampered by damaged bridges and roads after flash floods and landslides on Indonesia’s Sumatra island left 79 people dead and dozens missing.

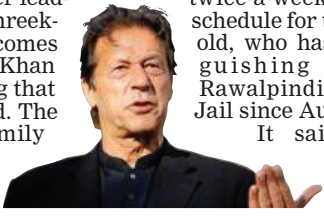
Imran’s sister moves Islamabad HC after being barred from visits

ISLAMABAD, 28 NOV

Imran Khan’s sister on Friday filed a contempt of court petition in the Islamabad High Court against the Adiala Jail Superintendent and others for not being allowed to meet Pakistan’s jailed former prime minister. Aleema Khan filed the petition in the presence of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi and other leaders of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). This comes amid rumours that Khan died in jail, something that the authorities denied. The PTI and Imran’s family have asked the government to show proof of his well-being.

66 Pakistan is going through its darkest period... facing Hitler-era-like repression
-Noreen Niazi, Imran Khan’s sister

66 This absolute blackout is not a security protocol. It is a deliberate attempt to hide his condition
-Kasim Khan, Imran Khan’s son



contempt of court proceedings “particularly with respect to the authorities’ failure to allow” their meetings. Both Aleema and Afridi were part of the 16-hour long sit-in that began on Thursday and ended early Friday. Meanwhile, the UN has urged Pakistan to ensure Khan’s human rights and respect the due-process.

Europe slams Sudan war, but no mention of UAE

STRASBOURG/CAIRO, 28 NOV

The European Parliament approved a resolution that calls for an end to the civil war in Sudan, but omitted any mention of the United Arab Emirates’ (UAE) alleged role in the conflict. Reports suggest that UAE delegations had lobbied in Strasbourg and convinced Members of the European Parliament (MEP) to remove any mention of the UAE’s role in the conflict. Multiple expert groups and leaked United Nations (UN) reports suggest that the UAE has been funding the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The European resolution condemns the civil and atroci-

ties committed by both the RSF and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). Meanwhile, experts have raised concerns about the RSF trafficking of young girls and women from el-Fasher, which the RSF seized last month, the UN said. The UN said that renewed fighting in the Kordofan region is driving further large-scale displacement. Meanwhile, the RSF have converted parts of the Al-Nuhud Hospital in West Kordofan in Sudan’s south into a military command centre and barracks since taking over of the city five months ago, Sudan Doctors Network said. The UN has called Sudan the worst humanitarian crisis.

200 RESIDENTS UNTRACED

Hong Kong toll now 128, search on for those missing

HONG KONG, 28 NOV

Hong Kong firefighters searched through a high-rise tower complex apartment-by-apartment Friday for more victims after a massive fire engulfed seven of its eight buildings, killing at least 128 people. Crews were prioritising apartments from which they received more than two dozen calls for assistance during the blaze, but were unable to reach. The toll rose on Friday afternoon to 128 after more bodies were found in the blackened towers. The fire started on Wednesday afternoon in one of the Wang Fuk Court complex’s eight towers, jumping rapidly from one to the next as bamboo scaffolding caught



The charred high-rise after a deadly fire that started Wednesday at Wang Fuk Court, in Hong Kong

fire. The final search of the buildings is expected to be completed late Friday, at which point officials have said they will officially end the rescue.

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Three men, the directors and an engineering consultant of a construction company, have been arrested, and police said company heads were suspected of gross negligence. While the exact cause of the inferno that swept across the apartment complex is unknown, questions have been raised about the role of the bamboo scaffolding that enveloped the buildings at the time of the fire. The blaze has focused attention on the use of the ancient construction technique used for more than 1,000 years. Hong Kong’s anti-corruption agency said it arrested eight people connected to the renovation of the buildings, including scaffolding subcontractors and directors of an engineering consultant company.

Gold climbs
by Rs 700 to
Rs 1.30 lakh/10g

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV
Gold prices climbed Rs 700 to Rs 1,30,160 per 10g in the national capital on Friday tracking firm trends in the global markets and strong investor appetite, according to marketmen. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity jumped by Rs 700 to Rs 1,29,560 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). Silver prices also continued their upward march for the fourth straight session, soaring by Rs 3,000 to Rs 1,71,200 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). In the past four sessions, the white metal skyrocketed by Rs 16,200 from Rs 1,55,000 per kg on Monday. In the international markets, spot gold went up by USD 12.44 or 0.30 per cent, to USD 4,169.88 per ounce. Spot silver was trading 0.77 per cent higher at USD 53.81 per ounce, marking gains for the fifth straight day.



Rupee falls by 7P,
settles at 89.43
against USD

MUMBAI, 28 NOV
The rupee dropped 7 paise to settle at 89.43 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, tracking a strong greenback and a rise in crude oil prices in the international market. The Indian currency was also weighed down by subdued equity market sentiment and the withdrawal of foreign funds, even as investors keenly awaited the release of domestic macroeconomic data later in the day, forex traders said. At the inter-bank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 89.41 and touched the intraday low of 89.49 against the greenback. It finally settled at 89.43 (provisional) against the US dollar, registering a loss of 7 paise from the previous close. Meanwhile, the dollar index was 0.18 per cent higher at 99.69.

Apple to open
5th store in Noida
on 11 December

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV
Apple has announced the opening of its fifth store in India, situated in Noida at the DLF Mall of India, set to launch on 11 December. In a statement, the company expressed that “this opening marks another milestone in Apple’s ongoing retail expansion in the country, bringing customers in Noida new ways to explore and buy Apple products.” The store’s barricade features vibrant peacock-inspired designs, reflecting India’s national bird. Customers will be able to explore the iPhone 17 lineup, receive expert support, and attend “Today at Apple” sessions—all geared towards enhancing learning and creativity, showcasing Apple’s commitment to personalised customer engagement in India.

