

## International

### US claims capture of Venezuela's President Maduro.

The United States has claimed that Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, were captured and flown out of the country following large-scale military strikes.

US President Donald Trump said the operation was conducted with US law enforcement.

Venezuela has declared a national emergency.

Russia, Iran and Cuba condemned the reported actions and called for restraint and diplomacy.

### UK-France conduct joint Airstrike on IS arms cache in Syria.

The UK Ministry of Defence has confirmed a joint military strike with France on an underground weapons storage facility of the Islamic State in Syria.

The target, located in the mountainous region north of Palmyra, was assessed through intelligence as a stockpile of arms and explosives.

The strike highlights continued international efforts to counter residual IS networks operating in remote Syrian regions despite the group's territorial defeat in 2019.

## Important Days

### World Braille Day: 4<sup>th</sup> January.

World Braille Day is being observed globally on 4<sup>th</sup> January to honour the legacy of Louis Braille, the creator of the Braille system that enables persons with visual impairment to read and write using raised dots.

Invented in 1824, Braille is now used worldwide across languages for education, daily activities and professional work.

In New Delhi, the National Federation of the Blind marked the day by launching the

“More Braille More Empowerment” campaign.

## National

### PM Modi inaugurates international exposition of sacred Piprahwa relics.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated *The Light and the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One*, a grand international exposition of the sacred Piprahwa relics of Gautama Buddha, at New Delhi's Rai Pithora Cultural Complex. He said the return of the relics after over a century marks the homecoming of India's heritage.

The exhibition reunites relics preserved at the National Museum, New Delhi, and the Indian Museum, Kolkata, highlighting India's civilisational link with Buddhism and efforts to preserve spiritual heritage.

### I&B Ministry declares winners of 'Badalta Bharat Mera Anubhav' campaign.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has announced the winners of four creative challenges under the *Badalta Bharat Mera Anubhav* campaign, organised in collaboration with MyGov.

The initiative invited citizens to showcase India's transformation over the last 11 years under the leadership of Narendra Modi, aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047.

Indrajeet Subodh Mashankar, Manthan Rohit, Sushovan Manna, and Krishna Gupta won first prizes in the Instagram Reel, YouTube Shorts, Short AV, and Blog Writing categories, respectively.

### Delhi makes QR codes mandatory on road signages for transparency and citizen feedback.

The Public Works Department of Delhi has made it mandatory for all new road signage in the national capital to carry QR codes, as per guidelines.

The QR codes will display details such as the manufacturer's name, date of manufacture, materials used and warranty information, helping ensure uniformity and better visibility.

The department has directed that this requirement be included in all future tenders.

In the next phase, the QR codes will be linked to the PWD Sewa mobile app, allowing citizens to report issues related to roads, potholes, streetlights and signboards directly.

## **Business and Economy**

### **Government removes 3-year rule for deep-tech startups under DSIR.**

The government has scrapped the mandatory three-year existence requirement for deep-tech startups to gain recognition under the Industrial Research and Development Promotion Programme of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR).

Union Minister Jitendra Singh said the relaxation will help early-stage innovators scale faster.

He added that multiple support schemes already exist through bodies like the Department of Science and Technology and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, while highlighting the growing participation of women beneficiaries in DSIR programmes.

## **Sports**

### **Ajay Kumar clinches men's 10m Air pistol Gold at National Shooting Championships.**

Army shooter, Ajay Kumar won the gold medal in the men's 10m air pistol event at the 68th National Shooting Championship Competitions.

He topped the final with 241.1 points, narrowly defeating Railways' Shubham Bisla, while Haryana's Anmol Jain secured bronze.

Karnataka's Jonathan Gavin Antony enjoyed a stellar outing, winning gold in sub-youth, youth and junior categories. In shotgun events, Tamil Nadu claimed both senior and junior trap mixed team titles at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range.

### **Ladakh Sports Policy 2025 launched to strengthen regional sports ecosystem.**

Lieutenant Governor Kavinder Gupta launched the Ladakh Sports Policy 2025 in Leh, marking the Union Territory's first dedicated sports policy since its formation in 2019.

The policy aims to build a robust sports ecosystem through a structured roadmap, including 4 per cent reservation in government jobs for outstanding sportspersons.

It also provides for scholarships, awards and cash incentives, and mandates the creation of a Ladakh Sports Council to coordinate infrastructure, coaching and financial support.

The Lieutenant Governor assured full administrative support for effective implementation.

### **India U-19 start series with DLS win over South Africa.**

India Under-19 defeated South Africa Under-19 by 25 runs under the DLS method in the opening Youth ODI at Willowmoore Park, Benoni.

Batting first, India were bowled out for 300, with Harvansh Pangalia scoring 93 and R.S. Ambrish adding 65.

In reply, South Africa were 148 for 4 in 27.4 overs when rain and lightning halted play, forcing abandonment. India were declared winners under DLS.

Led by Vaibhav Suryavanshi, the series serves as key preparation for the upcoming ICC Under-19 World Cup starting January 15.

## **KKR part ways with Mustafizur Rahman on BCCI's direction.**

Kolkata Knight Riders have released Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman from their squad following instructions from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said KKR would be allowed to sign a replacement as per IPL rules.

Rahman was bought for ₹9.20 crore at the December mini-auction, the highest ever for a Bangladeshi player, and has taken 65 wickets in 60 IPL matches since debuting in 2016.

## **Sanjay Takale scripts history with H3 class win at Dakar Rally 2026 Prologue.**

India's ace driver Sanjay Takale created history by winning the H3 class in the Prologue Stage of the Dakar Rally 2026.

Takale finished 35th overall in the Cars category and emerged on top in the high average speed Dakar Classic Group H3, becoming the first Indian to stand on the Dakar podium in the Cars category on Day 1.

Driving a Toyota HDJ 100, he topped the 22-km Special Stage and 74-km Liaison.

Following the win, Takale will lead Stage 1 from Yanbu to Yanbu, facing challenging dunes and navigation sections.