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PM Modi urges investors to tap Odisha's potential at Make in Odisha Conclave 2025

Bhubaneswar, 28/1 (photonewstimes): Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the Utkarsh Odisha Conclave at Janata Maidan in the capital city of Odisha on Tuesday.

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati welcomed the Prime Minister at the Airport. Shri Modi then moved directly to the Janata Maidan for the mega investors meet.

The conclave will be held at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar from 28 to 29 January.

The Utkarsh Odisha conclave aims to position Odisha as the anchor of Purvodaya Vision, a leading investment destination and industrial hub in India.

PM Modi also inaugurated the Make in Odisha Exhibition, which will highlight the state's achievements in developing a vibrant industrial ecosystem. The exhibition will serve as a platform for industry leaders, investors, and policymakers to converge and discuss the opportunities Odisha offers as a preferred investment destination.

The conclave will host CEOs' and Leaders' Roundtables, sectoral sessions, B2B meetings, and policy discussions, ensuring targeted engagement with investors worldwide. More than 7,500 investors from India and abroad will attend the Utkarsh Odisha conclave.

The conclave will focus on five key sectors-IT, renewable energy, textiles, chemicals, and food processing. Twelve countries, including Australia, Malaysia, Japan, Germany, Poland, and Cuba, have been invited as 'Countries of Focus' to participate in the conclave.

The Odisha government aims to secure investments worth Rs 5 lakh crore to turn Odisha into a global industrial hub. During the mega event, as many as 100 Memorandums of Understanding are



CM Majhi calls on to make Odisha a beacon of industrial progress, innovation

Bhubaneswar, 28/1 (photonewstimes): Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi today called on to make Odisha a beacon of industrial progress and innovation, embracing sustainable development values.

On the eve of Utkarsh Odisha - Make in Odisha Conclave 2025, the Chief Minister addressed the esteemed members of the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and expressed gratitude for their partnership. "Odisha stands tall as the rising star of the East, emerging as a key player in India's industrial ecosystem. With a focus on robust infrastructure, ease of doing business, and job creation, we are committed to making Odisha a preferred destination for global and domestic investors. Let us come together to build a Samrudh Odisha and make it a beacon of progress and sustainable development. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji for his unwavering support and vision of Viksit Bharat. His focus on Odisha inspires us to achieve Viksit Odisha through Purvodaya. Together, let us Make It Utkarsh., the Odisha CM said.

During his speech, CM Majhi emphasised Odisha's emergence as a key player in India's industrial ecosystem and its commitment to becoming a preferred destination for global and domestic investors.

The Chief Minister outlined a vision to attract industrial investments, create jobs, and ensure sustainable economic growth. He laid focus on developing robust industrial infrastructure, championing ease of doing business, and advocating for large-scale job creation.

Eastern India is growth engine in development of country, Odisha plays key role in this: PM Modi

Bhubaneswar, 28/1 (photonewstimes): Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the Utkarsh Odisha - Make in Odisha Conclave 2025 and Make in Odisha Exhibition in Bhubaneswar, Odisha today.

Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister said this was his second visit to Odisha in the month of January 2025, recalling his visit to inaugurate the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2025 event. Noting that this was the biggest business Summit in Odisha to date, Shri Modi said that there were around 5-6 times more investors participating in Make in Odisha Conclave 2025. He also congratulated the people and the Government of Odisha for organising the grand event.

"Eastern India is a growth engine in the development of the country and Odisha



plays a key role in this", exclaimed the Prime Minister. He added that historical data also reveals that the contributions of Eastern India were remarkable when India played a major role in global growth. Shri Modi noted that there were huge industrial hubs, ports, and trade hubs in Eastern India and Odisha's participation in this was remarkable. "Odisha used to be an important centre in South Eastern Asian trade and the ports were a gateway to India", said the Prime

Minister. He added that Bali Yatra is celebrated even today in Odisha. Recalling the recent visit of the President of Indonesia to India, the Prime Minister said that the President's words that there were probably traces of Odisha in his DNA. The Prime Minister remarked that Odisha celebrates a legacy that connects it with South East Asia. He added that Odisha had now begun to revive its glorious heritage in the 21st century. He

noted that the President of Singapore recently visited Odisha and Singapore was very enthusiastic about its relationship with Odisha. He highlighted that ASEAN countries have also shown interest in strengthening trade and traditional connections with Odisha. The Prime Minister emphasized that numerous opportunities were opening up in this region, more than ever before since independence. He called upon all the investors present, stating that now

was the right time to invest in Odisha's development journey and assured them that their investment would lead to new heights of success.

