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ENOUGH EVIDENCE

INDIA TO APPROACH FATF WITH NEW EVIDENCE OF PAK TERROR CAMPS

Sources say that a high-level meeting of security and diplomatic officials took place in New Delhi on Sunday to discuss the security situation in the region.

T. BRAJESH
NEW DELHI

India is gearing up to approach the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and other international forums including the United Nations with a "fresh set of evidence" on terror infrastructure in territory under the control of both Pakistan and Afghanistan. The diplomatic and security officials from New Delhi will share "hard facts" with the Paris-based terrorism financing watchdog and global community, detailing how terror groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) are maintaining their training camps

in Pakistan and some provinces of Afghanistan, sources told The Daily Guardian. "The evidence collected by our security agencies over the past few months are sufficient to establish that the terror camps have the backing of the governments in Pakistan and Afghanistan," sources said, adding, "India is getting cooperation from the US administration and its intelligence agencies in this mission."

American diplomats would be working in close coordination with their Indian counterparts at FATF and the UN to ensure that the global forums mount pressure on Pakistan and Afghanistan to dismantle



the terror camps immediately, sources said. US Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti's statement reaffirming Washington's commitment to fight alongside New Delhi against the menace of terrorism assumes significance in this context. He made this statement after paying tributes to the victims at the US Consulate

in Mumbai on the 15th anniversary of the 26/11 terror attacks on Sunday. Sources told this newspaper that a high-level meeting of security and diplomatic officials took place in New Delhi on Sunday, during which they reviewed the security situation in the region with focus on the growing activities of the terror camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan. According to sources, a couple of more meetings will be held to give the final shape to the dossier of evidence on terrorists being sent by Pakistan to the Indian region. The experts in security and diplomatic establishments have scanned the evidence gathered by Indian intel-

ligence and security agencies. Some satellite images have also been collected by the experts showing terror camps operating on Pakistan soil, sources said.

Indian security agencies have collected a huge amount of evidence from the terrorists who have been eliminated in certain areas of Jammu and Kashmir over the past few months. Only three days ago, a top LeT commander and his associate were killed in an encounter in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri. Identified by the codename Qari, he had been active in the Rajouri-Poonch region with his group for the past one year. Sources

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Winds of change blowing across Telangana: PM

MADHU SHARMA
HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his campaign trail in Telangana on Monday, ahead of the Assembly elections in the state on Thursday, said that he was seeing winds of change blowing across the state and the next five years were crucial for the development of Telangana.

"For the first time a BJP government will be formed in Telangana and a BC will be the Chief Minister. The people of Karimnagar have shown the trailer to Chief Minister and BRS president K. Chandrasekhar Rao—the trailer of defeat in the Huzurabad byelection. Now in the Assembly elections you are going to send him home. Forming BJP government in Telangana is very important as in 2024 BJP will come to power at the Centre again and having a double engine



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a roadshow ahead of the Telangana Assembly Elections in Hyderabad on Monday. ANI

government will speed up development and progress in the state," said the PM.

The Prime Minister visited the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple in Hyderabad in the morning, after which he held public meetings at Mahabubnagar and Karimnagar, before participating in a mega road show in Hyderabad.

"We will show how Telangana will become number one in the country. You cannot leave the future of Telangana to fate. We have to take care. For us the development

of the nation, by including every state is important. Whenever you tell people you have voted for development, for the pride of the nation, for public support and welfare of the poor, the only name that comes to the mind of the people is BJP. I am seeing the winds of change," he said while addressing a public meeting.

"TRS and Congress did not leave any opportunity to cheat you. Corruption and appeasement are the names of the parties that will come to your mind. There is no

TOP OF THE DAY

PRAY FOR TUNNEL WORKERS: PM

HYDERABAD: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that the government and all the agencies together were leaving no stones unturned to evacuate the workers trapped in the Uttarakhand tunnel for the last two weeks and that people should pray for them to get out safely and as soon as possible. The Prime Minister said that nature is constantly throwing challenges towards the rescue operation, underway to bring the trapped men out.

RAHUL GETS COURT SUMMONS

SULTANPUR, UP: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has been summoned by MP/MLA court on 16 December in connection with a 2018 case over using derogatory remarks against Union Home Minister Amit Shah in a Bengaluru conference. The complaint was filed by the then BJP district vice president, Vijay Mishra for the objectionable remarks made by Rahul Gandhi at a press conference in Bengaluru.

ISRAEL-HAMAS TRUCE EXTENDED

DOHA, QATAR: Qatar has successfully negotiated an agreement between Israel and Hamas to extend the four-day truce between them by an additional two days, Doha's foreign ministry spokesperson said. This means at least ten more Israeli hostages will be released on Tuesday and that another ten will be released on Wednesday.

INTERVIEW

Unfulfilled promises a major issue in Telangana: Kharge

RAJAT RAKESH TANDON
HYDERABAD

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge spoke to this newspaper on the path that the Congress has been pursuing in Telangana. Kharge shed light on unkept promises, rampant corruption, and economic woes plaguing Telangana, among other issues. Edited excerpts:

Q: The Congress has been conducting three to four rallies and roadshows daily in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, and Telangana. What are the two major issues for the Congress in these states?

A: The issue in Telangana is that they (the ruling BRS) haven't fulfilled the promises they made. The promises they made when they became the Chief Minister,

those promises have not been kept. Now, corruption has increased to such an extent that people themselves are fed up. The common people are saying that Sonia Gandhi had helped create this state, to create a good and model Telangana. But today, those who have received this state are ruining it entirely. There's no employment, no control over inflation, and there are

various mafias like the land mafia. The government has control over everything, and it's being run by powerful people.

Q: Since the victory in Karnataka, Congress started working in Telangana. The people of Telangana were given the state by the UPA government, by the Congress. But after that, the party disappeared com-

IN LONG ISLAND

INDIA'S ENVOY TO THE U.S. HECKLED BY KHALISTANIS AT NEW YORK GURUDWARA

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India's ambassador to the United States, Taranjit Sandhu, was heckled and harassed by pro Khalistani elements at a Long Island gurudwara in New York state on Sunday. The Indian envoy had gone to the Hicksville gurudwara to pay obeisance to Guru Nanak ahead of the auspicious day of Gurupurab. The video of the heckling was shared on



A screen grab from the video featuring Taranjit Sandhu. X, formerly Twitter, by the national spokesperson of the Bharatiya Janata Party,

R.P. Singh. The video shows Sandhu being accosted by aggressive men who accuse him of plotting the assassination of wanted terrorist and Khalistani radical Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was gunned down in Canada earlier this year.

The subtitle of the video also translates the speaker, who is not seen on camera, as saying that Sandhu "plotted to kill Pannun". The reference is to Gurpatwant Singh

ON COURSE

INDIA-U.S. PREDATOR DRONE DEAL LIKELY EARLY NEXT YEAR

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India is looking at sealing a landmark deal to procure 31 MQ-9B Predator armed drones from the United States under a government-to-government framework by March, with the US

Congress expected to clear the supplies in the next few weeks, sources said.

American and Indian government officials will hold the final series of negotiations on the procurement after Washington responds to India's Letter of Request (LoR) for the

acquisition of drones from US defence major General Atomics (GA), they said.

This acquires significance in the backdrop of speculation that interests inimical to India are trying to scuttle the deal, for New Delhi buying such high-tech

PARLIAMENT

WINTER SESSION FROM 4 DECEMBER; POLLS, MAHUA ISSUE LIKELY TO DOMINATE

ASHISH SINHA
NEW DELHI

The upcoming winter session of Parliament is scheduled to begin on 4 December and continue till 22 December. An all-party meeting has been scheduled specifically for this purpose on 2 December.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahlad Joshi confirmed this on X, formerly Twitter. He tweeted that the

session planned to hold 15 meetings in 19 days. Discussions on legislative business and other agenda items are eagerly awaited during this session amid Amrit Kaal. There is speculation that Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra's "cash for query" report and the Assembly election results of the five states coming out on Sunday, 3 December, will dominate the winter session.

The Assembly election results of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Telangana are expected to have a significant impact on the session, as the government aims to pass important bills.

The Ethics Committee report on "cash-for-query" allegations against Mahua Moitra will be presented in the Lok Sabha during this session.

RAT HOLE MINERS

MANUAL DRILLING STARTS AT UTTARAKHAND TUNNEL COLLAPSE SITE



Rescue operation is underway in the Silkyara tunnel where 41 workers are trapped inside after a portion of it collapsed, in Uttarakhand on Monday. ANI

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The manual horizontal drilling of the tunnel at Silkyara, Uttarakhand, where 41 tunnel workers have been trapped for more than two weeks, started on Monday evening. It started after the US-made Auger drill broke down once again, with its blades getting destroyed by the iron grill on the tunnel ceiling. The manual drilling is being conducted primarily by "rat hole miners", with the assistance of the Indian Army. These miners get their

name from digging rat hole sized tunnels to extract coal. Meanwhile, on the second day of vertical drilling on top of the Silkyara-Barkot tunnel, around 36 metres were drilled, with another 50 metres to go to reach the trapped tunnel workers.

The National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) said on Monday that the vertical drilling was likely to be completed by Thursday, 30 November. The managing director of NHIDCL, Mahmood Ahmad

RATING AGENCY

S&P raises India's FY24 growth projection to 6.4%

NIVEDITA MUKHERJEE
NEW DELHI

Endorsing the Government and Indian policymakers' confidence in the resilience of the Indian economy, S&P Global Ratings, on Monday, revised India's growth forecast for the financial year 2023-24 (ending in March 2024) upward to 6.4% from 6% projected earlier, with robust domestic momentum appearing to have offset headwinds from high food inflation and weak exports. This is in sync with RBI's estimate of 6.5%. The US rating agency's "Economic Outlook Asia-Pacific Q1 2024: Emerging Markets Lead The Way", suggests that India's growth, with its solid domestic demand like other Asia-Pacific emerging market economies as Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, is the strongest for the current year and in 2024.

GDP growth is projected at 5.4% in 2023, slowing down to 4.6% in 2024 amidst the country's property weakness continuing to weigh on the economy and the latter projection of 2024 aligning with the S&P estimate of economic slack persisting next year. The expectation for developed economies is one of lowest growth, especially for those exposed to the weak global trade conditions like South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, or where the central bank has raised interest rates a lot to fight inflation as in the case of Australia and New Zealand. Even then, 2023 GDP growth is likely to exceed 1% in all Asia-Pacific economies and S&P projects a modest pick-up in growth in 2024, due to a gradual improvement in external demand and some monetary policy easing. Overall, the region excluding China

Compared to this, China's

MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

SC TO HEAR DMK MINISTER V SENTHIL BALAJI'S PLEA TODAY

ASHISH SINHA
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday will hear a Plea filed by DMK minister V Senthil Balaji challenging a Madras High Court order that dismissed his bail plea on 19 October, citing concerns that he might influence witnesses if released on bail.

Earlier the top court had directed DMK Minister V Senthil Balaji, arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case, to submit his latest medical reports for examination.



A bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and SC Sharma had directed senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, representing Balaji, to provide the medical reports and scheduled the matter for

further hearing on 28 November.

The Madras high court, while dismissing the bail plea, remarked that based on Balaji's health report, it did not appear to be a medical

condition that could only be addressed if he were released on bail. The high court also cited Balaji's past conduct, his current position as a minister without portfolio, the absence of his brother Ashok Kumar, and an alleged attack on Income Tax Officials by Balaji's supporters during earlier searches as reasons for its decision.

Balaji was arrested on June 14 by the ED in connection with a money laundering case related to a cash-for-jobs scam that occurred when he was the Transport Minister in a previous AIADMK regime.

TELANGANA CAMPAIGN

KCR EYES THIRD TERM, CONGRESS KEEN TO WREST POWER

RAHUL CHHABRA
NEW DELHI

As campaigning for election in Telangana entered the last 24 hours on Monday the key parties, including the ruling BRS, put in all their resources to attract voters with promises ranging from welfare schemes that include farm loan waivers, higher pensions, loans for backward classes and more government jobs. Voting on Thursday would mark the culmination of balloting process in five states whose result will be declared on 3 December, setting the tone for fresh strategies and realignments for the 2024 Lok Sabha.

The result on 3 December will also determine the path that K Chandrasekhar Rao controlled BRS shall play in an anti-BJP grouping. If KCR decides to focus on national politics in 2024, his son K T Rama Rao is expected to handle affairs in the state.

With the election in Telangana being a direct fight between the ruling BRS and the Congress, the BJP, as the third player, is seeing itself in a position to disturb the apple cart of both the main rivals.

The BJP's vote share has been on the rise in the state from 6.98 per cent in the 2018 assembly election to 19.65 per

cent in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The more the number of seats that the BJP manages to win in the current election, the more the chance of the contest yielding a hung assembly.

The BJP had won just one seat in Telangana assembly in 2018 but since then it has managed to spread its network in the state. The BJP won four Lok Sabha seats in the state in 2019.

The 3.17 crore voters in the state will vote on Thursday in 119 seats, out of which 31 are reserved for SC/ST candidates. According to the Election Commission 1.2 lakh polling centres have been identified as critical.

Meanwhile on the penultimate day of campaigning, the ruling BRS received a setback with the EC withdrawing permission to Telangana government for disbursements of financial aid to farmers for rabi crops under the Rythu Bandhu Scheme after state minister T. Harish Rao violated the poll code by making a public announcement about it.

The poll body, in a notification, said that there shall be no disbursement under the scheme till the model code of conduct in the state of Telangana ceases to apply.

Apart from the Kamareddy seat in North Telangana

where a prestige battle is unfolding between the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao or KCR and Congress's Revanth Reddy, a key contest is lined up in Sircilla constituency where K T Rama Rao, son of Telangana CM and working president of BRS, is contesting for the fourth time.

KTR owes his electoral success to the weavers' community called 'Padmashalis', who are dominant in Sircilla constituency.

While there are signs of discontent among a section of young voters over lack of job opportunities, KTR's connection with the electors is likely to help him emerge as a winner this time as well.

Though the issue of suicides among weavers appears to have died down, the community still has high expectations from the Bathukamma Saree scheme that was launched in 2017 with the goal to support the weavers. The weavers claim that at present they get employment under the scheme for just three months in a year. They want the scheme to benefit them through the year.

Congress leaders alleged the youth are not happy with the ruling party for not keeping its word on poll promises. For example, despite making a promise of providing

12 lakh jobs the ruling party managed to provide only 12,000-13,000 jobs in the state in the last nine years, alleged a Congress leader.

KTR, the political heir of KCR's legacy, is also looking to consolidate his position as the CM-in-waiting with his fourth straight win from the constituency. KTR began his political career in 2009 when he contested the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly Elections from the Sircilla constituency. He won by a close margin of 171 votes, defeating independent candidate K. K. Mahender Reddy.

In 2014, KTR defeated Congress candidate Konduru Ravinder Rao with a massive margin of over 53,000 votes. In 2018, he won in Sircilla for the third consecutive time with a margin of over 89,000 votes. In this constituency, there are a total of 1,84,427 voters, which includes 91,139 male voters, and 93,275 female voters. In the 2018 Telangana assembly elections, Sircilla recorded a voter turnout of 80.57%. In 2014 the turnout was 73.62%.

Sircilla constituency is part of the Karimnagar Lok Sabha constituency. Sircilla comes under Rajanna Sircilla district and the North Telangana region of Telangana. It is categorised as a rural seat.

CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT

Union Min informs CAA rules by March 30; TMC calls it electoral gimmick

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

While the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Ajay Kumar Mishra, has claimed that the rules for the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) will be framed by the Centre by March 30, 2024, the Trinamool Congress has brushed it off as just another electoral gimmick before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Mishra made the announcement while attending a festival of the Dalit Matua community that has been demanding it for long. He told the large crowd that had gathered for the annual Ras Utsav at Thakurnagar in West Bengal's North 24-Parganas district.

"I am assuring that members of the Matua community will not lose their citizenship. They are all safe. According to the latest information I have, the laws for CAA will be framed by March 30, 2024," Mishra said. The Centre had earlier said that it was in the process of framing laws for the CAA.

During his 2021 election campaign at Thakurnagar, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had announced that the Centre would enforce CAA once Covid-19 vaccination across the country was over.

However, the BJP has not spoken on this issue since then and it suffered a setback in the Bengal panchayat polls earlier this year.

Passed by Parliament in 2020, CAA offers citizenship to religious minorities who entered India from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh before 2015. The Trinamool Congress (TMC) insists that CAA is unconstitutional saying that it excludes Muslims and links citizenship to faith in a secular country.

The Matuas are a part of the large Dalit Namasudra community that migrated from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) during India's partition in 1947 and the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War to escape religious persecution.

Located close to the Bangladesh border, Thakurnagar town has the headquar-

ters of the All India Matua Mahasangha of which BJP leader and Union Minister of State for Shipping, Shantanu Thakur, is the president.