FM, Naidu launch
financial hub in
Amaravati

AMARAVATI, NOV 28
Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday laid the foundation stone for new offices of 15 public sector banks and insurance companies in Amaravati. The institutions, including SBI, LIC and NABARD, will invest Rs 1,328 crore and are expected to create 6,541 jobs. She said Amaravati was planned through scientific consultation and now required financial backing, describing the establishment of all major PSU banks and insurers on one financial street as a historic first for any state capital. She thanked institutional heads for their participation and praised Naidu’s efforts to revive the stalled capital project, calling it a “Brahma Yagna”. She expressed confidence Amaravati will become a strong and prosperous capital.

IMF grades India’s GDP, other national data ‘C’

Meanwhile, Moody’s says India will lead growth in markets

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has graded India’s GDP and other national accounts statistics as ‘C’, the second-lowest rating, said the source.
According to the sources, the IMF’s annual review of India’s economic framework states that the data has been graded as ‘C’ due to some shortcoming which might hamper the surveillance.
The financial institution stated in its review that the available data are “adequate frequency and timeliness and provide broadly adequate granularity, methodological weaknesses somewhat hamper surveillance and warrant an overall sectoral rating for the national accounts of C”.
It also pointed out the lack



IMF pointed out the lack of seasonally-adjusted data

of seasonally-adjusted data and need for improvement of other statistical methods, which are using in quarterly national accounts compilation, said sources.

MOODY’S STATE 7 PER CENT GDP EXPANSION
Moody’s Ratings on Friday said with a 7 per cent GDP expansion in 2025 and 6.4 per cent in the next

year, India will lead growth among emerging markets and across the Asia Pacific region.
Moody’s also said that India’s domestic growth drivers underpin its economic resilience amid global uncertainty.
Although the Indian rupee has continued to weaken against the dollar, most rated companies have active currency risk management or strong financial buffers, while investment-grade entities have demonstrated access to international capital markets.
Its projected average GDP growth in APAC (Asia-Pacific) will remain steady at 3.4 per cent in 2026 compared with 3.3 per cent in 2024 and expected growth of 3.6 per cent in 2025.

AUS SC blocks activist seeking Adani’s coal mine data

BRISBANE, 28 NOV

The Supreme Court of Queensland has issued permanent orders prohibiting anti-fossil-fuel activist Ben Penning’s from seeking or using confidential information belonging to Adani’s Carmichael coal mine, concluding a lengthy legal battle.
The orders require Penning’s to cease efforts to obtain confidential business information from Bravus Mining and Resources employees, contractors or potential contractors, and bar him from encouraging others to disclose such material. Bravus, a subsidiary of the Adani Group, has agreed not to pursue its legal costs.
The Carmichael coal mine in



The Carmichael coal mine in the Galilee Basin produces about 10 million tonnes of coal annually for export

the Galilee Basin produces about 10 million tonnes of coal annually for export.
While the orders restrict the

solicitation of confidential information, they do not limit Penning’s ability to take part in lawful protest or public

Meesho’s ₹5,421 crore IPO to open on 3 Dec

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

SoftBank-backed e-commerce firm Meesho has announced plans to raise Rs 5,421 crore through its initial public offering (IPO), set to open for subscription on 3 December. The company has established a price band of Rs 105 to Rs 111 per share, targeting a valuation of Rs 50,096 crore (approximately USD 5.6 billion) at the upper end.
Meesho’s IPO will close on 5 December, with allocations for anchor investors scheduled for 2 December. The offering includes a fresh issue of shares worth Rs 4,250 crore, complemented by an offer for sale (OFS) of 10.55 crore shares, valued at Rs 1,171 crore at the upper price band, bringing the

total issue size to Rs 5,421 crore.
Notable early investors, including Elevation, Peak XV, Venture Highway, and Y Combinator, are participating in the OFS.
Proceeds from the IPO will be used for investments in cloud infrastructure, marketing initiatives, and potential acquisitions.
Seventy-five per cent of the issue is earmarked for qualified institutional buyers, 15 per cent for non-institutional investors, and the remaining 10 per cent for retail investors.
In FY25, Meesho registered a net merchandise value growth of 29 per cent year-on-year, reaching Rs 29,988 crore, though it reported a net loss of Rs 3,942 crore, due to one-time expenses.



NCLT clears ₹1.9K cr NSEL settlement

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has approved a One-Time Settlement Scheme between the National Spot Exchange Limited (NSEL) and traders, paving the way for a Rs 1,950 crore payout to 5,682 affected traders, the exchange announced on Friday.
The settlement provides proportionate payments based on outstanding dues as of 31 July,

2024. In return, traders must close all legal cases against the group and assign their rights to 63 moons, NSEL said in a statement.
The proposal was filed before NCLT Mumbai by NSEL with support from its parent company, 63 moons technologies limited, aiming for an amicable, full and final resolution.
When put to vote, 92.81 per cent of traders by number and



91.35 per cent by value backed the plan.
This is the second time 63 moons has intervened to assist traders. In August 2013, it helped distribute around Rs 179 crore to 7,053 small traders.
The decision brings long-awaited relief to traders impacted by the NSEL payment crisis of July 2013.

DBS ex-CEO named as Temasek’s Chairman

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

Piyush Gupta, the former chief executive of DBS Bank, has been appointed chairman of Temasek India, the local arm of Singapore’s investment company. Gupta, an alumnus of IIM Ahmedabad, led DBS Bank for 16 years until earlier this year.
Effective 1 December, Gupta will assume a non-executive and advisory role, collaborating with the local team.

Temasek recently revealed that its India portfolio has surpassed USD 50 billion and is actively pursuing up to USD 4 billion in new investments.
Gupta will partner with India head Ravi Lambah on invest-



ment strategies, support Temasek’s portfolio companies, and engage with the Indian government and business sectors. Temasek Holdings’ executive director and CEO, Dilhan Pillay, remarked, “Piyush brings extensive business insights and strong connections developed over decades in financial services.”