"India is on a path of development driven by the aspirations of crores of people", remarked Shri Modi and emphasized that AI stands for both Artificial Intelligence and Aspiration of India, which is the country's strength. He said that aspirations grow when people's needs are met, and the past decade has empowered crores of citizens, benefiting the nation. The Prime Minister highlighted that Odisha represents this aspiration. He described Odisha as outstanding, symbolizing the optimism and originality of New India. He added that Odisha had numerous opportunities, and its people have always shown a passion for outperforming. Sharing his personal experience of witnessing the skills, hard

work, and honesty of people from Odisha in Gujarat, the Prime Minister expressed confidence that with new opportunities emerging in Odisha, the state will soon reach unprecedented heights of development. He praised Chief Minister Shri Mohan Charan Manjhi and his team for their efforts in accelerating Odisha's development. The Prime Minister noted that Odisha is becoming one of India's leading states in various industries, including food processing, petrochemicals, port-led development, fisheries, IT, Edutech, textiles, tourism, mining, and green energy.

Remarking that the world was increasingly focusing on sustainable lifestyles and moving towards a green future, Shri Modi noted that the potential for green jobs is also growing significantly.



Vedanta Inks MoU Worth Rs 1 Lakh Crore with State Govt

Bhubaneswar, 28/1 (photonewstimes): Vedanta Limited, a global leader in natural resources and technology, and a committed partner in Odisha's progress for more than two decades, today signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) worth Rs 1 lakh crore with the Government of Odisha, on the opening day of Utkarsh Odisha, the state's global investment conclave organised in Bhubaneswar.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Shri Mohan Charan Majhi, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha and Shri Anil Agarwal, Chairman, Vedanta Limited. This transformative commitment aims to accelerate Odisha's

industrial growth by establishing world-class aluminium production facilities and promoting sustainable development across the state.

The collaboration includes the development of a 3 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) aluminium plant and an aluminium park that is poised to emerge as a major hub for downstream producers of aluminium products. Together, the announced initiatives will not only further cement Odisha's crucial role in the global aluminium value chain, but will also generate 2 lakh employment opportunities and foster MSME growth across sectors like automotive, power, construction, and logistics.



Former AP Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan Hospitalised

Bhubaneswar, 28/1 (photonewstimes): Former Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan has been admitted to a private hospital in Bhubaneswar due to health complications.

His son, Prithviraj Harichandan, confirmed that efforts are underway to shift him to Hyderabad for advanced medical treatment. The veteran leader's

condition is being closely monitored by a team of doctors, and arrangements are being made for his transfer to a specialized medical facility. Harichandan, a senior BJP leader and former Odisha minister, served as the Governor of Andhra Pradesh from 2019 to 2023. Known for his long-standing contributions to politics and public service, his health update has raised concerns among his well-wishers and supporters.

State gov't procures paddy from 9 lakh registered farmers

Bhubaneswar, 28/1 (photonewstimes): The paddy procurement process in Odisha has been further expedited in the current Kharif season. The steps taken by the government to achieve the paddy procurement target are being successful. More registered farmers are joining in the procurement process. Similarly, Rs 3,100 per quintal of paddy, including minimum support price and input assistance, is also bringing joy to the farmers. With this, more than 50 per cent of the registered farmers have sold their paddy. So far, around 9 lakh farmers in all the 30 districts of the state have sold their paddy. Rs 9,069 crore as minimum support price and Rs 3,154 crore as input assistance have been released to the farmers after procurement. While 90 per cent of the target has been achieved in some other districts of the state, including western Odisha, the paddy procurement process will be completed in these districts very soon. Apart from this, the process of paddy procurement has been further expedited in other districts of the state. This has been possible due to the cooperation and coordination of the state administration, district administration, women self-help groups, farmers, stakeholders and other concerned stakeholders. Custom Milling Rice has also started for necessary process.

expected to be signed.

Mrs trailer: Sanya Malhotra leads film about a woman's quest for her identity



The trailer of Mrs released on January 27. Featuring Sanya Malhotra in the main role, the film will release on Zee 5 on February 7. The trailer for Mrs, a film starring Sanya Malhotra, premiered on January 25 at the prestigious Kala Ghoda Festival. Set to stream on ZEE5 from February 7, the film will explore the challenges faced by women as they navigate societal expectations, gender inequality, and personal ambitions.