Thakur was present on the dais when Mishra made the announcement on Sunday afternoon. Since 2019, Thakur represents the Bongaon Lok Sabha seat which was earlier won by his aunt and TMC leader Mamata Bala Thakur.

Implementation of the CAA has been the principal demand of the Matuas. Shantanu Thakur, too, has raised it on several occasions.

Support of the Matua and other Dalit communities helped BJP win several seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha and 2021 State polls.

Shantanu Thakur was made a Minister of State during the Union Cabinet reshuffle in 2021. This was seen as a move by the BJP central leadership to keep the Matuas happy. Thakur even accompanied Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh on the eve of the 2021 Assembly polls. Modi offered prayers at the Ma-

tua temple at Orakandi near Dhaka and praised Thakur in his speech, triggering a sharp reaction from Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Reacting to Mishra's announcement, TMC leaders said BJP is once again raising the citizenship issue in Bengal with an eye on the coming Lok Sabha polls.

The BJP won 18 of Bengal's 42 Lok Sabha seats in 2019.

TMC Rajya Sabha member Santanu Sen said: "CAA is a thorn for the BJP. During the 2021 Assembly polls, BJP did not even mention CAA in Assam but raised it in Bengal hoping to capture votes. In Gujarat, on the other hand, attempts are being made to enforce CAA in some districts. Bengal's Matuas have understood the trick."

"Mamata Banerjee has said several times that Bengal does not need CAA because those people have been casting their votes, owning property and having jobs for decades, and are already citizens. They do not need fresh citizenship certificates from the Centre," Sen added.

POLL CODE VIOLATION

EC revokes permission to disburse aid from Telangana govt

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a strong statement, the Election Commission announced on Monday the revocation of permission granted to the Telangana government for the distribution of financial aid to farmers for rabi crops under the Rythu Bandhu Scheme.

This decision was made after a state minister violated the provisions of the model code by publicly announcing the disbursement. Despite initially approving the state government's request to distribute the rabi instalment during the model code of conduct period, the poll panel took this action based on specific conditions.

The state was asked not to publicise the disbursement during the poll code as part of the condition.

Telangana goes to poll on 30 November. "The Com-

mission has observed that T Harish Rao, Minister of Finance and Health and Family Welfare, Govt of Telangana ... has not only violated the provisions of MCC (model code of conduct)... but also conditions laid down as above by publicising the release under the scheme, and thereby disturbed the level playing field in the ongoing election process," the EC letter to the state chief electoral officer (CEO) read.

The Election Commission communicated its decision to retract permission to the state chief electoral officer.

The state finance minister had publicly announced the release of rabi instalment disbursements, stating, "The disbursement will be made on Monday. Even before the farmers complete their breakfast and tea, the amount will be credited into their account."

IN WEST BENGAL

BENGAL BJP ALLEGES RS 5,000-CR COVID SCAM BY MAMATA GOVT

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

The Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari, has written to the Enforcement Directorate (ED), alleging that the Health Ministry in West Bengal, headed by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, perpetrated a scam in the purchase of PPE kits and other medical equipment during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. In his three-page complaint, Suwendu Adhikari alleged that the total corruption amounted to Rs 5,000 crore since a PPE kit which cost Rs 300 was purchased for Rs 1200. He also named some bureaucrats who were allegedly involved in the scam.

Taking to his official handle on social media platform X, Adhikari shared a detailed post informing that he had written to the director, ED, principal director general of the Income Tax Department and secretary, Union Ministry

of Health & Family Welfare, seeking an inquiry into the alleged irregularities in the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits.

"A huge financial scam was executed in WB during the Covid Pandemic period, with regard to the purchase of PPE kits and other medical equipment by the WB Health Department. Huge funds were provided by the Central Govt at that time to bolster the efforts to fight against the virus collectively," Adhikari posted from his official X handle. He wrote that considering the urgency of the situation, no stringent measures were placed which could have delayed the procurement process. "The Central Government allowed the State Governments to act swiftly in good faith and this was misused by the ruling Trinamool Congress Government in the State," he said. He alleged: "The corrupt WB Govt saw this as a clear opportunity to siphon funds and hundreds of crores were stolen.

CRITICISM

Cong leader Priyanka Gandhi alleges BRS will rule from 'farmhouse' if voted in

TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

Congress leader, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra attacked the government led by Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, asserting that influential figures in the BRS are orchestrating governance from farmhouses.

She claimed that under this regime, the wealth gap is widening, with the poor getting poorer while the ruling party grows richer. Speaking at a campaign rally in Bhongir, approximately 50 km away, she alleged that if the BRS returns to power, the government will be run from a "farmhouse," allowing the liquor mafia to dominate the state, with a lack of employment opportunities.

She alleged that all "big" leaders in the BRS are sitting in farmhouses and running the government, and the poor are becoming poor-

er while the ruling party is becoming richer.

Addressing a poll rally at Bhongir, she alleged that if the BRS is voted to power again, the government will run from "farmhouse" and the land liquor mafia will rule the state, while there will not be any employment opportunities available.

"Big leaders of Telangana are sitting in their mansions and farmhouses and running the government... All its (BRS) leaders are sitting in big mansions. All their policies are for big business people only. They do not have anything for the small business people, middle class, poor, Dalits and Adivasis," she said.

According to her, all government employees across the country are urging the implementation of the old pension scheme, yet the Centre maintains that it lacks the funds to fulfill this demand.

'HAWALA' MONEY

DELHI COURT PERMITS K'TAKA DEPUTY CM SHIVAKUMAR TO TRAVEL ABROAD

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has granted permission to Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, an accused in a money laundering case, to travel abroad. Special Judge Vikas Dhull approved Congress member Shivakumar's trip to Dubai from 29 November to 3 December based on his application.

The application stated that he had been invited to attend the upcoming COP28 Local Climate Action Summit in Dubai by His Excellency Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, COP28 President-Designate, and Michael R Bloomberg, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Climate Ambition and Solution.

The judge, noting that the accused is an eight-time MLA and the current Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka, considered the possibility of him fleeing from India as quite remote.

The judge imposed several conditions, including furnishing a Fixed Deposit Receipt (FDR) of Rs 5 lakh before the court, submitting a complete travel itinerary, and refraining from contacting co-accused or influencing witnesses while abroad.

The application asserted that the investigation was complete, a prosecution complaint had been filed, and the applicant had no criminal antecedents.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) opposed the application, alleging Shivakumar's involvement in a criminal conspiracy to move tainted cash and conceal its source.

Shivakumar was booked under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act based on a charge sheet filed by the Income Tax Department in 2018, accusing him and his associate S K Sharma of engaging in transactions involving large amounts of unaccounted-for money through "hawala" channels.

INTERVIEW

Mohammad Azharuddin enters Telangana political arena

RAJAT RAKESH TANDON
NEW DELHI

Former Indian cricket captain turned politician Mohammad Azharuddin is contesting the Telangana assembly elections, the 119-member state assembly polls scheduled for 30 November 2023.

Rajat Rakesh Tandon, the political editor of "India News," engaged in an in-depth conversation with Azharuddin regarding the approaching elections.

Q: KCR asserts that our party has prioritised the welfare of the people. What issues are you highlighting in the upcoming state assembly polls?

A: The current state government has fallen short of its objectives. Numerous important schemes were not implemented. Despite claiming to have undertaken significant measures for the minority community, they have not delivered on their promises. They are spreading falsehoods and misleading the minority population. The Waqf board for minorities remains non-digitalised and lacks influence in the current government. The KCR-led government has not made substantial efforts for the Dalits, merely favouring its own people.

Q: Relying on Asaduddin Owaisi for minority votes, KCR's party is accusing the

Congress of inaction for the minority community and challenging Rahul Gandhi?

A: Challenging is easy; Rahul Gandhi is courageous, they should go beyond and achieve the same. Rahul Gandhi is a prominent leader, and Owaisi cannot be compared to him. Owaisi's primary objective seems to be provocation in his speeches, which is detrimental to the minority community. His speeches have led to various issues in Bihar and UP. Apart from his inflammatory rhetoric, he has not made significant contributions to the well-being of the minority community.

Q: You've moved between Moradabad, UP, Rajasthan, and now Hyderabad, not consistently contesting elections?

A: I am from Hyderabad, and I contested elections in Moradabad, UP, before moving to Rajasthan and now returning to my home turf. How can you claim that I am not active on the political front? I have dedicated myself to the well-being of the people, with around Rs 4,500 crore allocated for various schemes in Moradabad. Success and defeat are inherent aspects of life, be it in cricket or politics.

Q: Following the win in Karnataka, the Congress party appears optimistic?

A: The Congress party is likely to form a government this time, as the people of the state want a change. Criticising not only the state government but also the Central government for various failures. KCR asserts that Azharuddin lacks knowledge about Jubilee Hills, but having spent a decade in this region, I possess extensive knowledge of every part. Unfortunately, there has been no development in this area over the past decade.

Q: Corruption appears to be a significant concern in Telangana this time?

A: The state government has acquired a substantial portion of Waqf land. The corruption rate is very high in KCR's government.

Q: Cricket played a major role in the Rajasthan election, with terms like "Panauti" being used to refer to PM Modi?

A: I can't elaborate much on this, but politicians have a fondness for cricket. They used to visit during our days as well.

Q: During the campaign, are you preferred more as a leader or as a cricketer?

A: People know me as a cricketer, but I am determined to serve them. There are numerous challenges in my constituency, and I aspire to address most of them if I win the election.

TWEET OF THE DAY

Narendra Modi
@narendramodi



A vote for BJP is a vote to improve Telangana's infrastructure, boost development and ensure a better quality of life for farmers, youngsters, women and the poor.

Rahul Gandhi
@RahulGandhi



Telangana's youth are suffering immensely under 'Dorala' KCR sarkar, my recent visit to Ashok Nagar, Hyderabad made that crystal clear. Our 'Job Calendar' is the first step in easing their pain. We will ensure: 2 lakh Govt Jobs in 1 year. Revamp of TPSC on UPSC lines. Yuva Vikasam - Rs 5 lakh assistance. The future of our youth is secure in the hands of Congress' Prajaya Sarkar - this is my Guarantee!

President of India
@rashtrapatibhron



President Droupadi Murmu graced the Boita Bandana ceremony being organized by the Paradip Port Authority at Paradip. The President said that Balyatra is a symbol of the prosperity of maritime trade of Odisha. It also highlights the rich cultural consciousness of the people of Odisha.

Arvind Kejriwal
@ArvindKejriwal



After Delhi, now free pilgrimage scheme is being started in Punjab also. On this auspicious occasion, I also joined the happiness of the people of Punjab in Sangrur.

BJP
@BJP4India



Votes for Congress means opening the doors for KCR to come to power again! There is no guarantee as to when Congress MLAs will switch to the BRS! The only way to oust KCR from power is choosing the 'Lotus'!

Congress
@INCIndia



Telangana was once a surplus state and today the state has a debt of lakhs of crores. Schemes like scholarship for children of the state, assistance to farmers, Dalit Bandhu Yojana, widow pension, old age pension have been closed due to lack of funds.

DEMAND RESIGNATION

BJP ALLEGES SCAM IN SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT PROJECTS IN DELHI

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday alleged a scam in the tendering process for upgrading sewage treatment plants operated by the Delhi Jal Board and demanded that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tender his resignation immediately.

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters here, BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia claimed the Delhi Jal Board invited bids for the upgradation of five sewage treatment plants (STPs) in



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal

the city and for the upgradation and augmentation of another five to increase their capacity.

While the estimated cost of the projects was around Rs 1,500 crore, they were awarded to the contractors at an increased rate of Rs 1,938 crore, Bhatia claimed.

"Bids were invited, and tenders were awarded only after cartelisation to ensure that no honest contractor gets the project... This is worrisome, Arvind Kejriwal, you have committed one more scam," the BJP spokesperson charged.

"Look at Arvind Kejriwal's mechanism. The LI (lowest) bid was at Rs 392 crore, but the contract was awarded at an increased cost of Rs 408 crore. Prima facie, this is a scam worth Rs 450-500 crore in awarding contracts, he added.

"If there is anyone who is synonymous with corrup-

tion and an expert in loot, it's one and only 'kattar beimaan' (outright dishonest) Arvind Kejriwal... If at all there is even a little shame left, Arvind Kejriwal should immediately resign as Delhi Chief Minister and let the law take its course, Bhatia said. Raising the issue, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva has written to central probe agencies and Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena, seeking an investigation into alleged irregularities in the tendering process for upgrading the sewage treatment plants run by the DJB.

NON-PAYMENT OF DUES

DJB contractors association launches strike from Monday

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Jal Board contractors association went on a strike on Monday over non-payment of dues, its general secretary Vinay Mangla said and claimed that around 1,150 contractors will halt their work until payments are made to everyone.

"It is an open-ended strike, and we are expecting it to go on for a week," he said.

The Delhi Jal Board Contractors Welfare Association had written to the additional chief engineer, mentioning that the contractors would stop all ongoing work due to non-payment of funds.

"After detailed deliberations and finding no option,

it was unanimously decided that all ongoing works related to water leakages, water contamination, maintenance of water supply, settled sewerage system, maintenance of sewerage system, operation of tube wells and pumping stations, providing sewer beldars, engagement of labours and de-silting work will be stopped from November 27," the letter read.

The decision was taken following a meeting of the association on November 23 over dues pending since February. The association said the works will be taken up only on receipt of dues by all contractors concerned. DJB Vice-Chairman Somnath Bharti said the Delhi government has been doing everything possible to en-

sure the release of funds for the board for the last three months.

"The water minister has repeatedly directed the finance department regarding the same and even wrote to the L-G to ensure this. Despite repeated directions from the finance minister, the finance department has not released funds for the last three months.

They keep on raising different queries and objections to delay the release of funds," he said. Earlier, Delhi Water Minister Atishi claimed the city was staring at a "man-made water crisis" due to the stoppage of funds to the Delhi Jal Board by the finance department and demanded Lt Governor V K Saxena's immediate intervention in the matter.

ACADEMIC YEAR

DELHI GOVT DIRECTS SCHOOLS TO IMPLEMENT MINIMUM OF 220 WORKING DAYS IN A YEAR

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi schools have been directed to observe a minimum of 220 working days in an academic year, according to a circular from the Directorate of Education (DoE) issued on Monday.

"As per section 19 of RTE Act 2009 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023, it is mandatory for all the schools running under the Directorate of Education to observe



the minimum 220 working days in an academic year, giving consideration to the notified lists of gazetted, restricted, and local holidays

for the calendar year (January to December)," the circular stated.

It said that prior to the commencement of the academic

year and before the observance of the holidays, the heads of government schools must ensure that 220 working days are completed.

"The deputy district education (DDE) officers are also advised to ensure strict compliance with the same before sanctioning restricted or local holidays to any school under their jurisdiction. In addition, unaided recognised schools would also obtain approval of holidays from their respective management," the DoE said.

RECONSTITUTION

LG VK SAXENA DISSOLVES AAP'S STANDING COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL CASES

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena dissolved the existing Standing Committee constituted by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government on Monday to ensure the quality of investigation in criminal cases and their prosecution. Saxena noted that this move was in gross violation of the 2014 Supreme Court directions and subsequent guidelines of the Centre.

While scrapping the existing Standing Committee, which was headed by the Standing Counsel (Criminal) of the Del-



Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena.

hi High Court, with the Additional Standing Counsel as a Member, Saxena approved the proposal for its reconstitution. The reconstituted committee will have the Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary

(Home) as Chairman and the Principal Secretary (Law), Director (Prosecution), and Special Commissioner of Police as members, according to a press note from the Delhi Lieutenant Governor's office.

The LG emphasized that there was no reason or justification for the continuation of the existing Standing Committee.

Even his predecessor had repeatedly objected to it, as indicated in his note dated May 11, 2017. The LG had directed a review of the committee's constitution to bring it into conformity with the order of the Apex Court. Reminders

were issued by the LG Secretariat on February 19, 2018, June 22, 2018, October 18, 2018, and May 31, 2019, but no proposal for the reconstitution of the committee was submitted.

Saxena observed that the lackadaisical approach of the ruling dispensation in this case seems to be an attempt to control the service matters of police and prosecution officers, which is not in their executive domain. It is a settled principle of law that things that cannot be done directly shall not be done indirectly in a clandestine manner, as per the note.

POLLUTION

DELHI-NCR FACES SEVERE AIR QUALITY CRISIS, WITH AN AQI EXCEEDING 400

ASHISH SINHA
NEW DELHI

The air quality in Delhi and the NCR region has remained distressingly poor over the past month, with many areas reporting an Air Quality Index (AQI) exceeding 400 on Monday morning.

The deteriorating pollution levels have made breathing increasingly challenging for residents, with a slight improvement noticed over the weekend quickly reversing as pollution soared back to the 'severe' category on Monday.

