

Morning News Script

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday virtually inaugurated the 72nd National Volleyball tournament in Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. Mr Modi who is also the Member of Parliament from Varanasi, extended greetings to players from across the country and underlined the role of sports in nation-building. Addressing the event, Mr Modi said the government has significantly increased the sports budget, and today India's sports model has become 'athlete-centric', with focus on talent identification, scientific training, nutrition, and transparent selection.

The eight-day tournament which will continue till 11th of this month, is witnessing participation of over one thousand players from across the country, competing as part of 58 teams representing various states and institutions.

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India has expressed deep concern over the recent developments in Venezuela. The External Affairs Ministry said in a statement that the evolving situation is being closely monitored. India has re-affirmed its support to the well-being and safety of the people of Venezuela. The Embassy of India in Caracas is in contact with the members of the Indian community and will continue to provide all possible assistance. Meanwhile, the Ministry has issued an advisory urging Indian nationals to avoid all non-essential travel to Venezuela in view of recent developments. In a related development, the United Nations Security Council will hold an emergency meeting today to discuss the US military operation in Venezuela.

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OPEC (Plus) has agreed in principle to maintain steady oil output despite rising geopolitical tensions among key members and fresh uncertainty surrounding Venezuela. The eight participating countries, Saudi Arabia, Russia, the United Arab Emirates, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Iraq, Algeria and Oman, collectively pump about half of the world's oil. They had raised output targets by around 2.9 million barrels per day between April and December last year, equivalent to nearly three percent of global demand, before agreeing in November to pause further increases for January, February and March.

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India has become the world's largest producer of rice, surpassing China. This was stated by Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in New Delhi yesterday. He said, India's rice production has reached 150.18 million tonnes, compared to China's 145.28 million tonnes. Mr Chouhan said, India is now supplying rice in overseas markets.

The minister unveiled 184 improved varieties of 25 field crops developed by Indian Council of Agricultural Research at an event held in the national capital.

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The government has dismissed a video as false which claims that Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced freebies like gold, mobile phones, two and four wheelers. The Fact Check Unit of the Press Information Bureau said that the Prime Minister has not made any such announcement. The unit termed the video as AI generated and fake. The government has urged citizens to be cautious of such misinformation and to verify facts before trusting them.

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2018 Asian Games gold medallist Amit Panghal of SSCB and Sagar of Haryana registered contrasting wins to advance in the Elite Men and Women National Boxing Championships being played at Gautam Buddha University in Greater Noida.

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And, in weather... The India Meteorological Department has forecast dense fog conditions during night and early morning hours in isolated to some pockets of Nagaland and other North Eastern states till January 7. The weather agency has also predicted that dry weather is most likely to prevail across all districts of Nagaland till January 10.

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