Govt notifies 18 pvt entities to boost coal sector



NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The government on Friday said it has expanded the list of agencies authorised to carry out search and exploration of coal and lignite by adding 18 new entities, taking their total number to 45.
Exploration and preparation of a geological report by an authorised prospecting agency is a prerequisite for operationalisation of a coal mine. Until now, a total of 27 entities

- Exploration and preparation of a geological report by an authorised prospecting agency is a prerequisite for operationalisation of a coal mine.

for a mining operator who, until now, has to wait for a report from a prospecting agency about mineral deposits in a particular area.
The coal ministry said in a statement that 18 agencies have been added “for carrying out prospecting operations for the exploration of coal and lignite, enabling the coal blocks allottees to have more flexibility and choice towards engaging these agencies”.

RS 350 CRORE DEAL

MiniMines, K’taka sign MoU for refining facility

Aggressive hybrid MF assets rise

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Aggressive hybrid mutual funds have gained significant traction among investors, with their asset base soaring to Rs 2.5 lakh crore by October 2025, marking a 13 per cent increase from the previous year. This growth comes amidst a period of volatility in the benchmark Nifty, prompting investors to pursue stability through mixed portfolios.
The investor base expanded dramatically, adding 400,000 folios over the year to reach 6.04 million by October 2025, according to the Association of Mutual Funds in India. Aggressive hybrid funds typically allocate 65-80 per cent of their assets to equities, averaging about 72 per cent. ICICI Prudential Equity & Debt Fund has led returns.

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

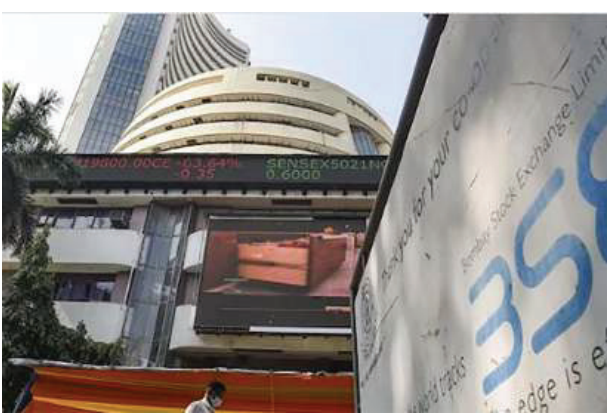
City-based startup MiniMines Cleantech Solutions on Friday signed an MoU with the Karnataka government to set up a Rs 350 crore Giga Critical Minerals Refining Complex in the city, officials said.
The Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Department of Electronics, Information Technology and Biotechnology in Bengaluru, they said.
According to a statement, the proposed facility will support sectors including electric vehicles, renewable energy, aerospace, defence and electronics by ensuring a steady supply of refined materials worth Rs 500-600 crore that are currently imported.

“The first phase will have a refining capacity of 15,000 MTPA, generating 13,400 tonnes of annual throughput. For every Rs 1 crore of MiniMines’ output, approximately Rs 3 crore of industrial value will be created downstream through various supply chains,” the statement said.
The refining complex will use MiniMines’ patented Hybrid-Hydrometallurgy (HHM)™ technology for recycling lithium-ion batteries.
The company is also developing its HydroMag REE Loop™ process for recycling and recovering rare earth magnets.
MiniMines Co-Founder and



The MoU was signed with the Department of Electronics, Information Technology and Biotechnology in Bengaluru on Friday

CEO Anupam Kumar said the agreement marks a significant milestone in India’s push for self-reliance in critical minerals.
The company said the project is expected to create more than 1,500 direct and indirect jobs and contribute around Rs 1,300 crore in annual turnover and Rs 200 crore in GST revenue once operational.
Commenting on the partnership, Karnataka Minister for Panchayati Raj and Rural Development and IT/BT, Priyank Kharge, said MiniMines’ work in critical minerals and rare earth recycling is a significant step toward India’s self-reliance and a greener future.



Sensex slipped by 13.71 points or 0.02 per cent, while Nifty skidded 12.60 points or 0.05 per cent

Mkts end flat ahead of GDP & IIP data announcement

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed almost unchanged in a highly volatile trade on Friday as investors stayed on the sidelines ahead of key macroeconomic data announcements in post-market hours.
Halting its two-day rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex slipped by 13.71 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 85,706.67. During the day, it hit a high of 85,969.89 and a low of 85,577.82, gyrating 392.07 points.
The 50-share NSE Nifty skidded 12.60 points or 0.05 per cent to 26,202.95.
The key indices had raced to record highs in intraday trade on Thursday but ended almost flat due to profit-taking by investors in the second half of the session.
Analysts said that fresh foreign fund outflows and largely muted global market trends kept the stock markets rangebound.
Among Sensex firms,

Power Grid, Eternal, Bharti Airtel, Axis Bank and Infosys were the biggest laggards.
However, Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Kotak Mahindra Bank and State Bank of India were among the major gainers.
In Asian markets, South Korea’s Kospi and Hong Kong’s Hang Seng index settled lower while Japan’s Nikkei 225 index and Shanghai’s SSE Composite index ended in positive territory.
Markets in Europe were trading mostly lower. US markets were closed on Thursday due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,255.20 crore on Thursday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth Rs 3,940.87 crore, according to exchange data.
Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, went up by 0.25 per cent to USD 63.50 per barrel.

DELHI'S 1ST
HOT AIR
BALLOON

At a time when Delhi is choking due to pollution, Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is starting a hot-air balloon adventure for the public from 29 November at Baansera Park. The ticket costs Rs 3,000 per person, excluding taxes, for a 120 feet high ride. The trip will range between seven and 12 minutes, with four people in each ride. Each day, four hours of flying time will be allowed. The private company will operate on a revenue-sharing model with advertisements on the balloons



India's new data law
threatens privacy: Critics

India's new data protection law promises privacy safeguards, but critics warn it expands government power, curtails right-to-information access, and threatens press freedom.