Alarming AQI Levels Recorded

According to the Central Pollution Control Board, the AQI stood at 402 in Anand Vihar, 419 in RK Puram, 437 in Punjabi Bagh, and 435 in ITO at 7 am on Monday. Other areas also registered high pollution levels: Indira Gandhi Airport at 376, Lodhi Road at 347, Rohini at 422, Okhla at 413, Alipore at 417, and DU North Campus at 424, all falling within the 'serious' category.

Hope Amidst Weather Changes

The Meteorological Department predicts partly cloudy skies on Monday with the possibility of light rain and drizzle in various areas. Delhiites are eagerly anticipating relief from pollution due to the anticipated rainfall, which may also bring a drop in temperature by up to four degrees Celsius. Consequently, the maximum temperature is expected to be around 22 degrees Celsius, with the minimum around 12 degrees Celsius.

Understanding AQI Categories

As a reminder, AQI levels range from zero to 500, with 'good' falling between zero and 50, 'satisfactory' between 51 and 100, 'moderate' between 101 and 200, 'bad' between 201 and 300, 'very poor' between 301 and 400, 'severe' between 401 and 450, and 'very severe' between 451 and 500.

Causes of Escalating Pollution

An analysis by the Center for Science and Environ-

ment (CSE) points to non-compliance with emission standards by thermal power plants in the Delhi-NCR region as a primary factor contributing to the worsening air quality. The CSE's study focuses on pollutants like nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide emitted from 11 thermal power plants in the area, citing that these persistent sources contribute to approximately eight percent of PM2.5 pollution in Delhi-NCR.

Challenges in Compliance

Despite multiple deadline extensions and revised classifications by the Union Environment Ministry, several plants are struggling to meet prescribed norms for emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter. The Ministry's stringent emissions standards, initially set in December 2015 and later extended by five years except for Delhi-NCR, were intended to be complied with within the specified timelines, highlighting the pressing need for enhanced adherence to pollution control measures.

CLOUDY WEATHER

LIGHT RAIN LASHES SEVERAL PARTS OF DELHI-NCR

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi and NCR region on Monday evening experienced light rainfall, resulting in a slight decrease in temperature. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), there is a projected additional decline of two to three degrees in temperatures across northern India.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast light to moderate-intensity rain and gusty winds over most places of Delhi and its adjoining areas during the next two hours.

"Thunderstorms with light to moderate intensity rain and gusty winds with speed of 30-50 Km/h would occur over and adjoining areas of many places of Delhi (Mundaka, Jafarpur, Nazafgarh,

Dwarka, India Gate, Palam, Lodi Road, IGI Airport, Vasant Vihar, RK Puram, Defence Colony, Lajpat Nagar, and other places).

The weather department has also predicted an increase in fog in Delhi-NCR, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Punjab starting from November 28. "The weather in the national capital, Delhi, is currently cloudy and will persist for the next 12-18

hours. The temperature is anticipated to decrease by 2 to 3 degrees at night, and fog is expected to intensify in Delhi-NCR, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Punjab from November 28," IMD Senior Scientist Jenamani said.

As per the IMD, the minimum temperature in Delhi on Monday was recorded at 13.4 degrees Celsius, while the maximum temperature was recorded at 23 degrees.

DELHI EXCISE POLICY

DELHI COURT TO HEAR AAP LEADER SANJAY SINGH'S BAIL PLEA TODAY

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court will hear on November 28 the bail application of AAP MP Sanjay Singh, arrested in connection with a money laundering case linked

to the alleged Delhi excise scam. The arrest of the AAP leader by the anti-money laundering agency occurred on October 4, with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) asserting that Singh played a significant role in formulating and implementing

the now-discarded policy. The policy was alleged to have benefited specific liquor manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers in exchange for monetary considerations. Singh has vehemently denied the accusations.

IN POLICE NET

Police nabs two sharpshooters linked to Arshdeep Singh after gun battle

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Two sharpshooters of international gangster Arshdeep Singh's gang have been arrested following a brief exchange of fire with police near Mayur Vihar in east Delhi, officials said on Monday.

According to them, the arrested accused have been identified as Rajpreet Singh (25), and Virender Singh (22) and they were planning to kill Punjabi singer Elly Mangat.

"During the encounter, five rounds of bullet were

fired by the accused, of which two hit the bullet-proof jacket of a police staffer.

"In retaliation, the police team fired six rounds. During this exchange of fire, one of the accused, Virender Singh, sustained a gunshot injury on his right leg," a senior police officer said, adding that both accused were sent to LBS hospital for treatment after the encounter.

Two revolvers, 13 live cartridges, a hand grenade, and a stolen motorcycle were seized from them, police said. An FIR for an attempt to murder

has been registered under the Explosive Substances Act and the Arms Act against the accused.

"Based on the disclosure made by the accused, a raid was conducted at Dairy Skaner in Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh and another associate, identified as Sachin Bhati, suspected to be having a huge cache of arms, was apprehended," police said in a statement.

The senior police officer said that during interrogation, the accused admitted that they were tasked by Arshdeep Singh to kill singer Elly Mangat.

SWAYAM PORTAL

DU may provide up to 20 per cent courses online

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi University may provide up to 20 per cent of its courses through online medium on the Swayam portal.

A proposal in this regard will be placed before the Academic Council during its meeting scheduled for November 30.

According to the propos-

al, colleges may consider providing up to 20 per cent of the total courses being offered in a particular programme in a semester in online mode.

This would supplement the teaching-learning process in the institute, the proposal said.

The proposal is expected to be opposed by a large majority of AC members who feel that employment gen-

eration at the university will be at risk amid the push for online learning, according to Maya John, assistant professor at Jesus Mary College.

"Almost 90 per cent of the Academic Council members will oppose this proposal as it is an anti-student and anti-teacher move. Classroom teaching is very important for many students who come from different backgrounds and this will also

impact the need for teaching staff, who will be substituted by online learning on Swayam," she said.

The proposal is in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which aims to achieve a 50 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education by year 2035 with the help of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) offered by the Swayam platform.

MP REPORT CARD

ASSESSING SUBRAT PATHAK'S PERFORMANCE AS KANNAUJ'S MP

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A ground-level survey of the Kannauj parliamentary constituency was conducted by India News to analyse the performance of Subrat Pathak, the Member of Parliament from Kannauj, and to gather voters' feedback about him.

Subrat Pathak, an Indian politician, secured victory in the 2019 Indian general election, representing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Lok Sabha from Kannauj, Uttar Pradesh, defeating Dimple Yadav. He serves as the General Secretary of BJP, Uttar Pradesh, and is a former President of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha. Pathak, a significant figure in the BJP's UP organization, has been in the political spotlight for his statements and activities.

Despite a defeat in 2009, he contested again in 2014 and 2019, winning the latter. Kannauj, known for its fragrance and history, has 5 assembly seats, with Muslims, Yadavs, SCs, and Brahmin-Rajputs influencing electoral dynamics. As Kannauj gears up for the 2024 general election, Subrat Pathak's performance will be scrutinised based on parliamentary, ground-level, and social media evaluations, along with accurate surveys.

In terms of parliamentary presence, the number of questions asked, MP fund utilization, and special con-

tributions, Kannauj Lok Sabha MP Subrat Pathak scores 1 out of 0.85, which is an excellent performance as an MP. This means that Subrat Pathak has achieved nearly 85% in parliamentary performance, showcasing his remarkable contribution in parliamentary activities.

Parliamentary performance holds little significance during elections; the real measure is what the constituents think about their MP on the ground. India News conducted a survey, asking questions to the people of the Kannauj Lok Sabha constituency. The respondents provided open and candid answers after conversations with thousands of people. Let's see what the public's verdict is. As mentioned earlier, India News allocated 70% attention to the survey evaluation. According to this, 7 out of 10 marks were given, and our questions were evaluated based on these 7 marks.

The people of Kannauj Lok Sabha have candidly answered our six questions. Without evasion, they responded to each question. Most people believe that the MP's work is excellent, and the focus is on development in the constituency. While the public is generally satisfied with the MP's work, they would like to see more active involvement in the constituency. The majority view is that the MP's work has been beneficial, and there



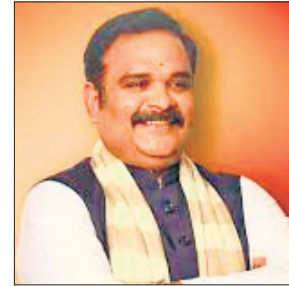
MP REPORT CARD

HISTORY OF KANNAUJ SEAT

1999 Mulayam Singh (SP)	2000-2004 Akhilesh Yadav (SP)	2009 Dimple Yadav (SP)	2012-2014 Dimple Yadav (SP)	2019 Subrat Pathak (BJP)
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ASSEMBLY SEATS (05)

- Chhibramau
- Tirwa
- Kannauj
- Bithoona
- Rasoolabad



is a preference for the NDA in the 2024 general elections.

Around 63% of the people are giving Subrat Pathak, the sitting MP, a favourable score based on the ground-level survey, reflecting their expectations and satisfaction with his work.

In India News' survey, the people of Kannauj Lok Sabha were asked the same questions as in our survey. We evaluated the ground performance based on 10% attention, assigning 1 number out of 10. The result of

the ground performance is 0.65 out of 1, or 65%.

Parliamentary performance, ground performance, and India News' survey score for the parliamentarian are now known. Kannauj's public opinion on social media was also surveyed. The social media score was evaluated at 10% attention, assigning 1 number out of 10.

In the social media survey, the parliamentarian scored 0.41 out of 1, which is below average, approximately 41% favouring him on social me-

dia.

The evaluation of the parliamentarian's work in Parliament, such as attendance, the number of questions, use of parliamentary funds, and special contributions, resulted in a score of 0.85 out of 1.

The ground performance evaluation gave him a score of 0.65 out of 1. In the social media survey, he scored 0.41 out of 1. In our ground survey, the parliamentarian received a score of 4.41 out of 7,

- ISSUES**
- Fragrance business shutdown
 - Extreme unemployment
 - Farmers' problems
 - Drinking water crisis
 - Weak tourism infrastructure
 - Poor condition of local roads
 - Education and health-care negligence
 - Severe backwardness

VOTER DEMOGRAPHICS

Male	51%
Female	49%
Urban	14%
Rural	86%
SC/ST	22%
Yadav	16%
Brahmin	15%
Rajput	10%
Muslim	16%

and when combined, he gets 6.32 out of 10. Based on this, Kannauj's public has given him a satisfactory score of 63%.

The ground-level survey reveals widespread satisfaction with MP Subrat Pathak. Voters express contentment, emphasising the impactful measures that have led to his passing grade. There's a strong demand for continued effective initiatives in the Kannauj constituency.

MP REPORT CARD (GROUND)

- Are you satisfied with the work of your MP and would you like to re-elect them?**
Yes : 62.80%
No : 33.66%
Can't say : 3.54%
- Should your MP be more active for the development of the constituency?**
Yes : 94.54%
No : 3.52%
Can't say : 1.94%
- In the 2024 general elections, for which party would you like to vote?**
N.D.A. : 57.14%
I.N.D.I.A. : 2.88%
Other parties : 15.40%
NOTA : 4.01%
Can't say : 20.57%
- On what basis will you vote in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections?"**
Modi government's performance : 55.53%
Unemployment and inflation : 31.30%
Caste : 0.64%
None of the above : 6.90%
Can't say : 5.63%
- Have you benefited from the central government's schemes?**
Yes : 47.83%
No : 52.16%
Can't say : 0.01%
- Which scheme has benefited you?**
Free rations : 24.71%
Jan Dhan Yojana : 1.76%
Housing and sanitation : 4.49%
Ayushman Bharat : 2.24%
Ujjwala Yojana : 1.92%
Other schemes : 4.33%
All of the above : 8.39%
None : 52.16%

REPORT

SURGE IN MILK, EGG, AND MEAT PRODUCTION IN INDIA

TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

Production of milk, egg and meat has significantly increased in 2022-23 over the past five years, though wool output during the same period has witnessed a negative growth, says a report released by Union minister Parshotam Rupala here.

The Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics 2023 report, which was released by the Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying during National Milk Day event here, is based on the Animal Integrated Sample Survey (March 2022 to February 2023).

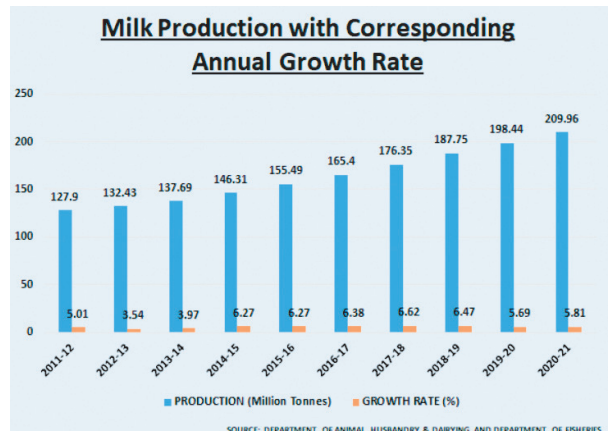
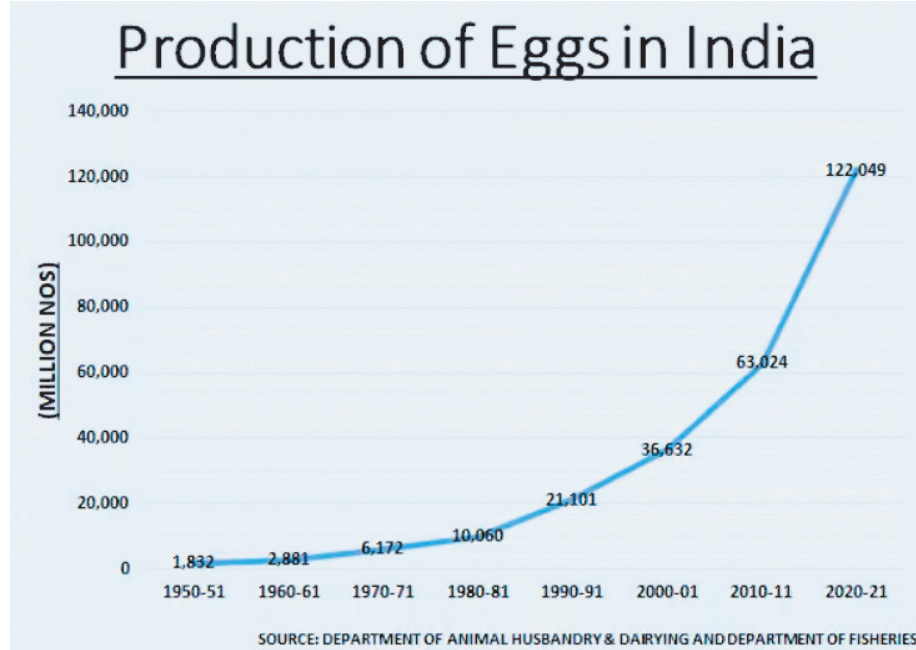
The survey is conducted across the country in three seasons, summer (March-June), monsoon (July-October) and winter (November-February).

The country's total milk production is estimated at 230.58 million tonnes in 2022-23, registering a growth of 22.81 per cent compared to the figures of 2018-19 when the output was 187.75 million tonnes.

According to the report, the production increased by 3.83 per cent in 2022-23 over the estimates of 2021-22. The annual growth rates in the past few years were 6.47 per cent in 2018-19, 5.69 per cent in 2019-20, 5.81 per cent in 2020-21 and 5.77 per cent in 2021-22.

The top milk-producing state in 2022-23 was Uttar Pradesh with a share of 15.72 per cent, followed by Rajasthan (14.44 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (8.73 per cent), Gujarat (7.49 per cent) and Andhra Pradesh (6.70 per cent).

In terms of annual growth rate (AGR), Karnataka with 8.76 per cent topped the list, followed by West Bengal (8.65 per cent) and Uttar Pradesh (6.99 per cent) over the previous year.



Total egg production has been estimated at 138.38 billion units during 2022-23, registering a growth of 33.31 per cent compared to 2018-19 figures when production was 103.80 billion units.

It has increased annually by 6.77 per cent during 2022-23 over 2021-22. The annual growth rate was 9.02 per cent in 2018-19, 10.19 per cent in 2019-20, 6.70 per cent in 2020-21 and 6.19 per cent in 2021-22.

Andhra Pradesh topped the list in egg production with a share of 20.13 per cent, followed by Tamil Nadu (15.58 per cent), Telangana (12.77 per cent), West Bengal (9.94 per cent) and Karnataka (6.51 per cent).

In terms of AGR, the high-

Bengal (11.93 per cent), Maharashtra (11.50 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (11.20 per cent) and Telangana (11.06 per cent).