Produced by Jio Studios in association with Baweja Studios and directed by Arati Kadav, Mrs follows the story of Richa, a young bride with dreams of becoming a dancer. After her marriage, Richa finds herself immersed in endless household chores, with her ambitions sidelined by the expectations of her traditional family. The film examines the silent struggles women face within patriarchal systems while telling an inspiring story of defiance and transformation. The trailer gives viewers a glimpse into Richa's journey as she battles the monotony of domestic life and the pressure to conform. Faced with the constant reminder that "the kitchen is a woman's domain," she begins to question whether she will lose herself entirely or take a bold step to reclaim her identity. Upon being asked about the film, Sanya Malhotra said, "When I read the script for Mrs., I was excited to bring this powerful story to life—it's a reflection of the everyday struggles many women face, and it's about time we start talking about it. My character's journey is one of quiet resilience, as she goes from doing the dishes to dreaming big again. It's been a rewarding challenge to play someone who dares to break free from the routine and find her voice, and I hope the audience feels inspired by her transformation!" Along with Sanya Malhotra, the film also features Kanwaljit Singh, Nishant Dahiya, and Kanwaljit Singh. The film will start streaming on Zee5 from February 7.

Nushratt Bharuccha, Anurag Kashyap join forces for next untitled thriller



Actor Nushratt Bharuccha has collaborated with Anurag Kashyap for her next untitled thriller drama. The actor shared a post and announced the same on social media. The film will be directed by Akshat Ajay Sharma

Actor Nushratt Bharuccha has teamed up with filmmaker Anurag Kashyap for her next untitled project. Described as a gripping thriller, the film is directed by Akshat Ajay Sharma and bankrolled by Vishal Rana. The Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweeti actor also revealed that her next yet-to-be-titled "suspense and thrill" drama is going to be a memorable one for her. She captioned the post and wrote, "The Thrill is Real! My next! A rollercoaster of suspense and thrill with the creative genius Anurag Kashyap...And very passionate Vishal Rana. Helmed by Akshat Ajay Sharma. This one's going to be memorable (sic)." Meanwhile, Nushratt has an interesting lineup of films. She is preparing for the release of her much-awaited sequel, Chhorii 2. Directed by Vishal Furia, the movie is the second part of the 2021 horror drama, Chhorii. It is produced by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, Vikram Malhotra, and Jack Davis under the banner of T-Series, in association with Crypt TV, and Abundantia Entertainment.

Aamir Khan says he shot Sitaare Zameen Par climax in Gujarat's Vadodara

Aamir Khan visited the Statue of Unity on Republic Day and revealed that the climax of his upcoming film, Sitaare Zameen Par, was shot in Vadodara. He shared nostalgic memories of Gujarat, where his father filmed several movies. Aamir Khan celebrated Republic Day by visiting the Statue of Unity in Gujarat. During his visit, the actor shared that he shot the climax of his next film, Sitaare Zameen Par, in Vadodara. He also spoke about his fond memories associated with Vadodara, where his father shot several films, and added that he would

love to come back to the state to shoot more films. Addressing the media, Aamir Khan shared, "The sequel to Taare Zameen Par is Sitaare Zameen Par, and the climax of that movie was shot in Vadodara." Aamir Khan, at the Republic Day celebration, further recalled fond memories of Gujarat. "When I was young, many of my father's films were shot in Gujarat. I was very small at that time, so I would come here. Today, all those memories have come rushing back," he said. He also added, "There have been a lot of changes in Vadodara.



There are many improved significantly. When I first came here, I was probably around 12 years old. A lot of changes have taken place in this area since

then." "Gujarat has been closely associated with filmmaking for a long time. It is a very vibrant place, with a strong connection to cinema, culture, and art. From the film industry's side, we would definitely love to come here and shoot," he added. Aamir Khan's Sitaare Zameen Par is a sequel to his 2007 blockbuster, Taare Zameen Par, co-starring Darshheel Safary.

Prabhas's Spirit to release in 2026, producer shares update on Ranbir's Animal Park

Prabhas and director Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Spirit is expected to go on floors later this year. Producer Bhushan Kumar shared an update about Spirit's release and Ranbir Kapoor's Animal Park. Prabhas and director Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Spirit will begin in December 2024. Producer Bhushan Kumar, in a recent interview with Connect Media, shared updates on the release of Spirit and Ranbir Kapoor's much-awaited sequel, Animal Park. Spirit marks Prabhas's 25th film in his career and fans are eagerly waiting to see his collaboration with director Sandeep Reddy Vanga of Arjun Reddy and Animal fame. In an interview, producer Bhushan Kumar said, "Spirit is a dream combination of



Prabhas and Sandeep Reddy Vanga. This combination will explode like anything. Prabhas is super excited about Sandeep." When asked about Animal Park, the producer explained, "We will finish Spirit and release it in mid 2026. After Spirit, [Sandeep will spend] six months on writing. He has the idea in mind, and we will start filming in early 2027.

That's for sure and even the actor [Ranbir Kapoor] is locked." Coming to Spirit, the film is expected to be launched in a grand manner in December 2024. Sandeep Reddy Vanga has been involved in music sessions with Harshvardhan Rameshwar. As reported earlier, Prabhas will play the role of a cop in Spirit. Director

Sandeep Reddy Vanga had mentioned previously that the film will be made on a massive budget of Rs 300 crore. He confidently added that it will rake in Rs 150 crore on its opening day. The pre-production work for Spirit is underway. Soon, the makers will announce the cast and crew of Spirit.