India's new data privacy rules, requiring companies like Amazon, Meta, and OpenAI to minimise the collection of personal information, came into force this month. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDP) aims to secure Indian users' personal data, while guaranteeing their consent.

Under the DPDP rules, firms will only be able to collect customer data that is necessary for a specific purpose. They must allow users to opt out and tell them if their information is involved in a data breach.

GOVT OVERSIGHT
SPARKS PRIVACY FEARS

The DPDP and its rules "create a simple, citizen-focused and innovation-friendly framework for the responsible use of digital personal data," said India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in a statement.

However, the DPDP has been criticized for granting the government broad powers to access personal data without strong independent oversight.

India's DPDP has been compared to the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which requires strict consent, data minimization, and has an independent regulator. The DPDP gives a government-appointed Data Protection Board — with just four members — the task of overseeing privacy for some 1.4 billion people, raising concerns over compromised privacy and free speech.

EUROPE'S GDPR SETS
HIGH STANDARDS

Experts say the EU's GDPR, which has substantially influenced legislation in nearly 160 countries, firmly prioritises individual privacy through strict consent requirements, data minimisation principles, and a strong, independent reg-



India's new data privacy rules, requiring companies like Amazon, Meta, and OpenAI to minimise the collection of personal information, came into force this month

ulatory oversight that limits government intrusion.

"India's data protection act and rules are likely to remain paper milestones when it comes to genuinely protecting the privacy of its people, since it mainly formalises various aspects of data processing," Prateek Waghre, head of programs at Tech Global Institute, a digital policy and human rights nonprofit, told DW.

Waghre also claimed the government could coerce citizens and businesses into turning over data through sweeping provisions and presumption of consent.

RTI AMENDMENT RAISES ACCOUNTABILITY FEARS Perhaps one particularly controversial aspect of the DPDP is its direct impact on the Right to Information (RTI) Act, under which citizens could previously seek access to records held by public authorities if "larger public interest" justified the disclosure.

Critics have noted that the DPDP amends the public interest provision so that even if the requested information relates to the public interest, authorities can deny its disclosure.

"The amendment ... will potentially lead to a blanket denial of personal information needed by citizens to expose corruption and hold governments accountable," Anjali Bhardwaj, a co-convenor of the National Campaign for People's

Right to Information, told DW. **GOVERNMENT DENIES DILUTING RTI RIGHTS**

Amrita Johri, a campaigner for digital transparency, told DW that the change to RTI regulations removes earlier stipulations that permitted access to personal information if relevant to public interest or public activity.

"The government has used claims of 'no data available' to dodge transparency on critical public matters, further undermining the spirit of the RTI Act as a tool for democratic accountability," said Johri, who noted that the right to question and speak freely "is central to democracy."

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology said that it does not believe the DPDP dilutes the RTI.

The ministry's Secretary S Krishnan told the daily paper Hindustan Times that the DPDP only removed "a redundant provision" and did not affect citizens' right to information.

Krishnan claimed that the RTI Act already permitted public authorities to share any information if it served the public interest, regardless of exemptions.

FINES 'THREATEN' JOURNALISM

Reporters and journalists' organisations like the Press Club of India and Editors Guild of India (EGI) remain apprehensive, however. The

DPDP classifies them as "significant data fiduciaries" (SDFs) for routine work involving personal data collection, processing, and publication.

A data fiduciary is any person or organisation that decides why and how personal data is processed. They are responsible for protecting that data and ensuring it is used legally and fairly.

Reporters must therefore obtain explicit consent before using individuals' data in stories such as naming corrupt officials or exposing scams — which could make investigative reporting impossible without prior approval.

"We urge the government to urgently provide explicit clarification exempting bona fide journalism from these rules to safeguard press freedom and the public's right to know."

Non-compliance with the DPDP can result in substantial monetary penalties for data fiduciaries, with fines potentially reaching up to approximately \$30 million for every instance of violation.

"This will create a chilling effect, turning journalism into a high-risk activity and forcing media to act more like PR agents than watchdogs," Sanjay Kapoor, senior journalist and current EGI president, told DW.

"It could bankrupt small media outlets or force self-censorship to avoid damaging costs."

Post DC shooting, refugee
groups fear backlash

People who work with refugees are worried that those who fled dangerous situations to start again in America will face backlash after authorities say an Afghan national shot two National Guard soldiers this week, killing one of them.

Many Afghans living in the US are afraid to leave their houses, fearing they'll be swept up by immigration officials or attacked with hate speech, said Shawn VanDiver, president of the San Diego-based group #AfghanEvac, a group that helps resettle Afghans who assisted the US during the two-decade war.

"They're terrified. It's insane," VanDiver told The Associated Press Thursday. "People are acting xenophobic because of one deranged man. He doesn't represent all Afghans. He represents himself."

Officials say Rahmanullah Lakanwal, 29, drove from his home in Bellingham, Washington, to the nation's capital where he shot two West Virginia National Guard members deployed in Washington, DC.

President Donald Trump announced on Thursday that Specialist Sarah Beckstrom, 20, had died from her injuries. Staff Sergeant Andrew Wolfe, 24, remained hospitalized in critical condition.

Lakanwal had worked in a special CIA-backed Afghan Army unit before emigrating from Afghanistan, according to #AfghanEvac and two sources who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation.

He applied for asylum during the Biden administration and his asylum was



Afghan national Rahmanullah Lakanwal allegedly shot at two National Guards outside the White House

Many Afghans living in the US are afraid to leave their houses, fearing they'll be swept up by immigration officials or attacked with hate speech, said Shawn VanDiver, president of the San Diego-based group #AfghanEvac, a group that helps resettle Afghans who assisted the US during the two-decade war.

approved this year after undergoing a thorough vetting, the group said.