In terms of AGR, Sikkim recorded the highest with 63.08 per cent, followed by Meghalaya (38.34 per cent) and Goa (22.98 per cent).

The total wool production in the country is estimated at 33.61 million kg during 2022-23, registering a negative growth of 16.84 per cent compared to 2018-19 when output was 40.42 million kg.

However, the production has increased by 2.12 per cent in 2022-23 over 2021-22.

The earlier growth rates were -2.51 per cent in 2018-19, -9.05 per cent in 2019-20, -0.46 per cent in 2020-21 and -10.87 per cent in 2021-22.

Rajasthan tops wool production with a share of 47.98 per cent, followed by Jammu & Kashmir (22.55 per cent), Gujarat (6.01 per cent), Maharashtra (4.73 per cent) and Himachal Pradesh (4.27 per cent).

ASSEMBLY POLLS

TELANGANA POLLS: 2.5 LAKH STAFF; SEIZURES WORTH RS 709 CR; FEMALE VOTERS SURPASS MALES

TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

More than 2.5 lakh staff will be engaged in poll duties for the November 30 Telangana assembly polls, Chief Electoral officer Vikas Raj has said. He said out of 1,68,612 postal ballots issued, 96,526 have been polled till November 26.

"Almost definitely not less than 2.5 lakh people will be making this (poll) arrangement. When it comes to police, 45,000 Telangana police will be deployed. A total of 23,500 Home Guards were sought from neighbouring states. They are expected in a day or two," he said.

The EC will also deploy 3,000 personnel from other uniformed services in Telangana, 50 companies of Telangana State Special Police and 375 companies of Central forces will be manning the security arrangement, Raj said.

The official further said as many as 26,660 voters exercised their franchise through the "Home Voting" facility.

Law enforcement agencies have seized cash, gold, liquor, freebies, among others, all worth over Rs 709 crore in poll-bound Telangana, ever since the model code of conduct came into force in the state on October 9, the official said.

FEMALE VOTERS SURPASS MALES

As Telangana gears up for the upcoming assembly elections scheduled for November 30, 2023, the electoral landscape is witnessing a notable shift with a groundbreaking development - female voters have surpassed their male counterparts for the first time. The electoral roll, after the

TELANGANA TOPS THE LIST

Seizures made in the ongoing state elections (₹ crore)

State	Cash	Liquor	Drugs	Precious metals	Freebies & other items	Total
Chhattisgarh	20.8	2.2	4.6	22.8	26.7	76.9
MP	33.7	69.9	15.5	84.1	120.5	323.7
Mizoram	0.0	4.7	29.8	0.0	15.2	49.6
Rajasthan	93.2	51.3	91.7	73.4	341.2	650.7
Telangana	225.2	86.8	103.7	191.0	52.4	659.2
Total	372.9	214.8	245.3	371.2	556.0	1,760.0

*Figures are rounded off

STATE-WISE COMPARISON

Seizures made in past 6 state Assembly elections (₹ crore)

State	2017-18		2022-23		% increase
	2017-18	2022-23	2017-18	2022-23	
Karnataka	83.93	384.46	358.07		
Himachal Pradesh	9.03	57.24	533.89		
Nagaland	4.30	50.02	1,063.26		
Tripura	1.79	45.44	2,438.55		
Gujarat	27.21	801.85	2,846.90		
Meghalaya	1.16	74.18	6,294.80		
Total	127.42	1,413.19	1,009.12		

Source: Election Commission of India

Telangana Assembly Election 2023

Total Constituencies: 119

Schedule

Issue of Notification	Last Date for Nominations	Scrutiny of Nominations	Last Date for Withdrawal	Polling Date
Nov 3	Nov 10	Nov 13	Nov 15	Nov 30

Counting of Votes: Dec 3

completion of the extensive electoral roll process, stands at a significant 3,26,18,205, comprising 1,62,98,418 males, 1,63,01,705 females, and 2,676 individuals belonging to the third gender, as reported by Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Vikas Raj.

What makes this electoral scenario even more noteworthy is the remarkable increase of 8.75% in the number of electors since January 2023. This surge is attributed to a significant achievement in the enrolment of young voters in the 18-19 age group. The

electoral rolls now boast 9,99,667 new voters in this cohort, constituting a noteworthy 3.06% of the overall electoral roll. The improvement in the gender ratio from 992 to 1000.2 is seen as a fitting tribute to the spirit of inclusiveness behind the electoral process.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SHAPES ELECTORAL LANDSCAPE

Chief Electoral Officer Vikas Raj expressed satisfaction with this achievement, highlighting the commitment to ensuring the active participation of citizens in

the democratic process. The net increase in electors, particularly the surge in the 18-19 age group, reflects a positive trend towards greater political engagement among the youth.

This surge in youth participation is considered a significant factor in shaping the electoral landscape. Young voters often bring fresh perspectives and priorities to the political arena, influencing the discourse on key issues. The improvement in the gender ratio further underscores the importance of creating an inclusive and diverse political environment.

In terms of age demographics, the gender ratio in the 18 to 19 age group has seen a notable improvement, rising from 707 to 753. Additionally, there are 4,40,371 voters above the age of 80 and 5,06,921 Persons with Disabilities (PwD) voters. The number of third-gender persons has also increased to 2,676.

CEO Vikas Raj emphasised the importance of citizens verifying the details of their polling stations through the official channels, ensuring a smooth voting process. The distribution of Voter Information Slips (VIS) is set to commence shortly, facilitating voters with essential information about their polling stations.

The finalisation of the electoral rolls for the assembly elections involved a meticulous process of addressing applications for new voter enrolment, shifting of electors, deletion, and correction of details. A total of 35.73 lakh additions, 9.48 lakh deletions, and 16.29 lakh shifting and modifications were carried out in the electoral roll in the year 2023.

EXISTENTIAL CHALLENGE

VP DHANKHAR EMPHASISES ON IMPORTANCE OF LEGAL AID

ASHISH SINHA
NEW DELHI



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar stated that the denial of legal aid posed an existential challenge to the vulnerable, emphasising that affirmative initiatives and policies can address issues faced by the weaker sections. He also urged the Global South to break free from its colonial past and collaborate to rectify historical wrongs perpetuating injustice and inequality.

Dhankhar noted that India's example should be followed, with ongoing legislative considerations in Parliament expected to bring about a significant transformation in legal perspectives, eliminating exploitative provisions in procedure and penalty. The reference seemed to be directed at the three bills aimed at replacing the IPC, CrPC, and the Evidence Act.

Speaking at the first regional conference on "Ensuring Access to Quality Le-

gal Aid for the Vulnerable: Challenges and Opportunities in the Global South," the Vice President highlighted Parliament's commitment to legal reformation. Key areas include promoting mediation, repealing archaic laws hindering progress, and enacting new laws addressing contemporary challenges. Dhankhar emphasised that access to legal aid and the justice system was crucial for nurturing fundamental human values and fostering equitable societies.

Referring to the Preamble of the Indian Constitution, Dhankhar pointed out that the declaration "We, the people of India" reflects the inclusive spirit of the Constitution, aiming to safeguard the rights of every citizen, regardless of background, circumstances, or social standing. He highlighted Article 32, granting every individual the right to move the Supreme Court for the enforcement of fundamental rights, as the "soul of the Constitution", echoing B.R. Ambedkar's eloquence.

VP Dhankhar also commended Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud for his mission mode initiatives over the last year, particularly focusing on securing legal aid and easy access to justice for the marginalised sections. The initiatives have proven to be a game-changer in bolstering both legal aid and access to the justice system for vulnerable segments of society. Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, CJI D.Y. Chandrachud, and senior judges of the Supreme Court were present at the conference.

RATING AGENCY

S&P raises India's FY24 growth projection to 6.4%

CONTINUED FROM P1 is poised to grow by 4.2% in 2024 and 4.4% in 2025, compared to 4.1% in 2023.

Going ahead, for India, S&P expects growth to slow in the second half of the fiscal year as subdued global growth, a higher base and the lagged impact of rate hikes weigh down on the country, bringing down S&P's estimate of FY25 growth by 0.5 percentage points to 6.4% from 6.9%. The Indian economy though would bounce back to 7% growth in FY26 and FY27.

According to the S&P report, with core inflation continuing to ease, the region's central banks are unlikely to have to tighten monetary policy again. Still,

given the pressure from higher-for-longer US interest rates, any meaningful falls in policy rates for the next six months can be ruled out.

The robust labour markets and service sectors, as in India's case, have buoyed growth. The services sector PMI has fallen in Japan and Australia, but it remained above 50 in Japan. The S&P Global purchasing managers' indices (PMIs) suggest Asia-Pacific economies have generally continued to expand. While India's manufacturing gauge eased, at above 55 it remained strong as emerging market economies gained support from the post-pandemic resumption of the earlier robust domestic demand trend. In October, manufacturing

PMIs remained below 50 in developed economies, although they have risen in South Korea and Taiwan, reflecting stronger activity in the semiconductor industry. In Southeast Asia, the manufacturing PMI mostly exceeded 50 in October, including in the Philippines, where it has jumped since September. Only in Malaysia it remained below 50.

The composition of the recovery after the pandemic slump differs across the region, shows S&P data. With the exceptions of Hong Kong, and Thailand, GDP exceeded the 2019 level by between 0.1% in Japan and 15.5% in India, in the first half of 2023.

In Northeast Asia, India, Australia, and New Zealand, fixed investment has

recovered considerably more than private consumer spending. In Northeast Asia, this is partly because high-tech firms such as semiconductor producers are making large investments. On the other hand, in all Southeast Asia economies, the fixed asset investment recovery has lagged that in consumption.

In India, observes S&P, there was a transitory spike in food inflation in the July-September quarter, but it appears to have had little effect on underlying inflation dynamics. Still, headline inflation remains above the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) target of 4%, suggesting it will be a while before the rate cycle turns.

The rating agency expects policy rates in the region

(excluding Japan) to fall later in the fiscal ending March 2024, by between 100 bps in India and 25 bps in Taiwan and Thailand. In Australia, India, and the Philippines, lingering inflation risks are keeping central banks occupied. Key risks to growth stem from possibly slower growth in the West and China as well as unexpected increases in inflation in the US which may force policy rates there to be even higher for longer thus exacerbating the pressure on Asian currencies and markets. Risks remain but so does the potential for growth in the region. In coming months, the spotlight may shine a little more brightly on emerging markets where domestic demand is strong.

ON COURSE

INDIA-U.S. PREDATOR DRONE DEAL LIKELY EARLY NEXT YEAR

CONTINUED FROM P1

drone will pose a problem for neighbours Pakistan and

China, apart from bringing the US and India closer as defence and security partners. In fact, the sudden influx of reports in the western media of "Indian death squads" that are apparently going around assassinating or trying to assassinate Khalistanis Hardeep Singh Nijjar and Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, respectively, is being seen as an attempt to queer India's pitch ahead of the Congressional review.

A concerted effort is being made to paint India as unfit to be a defence and security partner of the US. Major questions are being raised on the human rights situation in India. In addition, India is being portrayed as a Russia, which the West says carries out assassinations on foreign soil. India has rubbished all these allegations as sponsored by the Sino-Pakistan lobby in the US.

India is procuring the long-endurance "hunter-killer" drones to crank up the surveillance apparatus

of the armed forces, especially along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.

Though the price of the drones will be finalised during the negotiation process, it is estimated that the procurement would cost around US\$3 billion.

Sources said that New Delhi and Washington will depute their respective teams to firm up the deal including finalising the cost and other details. The deal may get finalised by March next year, sources said.

INTERVIEW

UNFULFILLED PROMISES A MAJOR ISSUE IN TELANGANA: KHARGE

CONTINUED FROM P1

pletely from both Telangana and Andhra.

A: These people created an environment where collectively we couldn't progress. We saw that there are people who are not only wasting money but also burdening the people with debts from external agencies. There's a debt of at least Rs 5 lakh 7 thousand crore. Before this, when the Congress government or any other government was there, they at least kept it in surplus. Today, forget surplus, every person has a debt of Rs 1 lakh 40

thousand on their heads. If governance remains like this, nobody will benefit. You'll keep giving slogans or make ten promises and fulfill half of it in six months; you're deceiving people. The promises made to the people were not fulfilled.

Q: Sir, as Congress President, in the elections, there was a lot of discussion regarding OBCs, regarding caste census in both parties.

A: The slogan was to make a Backward Chief Minister. Amit Shah made this promise, then Modi-ji did. But out of our four Chief Ministers, three are Backward, wheth-

er in Karnataka, Rajasthan, or in Chhattisgarh. We have three out of four, but we never used to talk about it. They remove poor people from their states and bring their people.

They make allegations against Congress. Maybe this is their intention, to criticise Congress.

They maligned Congress in the name of dynasty. Congress didn't ask for anything; they made an act for the country's service and poverty alleviation, the Right to Education, Right to Food, Right to Information, etc.

IN LONG ISLAND

India's envoy to the U.S. heckled by Khalistanis at New York gurudwara

CONTINUED FROM P1

Pannun, a radical Khalistani who holds the dual citizenship of the United States and Canada. Pannun, who is the spokesperson of the Khalistani organisation Sikhs for Justice, has been in the news for inciting hatred against Hindus, threatening Indian diplomats on camera, warning Sikhs against taking Air India flights, apart from promising the dismemberment of India. He is also one of the main backers of the Khalistani referendum on secessionism from India.

R.P. Singh, in his tweet names the man who led the hecklers as Himmat Singh. Singh tweeted: "Khalistanis tried to heckle Indian Ambassador @ SandhuTaranjitS with baseless Questions for his role in the failed plot to assassinate Gurpatwant, (SFJ) and Khalistan Referendum campaign. Himmat Singh who led the pro Khalistanis at Hicksville Gurudwara in New York also accused ambassador

Sandhu for India's role in the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was President of Surrey Gurudwara and the coordinator for Canadian Chapter of the Khalistan Referendum."

Sandhu calmly left the gurudwara post the heckling and later tweeted about the visit, without making any mention of the unpleasant incident: "Privileged to join the local Sangat, including from Afghanistan, at Guru Nanak Darbar of Long Island in celebrating Gurburab - listened to Kirtan, spoke about Guru Nanak's everlasting message of togetherness, unity, & equality, partook langar, and sought blessings for all."

Earlier, during the felicitation ceremony at the gurudwara, Sandhu had said, "Today is a very special day for me to come here to Guru Nanak's Gurudwara and get the blessing here on this auspicious day.

I am thankful to the management of the Gurudwara for inviting me...

For those of us in the US if we study our religious legacy from the Guru's time he always spoke for progressive thought, if we implement that in our lives it will be very good. The message of oneness, unity of truth, honest and virtuous living is a message for us and for us to implement in our lives" he added.

The pro Khalistan elements, who raised the Khalistani flag in front of the gurudwara, were echoing Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's charge that there were "credible allegations" of Indian government agents' possible involvement in the assassination of Nijjar. India refuted the charge as baseless and asked Trudeau to show proof, which he has not been able to do till date.

As for Pannun, some media reports have been floated in the US claiming that India had hatched a plot to kill Pannun for his separatist activities, but was warned by the United States against it. India has dismissed these

RAT HOLE MINERS

MANUAL DRILLING STARTS AT UTTARAKHAND TUNNEL COLLAPSE SITE

CONTINUED FROM P1

told the media in Uttarkashi, "The work of vertical drilling is also going on which is being executed by SJVNL. As of now, vertical drilling of 36 meters has been completed. We have to drill 50 meters more. We will take all actions, and we hope that we move forward quickly." He had earlier said that "The current machine that has been deployed can drill around 40-45 meters. We have brought two more machines for this purpose... Changeover machines will take time. We are expecting vertical drilling work would be completed by 30 November."

Earlier on Monday, National Disaster Management Authority member, Lieutenant General Syed Ata Hasnain (Retd) said that manual drilling would start in the evening with the help of Indian Army engineers, rat hole miners and other technicians, who would work inside in groups of two people. At least six rat hole miners have arrived from Delhi and Jhansi to enter the tunnels and dig manually.

Neeraj Khairwal, Secretary, Uttarakhand Government, said that timelines for the drilling operations in totality cannot be assumed.

"After taking out the part of Auger that was stuck inside the tunnel was taken out. 1.9 meters that was cut, in that, the first 220 mm was pushed, and was taken out. There was concern that it may not be pushed, but now we won't have to go on an alternate method. Then again 500 mm was pushed. Rat miners pushed that part," the official said.

"A time limit cannot be said, but let's hope and pray that minimum obstacles occur and we will be able to do this quickly," he added.

Officials said that the 41 workers trapped inside the tunnel were stable and safe.

Lt General (Rtd) Syed Ata Hasnain said that "Things are under control. Food and medicine are going inside as per requirements. Psychological aspects are also given importance. Backup communications have been established."