No Hera Pheri: Suniel Shetty, Paresh Rawal, Akshay Kumar reunite for Kudo event

Actors Akshay Kumar, Paresh Rawal and Suniel Shetty recently attended a Kudo Tournament. Sharing posts from the event, the actors clarified that their reunion was not related to the next Hera Pheri installment. After they shared pictures from the event, rumours were dispelled about Hera Pheri 3. Actors Akshay Kumar, Paresh Rawal and Suniel Shetty recently attended the 16th Akshay Kumar International Kudo Tournament 2024 held in Surat, Gujarat. Sharing pictures from the event, Akshay and Suniel dispelled rumours that their reunion has any connection with the third installment of their popular franchise, Hera Pheri. Sharing a video from the tournament on November 12, Akshay Kumar wrote, "At the 16th Akshay Kumar International Kudo Tournament 2024, two Guinness World Records were shattered, making it a truly memorable day—no "Hera Pheri" involved! (sic)"



Khel Khel Mein director on Akshay Kumar's low phase: Form is temporary, class is permanent

Mudassar Aziz, director of Khel Khel Mein, discussed Akshay Kumar's recent career challenges, comparing them to a cricketer's temporary dip in form while affirming his enduring talent. The filmmaker compared the actor's low phase to a cricketer who is out of form. A lot has been said about Akshay Kumar's career graph in the last two years. The superstar saw a string of flops at the box office, leading many to believe he had lost his charm. However, in a chat with India Today, in, Mudassar Aziz, director of his film Khel Khel Mein compared the actor's low phase to a cricketer who is out of form, emphasising that even during such times, their class remains

intact. Aziz discussed his experience working with him and what Akshay felt about the negative online chatter surrounding him. He shared that he has been interacting with him for the last three years, from the time he conceived the film. Aziz also mentioned that his relationship with Akshay extends over 30 years. The filmmaker further revealed that the superstar pays close attention to what is being said about him. "It all started when I as a little boy went to see Garam Masala in a theatre and laughed my lungs out. From then to coming to know him personally and now working with him, it has been such a wonderful ride. Also, he is an extremely perceptive,



intelligent and aware person. It's not that a lot of this chatter does not land on his ears, it does. He is not someone to carelessly brush that aside. It may not determine his next choice but he pays careful attention to what's being said about him," Mudassar Aziz said. He further added, "There is a very important phrase

in cricket, 'Form is temporary, class is permanent'. Every time a cricketer is having a bad run, the whole nation unites to tell them what they should do, or shouldn't do. But you cannot take away their talent and the class reveal itself soon. There was no doubt in our minds about Akshay, and now with Khel Khel Mein, he's

returned to comedy, batting on the wicket where he's scored many centuries. He is back to entertaining his audiences the way they like it." Mudassar Aziz also shared what he has learned from Akshay Kumar - a trait he feels everyone should adopt. "He treats success and failure as part of the same process. He doesn't process them differently,

and that is commendable," he said. The director also revealed how it's not just with Akshay but the entire Khel Khel Mein cast fell in love with each other while shooting. "We did not have to ask them to be friends as that camaraderie was very much already there by the time we started shoot. We have a WhatsApp group and we keep sharing reviews, posts, and even memes on it and laugh about it. The entire experience has been so satisfying. Also, none of us have the cockiness to claim we made a good film because we had trust and pride in our product."



Murphy, Kuhnemann reunite with a shared fixation

New Delhi, (photonewstimes): Matt Kuhnemann has checked more on his Baggy Green than he has his passport since leaving home for the Sri Lanka Test tour last week. "Once every 10 minutes to make sure it's there, and just to have a look at it," in his own words to Cricbuzz. It's the first time he's traveling overseas with his Baggy Green after all since making his debut in India back in early 2023. It's not only now, all of a sudden, that the 28-year-old left-arm spinner has started showing extra care for his treasured possession that symbolises him being a Test cricketer for Australia. He's been doing so quite regularly at home as well since last being a part of the Test squad in his debut series nearly two years ago. "It's travelled a fair bit. I've moved a couple of times. I actually have a

look at it a fair bit. Put it on and I always like to keep an eye on it. It obviously means everything to me," Kuhnemann says, almost blushing while he does. Todd Murphy on the other hand never puts his Baggy Green on his head, even if he 'checks on it' as regularly as his spin bowling partner does. His has got a "safe spot" at home where it sits undisturbed. "Nah, never goes on the head. Not sure that's an unwritten rule. But I'm not doing it," the young off-spinner tells this website. Unlike Kuhnemann, Murphy has been on a foreign trip with his Baggy Green before. He was part of the Ashes squad to England in the middle of 2023 and even ended up playing the last three Tests of the series following Nathan Lyon's heartbreaking injury at Lord's. But he insists on having found his Test cap to be still quite "fresh"