After the shooting, US President Donald Trump said his administration would review everyone who entered the country under former president Joe Biden — a measure his administration had been planning even before the shooting.

Refugee groups fear they'll now be considered guilty by association. Ambassador Ashraf Haidari, founder and President of Displaced International, which provides resources, advocacy and support to displaced people worldwide, said there must be a thorough investigation and justice for those who were harmed, "but even as we pursue accountability, one individ-

ual's alleged actions cannot be allowed to define, burden, or endanger entire communities who had no part in this tragedy."

Matthew Soerens, a vice president with World Relief, a Christian humanitarian organization that helps settle refugees, including Afghan nationals in Whatcom County, Washington, said the person responsible for the shooting should face justice under the law.

"Regardless of the alleged perpetrator's nationality, religion or specific legal status, though," he said, "we urge our country to recognise these evil actions as those of one person, not to unfairly judge others who happen to share those same characteristics."



Many Afghans living in the US are afraid to leave their houses

LETTERS

write to us at growingindia.co.in@gmail.com

Global garment industry profiting from repression of workers

Governments, factories and global fashion brands are profiting from the continued repression of garment workers and abuse of their labour rights in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, Amnesty International said in two companion reports released today.

The two reports — 'Stitched Up: Denial of Freedom of Association for Garment Workers in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka' and 'Abandoned by Fashion: The urgent need for fashion brands to champion worker rights' — document widespread anti-union abuse in the garment industry, manifesting in abuses of workers' rights, harassment and violence by employers.

"An unholy alliance of fashion brands, factory owners and the governments of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka is propping up an industry known for its endemic human rights abuses. By failing to ensure that the right of garment workers to unionise and collectively bargain is respected, the industry has thrived for decades on the exploitation of a grossly underpaid, overworked and mostly female workforce," said Agnès Callamard, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

The two reports are based on

research carried out by Amnesty International

between September 2023 and August 2024, including 88 interviews covering 20 factories in the four countries. This included 64 workers, 12 with union leaders and labour rights activists with over two-thirds of those interviewed being female. Amnesty International also sent a survey in November 2023 to 21 major brands and retailers in nine countries, including Germany, Denmark, Japan, Spain, Sweden, UK, USA, Spain and China, requesting information about their human rights policies, monitoring and concrete actions related to freedom of association, gender equality and purchasing practices.

Adidas, ASOS, Fast Retailing, Inditex, Otto Group and Primark provided full responses. Many others replied with partial information, including M&S and Walmart, while some failed to provide information, including Boohoo, H&M, Desigual, Next and Gap.

'IF WE JOIN THE UNION, WE WILL BE SACKED'

The global garment industry has long faced scrutiny over human rights abuses in its supply chains and business model. South Asian workers, especially women, are system-



Two reports document widespread anti-union abuse in the garment industry, manifesting in abuses of workers' rights, harassment and violence by employers

atically disenfranchised through informal and insecure contracts, poverty wages, discrimination and precarious work conditions.

In all four countries, garment workers said the threat of repercussions from employers prevented them from joining a union. All union organisers interviewed by Amnesty International described a climate of fear in which supervisors and factory bosses frequently harassed, dismissed and threatened workers for belonging to or organising a union, in a clear abuse of their right to freedom of associa-

tion.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS EVERY DAY

Authorities in all four countries use numerous ways to deter workers from organising themselves or deny them their labour rights through union busting, obstacles to the right to strike, such as the specific barriers to union organising in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and replacing independent unions with pro-management bodies.

In India, vast numbers of home workers in the garment industry, working outside the

factory on embroidery or finishing garments, are not recognised as employees under the country's labour laws and thus, are not eligible for pensions, other employment-related social protection benefits or union membership.

GLOBAL FASHION BRANDS RESPONSIBLE

Fashion companies contribute to workers' vulnerability as they are not fulfilling their human rights responsibilities, instead turning human rights due diligence and codes of conduct into tick box exercises. They have allowed the growth

of opaque supply chains and demonstrated a willingness to source labour from governments and business partners that fail to oversee and remedy poor labour practices, or which actively repress freedom of association. The lack of due diligence legislation in many countries means brands are not held to account for their supply chains, enabling an extractive and exploitative industry. Where such laws exist, their implementation and scope are still emerging.

International law and standards, including the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, require fashion companies to identify and address all human rights risks and impacts by conducting ongoing human rights due diligence throughout their supply chain. However, in most garment-producing states, the lack of binding legislation has allowed the abuse of workers' rights to become embedded in supply chains, with little meaningful action taken to address it.

'ACCESS TO JUSTICE IS MINIMAL FOR WOMEN'

The majority of the garment industry workforce in South

Asia are women, who are often rural migrants or from marginalised castes. Despite their numbers, they are under-represented in factory management, which typically reflects the patriarchal system outside the factory, as well as existing class, ethnic, religious and caste discrimination.

Female garment workers report being routinely harassed, attacked, and abused physically or sexually in the workplace. Yet they rarely get justice. The lack of effective, independent mechanisms to hear their grievances in male-led factories, combined with state-sponsored restrictions on organising and employers' threats against workers unionising, means their suffering continues.

"I was touched physically and abused verbally. No one in management would listen to my complaints, then I asked other women to organise. I was threatened with dismissal many times," Sumaayaa, a union organiser from Lahore, Pakistan, told Amnesty International. Amnesty International is calling on states to ensure that all workers can exercise their right to freedom of association, including by being able to form and join trade unions at the factory level and engage in collective bargaining



KIDNEY DISEASES ARE BECOMING COMMON IN INDIA, AFFECTING BOTH YOUNG AND OLDER ADULTS. UNHEALTHY DIET, SEDENTARY LIFESTYLES, DIABETES AND HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, AND LACK OF AWARENESS HAVE LED TO AN UPTICK IN KIDNEY DISEASE. FORTUNATELY, ADHERING TO HABITS CAN REDUCE THE RISK OF KIDNEY DAMAGE AND PROMOTE LONG-TERM WELLNESS.