After a portion of the tunnel caved in on November 12, the debris falling in the 60-metre stretch on the Silkyara side of the tunnel trapped 41 labourers inside the under-construction structure.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Principal Secretary, P.K. Mishra visited the rescue site on Monday and took stock of the situation and spoke with the trapped workers over phone.

On Sunday, a line of phone communication was established with the 41 workers by BSNL, which set up a temporary telephone exchange at the location.

PARLIAMENT

Winter session from 4 December; polls, Mahua issue likely to dominate

CONTINUED FROM P1

session. Additionally, according to sources, the government is planning to introduce a bill to seek Parliament's approval for adjustments in the Centre's Rs 35 trillion spending program for the current fiscal year. Bills related to GST Appellate Tribunal and expenditure are likely to be discussed during the winter session.

Another important bill attracting attention in Parliament relates to the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners.

There is a possibility that bills to amend the IPC, CrPC and the Evidence Act will be discussed during this session.

The winter session of Parliament will be held exclusively in the new building. In September this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the new Parliament building.

The new Parliament complex, the centerpiece of the \$2.4 billion project, is equipped with state-of-the-art technologies. It has a total of 1,272 seats across the two Houses, about 500 more than the old building, and enough space to accommodate new MPs in the world's largest democracy.

The Women's Reservation Bill has received the approval of President Droupadi Murmu and has now become a law.

Recently, MPs raised concerns about cyber security within the new Parliament House and urged banks to take necessary measures to protect the financial assets of the public.

They also stressed the urgency of increasing cyber security awareness across the country and proposed the development of a "Cyber Consciousness Index" to assess it.

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

WINDS OF CHANGE BLOWING ACROSS TELANGANA: PM

CONTINUED FROM P1

guarantee that Congress MLAs will remain with the party. They will join the BRS. If you wish to send BRS home then vote for BJP," the PM urged, adding that the Congress had humiliated the late Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao when he was alive and after his death. "Both BRS and Congress are family parties and they can think of only their family

members on the top post but not your children. They will destroy your children's future of. Both parties are the same. Be careful with them. Only the BJP can increase the pride of Telangana. Family parties will not care even for laws. The PFI has reared its head here.

This area also witnessed Naxalite violence. We put a firm foot down on it and KCR took the advantage," he said.

Recalling Chief Minister

K. Chandrasekhar Rao's promise of transforming Karimnagar to London, the Prime Minister wondered what happened to that.

"Chandrasekhar Rao is firm believer in tantriks. Someone told him that even the shadow of Modi will destroy your dreams and since then he is avoiding to meet me. How will a person like that make your dreams true?" asked Modi and urged the people to vote for BJP for fast growth and development.

ENOUGH EVIDENCE

INDIA TO APPROACH FATF WITH NEW EVIDENCE OF PAK TERROR CAMPS

CONTINUED FROM P1

MLAs that he was deployed by Pakistan there to revive terror activities in the area. The documents and other evidence establish that the LeT commander was trained on the Pakistan and Afghan front. Several such proofs are in possession of Indian agencies that would be in the dossier of evidence, sources said.

The diplomats from the US, the UK, Israel, Germany and other countries who were in Mumbai to

pay tributes to the victims of 26/11 attacks by Pakistani terrorists were of the view that Islamabad did not take any action against the perpetrators, handlers and masterminds of these terror attacks.

They are all with India in its campaign to approach the FATF and UN to put further pressure on Pakistan to act against the terrorists who are still enjoying a safe haven on its soil. Indian officials have referred to a UN report saying that JeM, which is ideologi-

cally closer to the Taliban, maintains eight training camps in Nangarhar, three of which are directly under Taliban control.

Officials and foreign diplomats say that action should be taken against Pakistan for not doing anything against the perpetrators of the 26/11 terror attack. Pakistan should take credible and verifiable action against the perpetrators of the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks whose victims await justice even after 15 years, say officials.

TOP OF THE DAY

ELEPHANT DIES OF ELECTROCUTION IN CHHATTISGARH

KORBA: An elephant died after coming in contact with a live wire at a forest in Chhattisgarh's Korba district on Monday morning, an official said. Action will be taken against officials of the power company concerned in connection with the jumbo's death, divisional forest officer Kumar Nishant said. The incident took place at Pasan near Baigapara-Khanjarpar village under Katghora forest range where one of the tuskers, separated from a herd of 50 elephants, was passing through a route between two hills, he said. "Preliminary investigation revealed that the elephant, around 20 years old, came in contact with an 11 kV power line wire, hanging at a height of 10 feet above the ground level, in the forest and got electrocuted," the official said.

UNSEASONAL RAINS LASH SIX DISTRICTS OF MARATHWADA

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR: At least six districts of Marathwada witnessed unseasonal rains, with Jalna recording the highest 132.25 mm rainfall, an official said on Monday. Unseasonal showers lashed 107 revenue circles in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Jalna, Parbhani, Hingoli, Nanded and Beed on Sunday, the official said. The highest rainfall, 132.25 mm, was recorded in the Wagrul revenue circle of Badnapur tehsil in Jalna, he said. As many as 32 circles in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, 27 in Jalna, 23 in Parbhani, 12 each in Nanded and Hingoli and one circle in Beed recorded rainfall above 65 mm from Sunday evening ending 8 am on Monday, the official said.

ROURKELA-PURIVANDE BHARAT PELTED WITH STONES NONE HURT

BHUBANESHWAR: Rourkela-PuriVande Bharat Express has been pelted with stones, the East Coast Railway (ECOR) said in a statement on Monday. However, no injuries were reported in the incident that took place between Meramandali and Budhapank stations in Dhenkanal-Angul railway section on Sunday night, it said. "Train number 20835 Vande Bharat Express has been targeted by some stone-pelters between Meramandali and Budhapank in the Dhenkanal-Angul railway section of the Bhubaneswar-Sambalpur rail line," the statement read.

3 ELEPHANTS KILLED AS GOODS TRAIN HITS THEM IN BENGAL

KOLKATA: Three elephants were killed on Monday when a goods train hit them while they were crossing the tracks passing through forests at Rajabhatkhawa in West Bengal's Alipurduar district, a senior official of North Frontier Railway said. The Rajabhatkhawa-Kalchini section within which the incident took place is not covered by the Intrusion Detection System (IDS) meant to avert such collisions, he said.

ELECTION WAR

AMIT SHAH'S KOLKATA RALLY TO TEST BJP'S GROUND STRENGTH IN BENGAL

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

Buoyed by the twin High Court verdicts allowing the Bengal BJP to hold its Wednesday rally at a spot long monopolised by the Trinamool Congress, the BJP is pulling out all stops to ensure a massive turnout in front of Home Minister Amit Shah who is expected to be the main speaker. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is organising the mega-rally in front of Victoria House in Esplanade on November 29, the same venue in which the Trinamool Congress has been holding its annual Martyrs' Day rally on July 21 since 1994.

BJP leaders are holding rallies in Kolkata and in the district headquarters to drum up support for Wednesday's rally which is



Home Minister Amit Shah

being seen as an opportunity, as well as a challenge, test the party's ground strength in Bengal as it plans to take on the ruling Trinamool in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Party sources said that since they were apprehending that Trinamool Congress cadre, aided by the State police, would put up obstacles to prevent BJP supporters from reach-

ing the city, the party had booked eight trains to ferry its supporters. These trains will bring in supporters from the western and northern parts of the State from which the BJP has won the maximum seats in the last Assembly elections.

Bengal BJP leader and the leader of the Opposition Suwendu Adhikari has stretched the purview of the meeting beyond the party's

support base. Adhikari, in a video message, has extended the rally's invitation as the leader of the Opposition. He has asked people - not only the party workers and supporters - who have faced "atrocities" and "deprivation" to come forward and register their protest in a democratic, and peaceful way. Adhikari has claimed presence of rampant corruption in different sectors, and deprivation, and has asked people from different sections of society to participate for their rights.

The party is planning to keep drop-boxes at different places near the rally site in which people who had grievances against the Mamata Banerjee Government, can drop their complaints. A message, addressed to people, has also been released by BJP-Bengal's state president Sukanta

Majumdar. While BJP builds momentum around issues like corruption, deprivation and violence, the Trinamool Congress has also planned its moves well in advance.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, the Trinamool Congress will hold anti-Centre protests in the Assembly. In the coming weekend, the party will hold block-level programmes to ramp up its protests against the freeze of Central funds for MGNREGA and the PM Awas Yojana. Bengal Chief Minister and TMC chief Mamata Banerjee has already announced that she will lead her party leaders to Delhi later this month and will try to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi to press for funds. If the meeting does not fructify, then the Trinamool will hold protests in Delhi, Mamata Banerjee has warned.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT SCAM

SC to hear AP Govt plea Challenging Naidu's Bail on Tuesday

ASHISH SINHA
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday will hear a plea filed by Andhra Pradesh government against the high court order granting regular bail to TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu in the Skill Development Corporation scam case.

On November 20, the Andhra Pradesh High Court had released Naidu on bail, stating that discretion to grant bail should be exercised judiciously in a humane and compassionate manner. The state government, in its appeal, stated, "The state of Andhra Pradesh is constrained to file the present Special Leave Petition against the impugned judgment dated November 20, 2023 passed by the High Court of Andhra Pradesh at Amaravati... where the High Court, in a bail matter, has delved deep into facts of the case and has rendered findings that are not only factual-



TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu

ly incorrect but are also likely to prejudice the court below during the trial."

The high court had converted Naidu's four-week interim medical bail in the case into absolute bail and ordered the former chief minister's release on regular bail, considering his age, old age-related ailments, non-flight risk, and other reasons.

The TDP chief recently underwent cataract surgery at L V Prasad Hospital in Hyderabad. He was arrested on September 9 and released on interim medical bail on October 31, which is now made regular.

TRAGEDY

20 killed In Lightning strikes amid unseasonal rains in Gujarat

TDG NETWORK
AHMEDABAD

A devastating toll of twenty lives has been reported due to lightning strikes across different regions of Gujarat amid unexpected and widespread rainfall on Monday, according to reports. An official from the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) confirmed a total of 20 rain-related fatalities scattered across Gujarat. The casualties were attributed to lightning strikes

during the unseasonal rainfall that battered the state on Sunday.

According to SEOC, the affected districts included Dahod, Bharuch, Tapi, Ahmedabad, Amreli, Banaskantha, Botad, Kheda, Mehsana, Panchmahal, Sabarkantha, Surat, Surendranagar, and Devbhumi Dwarka. Expressing grief, Union Home Minister Amit Shah extended condolences for the lives lost due to adverse weather conditions and lightning strikes in

various cities of Gujarat on Sunday. He emphasized the ongoing relief work conducted by the local administration.

In a statement issued on Sunday night, Union Minister Amit Shah expressed deep sorrow, saying, "I am deeply saddened by the news of the death of many people due to bad weather and lightning in various cities of Gujarat.

I express my deepest condolences for the irreparable loss to those who lost their

loved ones in this tragedy. The local administration is engaged in relief work, praying for the speedy recovery of the injured."

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) anticipates a reduction in rain activity on Monday. SEOC data revealed that 234 out of 252 talukas in Gujarat experienced rainfall on Sunday, with several districts recording significant rainfall of 50-117 mm in 16 hours, disrupting normal life and causing crop damage.

Hailstorms in Rajkot and disruptions in the ceramic industry of Morbi district added to the challenges. IMD's Ahmedabad centre director, Manorama Mohanty, assured that the rains would subside on Monday, focusing on some parts of south Gujarat and Saurashtra districts.

The rainfall's origin, a cyclonic circulation over the northeast Arabian Sea and adjoining Saurashtra and Kutch regions was highlighted in the IMD bulletin.

BILATERAL RELATION

INDIA PURSUING MIDDLE EAST CORRIDOR ON LONG TERM CONSIDERATION: SITHARAMAN

NIVEDITA MUKHERJEE
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday emphasised that the Government was pursuing the India Middle East Corridor project which has long term considerations and that it would not be dependent on one or the other major event of concern. "It is something in which the vision will drive the implementation in the long run. It is going to be pursued because India has very good relations with the Middle-East built very carefully by Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Sitharaman said, during a virtual interaction at the India Global Forum (IGF).

India has a lot at stake in the IMEC, an ambitious transcontinental transit infrastructure project launched on the side-



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

lines of the G20 summit in New Delhi. However, escalating tensions between Tel Aviv and Gaza has cast a shadow on the project.

The Finance Minister also highlighted the fast pace at which the Indian economy was growing amidst the current global scenario and underlined the im-

portance of GST ushered in by Arun Jaitley under the principle of 'One Nation, One Tax'. Terming it as a good example of positive Centre-state relationship and the federal structure, Sitharaman noted that decisions are taken together and most of the decisions are unanimous. "The GST Council, the constitutional body was created through a great deal of effort by the Prime Minister," she added.

Sitharaman also highlighted India's relationship with Africa. Since PM Modi came to power in 2014, it has made it a point to promote tariff-free, quota-free relations with the least developed countries of Africa. "On development related activities, Africa received about USD 32 billion or 38 per cent of all credit extended by India in the last decade. India is one of the largest suppliers of generic

medicines to Africa, making it available at affordable rates for African citizens," Sitharaman observed. India had formally launched the tele-education project 'e-VidyaBharti' and tele-medicine project 'e-ArogyaBharti', which is focused on providing free tele-education for over 500 courses to 15,000 students and free tele-medicine courses to 1,000 doctors and paramedics in various African countries. "India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD) also happened on the sidelines of the Defence Expo at Lucknow and Gandhinagar," Sitharaman said, referring to India's defence cooperation with many African countries including Comoros, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa and Madagascar which are members of the Indian Ocean Rim Agreement.

CREDIT GROWTH

NBFCs anticipate 14-17% asset growth; RBI emphasizes better liability management

NIVEDITA MUKHERJEE
NEW DELHI

Even as Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das advised non banking financial companies (NBFCs) to further strengthen their asset liability management and avoid all forms of exuberance regarding credit growth at the overall, sectoral and sub-sectoral levels, the assets under management (AUM) of NBFCs are set to log a healthy 14-17 per cent growth next fiscal on the back of continued strong credit demand across retail loan segments. Retail credit growth

continues to be driven by sound underlying macro and micro factors. The two largest traditional segments of home loans and vehicle finance now comprise 25-27 per cent each of the NBFC AUM. Both segments are expected to report steady growth. In the home loan segment, growth of 12-14 per cent next fiscal will be driven by HFCs' focus on affordable home loans (ticket sizes of less than Rs 25 lakh), while vehicle finance is expected to grow 18-19 per cent this fiscal and sustain 17-18 per cent growth next fiscal on the back of solid underlying-asset sales.

However, growth of AUMs may be moderately lower than 16-18 per cent expected in the current fiscal because unsecured retail loans - the fastest growing segment in the AUM pie of the NBFCs so far -- are likely to see a relatively slower growth as these financial entities recalibrate their strategies due to the recent regulatory measures issued by the RBI, finds CRISIL. The RBI Governor has flagged the need for NBFCs - amidst galloping credit growth in the current period -- to take care that expansion of the credit portfolio itself and pricing

of the same is in sync with risks envisaged. Das has also expressed concern over increased reliance on high cost short term bulk deposits while the tenure of the loans, both in retail and corporate loans, is getting elongated.

As NBFCs are large net borrowers of funds from the financial system, with their exposure from the banks being the highest, Das has suggested that the NBFCs should focus on broad basing their funding sources and reducing over-dependence on bank funding, at a recent FICCI platform, FIBAC.

UNALARMED ENTRY

Rajasthan tiger ventures into MP's Kuno Park, no threat to cheetahs

TDG NETWORK
SHEOPUR

A sub-adult tiger from Rajasthan has entered Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park (KNP), where cheetahs from Africa have been introduced to revive their population in the country, an official said.

There is no direct threat to the cheetahs as they have been kept in soft enclosures or 'bomas' in the park, KNP director Uttam Sharma told PTI on Sunday.

"Tiger pugmarks were found inside the KNP two to three days back," he said. The tiger, around three

years old, forayed into the protected forest from Rajasthan's Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, which was about 100 km from KNP, officials said. KNP currently has seven male and as many female cheetahs and a cub.

Officials said leopards too are scared of tigers and are very watchful of them. KNP has a high density of leopards, they said. The Kuno National Park is spread over 748 sq km.

Besides, it has a buffer area of 487 sq km.

The average weight of a male tiger animal is about 200 kg, while that of a male cheetah is between 55 and

60 kg, as per officials. Under the cheetah reintroduction project, eight Namibian cheetahs, comprising five females and three males, were released into enclosures at KNP on September 17 last year.

In February this year, 12 more cheetahs arrived at KNP from South Africa. Later, four cubs were born in the park, raising the number of the felines to 24. Since March, nine cheetahs, including three cubs, have died, while 14 cheetahs and one cub are in healthy condition, officials earlier said. Cheetahs were declared extinct in India in 1952.