when he had the joy of packing it in his suitcase for the first time in 18 months some 10 days ago. Just like it's been every time he's opened the drawer at home to "take a look at it". "It's always nice when you get to pull it out and pack it in the suitcase again. Brings back some good memories and some excitement going forward," says Murphy. He then starts beaming as soon as the topic shifts to the 24-year-old rekindling his relationship with the Baggy Green by getting reunited with it in a day's time in Galle. "A lot of history in it. Cool bringing it out again and knowing there's a real possibility it might get used again," says Murphy. And it seems highly likely that it will get used with Murphy and Kuhnemann set to team up together for the first time since the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad back in



March 2023 to complement their mentor, Nathan Lyon, in the first Test against Sri Lanka. It will be a significant moment for both the finger spinners too after they've had to spend two home summers since that India trip, waiting in the wings to get anywhere near playing Test cricket again. In that extended interim period, every glance at his Baggy Green for Murphy has

been an opportunity to "understand that that's what" he wants to get back to". Whereas for Kuhnemann it's also always been associated with nostalgia and reminiscing about the two incredible weeks he had in India to kickstart his international career. Including this very sweet reminder his Baggy Green still carries from his match-winning exploits in Indore.

"There are so many thoughts and experiences that flash back when I look at it. I remember in Indore, I was using my hand on the dirt a fair bit over there and when I put my hat on, there's still the dirt marks there. That's very cool." Very cool indeed. Even if the whole experience itself of being fast-tracked into the Test team two years ago still feels like a 'blur' for

Kuhnemann. "Blur is a great way to put it. It was a bit of a whirlwind month in India. Looking back at it now, how special it actually was. The environment with Ronnie (Andrew McDonald), Patty (Pat Cummins) and Steve (Smith) have created it's very easy for someone who isn't part of the squad full-time coming in and to feel confident to do well. So, I look back and think I've grown as a cricketer in my skill-sets a lot better than a couple of years ago," he says. And while there's the skills side to his growth, he feels like the biggest improvement he sees with his own cricket is how much better he is with the mental side of it. "You go from India, then I played a couple of county games and then back home to Queensland where I wasn't playing. You have to be resilient enough to go and that season to move to Tassie and you're playing a fair bit of red-ball cricket. Probably learn to bowl all around the world. Talk to

the likes of Steve O'Keefe and Nathan Lyon who is the best finger spinner we've ever had. You learn so many little things. And puts you in good stead. I'm a lot more confident going into this series than I was in India." Despite the eventful journey he's been on since his last appearance, 18 Tests ago, Kuhnemann insists that he remembers his first tryst with Test cricket like it was yesterday. Murphy echoes those sentiments when asked about whether it feels like 18 months since he last donned his beloved Baggy Green, at The Oval in August 2023. That it didn't feel like it was that long ago when he was taking six wickets as part of a highly impressive performance in the final Ashes Test.

CSK withdraw from The Hundred race; MI, LSG, SRH, DC vying for teams

New Delhi, (photonewstimes): Chennai Super Kings have officially withdrawn from the race to acquire a franchise in The Hundred. The franchise CEO, Kasi Viswanathan, confirmed the decision to Cricbuzz, stating that they are no longer pursuing a bid to own a side in the league. This leaves four IPL franchises - Mumbai Indians, Lucknow SuperGiants, Sunrisers Hyderabad, and Delhi Capitals - still in contention. "We've withdrawn and we have formally informed the England and Wales Cricket Board about it," Viswanathan told Cricbuzz on Monday. Cricbuzz reported last week that CSK and Kolkata Knight Riders are not going to seriously participate in the bidding. Later this week, ECB is expected to invite financial bids for each franchise in the 100-ball tournament. They are mapping the process in



such a way that if an interested party fails to bag a team, it can still be in the race to own one of the remaining teams. There are eight teams up for sale: Birmingham Phoenix, London Spirit, Manchester Originals, Northern Superchargers, Oval Invincibles, Southern Brave, Trent Rockets and Welsh Fire. According to information obtained from various sources, Reliance Group, the owners of the Mumbai Indians, Sanjiv Goenka of Lucknow SuperGiants and a group of Tech entrepreneurs, who have formed a consortium, are the

favourites to bag the two London teams - London Spirit (MCC) and Oval Invincibles (Surrey) - and the one in Manchester (Manchester Originals). Who gets which team will depend on the financial bids, and of course how ECB negotiates with them. The Sun Group, the owners of SunRisers Hyderabad, are in the race to bag one of the Trent Rockets (Nottinghamshire country) and Northern Superchargers. Birmingham City, once an English Premier League (EPL) side, currently competing in the second

tier of the English football league, is believed to be interested in owning the eponymous Birmingham Phoenix. The Warwickshire County, which currently owns the Phoenix team, is understood to be not keen on selling its stake, which means the new owner will only have minority shares. The Birmingham situation may suit CVC Capital, a private equity firm, who are known to be interested in investing in entities rather than owning them entirely. Sanjay Govil, the owner of the Washington Freedom in Major