DAILY HABITS YOU MUST FOLLOW TO PREVENT KIDNEY STONES AND DISEASE



STAY ACTIVE AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT
Various studies have confirmed that regular physical activity improves overall health and prevents diabetes and heart disease, both of which affect the kidneys. It is the need of the hour to exercise every day for at least 45 minutes under the guidance of a fitness trainer.



STAY HYDRATED
According to various studies, drinking enough water helps the kidneys flush out toxins. Try to drink at least 10-12 glasses of water per day. Consult an expert and understand the amount of water one should drink per day.



MANAGING COMORBIDITIES
Diabetes and hypertension are the culprits behind kidney disease. Regular health check-ups, a balanced diet, medications, exercise, and getting a minimum of 8 hours of sleep every day will help to control these comorbidities.



AVOID UNNECESSARY PAINKILLERS AND SELF-MEDICATION
Frequent use of over-the-counter drugs can harm your kidneys. Always consult a doctor before taking any medicine regularly. Remember, self-medication is risky.

CUT DOWN PROCESSED FOODS
Excess salt can pressurise the kidneys and raise blood pressure. It is necessary to avoid processed and salty foods. So, bid adieu to Pizza, pasta, namkeens, bakery items, sodas, and colas. Choose home-cooked meals with less oil, salt, and preservatives. Follow the diet as advised by the expert.

HEALTH

MOST PEOPLE WITH OILY SKIN TEND TO SUFFER FROM ACNE, PIGMENTATION, ENLARGED PORES AND OTHER PROBLEMS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO TACKLE THESE PROBLEMS SINCE IT SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTS YOUR SKIN HEALTH. YOUR SKINCARE ROUTINE PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE IN HOW YOUR SKIN BEHAVES. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A MORNING AS WELL AS A NIGHTTIME SKINCARE ROUTINE. THE PRODUCTS THAT YOU APPLY ON YOUR SKIN HELPS TO BOOST SKIN HEALTH. HENCE, MAKE SURE YOU USE THE RIGHT PRODUCTS THAT ARE MEANT FOR OILY SKIN. HERE'S A MORNING SKINCARE ROUTINE THAT YOU CAN FOLLOW IF YOU HAVE OILY SKIN.

STEP 1- USE A GENTLE OIL-FREE CLEANSER

Start your routine with a gentle oil-free cleanser. This helps to remove oil, dirt and sweat without stripping the skin of its natural moisture. When buying a product, look for ingredients like salicylic acid or tea tree oil as it helps to unclog pores and prevent breakouts.

STEP 2- APPLY A TONER TO BALANCE OIL

Using a toner can help to balance skin's pH and tighten pores. Choose alcohol-free toners that have ingredients like witch hazel or niacinamide as they help to control oil production and reduce inflammation without drying out the skin.

MORNING SKINCARE ROUTINE FOR OILY SKIN STEPS TO REDUCE ACNE, PORES AND SHINE



STEP 3- USE A LIGHTWEIGHT SERUM

Use a lightweight and water-based serum that has niacinamide, hyaluronic acid or zinc in it. These ingredients help to control oil, hydrates the skin and reduces acne or redness. People with oily skin should avoid heavy or oily serum that can clog pores.



STEP 4- MOISTURISE WITH OIL-FREE GEL

It is very important that you need to use a moisturiser even if you have oily skin. Use a non-comedogenic and oil-free moisturiser as it helps to maintain hydration without adding extra oil and shine. You can also opt for gel-based moisturisers with aloe vera or green tea.



STEP 5- NEVER SKIP SUNSCREEN

Use a broad-spectrum SPF 30 or higher, preferably one that is a matte-finish sunscreen. Look for formulas that are oil-free or made for oily/acne-prone skin. Sunscreen helps prevent dark spots, sun damage and premature ageing.



Poonacha-Isaro
secures Australian
Open 2026 spot

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV
Indian tennis player Niki Poonacha, along with Thailand's Pruchya Isaro, secured a spot in the Australian Open 2026 men's doubles main draw after beating Japan's Shunsuke Nakagawa and Yusuke Kusunoha in the Asia-Pacific wildcard play-off tournament final on Friday. The Indo-Thai pair beat the Japanese duo 6-4, 6-3 at the Sichuan International Tennis Centre in Chengdu, China, to secure a spot in the Grand Slam Finals. In the semifinals, they beat South Korea's fourth seeds Park Ui-seong and Nam Ji-sung 6-4, 6-2. This will be the 30-year-old Poonacha's first appearance at a Grand Slam.

Tanvi, Unnati, and
Srikanth reach
semifinals of SMI

LUCKNOW, 28 NOV
Tanvi Sharma crushed Hong Kong's Lo Sin Yan Happy in straight games to storm into the semifinals, while Unnati Hooda and Kidambi Srikanth also made their way into the final four of the Syed Modi International Super 300, here on Friday. In the women's singles, the 16-year-old Tanvi, who had earlier defeated former world champion Nozomi Okuhara from Japan, needed only 38 minutes to brush aside the challenge of Lo Sin 21-13, 21-19. Tanvi will take on fifth-seeded Hina Akechi of Japan, who got the better of third-seeded Sung Shuo Yun 21-8, 21-15 in the other quarterfinal. Unnati was made to work hard by compatriot Rakshittha Santosh R in the quarterfinal, before winning 21-15, 13-21, 21-16. Unnati will face off against fourth seed Neslihan Arin in the semifinals.