VIOLENCE

NAXALITES TORCH 14 VEHICLES MACHINES ENGAGED IN CONSTRUCTION WORKS

TDG NETWORK
DANTEWADA

Suspected Naxalites set afire at least 14 vehicles and machines engaged in construction works in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district on Monday, police said. No person was reported to be injured in the incident, which took place at around 1.30 am at Bangali camp under Bhansi police station limits, a senior police official said.

As per eyewitnesses, 40 to 50 unidentified people, clad as civilians and a few of them armed, reached the spot and set ablaze 14 vehicles and machines, including trucks, poclair and earth moving machines, parked there, he said.

While 13 vehicles and machines, belonging to a private construction firm, were engaged in road construction



between Dantewada and Bachel, a water tanker was engaged in railway works, he said. Soon after being alerted, a police team led by Bhansi station house officer went to the spot, he said.

"Prima facie it seems to be the handiwork of Naxalites and search operation is underway in the area to trace the culprits," the official said.

Naxalites have frequently tried to disrupt road construction works in the Bastar division, which consists of seven districts in Dantewada, by launching attacks on security forces and damaging roads, vehicles and machines used in the work.

PLEDGE TO FIGHT

WAR AGAINST MILITANCY IN J-K NOT FULLY OVER J-K POLICE CHIEF

TDG NETWORK
SRINAGAR

The war against militancy in Jammu and Kashmir is not fully over and security forces may be suffering losses but will not back down from the fight, the union territory's Director General of Police R R Swain said here on Monday. The forces, he said, were trying

to minimise losses. "If the challenge is to move forward even though we have to bear losses... we will not back down from that challenge," Jammu and Kashmir's top police officer added.

He was talking to reporters after paying obeisance at Srinagar's Chatpadshai Gurudwara on the occasion of Gurpurab.

INDIA'S LANDSCAPE

India, the new rising sun in the changing global order: The soft power

The world remained under the shadow of unipolar superpower for a period. But that cannot be the case forever, nothing is permanent. Change is the law of the nature.

OPINION

TAUSIF HASAN



era of 21st century India and China took the economic leads as the Chinese manufacturing power become a significant threat to the major economic powers and India's fast economic growth surprised the world. By the time superpower realised that growing significance of rising economies in Asia and it went in firefighting mode, it was little late. Surging economic powers remained exuberant and ebullient.

Who rules the world? The answer was not difficult till the end of 20th century. The countries which had the biggest military power. Till the disintegration of USSR, it was a bipolar world, US at one side the USSR at the other. After the disintegration of USSR, United States of America emerged as the sole superpower, dominating world institutions, having military establishments in almost every corner of the world. The world remained under the shadow of unipolar superpower for a period. But that cannot be the case forever, nothing is permanent. Change is the law of the nature.

Military might cannot be the only global power order in future, soft power and vehement and fervent economic trends are the future of new global order. In the new

Soft power: Soft power is going to be the new mantra which will define the next vehement and inevitable global power order in the new world order. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., a political scientist at Harvard University and the author of "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics" coined the term in the late 1980s. Soft power is a type of influence wielded by persuading others, particularly countries, to do what you want them to do through economical, moral, cultural or political attraction without having to coerce with threats or financial incentives. That means to success and have a say in world policies, politics, and economics. Soft power is important because it has a measurable, positive effect on human suffering. Hard power is the root cause of all wars, and conflicts.

Manpower: India being the

world biggest manpower exporter plays a big role in the growth and development of many countries. By the end of third decade of twenty first century twenty percent of the global workforce outside India are NRIs or citizens of Indian origin. This makes a major impact of geopolitical stage. Most cost effective, less problematic and hardworking Indian diaspora force is an incomparable power which shapes economies of many nations. There are countries which economies cannot survive if Indians decide to withdraw or leave the county. Indian expatriate community is the largest ethnic community in UAE constituting roughly 28 per cent of the country's population. The number of resident Indian Nationals is estimated to be 2.8 million in 2023 as per GMI. They are in every sphere of life from semi-skilled labour to CEO of top UAE companies. Business tycoons based in the UAE have bagged prominent positions in the Forbes' 37th annual world's billionaires list. Among the top 10 UAE residents six are Indians or Indian origin.

The number of Indians who became permanent residents in Canada rose from 32,828 in 2013 to 118,095 in 2022, an increase of 260%, according to a National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP). According to ministry of external affairs data total number of NRIs, PIOs and OIs is around 64,243,180 (NRIs 13459195 PIOs 18683645 OIs32100340) residing outside India comprise the world's largest overseas diaspora.

Economy: Growing econ-

omy is a promise of better future. At present, India is ranked fifth in terms of the size of its economy at \$3.7 trillion in 2023-24. "India's nominal GDP measured in USD terms is forecast to rise from \$3.5 trillion in 2022 to \$7.3 trillion by 2030. This rapid pace of economic expansion would result in the size of the Indian GDP exceeding Japanese GDP by 2030, making India the second largest economy in the Asia-Pacific region," the S&P report says. To become the world's largest economy by 2047, India needs to grow at 14 per cent every year, assuming the rupee

India is one of the largest medical tourism hubs in the world, with numerous patients flocking to its cities each day, to avail the highest standard of treatments.

remains stable against the dollar. This is an achievable figure possible by keeping each determinant of growth like labour, investment, human capital and total factor productivity at its best. In between 2006-2011, India's annual growth rate was around 14 per cent.

Market: Population of a country is not a liability but sometimes it is the power if you act wisely. India being the most populated country of the world is the biggest market for the multinationals all over the world. Take the recent example of Tesla. After making many attempts to enter Indian market finally commerce minister Piyush Goyal is all set to meet billionaire Elon Musk in the United States. The talks between the

Musk and Goyal in US will centre around Tesla's plans to setup an Indian factory, manufacturing a \$24,000 car there, sourcing more components and establishing charging infrastructure across the nation. They can not antagonise India as they may be deprived of one the biggest market.

Culture: This is a country's power to influence others through its cultural riches, such as art, literature, music, and movies. Indian soft power includes popular entertaining media like movies, music, and television soups. Indian film industry is most popular entertain-

ing industry after Hollywood. Indian film is dubbed in several languages that gives a wide scope to Indian culture overseas. Baahubali has been dubbed in more than 10 languages including Japanese, Chinese, Taiwanese, French, German and Spanish.

Healthcare: India is one of the largest medical tourism hubs in the world, with numerous patients flocking to its cities each day, to avail the highest standard of treatments. Apart from excellence in treatments, the country also offers numerous sightseeing spots in diverse cities, for tourists to explore. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) said that India received around 650,000 medical

tourists in 2022, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, which was a 22.3 per cent increase vis-a-vis 2018. Mostly from Africa, SAARC and other Asian countries. One of the primary reasons for foreigners seeking medical care in India is the cost-effectiveness of treatments. Medical procedures and surgeries in developed countries can often be exorbitantly priced, making them inaccessible for many.

Education is another example, when a country becomes a desirable destination for international studies due to high-quality institutions and scholars. Some countries, including the United States, attract many international students. Public diplomacy in foreign affairs and contributions to global development are potent sources of soft power. India's rich culture and ancient ways of fine life are well received. For instance, the world observes 21st June as international yoga day. Yoga programmes and sessions are organised and celebrated by various organisations, institutions, schools and the general public all over the world. Indian food and restaurants are very much in demand in Europe, America and Asian countries. This all makes Indian a vitally important and significant nation on the planet.

In the words of Rabin-drath Tagore: "India represents the wealth of mind which is for all. We acknowledge India's obligation to offer to others the hospitality of her best culture And India's right to accept from others their best."

The writer is a Dubai based freelance columnist.

THE SAVIOUR

WHEN A BOLLYWOOD TIGER SAVES DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN



RAJESH TALWAR

This time, there is a twist in the tale, or a variation in the standard Bollywood formula. Tiger 3, the latest offering from the YRF Spy Universe, declared to be a box-office hit by the trade pundits has thereby resurrected the fortunes of aging superstar Salman Khan.

After a series of successive flops, Salman Khan's future hinged on this film. The film world can be notoriously cruel and had this film too met a fate similar to that of his other recent releases he could have been written off by many as a has-been. Now Tiger 3 is not a particularly well-made film, even by mainstream standards. Many scenes are unoriginal, the dialogues are not particularly memorable, and while Salman Khan does his best, acting has never been his strong suit. The songs too are not great. How then has the film managed to grab the audience's interest? One suspects that is because of the twist in the tale.

It is one thing to battle terrorism and evil, finish off the bad guys, and make the world, ipso facto, a safer place. That has been the standard formula thus far. It is a different matter, a far nobler action, one might say, when the hero battles the military in the neighbouring state, foils the attempted assassination of a female prime minister and thereby prevents a military coup from taking place.

The famed psychologist Sigmund Freud wrote on how our dreams often represent wish fulfillment. Does Indian cinema too often represent unfulfilled fantasies of the Indian public? A while ago in An Action Hero, a Dawood Ibrahim like figure is neutralised by Ayushman Khurana. It was an excellent film but the idea was not original for Dawood Ibrahim had already been killed by RAW agents in D-Day, another Bollywood production. And now in Tiger 3 Bollywood has gone a step further and helped democracy survive in Pakistan. The fantasy in Tiger 3 is really about India, as a great magnanimous power humbling truant Pakistan. Therein lies its special appeal.

In a recent interview former RAW chief Vikram Sood rubbished the idea that a male RAW agent could ever be romantically entangled with a female ISI agent. Mr Sood may be a great sleuth but he possibly hasn't watched enough cinema, and needs to learn the art of suspending disbelief. After all, if James Bond can have amorous relationships with Russian ladies in more than one film including in Golden Eye, why cannot Salman Khan have an attractive wife named Zoya who happens to be an ISI agent from neighbouring Pakistan? Katrina Kaif, who gets to play Zoya in the movie gets the chance to demonstrate that she can show and kick ass both. In a scene that will have front benchers drooling, and some of us on recliner seats in the multiplexes sitting up as well, she battles and downs a female Chinese martial arts expert inside a Turkish hamam wearing only a towel.

Attractive female partners from an adversary nation are not all that Bond, Tiger and Pathan share in common though. Bond has a female boss, the legendary 'M'. In Tiger 3, Salman too reports to a female chief of the RAW. Female bosses appear to be in vogue for only a few months ago, in Pathan Shah Rukh Khan too had a female boss played by Dimple Kapadia. James Bond is, after all, a time-tested brand. What's not to like, copy and paste here? Moreover, such casting nicely feeds into the nari mukti, or female empowerment narrative.

Tiger 3 does not paint the Pakistani public as evil but rather as victims of a cruel, grasping military. This is actually close to the truth. It is extremely doubtful if the film will ever be permitted to be screened in theatres in Pakistan, but it will nonetheless be widely watched on pirated videos smuggled into Pakistan and Afghanistan. Young boys and girls in Islamabad and Lahore eagerly watching Tiger 3 on video inside their homes, with curtains tightly drawn, may even cheer Salman on as he battles the Pakistani army, much to the consternation of their parents, a few of whom may actually be serving in the military.

Tiger 3 is likely to confuse Pakistani audiences who get to watch it. Were the hero not portraying an Indian agent, many would wish to cheer for a hero who battles their military in order to prevent the assassination of a prime minister. Towards the end of the film, the female Pakistani prime minister who is dressed up like Benazir Bhutto publicly thanks Tiger and RAW on Pakistani television for saving her life and democracy. Before Tiger is permitted to depart for his next mission, a group of Pakistani children play a patriotic tune for him as a token of their nation's gratitude. As a nice little touch, one of the girls plays a sitar.

What's next from Bollywood? Perhaps in Tiger 4 Salman Khan can take on both the Pakistani military as well as their Chinese overlords who are in cahoots with them in suppressing democracy. That may be a bit much even for him. So perhaps just like superheroes often come together in the Marvel Universe, we could have a film titled Tiger and Pathan in which Salman handles the Pakistani military and Shah-rukh Khan, the bigger star, deals with the Chinese? Do we want to miss out on a release in China? After all, Three Idiots made millions at the Chinese box office. However, China will, in any case, not allow a film that targets the Pakistani military to be screened in their country so it doesn't really matter if they too are targeted. Not to worry. Even without a China release Pathan reportedly managed to do business of a thousand crores.

Indian cinema clearly needs to improve the quality of its offerings, but regardless and in the meanwhile, more power to Bollywood's soft power!

Rajesh Talwar is the prolific author of thirty-eight books across multiple genres and has worked for the United Nations for more than two decades across three continents. His latest book is 'Where Elephants Danced and Dragons Flew.'

DATA REVOLUTION

Are we being driven by data?

OPINION

BENAZIR PATIL



'We need more data and information to help us set a clear direction for us', is an overused statement we hear in every nook and corner. We indeed believe that we have huge data emerging through various activities and interventions that are taking place around us and we have also gained the habit of calling ourselves smart, meaning everything in our lives has become smart, starting from the city to a school and much

more. Smartness also makes us believe that these days anything and everything is measurable! Is that true? Are we able to measure all resource footprints? meaning water consumption, energy usage, waste generation, employment, income and so on. And yes, it is not just about measuring the resources we generate, but also the losses we incur, be it economic losses from natural disasters, or any kind of recession we are going through.

These expectations of measuring all around us may seem overwhelming, but an approach that can help us rectify these things is a must. Having said that, we have to have clear data pertaining to all of these, otherwise it is easier said than done. And then, this is not all, getting the data is not enough, it needs to be communicated to the public as well, for their feedback

and understanding. Almost everything we see around is filled with criticism, the traffic management, the electricity bills, water quality, the air pollution, the flooding of rivers, the congestion in transport facilities and what not. For everything that we see around we feel that the systems are not equipped to deal with a size of population we have in our country.

And it is almost every now and then that the inability to analyze future scenarios is being talked about. Almost every third intellectual reflects that the one and only solution for addressing this challenge is nothing but a trustworthy data, with intermittent risk assessments.

Quality and accessible data has the capacity to directly influence both the governments and people's mindset to help formulate and execute effective programs. India being an emerging economy, it definitely has robust public data system, starting from the decennial Census, annual sample surveys, health surveys and various others that are thematic in nature. And when evidence-based planning becomes the bedrock of any country, it can pave the way for dynamic economic progress and resilience in

the longer term.

When it comes to planning, it is the data that has so much to tell us; like children born in a particular state have better longevity than the neighbouring states; literacy rates of one region have influenced decision making among the youth as compared to any other region in the country. A report of NITI Aayog talks about statistics like, the number of murders reported per lakh population in India is 2.4; there are about 13 courts per 10 lakh population in India; for every 1 crore people in India, 34 corruption cases have been reported; while 15 states/Union Territories have achieved full birth registration, there is room for improvement, with Punjab leading at 99.2 percent, followed by Gujarat and Rajasthan at 98.7 percent.

This is indeed data that tells us about disparities in the country. However, it is these disparities and differences that help us in arriving at specific decisions on budgets, and further on monitoring the utilization of those budgets to ensure better generation of data on what has worked and what has not.

The other aspect on which we face criticism is the data

collection methods which needs to be modernized, when compared with other developed and developing economies. Computerized surveys employing various modes like in-person, telephone, web, and text-based interviews, necessitate a different approach to questionnaire design. Because these methods not only deliver faster and better data sets, but also enable improved data quality monitoring through audio recording, interviewer prompts, and such other methods. We also should accept and acknowledge that India now is an inseparable part of the global indices which has been and will also be inflating and deflating India's position on the global stage in years to come. And so it is also a time to increase monetary investment in data collection systems. Top of Form

The other aspect which cannot be overlooked at any cost is that India is currently undergoing a personal data revolution, driven by the widespread adoption of digital services. While personal data brings considerable value, it also introduces significant new risks. The substantial volume of personal data collected raises

worries about potential consequences such as the loss of individual privacy, financial losses in the event of breaches, and the possibility of unfair discrimination, marginalization, or exclusion of individuals and groups.

The government has also undertaken various initiatives to establish extensive platforms for handling large datasets, necessitating the acquisition and processing of massive amounts of data. And indeed a classic example of data analytics is the governments crucial role in tax administration. Needless to say, the reality of timely reminders for advance tax payments, identification of mismatches in Income Tax Returns (ITRs) and potential high-risk transactions absolutely reflects that we are hugely leveraging data analytics. Undoubtedly, we have miles to go, but a set of steps have been taken which signify a commitment to enhance the quality and availability of data, for both policymaking and public dissemination, reflecting a forward-looking approach to information management and governance in India.

Dr. Benazir Patil is a Chief Executive Officer - SCHOOL.

IN COURT

KERALA HIGH COURT: ALL TOURIST BUSES CANNOT BE OPERATE AS STAGE CARRIAGES

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Kerala High Court in the case *Abdulla. H. Naushad V the State of Kerala Transport Department* observed and has passed an interim order wherein the court directed that all the India tourist vehicles cannot be permitted to operate as stage carriers.