League Cricket (MLC) in the US, could be in the race to buy one of Glamorgan country-managed Welsh Fire or Trent Rockets. The Glazers, who own the iconic Manchester United football team, and are also linked to the Desert Vipers side in UAE-based IL T20, may be in the race to buy a side. GMR, who have recently purchased Hampshire County, are the favourites to bag the Southern Brave side. The final round of negotiations and bidding will start in the next few days, most probably on Friday (January 31), and the process should be complete in February, by when the announcement of the new owners may be made. But one is given to understand that the new owners will come into the picture only from the 2026 season since the parties will need a few months to complete the paperwork.

Paarl Royals maintain perfect home record with six-wicket win

New Delhi, (photonewstimes): Paarl Royals finished the home leg of the SA20 2025 with a fifth win in as many games and extended their lead at the top of the points table. On a sluggish surface, they handed Durban Super Giants their sixth defeat of the season that put to end their faint hopes of making it to the playoffs. They remain rooted to the bottom of the table. The Super Giants lost their way soon after opting to bat first. Openers Quinton de Kock and Brandon King were both snuffed out inside the PowerPlay while Bryce Parsons was dismissed right after it. From 33/3, the Super Giants were carried forward by Marcus Stoinis and Kane Williamson through a 53-run stand off 38 deliveries. Bjorn Fortuin broke that with the wicket of Williamson in the 13th over, and four overs later, Heinrich Klaassen was



dismissed for a 14-ball 13 by Kwena Maphaka. Stonis, who scored his maiden SA20 fifty, took on Joe Root at the death to collect 20 runs off an over. Super Giants managed 47 runs off the last five overs to reach 143/7. Off-spinner Subayan gave his team hopes of defending the score by trapping the leading run-getter of the season - Root - leg before on the first ball of the chase. But Pretorius and Ruben Hermann stitched a 91-run second-wicket stand to put their team back on track. Hermann went on to score a half-century before falling for a 51-ball 59 in the 13th over. Keshav Maharaj then cleaned up

Pretorius in the 15th over to keep the game on knife's edge as Royals had to continue their chase without skipper David Miller, who left the field during the first innings with a hamstring issue. Dinesh Karthik then stepped up with a quick-fire 21 off 15 that eased the pressure on the Royals, who needed 24 off the last 18 balls. Karthik spearheaded a 10-run Stoinis over and then pulled JJ Smuts for a six in the 19th to narrow the equation

Virat Kohli links up with Delhi Ranji team, begins training at Arun Jaitley Stadium

New Delhi, (ENS): Virat Kohli joined Delhi Ranji Trophy squad in their training session at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on January 28, ahead of his return to domestic cricket in the side's upcoming clash against Railways. India's star batter Virat Kohli has joined Delhi's Ranji Trophy squad for a team training session at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on January 28, preparing for his much-anticipated return to domestic cricket. Kohli's comeback will be in Delhi's Ranji

Trophy clash against Railways, marking his first appearance in the tournament since 2012, when he last played against Uttar Pradesh. Arriving at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Tuesday morning, Kohli participated in multiple group running and fielding drills, and even played touches of a football along with his Delhi teammates. His presence has heightened excitement within the Indian cricket fraternity, which has recently witnessed the domestic returns of other

prominent players, including India captain Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant, Shubman Gill, and Yashasvi Jaiswal. Kohli and the rest of the India stars making a return to domestic cricket aligns with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)'s renewed emphasis on domestic performance as a significant criterion for international selection. While Kohli missed Delhi's previous match against Saurashtra due to a neck injury, he is eager to make a strong impact in the upcoming game.



His return to form is crucial, particularly after enduring a lean patch in Test cricket, including struggles during India's Border-Gavaskar Trophy series defeat to Australia. Despite the buzz around Kohli's participation, fans may not be able to watch the match live, as there is no confirmation of telecast or live-streaming. The BCCI, however, has ensured additional security measures at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, recognising the star value Kohli brings to the fixture. Delhi's match

against Railways has now garnered significant attention as Kohli looks to regain his rhythm and confidence after his lean patch in his recent Test struggles against New Zealand and then Australia in the Border Gavaskar Trophy. With the game set to take place on January 30, the spotlight will be firmly on Kohli as he looks to make a memorable return to his roots and lead Delhi to a strong finish in the Ranji Trophy group stage.



The Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari attends concluding ceremony of Project Abhay by CRDT, IIT Delhi, in New Delhi . (Pic: PIB)

Iran's Khamenei says Gaza brought Israel 'to its knees'

Tehran, (photonewstimes): Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Tuesday that Gaza had brought Israel "to its knees", in a reference to the recent ceasefire in the Palestinian territory.

The ceasefire and hostage-release deal between Iran's arch-enemy Israel and the Tehran-backed militant group Hamas went into effect just over a week ago, aiming to put an end to more than 15 months of the "genocidal" war on Gaza. "The small, limited Gaza brought the Zionist regime, armed to the teeth, and fully supported by America, to its knees," Khamenei said during a meeting with officials in Tehran.

Also on Tuesday, Iran's foreign ministry spokesman, Esmail Baqaei, criticised US

President Donald Trump's idea to move Palestinians out of Gaza to other locations such as Egypt or Jordan.

"Political coercion and demographic manipulations will not be able to force the Palestinians to migrate," Baqaei said in a post on X, adding that Gaza is the Palestinians' "homeland and they've paid (an) extremely high price to remain there."

Thousands of displaced Palestinians returned to Gaza's most war-ravaged northern region starting Monday after Israeli troops withdrew from the region as part of the ceasefire deal with Hamas.

Israel had prevented Palestinians from returning to northern Gaza, accusing Hamas

of violating the terms of the truce, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said late Sunday they would be allowed to pass after a new agreement was reached.

Late Monday, the Hamas government in Gaza said "more than 300,000 displaced" had returned during the day "to the governorates of the north", an area of Gaza severely battered by the war.

Israel has been found to have committed genocide against the Palestinian people during its 15-month-long war on Gaza. Israel has killed at least 47,000 Palestinians including over 18,000 children, more than 200 journalists and over a thousand healthcare workers, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Qatar reiterates support for two-state solution after Trump calls for moving Gazans



Doha, (photonewstimes): Qatar reaffirmed its support for a two-state solution on Tuesday after US President Donald Trump repeated his call to move Palestinians from Gaza to Egypt or Jordan.

Foreign ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari did not reveal details of conversations with US officials, but said Qatar often didn't see "eye to eye" with its allies.

"Our position has always been clear to the necessity of the Palestinian people receiving their rights, and that the two-state solution is the only path forward," Ansari told a regular media briefing when asked about Trump's comments.

"We don't see eye to eye

on a lot of things with all our allies, not only the United States, but we work very closely with them to make sure that we formulate policy together," he added.

Qatar, the US and Egypt jointly mediated the Gaza ceasefire and hostage-release deal that went into effect a little over a week ago, halting more than 15 months of fighting sparked by Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack on Israel.

On Monday, Trump repeated his wish to move Gazans to another country, after earlier saying he wanted to "clean out" the devastated Palestinian territory.

The US president told reporters he would "like to

get them living in an area where they can live without disruption and revolution and violence so much". Ansari said Qatar, which hosts the region's biggest US military base, was "engaging fully with the Trump administration and with envoy (Steve) Witkoff", the president's special representative for the Middle East.

"I'm not going to comment on the type of discussions we are having with them right now, but I would say that it is very productive," Ansari said. "We have been working very closely with the Trump administration over the regional issues as a whole, including the Palestinian issue."

Bangladesh risks repeating Hasina regime's mistakes: HRW

D h a k a , (photonewstimes): Reprisals against journalists and indiscriminate arrests risk undermining Bangladesh's once-in-a-generation opportunity to end the legal abuses seen under ousted premier Sheikh Hasina, Human Rights Watch warned Tuesday.

Hasina fled into exile last August after a student-led revolution ended her 15 years of autocratic rule, capping an uprising that claimed hundreds of lives.

An interim government led by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus took charge days later, pledging to institute far-reaching democratic reforms and stage fresh elections.

In a report released Tuesday, HRW said

Yunus' administration had begun the process of reforming degraded institutions used as tools to persecute opponents of Hasina's Awami League party.

But the watchdog's Asia director Elaine Pearson warned "this hard-won progress could all be lost if the interim government does not implement swift and structural reforms".

The report said that police had "returned to the abusive practices that characterized the previous government" to target Hasina's supporters, filing charges against tens of thousands of people in the two months after Hasina's ouster.

It said family members of those killed by security forces in the



protests that toppled her government had been pressured into signing case documents without knowing who was being accused in their murder.