Chameera lifts Sri
Lanka into final of
T20 tri-series

RAWALPINDI, 28 NOV
Fast bowler Dushmantha Chameera grabbed 4-20 and stifled Pakistan in the final over as Sri Lanka breezed into the final of the T20 tri-series with a six-run victory. Pakistan, which had already qualified for Saturday's final with three successive wins, was held to 178-7 with captain Salman Ali Agha's career-best unbeaten 63 going in vain. Opening batter Kamil Mishra's 76 off 48 balls had earlier anchored Sri Lanka to 184-5 in a game the team had to win to reach the final instead of Zimbabwe.



New boxing coach
Nieva aims for more
medals at LA 2028

MUMBAI, 28 NOV
Newly-appointed Indian women's boxing head coach Santiago Nieva believes the current squad is brimming with potential, as he sets sights on creating history by going "beyond a bronze medal" at the Los Angeles Olympics 2028. Nieva, who earlier served as India's high-performance director (HPD) from 2017 to 2022 and worked predominantly with the men's team, returns to the country in a new capacity to shape the future of the women's squad. "The Indian women's team is really strong, and I think it's important to win those Olympic medals that weren't possible to secure in Paris," Nieva told PTL from Australia. "So, I thought that with the potential there is with the women's team and all those excellent boxers, I would like to contribute.

India to host SL for five women's T20Is from 21 to 30 Dec



NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Indian women's team will take on Sri Lanka in a five-match T20I series in Visakhapatnam and Trivandrum from 21 to 30 December, the BCCI said on Friday, days after a scheduled rubber against Bangladesh was postponed due to political tensions between the two countries. This will be the first assignment for the 'Women in Blue' after their ODI World Cup-winning campaign earlier this year. "The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announces the schedule for the upcoming Women's T20I series as India hosts Sri Lanka for a five-match contest next month. The series will begin in Visakhapatnam before moving to Thiruvananthapuram for the remaining fixtures," the BCCI said in a statement.

As per the original schedule, the Indian women's team was supposed to play a home series against Bangladesh during the same time. The Sri Lankans will be playing a T20I bilateral series in India for the first time since 2016, which the hosts won 3-0. India last played a T20I series in July this year, when they registered a historic win in England. India won that series, their first in England, 3-2.

SCHEDULE 2025

- 1st T20I: 21 December, Visakhapatnam
- 2nd T20I: 23 December, Visakhapatnam
- 3rd T20I: 26 December, Thiruvananthapuram
- 4th T20I: 28 December, Thiruvananthapuram
- 5th T20I: 30 December, Thiruvananthapuram

Jharkhand elbow out K'taka,
Mhatre slams 110 for Mumbai

Roy marshalled Jharkhand's chase of 158 with a composed unbeaten 95

AHMEDABAD, 28 NOV

Middle-order batter Anukul Roy marshalled Jharkhand's chase of 158 with a composed unbeaten 95 (58b, 9x4, 5x6) as they edged out Karnataka by two wickets in a last-over finish. Chasing Karnataka's 157 for nine, Roy singlehandedly guided Jharkhand's chase as only skipper Ishan Kishan (15) and Virat Singh (12) managed to find double-digit scores. Needing six runs to win from the final over with two wickets remaining, Roy took his side past in 19.4 overs. Earlier, Roy had also taken two wickets in Karnataka's innings to cap an excellent all-round outing. Karnataka: 157/9 in 20 overs (Mayank Agarwal 37, R Smaran 32; Anukul Roy 2/13, Sushant Mishra /39) lost to Jharkhand: 158/8 in 19.4 overs (Anukul Roy 95 not out; Vidyadhar Patil 3/45). Jharkhand: 4 points; Karnataka: 0. Chennai Super Kings batter Ayush Mhatre on Friday



scored a century for Mumbai against Vidarbha during the group-stage match in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2025. The 18-year-old completed the century in just 49 balls, hitting eight fours and seven sixes on the way. He ended unbeaten on 110 off 53 balls to steer Mumbai to a seven-wicket victory while chasing 193. Earlier on Friday, Mhatre was also named India Under-19 captain for the U-19 Asia Cup in Dubai from 12 to 21 December.



Dhull shines as Delhi beat Tamil Nadu Yash Dhull made an explosive fifty, leading Delhi to a thrilling, last-ball six-wicket victory over Tamil Nadu in a Group D match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy here on Friday. Once Tamil Nadu scored a competitive 198 for seven in 20 overs, Delhi needed a strong, collective batting effort to overhaul the target. Dhull (71, 46b, 4x4, 4x6) glued together Delhi's chase with his aggressive fifty, as they ended up with 203 for four in 20 overs. During his stay, the 23-year-old engaged in three partnerships of considerable significance — a 52 for the opening wicket with Priyansh Arya (35, 15b), a 58 for the second wicket with skipper Nitish Rana (34, 26b), and then the most crucial 61-run alliance with Ayush Badoni (41, 23b) for the third wicket. But Dhull fell to TN left-arm seamer T Natarajan, and Badoni departed, giving a catch to Shahrukh Khan off pacer Sonu Yadav.

Ayush Mhatre to lead
India in U19 Asia Cup

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Promising batter Ayush Mhatre was retained on Friday as captain of a 15-member Indian team for the upcoming U19 Asia Cup, in which the focus will again be on teen batting sensation Vaibhav Soorayavanshi. The age-group continental tournament will be held in Dubai from December a



50-overs format. Mhatre had also led India during a multi-format tour of Australia in September and October. Vihaan Malhotra has been appointed as the vice-captain for the tournament, which will serve as a preparatory ground for the U19 World Cup, to be played in Zimbabwe and Namibia in January-February next year.