It has also been directed by the said court that the authorities in the matter can take the appropriate actions against the tourist buses with all the Indian tourist permits that operate as the stage carriages.

The bench headed by Justice Dinesh Kumar Singh in the case observed and has directed the petitioner who were tourist bus operators to pay fifty per cent of the fine amount which is being imposed by the penalty challans for using their tourist bus in violation of the all-India tourist permit conditions.

The court stated that all the India tourist vehicles cannot be permitted to operate as



stage carriage as it is detrimental to the stage carriage operators which includes KSRTC and if the petitioners are violating the permit conditions, the petitioners are liable to be fined.

In the present case, the court was hearing the writ plea moved by the petitioner-tourist bus operators who have approached the High Court against the penalty challans issued against them for operating their tourist bus with all India tourist per-

mits as stage carriers. Thus, they also seek the direction against the authorities for issuing such penalty challans against tourist buses with all India tourist permits in violation of the provisions of the Motor Vehicle Act, 1988.

The court observed that when the said matter came up for hearing, the Government Pleader, P. Santhosh Kumar submitted before the court that the vehicles of the petitioner with all India tourist permits were being used

as stage carriers in violation of the all-India tourist permit conditions.

It was also informed by the said court that the penalty challans were issued against the petitioners.

The court observed that earlier an application was moved by the KSRTC wherein restricting the operations of All India Tourist Permit vehicles through the nationalized routes and scheme covered ROUTES formulated under the Motor Vehicles

Act, 1988.

It was also submitted before the court that many tourist vehicle operators resorted to operating their contract carriages as the stage carriages on the ground that the provisions of the Rules enable operators with All India Tourist Permits for entering into individual contracts with passengers to pick and passengers en route.

The counsel, by Advocate M R Sarin appeared for the petitioner.

IN COURT

Patna High Court: PIL Moved Challenging Bihar Law Increasing Reservation To 65%; Says SEBC Quota Need Not Be Proportionate To Population

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Patna High Court in the case observed wherein the Public Interest Litigation, PIL has been filed challenging the recent amendment passed by the Bihar Legislature in order to increase the reservation for Backward Classes, Extremely Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes from the existing 50% to 65%.

The petitioner in the plea challenged the constitutional validity of the Bihar Reservation (for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Back Classes) (Amendment) Act, 2023, and the Bihar (in admission in educational institutions) Reservation (Amendment) Act, 2023. Thus, the petitioner also seeks the stay of these enactments, as an interim relief.

The court stated that the Bihar State Legislature enacted the Acts of 2023 on 10.11.2023 and it received the Governor's Assent on 18.11.2023.

It has been notified by the Government that the act on

21.11.2023, through the Bihar Gazette.

The petitioner in the plea contended that the amendments are based on proportional reservation derived from the Caste Census conducted by the state. Thus, the census calculated the population of the Backward Classes of SC, ST, OBC, and EBC in the State of Bihar to be 63.13%.

The petitioners, Gaurav Kumar and Naman Sherstra contended before the court that the Constitutional mandate as stated under Article 16(4) of the Constitution of India, wherein it requires the reservation which is to be based on adequate representation of the Socially and Educationally Backward Class rather than the proportional representation of these classes within a specific state.

The plea stated that the 2023 Act passed by the Respondent State is in violation of Article 16 (1) of the Constitution of India, wherein it provides an equality opportunity for all citizens in matters which relates to the employment or appointment to any office

under the State and Article 15 (1) of the Constitution of India which prohibits any kind of under the State and Article 15 (1) which prohibits any kind of discrimination.

Further, the petitioner in the plea stated that the 2023 Acts passed by the Respondent State violates the upper ceiling of 50 percent as set by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Indira Sawhney, Supra* and that the Respondent State has miserably failed to address the exceptional circumstances whatsoever that led to increase the ceiling of reservation beyond 50 percent and therefore the 2023 Acts is in violation of the law laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the aforesaid judgment.

It has also been stated that the 2023 Acts passed by the State is in violation of Article 14 and Article 15 of the Constitution of India as the same suffers unreasonableness and manifest arbitrariness.

The counsel, Advocate Alok Kumar and served to the Advocate General's Office on November 24, 2023.

IN COURT

Delhi High Court To Delhi Police, MCD: Consider Feasibility Of Holding Muslim Mahapanchayat Meeting At Ramlila Ground On December 18

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case *Mission Save Constitution v. Union of India and Ors* observed and has directed the Delhi Police and Municipal Corporation of Delhi, MCD to consider the feasibility of holding a public meeting i.e., the All India Muslim Mahapanchayat at the Ramlila Ground on December 18, 2023.

The bench headed by Justice Subramonium Prasad in its order stated that the application already given by the organization, Mission Save Constitution, for holding the Mahapanchayat on December 18, 2023 be treated as a representation.

The court stated that the Respondent No.3/MCD and the Police Authorities are directed to consider the feasibility for holding the Mahapanchayat at

Ramlila Ground, Delhi on December 18, 2023.

In the present case, the court was dealing with the petition moved by the organization wherein seeking direction on the authorities to act upon its request and grant NOC to organize the public gathering at Ramlila Ground.

Therefore, the organization is founded by Advocate Mehmood Pracha and it claimed to work for creating awareness among the masses, especially the depressed classes, about their constitutional rights.

The court observed that the permission was initially sought for holding meeting on December 04, wherein the MCD took a stand that the Ramlila Ground was not available for the said date and the same can be allotted subject to NOC from Delhi Police.

It has also been stated by the Delhi Police that the

NOC was already given to Maha Tyagi Seva Sansthan for organizing 'Mahayagya for Vishwa Jan Kalyan' at Ramlila Ground from December 03 to December 15, and therefore, Ramlila Ground was not being available for December 04.

The court in the case stated that it was going into the controversy as to whether the Maha Tyagi Seva Sansthan should have first approached the MCD and then the Police Authorities or as to whether the petitioner organization should have first approached the Police Authorities and then the MCD.

The counsel appearing for the organization submitted before the court that out of the dates given by the MCD and the Police Authorities, December 18 was the most convenient for holding the Mahapanchayat.

Therefore, the court stated that let the application already given by the Petitioner on 10.11.2023 for holding the Mahapanchayat on December 04, 2023 be treated as the representation for holding the Mahapanchayat on December 18, 2023.

Further, the court stated that it had last month refused to grant permission to the organization to hold a similar public meeting at the Ramlila Ground on October 29. The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has upheld the decision of the Delhi Police, wherein it revoked the permission which is granted to the organization for holding the meeting. Thus, the court stated that the same cannot be held arbitrary. Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on November 28, 2023.

IN COURT

PUNJAB AND HARYANA HIGH COURT SEEKING RESPONSE FROM CHANDIGARH MUNICIPAL CORPORATION IN PIL FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANIMAL BIRTH CONTROL RULES

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Punjab and Haryana High Court in the case *Arushi Lamba v. Municipal Corporation, Chandigarh and Anr.* and has issued the notice on the Public Interest Litigation, PIL moved wherein seeking the directions to Chandigarh Municipal Corporation to take adequate and appropriate steps with regards to the effective and expeditious implementation of the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023, the ABC Rules in Chandigarh.

The Division bench comprising of Acting Chief Justice Ritu Bahri and Justice Nidhi Gupta in the case observed and has issued notice to the municipality.

The petitioner in the plea states that on filing the representation in the said regard before the Municipal Corporation, 'neither satisfactory' nor true picture of the adoption and imple-



mentation of the Animal Birth Control Rules 2023 was being provided.

In the present case, the Arushi Lamba who being the resident of Chandigarh, has filed the petition highlighting that ABC Rules have been notified by the Central Government in March 2023, under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. The said Rule upersedes the Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rules, 2001, and address the 2009 guidelines which is laid down by the Supreme Court in the case *India v. People for Elimination of Stray Troubles*.

Further, the court stated that it aims to provide guidelines for the sterilisation and immunisation of stray animals through Animal Birth Control ABC programmes and these programmes must be conducted by the Local Bodies, Municipalities, Municipal Corporation and Panchayats.

It has also been provided by the ABC Rules, 2023 that the Animal Birth Control and the Anti-Rabies Programmes should be carried out jointly by the mentioned Government bodies while focusing on guidelines to resolve dog bites without

of the animals.

The petitioner in the plea stated that the rule 20 ABC Rule has also been referred to state that, it accredits the responsibility of making necessary arrangements for feedings of community animals, especially making of the provisions for feeding spots and shelter homes for stay animals residing in that area.

Adding to it, the plea stated that on filing the RTI seeking information with regards to the status of the implementation of the Rule.

Further, the court stated that the response submitted by Municipal Corporation was neither satisfactory nor depicted a true picture of the adoption and implementation of the Animal Birth Control Rules 2023 in U.T. Chandigarh.

Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on January 25, 2024. The counsel, Advocate Arushi Lamb appeared for petitioner.

IN COURT

Supreme Court: Splitting Of Trial Under Section 317(2) Of CrPC Cannot Be Done When Further Investigation Has Already Been Ordered

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *S. Mujibar Rahman v State* observed and has held that the splitting of trial as stated under section 317(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 cannot be ordered when further investigation has already been ordered.

The court stated that the further investigation cannot be done when the investigating agency has not furnished a non-traceable certificate before it.

The Supreme Court bench comprising of Justice Abhay S. Oka and Justice Pankaj Mithal in the case observed wherein the court was hearing an appeal against the judgement of the Madras High Court, wherein the

court allowed the Criminal Revision petition and split the trial under section 317(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

The said case was related to property damages involving offences as stated under Section 395, Section 397, Section 212, Section 120B, and Section 3 of the Tamil Nadu Public Property Damages Act against 31 accused persons.

The court stated that it being pertinent to note that section 317(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, CrPC stated that if the accused in any such case is not represented by a pleader, or if the Judge or Magistrate considered his personal attendance necessary, he may, if he thinks fit and for reasons to be recorded by him, either he



can adjourn such inquiry or trial, or order that the case of such accused be taken up or tried separately.

The bench remarked that this court finds that the High Court has not even considered the reasons recorded by the learned Magistrate in the order dated July 16, 2019. Secondly, it has not been no-

tified by the High Court that the learned Judicial Magistrate on 13th February 2019 had permitted further investigation. Thus, when the High Court permitted the splitting of the trial, two important aspects were not noted by the High Court. The first one was that the learned Magistrate was not satisfied

that the police had made sufficient efforts to procure the presence of all the accused.

Therefore, the second factor which is more important is the order of further investigation passed on February 13, 2019 and this being not the stage at which the High Court could have permitted splitting of the case.

The court stated that the case dates back to 2016 when demonetization was announced. It was also alleged before the court that when the accused had induced the petitioner to believe that he could exchange the old notes (500,1000 Rupees) for the new 2000 rupees notes. Thus, the petitioner took 30 lakhs but was attacked by the accused who took away all the money and then he filed the complaint to the

police.

The petitioner allegedly found that there was a collusion between the investigating officer and certain accused individuals, compromising the investigation in this case and he made a representation to the Superintendent of Police (SP) about the same.

On the other hand, it has been directed by the SP to the respondent No. 1 to file a petition under section 173(8) CrPC for further investigation, which the magistrate allowed. Consequently, the respondent no 1 seek the splitting of the trial, which was rejected by the trial court in 2019 due to the ongoing order for further investigation. Therefore, he moved the criminal revision application before the HC

which allowed it and split the trial of some of the accused.

It has also been noted by the High Court that the case was pending since 2016 where summons remained unserved for 3 accused individuals, and nonbailable warrants were pending against 8 others out of a total of 30 accused persons.

The High Court in its order stated that the lower court to split the case against the accused who were absent and proceed with criminal proceedings against the rest of the accused persons.

The petitioner filed an SLP before the Supreme Court, aggrieved with the said order. The counsel appearing for the petitioner argued before the court that the High Court had passed the order without being acquainted

with the order of the judicial magistrate ordering further investigation in pursuance of the application by respondent no.1.

The petitioner relied in the judgement in the case *Subramaniam Sethuraman v. State of Maharashtra* in order to contend that an order obtained by fraud is a nullity.

Further, he also argued that no revision shall lie against an interlocutory order. He asserted that an order passed under section 317 CrPC is an interlocutory order.

Accordingly, the court set aside the judgement of the High Court and has restored the order of the Judicial Magistrate passed in 2019.

The counsel, Advocate on record A. Velan appeared for the petitioner.

IN COURT

PAPER APOLOGY CANNOT BE ACCEPTED IN CONTEMPT CASES: ANDHRA PRADESH HC

ANALYSIS

SANJEEV SIROHI

In a very significant judgment with far reaching consequences which no one can ever afford to just gloss over, the Andhra Pradesh High Court in a most learned, laudable, landmark and latest judgment titled P Satyanarayan Reddy vs M Saraswathi, Deputy Director, Tribal Welfare in Contempt Case No. 1032 of 2019 that was pronounced as recently as on November 7, 2023 minced just no words to say in no uncertain terms that “paper apology” cannot be accepted in contempt of court cases. The Court was most forthright in observing that, “Paper Apology” is an apology which is hollow; or with no remorse, regret or repentance, or if it is only a device to escape the rigour of the law. It must also be disclosed here that the Court observed so while holding clearly that Mrs M. Saraswathi, the Deputy Director of Tribal Welfare guilty of contempt of court under Section 12 of the Contempt of Court Act, 1971 (CC Act).

At the very outset, this brief, brilliant, balanced and bold judgment authored by the Single Judge Bench comprising of Hon’ble Sri Justice Ravi Nath Tilhari sets the ball in motion by first and foremost putting forth in para 2 that, “This contempt case is filed against the respondent Smt. S. Saraswathi, Deputy Director, Tribal

Welfare I.T.D.A., Rampachodavaram, East Godavari District, (Presently Director) with respect to the judgment and order dated 14.08.2019 passed by the writ Court in W.P.No.11279 of 2019.”

FACTS

To put things in perspective, the Bench envisages in para 3 that, “The petitioner was working as Secondary Grade Teacher, in Ashram Upper Primary School, Kansuluru Village, Chinturu Mandal, East Godavari District. He was not considered for promotion to the post of School Assistant (Maths). He had given representations to the 1st respondent, the last being dated 18.07.2019, but when there was no response and two of his juniors were already promoted he filed W.P.No.11270 of 2019 for the following relief:

“... to declare the Orders passed by the Respondents in not treating B.Tech with Chemical Engineering with Maths as one of the subjects as required qualification as per G.O Ms No 45 Social Welfare TW SER II/AI Department dated 28.6.2011 for promotion to the post of School Assistant Maths as illegal arbitrary discriminatory and violates the Article 14 16 and 21 of Constitution of India and consequently direct the respondents to effect promotion of the petitioner with effect

from 16.7.2019 with all consequential benefits and to pass...”

As we see, the Bench then states in para 4 that, “The Writ Court, disposed of the writ petition vide order dated 14.08.2019 directing the 1st respondent to consider the petitioner’s representation dated 18.07.2019 strictly in accordance with law, and bearing in mind all the relevant Rules as well as the G.Os, applicable to the case of the petitioner, within a period of four (4) weeks from the date of receipt of copy of the order.”

As it turned out, the Bench then specifies in para 6 that, “The petitioner served a copy of the order to the respondent on 07.09.2019. The time as granted, expired on 07.10.2019. The respondent did not comply and did not pass any order.”

Of course, the Bench then mentions in para 7 that, “The petitioner filed contempt petition.”

Do note, the Bench notes in para 23 that, “The G.O.Ms. No.45 (Social Welfare (TW.SER.III/AI) Department) dated 28.06.2011 is very clear. The qualification possessed by the petitioner is also not in dispute. The petitioner had the Graduation Degree (B.Tech) with Maths as one of the subjects. B.Tech degree is also a Bachelor’s Degree. The contention raised by the respondent that the Bachelor Degree, is normally understood as B.Sc./B. Com./B.A., with three years course and B.Tech., degree is four years study course, is nothing but after thought and an effort to justify the act of seeking clarification from the Director of Tribal Welfare which is unexpected of the respondent who held the post

of Dy. Director at that point of time and as per her letters seeking clarification, possess the educational qualification of M.A., LL.B. Besides, in the order of the writ Court it was clearly observed that, “.....finding prima facie the petitioner is meeting all the requirements of G.O.Ms.No.45, Social Welfare (TW.SER.III/AI) Dept., dated 28.06.2011.....”. Nothing has been brought on record, contrary to such prima facie finding of the writ Court to justify seeking of clarification from the Director of Tribal Welfare as also for not considering the petitioner’s case in accordance with the order of the writ court. The rejection after 17 (seventeen) months, holding the petitioner not qualified as per G.O.Ms.No.45, is in clear defiance of the order of the writ court. The subsequent Memo dated 25.09.2022 of the Director, Tribal Welfare also clearly holds the petitioner fulfilling the qualification, but in spite thereof also, it was only after about 8 (eight) months that the petitioner was granted promotion.”