The report also said the interim government had taken drastic action against journalists it

perceived to support Hasina's government. Murder charges were filed against at least 140 journalists by November for their alleged support of the Hasina government's crackdown on protesters last summer, the report said. Yunus'

government has yet to comment on the report.

The 84-year-old has said he inherited a "completely broken down" system of public administration and

Air strike on North Darfur market kills more than 100: Sudan lawyers' group

New Delhi, (photonewstimes): A Sudanese military air strike on a market in North Darfur killed more than 100 people on Monday, a pro-democracy lawyers' group said Tuesday, in a war marked by claims of atrocities on all sides.

The Emergency Lawyers said Monday's air strike also left hundreds injured in Kabkabiya, a town about 180 kilometres (112 miles) west of El-Fasher, the state capital that has been under siege from the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since May.

Tens of thousands have been killed and millions displaced in a 20-month war between the RSF and Sudan's army that has left the northeast African country on the

brink of famine, according to aid agencies.

"The air strike took place on the town's weekly market day, where residents from various nearby villages had gathered to shop, resulting in the death of more than 100 people and injury of hundreds, including women and children," said the lawyers group, which has been documenting human rights abuses during the conflict.

In footage sent to AFP purporting to show aftermath of Monday's strike, people were seen sifting through rubble as the charred remains of children lay on scorched ground.

The footage was supplied by civil

society group the Darfur General Coordination of Camps for the Displaced and Refugees and AFP has not been able to verify its accuracy.

The lawyers group said in a separate incident on Monday evening three neighbourhoods were hit with barrel bombs in Nyala, the capital of South Darfur, without reporting casualties.

Darfur, a region the size of France, is home to around a quarter of Sudan's population but more than half of its 10 million are displaced.

A UN-backed report in July said famine had taken hold in a major refugee camp in North Darfur after a months-long RSF siege disabled nearly all trade and aid access.

strikes. Israel has a long history of seizing territory during wars with its neighbours and occupying it indefinitely, citing security concerns. Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 Mideast war and annexed it in a move not recognised internationally, except by the United States. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which has closely tracked the conflict since the civil war erupted nearly 14 years ago, said Israel has carried out more than 300 airstrikes across the country since rebels overthrew Assad over the weekend, ending his family's half-century rule. The Observatory, and Beirut-based Mayadeen TV, which has reporters in Syria, said Israeli troops are advancing up the Syrian side of the border with Lebanon. It was not possible to independently confirm the reports.

Lt Col Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesperson, said. The reports circulating in the media about the alleged advancement of Israeli tanks towards Damascus are false.

Israeli strike in Gaza kills World Central Kitchen

DEIR AL-BALAH, (photonewstimes): An Israeli airstrike on a car in the Gaza Strip on Saturday killed five people, including employees of World Central Kitchen. The charity said it was "urgently seeking more details" after Israel's military said it targeted a WCK worker who was part of the Hamas attack that sparked the war. WCK said it was "heartbroken" and it had no knowledge anyone in the car had alleged ties to the Oct. 7, 2023 attack, adding it was "working with incomplete information." It said it was pausing operations in Gaza. It had suspended work earlier this year after an Israeli strike killed seven of its workers. The Israeli military in a statement said the alleged October 7 attacker took part in the assault on the kibbutz of Nir Oz, and it asked "senior officials from the international community" and the WCK to clarify how he had come to work for the charity. The family of the man named by Israel, Ahed Azmi Qdeih, rejected the allegations as "false accusations," and confirmed in a statement he had worked with the charity. Israel named him as Hazmi Kadhih.

Israeli warplanes pound Syria as troops reportedly advance deeper into country

D A M A S C U S , (photonewstimes): Israel carried out a wave of heavy airstrikes across Syria as its troops advanced deeper into the country, drawing to within 25 kilometres of the capital, a Syrian opposition war monitor said on Tuesday. Israel denied its forces were advancing toward Damascus.

Associated Press reporters in Damascus heard heavy airstrikes overnight and into Tuesday on the city and its suburbs.

Photographs

circulating online showed destroyed missile launchers, helicopters and warplanes.

There was no immediate comment from the insurgent groups Rs led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS Rs that have taken control of Damascus.

Israeli soldiers stand on the fence with the buffer zone that separates the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights from Syria, on December 9, 2024, near the Druze village of Majdal Shams

Netanyahu claims Israeli-occupied Golan

Heights in Syria will remain Israeli 'for eternity' Israel had earlier seized a roughly 400-square-kilometre buffer zone inside Syria that had been established after the 1973 Mideast war, a move it said was taken to prevent attacks in the aftermath of the overthrow of President Bashar Assad.

Israel has also said it is striking suspected chemical weapons sites and heavy weapons to prevent them from falling into the hands of extremists.

Israeli officials rarely acknowledge individual



Photographs