GAMBHIR FACES SCRUTINY FROM BCCI AFTER CANDID REMARKS

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Gambhir's remarks unsettled the BCCI, especially as India's batting struggled on both the Kolkata and Guwahati pitches, questioning the team's adaptability and preparation strategy. The BCCI has expressed dissatisfaction with India head coach Gautam Gambhir's candid comments about the Kolkata pitch following the team's recent Test defeat to South Africa. While no immediate action is being taken,



sources indicate that Gambhir is likely to remain in his role for now due to a lack of alternatives. However, his position may be reconsidered later in the year, particularly if India struggles in the T20 World

Cup on home soil. The board's frustration stems from Gambhir's public support of the black-soil pitch at Eden Gardens, which drew criticism after India's collapse on a turning track that exposed significant technical flaws. India lost by 30 runs, bowled out for just 93 in the fourth innings. This defeat added to the series of disappointing home Test performances, with India losing three consecutive home series. Gambhir, however, defended the pitch, stating

that it performed exactly as the team had asked for. "This is the exact pitch we asked for. The curator was extremely helpful and supportive. We got exactly what we wanted. When you don't perform well, this is what happens," he said following the defeat in Kolkata. The BCCI has expressed dissatisfaction with India head coach Gautam Gambhir's candid comments about the Kolkata pitch following the team's recent Test defeat to South Africa.

Kalimuendo strikes in
Nottingham Forest's win

LONDON, 28 NOV

Skipper Ryan Yates, Arnaud Kalimuendo and Nikola Milenkovic scored to ensure a comfortable win, in a repeat of the 1979 European Cup final when Forest beat the 24-time Swedish champions. Forest won 3-0 on Thursday night, with Abbott handed a start by manager Sean Dyche. Our aggressiveness in the press made sure they couldn't get out that much. They had a few spells, but not too much. We kept it touch... and, luckily, the goals fell



for us." That's when you start being comfortable in the game and move the ball quicker. I can take positives away (personally), and it was a good performance, with loads to go at and more to learn. Forest recorded three successive wins for the first time since the turn of the year - the drop-off in their form during the second half of last season is the reason why they are in the Europa League and not the Champions League. But they are now two points off the top eight - automatic qualification for the last 16 - with three games left. "The mentality we're trying to build here it's one game at a time.

Rajasthan Royals
up for sale ahead
of IPL 2026: Report

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

IPL champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru are reportedly up for sale ahead of the start of the 2026 edition of the IPL, and if Harsha Goenka, who is the elder brother of Lucknow Super Giants owner Sanjiv Goenka, is to be believed, then 2008 IPL champions Rajasthan Royals are also in search of new owners. Harsh took to X on Thursday evening to post a tweet in which he wrote, "I hear, not one, but two IPL teams are now up for sale- RCB and RR. It seems clear that people want to cash in on the rich valuations today. So two teams for sale and 4/5 possible buyers! Who will be the successful buyers- will it be from Pune, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Bengaluru or the USA?."



Germany beat South Africa
4-0 in FIH Junior WC opener

MADURAI, 28 NOV

Reigning champions Germany thrashed South Africa 4-0 in their opening match to begin their FIH Men's Hockey World Cup campaign on a rousing note here on Friday. Justus Warweg struck a brace for seven-time winners Germany, scoring field goals in the 19th and 56th minutes, while Ben Hasbach (43rd minute) and Paul Glander (44th) converted two penalty corners. In the first match of Pool A, Ireland beat Canada 4-3 in an engrossing contest. Ireland took the lead in the 13th minute with a meticulous field effort from Louis Rowe, before Canada equalised in the 26th minute with a field goal from Gurnoor Bhullar. Rowe scored another fine field goal in the 33rd minute. Gregory Williams made it 3-1 to Ireland, converting a penal-



Germany and South African players exchange greetings after the former won the inaugural match of the Hockey Men's Junior World Cup

ty corner in the 35th minute. Milo Thompson extended the lead when he scored another impressive field goal. Trailing 1-4, Canada didn't bow down and dominated the later stages of the match, scoring two goals.

Leighton De Souza converted two penalty corners in the 48th and 53rd minutes to give his side some hope. But Canada couldn't equalise as they failed to breach the Irish defence in the final seven minutes.

Portugal wins FIFA
Under-17 WC title

DOHA, 28 NOV

Portugal won the FIFA Under-17 World Cup title Thursday night, beating Austria 1-0 in the final of a 48-nation tournament where European teams took the first three places. Benfica forward Anisio Cabral narrowly stayed outside to receive a pass across the goalmouth and score into an empty net in the 32nd minute. It was Cabral's seventh goal of the tournament, one fewer than Austria's Golden Ball winner Johannes Moser. It was Portugal's first U17 title and came in the 20th edition of an event FIFA has expanded and now organizes annually instead of every two years.



Qatar staged this edition and will also host in each of the next four years. Earlier in Doha, goalkeeper Alessandro Longoni saved two penalties as Italy beat Brazil 4-2 in a shootout after a 0-0 draw in the third-place game.

AMID VISA DISPUTE

Iran boycotts 2026 World Cup draw in US

TEHRAN, 28 NOV

Iran will not send representatives to next week's World Cup draw ceremony in the United States, the Iranian Football Federation announced on Thursday, citing visa problems. Amir Mehdi Alavi, the federation's spokesperson, said the decision was made due to difficulties in obtaining visas for official federation members a process he said had moved beyond sports channels and prevented Iran's delegation from attending the international event. Alavi said in a televised interview that the federation has held official correspondence with FIFA's president and secretary-generals in recent days, and that FIFA is following up on the matter. He warned that the situation could create future problems for players and support staff entering the US, potentially disrupting the national team's preparations. ISNA reported that the federation's board decided on Thursday that no Iranian officials would attend the World Cup draw ceremony. According to the federation, the decision came after five members of a nine-person delegation were denied US visas. However, two sources within the Iranian Football Federation and the Sports Ministry told IranWire that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) ordered the boycott on Tuesday and communicated the decision to federation president Mehdi Taj. Regarding speculation about Iran withdrawing from the World Cup, Alavi said no such decision has been made and that the federation's goal is to ensure the national team's participation.