While citing the relevant case law, the Bench observes in para 27 that, “In Kapildeo Prasad Sah v. State of Bihar AIR 1999 SC 3215, the Hon’ble Apex Court held that even negligence and carelessness can amount to disobedience, particularly when attention of the person is drawn to the Court’s order and its implication.”

Resultantly, the Bench propounds in para 28 that, “From the aforesaid judgments, it is very much clear that even where the Court’s order is ignored a case of civil contempt is made out if the party fully knew of the order of the court and

was conscious thereof. Even negligence and carelessness can amount to disobedience, particularly when attention of the person is drawn to the Court’s order. It is not necessary to prove that he appreciated that it did breach the order.”

As a consequence, the Bench expounds in para 29 that, “In view of the aforesaid consideration, I hold that the charge No.1 as framed against the respondent stands proved. The respondent rejected the case of the petitioner vide order dated 12.04.2021 after 17 months though the petitioner fulfilled the requisite qualifications under G.O.Ms.No.45 dated 28.06.2011. The respondent has deliberately and willfully disobeyed the order dated 14.08.2019 passed by the writ court in W.P.No.11279 of 2019.”

While citing a recent and relevant case law, the Bench hastens to add in para 31 stating that, “In Arun Kumar Yadav v. State of U.P. (2013) 14 SCC 127, the Hon’ble Apex Court held that no one has the authority to conduct in a manner which would demean and disgrace the majesty of justice which is dispensed by a Court of law. The administration of justice is the paramount role of the Court. It was held that the apology should be prompt and genuine. The concept of mercy and compassion is ordinarily attracted keeping in view the infirmities of the man’s nature and the fragile conduct, but in a Court of law a counsel cannot always take the shelter under the canopy of mercy for the law has to reign supreme.”

Further, the Bench observes in para 32 that, “In Arun Kumar Yadav (supra) the Hon’ble Apex Court referred to the judg-

ment in L.D.Jaikwal v. State of U.P (1984) 3 SCC 405 in which it was observed that “We do not think that merely because the appellant has tendered his apology we should set aside the sentence and allow him to go unpunished, otherwise, all that a person wanting to intimidate a Judge by making the grossest imputations against him has to do, is to go ahead and scandalize him, and later on tender a formal empty apology which costs him practically nothing. If such an apology were to be accepted, as a rule, and not as an exception, we would in fact be virtually issuing a ‘licence’ to scandalize Courts and commit contempt of Court with impunity”.

Furthermore, the Bench clarifies in para 33 that, “In All Bengal Excise Licensees’ Assn. v. Raghendra Singh (2007) 11 SCC 374 the Hon’ble Apex Court held that it is settled law that a party to the litigation cannot be allowed to take an unfair advantage by committing breach of an interim order and escape the consequences thereof. It was observed that “under the constitutional scheme of this country orders of the High Court have to be obeyed implicitly and the orders of this Court – for that matter any Court – should not be trifled with”. In that case it was found that the respondents therein acted deliberately to subvert the orders of the High Court. The Hon’ble Apex Court observed that “it is equally necessary to erase an impression which appears to be gaining ground that the mantra of unconditional apology is a complete answer to violations and infractions of the orders of the High Court or of this Court.”

In addition, the Bench, to put it shortly, states in para 34 that, “It is apt to refer Bal Kishan Giri v. State of U.P. (2014) 7 SCC 280 as well in which the Hon’ble Apex Court held, in paras-13 to 17, as under:

“13. In Asharam M. Jain v. A.T. Gupta [(1983) 4 SCC 125 : 1983 SCC (Cri) 771], while dealing with the issue, this Court observed as under : (SCC p. 127, para 3)

“3. ... The strains and mortification of litigation cannot be allowed to lead litigants to tarnish, terrorise and destroy the system of administration of justice by vilification of Judges. It is not that Judges need be protected; Judges may well take care of themselves. It is the right and interest of the public in the due administration of justice that has to be protected.”

17. In L.D. Jaikwal v. State of U.P. [(1984) 3 SCC 405 : 1984 SCC (Cri) 421], this Court noted that it cannot subscribe to the “slap-say sorry-and forget” school of thought in administration of contempt jurisprudence. Saying “sorry” does not make the slapper poorer. [See also T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad (102) v. Ashok Khot [(2006) 5 SCC 1 : AIR 2006 SC 2007].] So an apology should not be “paper apology” and expression of sorrow should come from the heart and not from the pen; for it is one thing to “say” sorry, it is another to “feel” sorry.”

What’s more, the Bench clearly states in para 35 that, “In Bal Kishan Giri (supra) the Hon’ble Apex Court held that a conduct which abuses and makes a mockery of the judicial process of the Court is to be dealt with iron hands and no person can tinker with it to

prevent, prejudice, obstruct or interfere with the administration of justice. An apology tendered is not to be accepted as a matter of course by the Court.”

Without mincing any words, the Bench propounds in para 36 that, “The present is not a case of accidental or unintentional disobedience. The respondent acted deliberately to subvert the order of this Court. Her act is contumacious. The apology tendered by the respondent in the facts of the case is considered not bona fide. The apology tendered is rejected.”

CONCLUSIONS:

As things stand, the Bench states in para 40 that, “The charge No.1 against the respondent has been proved. Respondent is held guilty of committing civil contempt of the Court. The apology has been rejected. The act of the respondent substantially interferes with the due course of justice or due administration of justice. By the act of the respondent, the petitioner was prevented from justice by not complying with the order.”

Adding more, the Bench holds in para 41 that, “On charge No.2, I hold that the charge No.1 having been proved, the respondent deserves punishment under Section 12 of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971.”

Quite significantly, the Bench notes in para 42 that, “In the facts and circumstances, mere imposition of fine will not meet the ends of justice. Sentence of imprisonment is necessary. However, the Court is taking a lenient view in imposition of sentence of imprisonment.”

Please read concluding on thedailyguardian.com

IN COURT

If ‘Saptapadi Has Not Been Completed, Marriage Won’t Be Complete And Binding: Patna HC

SANJEEV SIROHI
NEW DELHI

While ruling on a very significant legal point pertaining to the marriage ceremony and when it could be considered complete and binding, the Patna High Court in a most learned, laudable, landmark and latest judgment titled Ravi Kumar vs Bandana Kumari in Miscellaneous Appeal No. 248 of 2020 that was pronounced as recently as on 10-11-2023 has annulled a marriage that was held at gunpoint in 2013. The Patna High Court said that if ‘Saptapadi’ has not been completed, marriage would not be considered to be complete and binding. It must be noted that the Patna High Court had annulled the marriage of a Constable who was abducted and forcefully married to a woman. Earlier the Constable had filed an appeal under Section 19(1) of the Family Courts Act, 1984 against the judgment of the Family Court which had dismissed his petition filed for decree of nullity of marriage.

At the very outset, this brief, brilliant, bold and balanced judgment authored by Hon’ble Mr Arun Kumar Jha for a Division Bench of Patna High Court comprising of Hon’ble Mr PB Bajantari and himself sets the ball in motion by first and foremost putting forth in para 2 that,

“The instant Miscellaneous Appeal has been filed by the petitioner/appellant under Section 19(1) of the Family Courts Act, 1984 against the judgment 27.01.2020 passed by the learned Principal Judge, Family Court, Lakhisarai in Matrimonial Case No. 51 of 2013 dismissing the petition of the petitioner filed for decree of nullity of marriage under Section 12(1)(c) of Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 read with Rule 6 of Hindu Marriage Rules, 1956.”

To put things in perspective, it would be material to note that the Division Bench envisages in para 3 while shedding light on the facts of the case stating that, “The case of the petitioner/appellant as it appears from the record, is that the petitioner/appellant is a Constable in communication coy Section ‘A’. On 30.06.2013, the petitioner along with his uncle had gone to Ashok Dham Temple in Lakhisarai for worship. When the petitioner and his uncle had been purchasing materials for worship at about 02:00 pm, three persons, namely, Rajesh Kumar, Deepak Kumar and Bipin Singh all of Village Chauki, P.O., Balgudar P.S. and District Lakhisarai along with six unknown persons who were armed with pistol and knives came and surrounded the petitioner and his uncle. These persons brought the

respondent near the petitioner and threatening him with life at gun point and dagger forced him to put vermilion (sindur) to the forehead of the respondent. On resistance being shown by the petitioner, he was assaulted with slaps and fists. The uncle of the petitioner was also surrounded and threatened by the aforesaid persons. Finding no way out as being in custody of the above noted persons, the petitioner put sindur on the head of the respondent but without any religious or spiritual rites and rituals. After performance of the so called marriage, the petitioner and respondent were kept confined in a dark room in the house of the above named Bipin Singh. The uncle of the petitioner was also threatened and confined to the house of Bipin Singh. After sunset, the uncle of the petitioner was set free and he was asked to come with his family members along with ornaments and clothes for respondent as the marriage has been performed. Thereafter, the uncle of the petitioner went to the Lakhisarai Police Station and informed the police about the incident at about 02:00 pm on 01.07.2013, but the police did not register the case. On the same night, the petitioner somehow managed to come out of the house of the respondent who is the daughter

of above named Bipin Singh and went to inform the police about the incident but again the police did not take any action. Thereafter, the petitioner reached his village. Since the petitioner was required to join his duty immediately, he went to his service place and after getting leave, he came to file this case. Meanwhile, the uncle of the petitioner has also filed a criminal case in the Court of learned C.J.M., Lakhisarai vide Complaint Case No. 431C/12 under Section 323, 341, 352, 387 and 365 IPC. Thus the petitioner submitted that the so called marriage is in contravention of religious and customary laws and is voidable as the petitioner was forced to put sindur on the head of the respondent under threat and coercion. The petitioner has not performed any religious function out of his free will and consent and prayed the learned Family Court to annul the so called marriage while passing a decree of nullity.”

As it turned out, the Division Bench enunciates in para 4 that, “The respondent appeared and filed her written statement. In her written statement, the respondent submitted that she is the wife of the petitioner and their marriage has been solemnized on 30.06.2013 under Hindu customs and at the time of marriage, the

father of the respondent gave the petitioner gift of gold, Rs. 10,00,000 (Ten Lacs) and other material. The respondent went to her matrimonial home and after passage of some time, the petitioner demanded a Maruti Car and tortured the respondent. The respondent denied all the averments made by the petitioner in his petition contending that respective allegations are false and fabricated. The respondent further submitted that she has filed a complaint case under Section 498 IPC vide Complaint Case No. 599C of 2015 which was pending in the Court of learned S.D.J.M., Lakhisarai.”

Do note, the Division Bench notes in para 34 that, “Section 7 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 reads as under:-

“7. Ceremonies for a Hindu marriage.-

(1) A Hindu marriage may be solemnized in accordance with the customary rites and ceremonies of either party thereto.

(2) Where such rites and ceremonies include the Saptapadi (that is, the taking of seven steps by the bridegroom and the bride jointly before the sacred fire), the marriage becomes complete and binding when the seventh step is taken.”

Most significantly, the Division Bench unmistakably holds in para 35 what consti-

tutes the cornerstone of this notable judgment that, “From bare perusal of the aforesaid provision, it is obvious that when such rites and ceremonies including Saptapadi the marriage becomes complete and binding, when seventh step is taken. Conversely, if ‘saptapadi’ has not been completed, the marriage would not be considered to be complete and binding. Now, the respondent has claimed that all rituals were performed and ‘saptapadi’ was complete. It is surprising that Pandit who performed the marriage ceremony has no knowledge about the essentials of the marriage and his deposition is not clear about the place of marriage. The photographs of the purported marriage cannot help the case of the respondent since it has not been properly exhibited and could not be considered admissible. Moreover, the photographs on their own could not reveal anything. It is not the case of the petitioner/appellant that no marriage was ever solemnized rather it is his contention that he was forced into marriage. Under the circumstances, even if the photographs are taken into consideration, it cannot be said that the marriage was being solemnized without any other influence. It has all along the contention of the petitioner that his marriage was under duress and the

same was rebuttable contention for which the onus was on the respondent, but she failed to discharge this onus. On the other hand, the petitioner’s case has been supported by witnesses who remained unimpeached during cross-examination.”

It cannot be glossed over that the Division Bench propounds in para 36 that, “The learned Family Court has adopted its own reasoning for disbelieving the case of the petitioner, but, in our opinion, the said view is flawed. The learned Family Court went on the premise that the petitioner did not immediately lodge the complaint either to the police or to the court and this gap makes the case of the petitioner disbelievable. As discussed herein before, the petitioner has explained the situation and there is no undue delay, even the petitioner took steps post marriage through his Officer in the Army Command. So, it cannot be said that the petitioner slept over the matter. Similarly, the learned Family Court has recorded that at the time of marriage, persons from both sides were present. But, where from the Family Court come to this conclusion is not forthcoming from the evidence of the respondent’s side. When the learned Family Court expressed his opinion that photographs has not been examined, it was not

open for the Family Court to rely on the same documents. Then, in absence of material to otherwise, the learned Family Court’s finding that not performing the ritual of ‘saptapadi’ does not mean that marriage was not performed, is devoid of any merit. Another aspect which has been taken into consideration by the learned Family Court is about respondent staying in her matrimonial home for a few days. But, where is the evidence to prove this contention? It remains only a statement in absence of any supportive evidence. If the respondent has resided in her matrimonial home after her marriage, there would have been corroborative evidence which is clearly lacking in the present case. Further, the learned Family Court relied on respondent lodging a case under Section 498(A) of IPC. But, dates and events makes it amply clear that the case was lodged by the respondent on 17.08.2015, i.e., after two years of the marriage. It does not appear to a co-incident that the said case was lodged after the Matrimonial Case No. 51 of 2013 came into existence. So, the case under Section 498(A) IPC being a counterblast to the matrimonial case, cannot be denied.”

Please read concluding on thedailyguardian.com

TOP OF THE DAY

ACTIVIST ABDUCTED,
BODY FOUND IN
MEXICO

MEXICO CITY: Authorities in western Mexico said on Sunday they have found the body of anti-mining activist Higinio Trinidad de la Cruz. Prosecutors said De la Cruz's body was found on a rural road in the state of Jalisco near the border with the neighbouring state of Colima. They said de la Cruz appeared to have been shot to death. The community group Tiskini said in a statement that de la Cruz had been abducted on Saturday. The group said he was an environmental and community activist in the Jalisco town of Ayotitlan. De la Cruz had opposed both illegal logging and iron ore mining that have altered the environment of the rural community.

SUICIDE BLAST
ROCKS NORTHWEST
PAKISTAN; 1 KILLED,
21 INJURED

PESHAWAR: At least one person was killed and 21, including 13 security personnel, injured in a suicide bombing by a TTP-splinter group targeting a security forces convoy in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. An explosives-laden tri-wheeler hit the security forces convoy on its way to Bannu from the North Waziristan district near the Azad Mandi in Bannu Cantonment on Sunday, police said. The bombing killed a pedestrian and injured 13 security personnel and eight civilians. Those injured were shifted to the Combined Military Hospital, Bannu. The condition of three security personnel is stated to be critical, according to the police.

PAUL LYNCH'S
'PROPHET SONG'
CLAIMS BOOKER
PRIZE

LONDON: Irish author Paul Lynch's "Prophet Song" was named the winner of the Booker Prize 2023, beating London-based Indian-origin author Chetna Maroo's debut novel "Western Lane", at a ceremony in London. Lynch, 46, won for his novel presenting a dystopian vision of Ireland in the grips of totalitarianism, something the author describes as "an attempt at radical empathy". Set in Dublin, "Prophet Song" tells the story of a family grappling with a terrifying new world in which the democratic norms they are used to begin to disappear. "I was trying to see into the modern chaos."

UAE: AIR ARABIA
LAUNCHES NEW
FLIGHTS TO PHUKET

SHARJAH: Air Arabia announced the launch of a new route to the enchanting island of Phuket, Thailand, from Sharjah. The non-stop flights will connect Sharjah International Airport with Phuket International Airport with a frequency of four weekly flights starting from 15th December, providing travellers with more convenient options to explore one of the most famous destinations in Southeast Asia. Adel Al Ali, Group Chief Executive Officer of Air Arabia, stated, "We are glad to introduce Phuket as the latest addition to our growing network, which will further expand our footprint in the Thai market."

FINAL DEAL

ISRAEL, HAMAS SEEK CEASEFIRE
EXTENSION; PLAN FINAL HOSTAGE SWAPTDG NETWORK
TEL AVIV

International mediators were pressing to extend a cease-fire in Gaza that has halted the deadliest Israeli-Palestinian violence in decades but is set to expire after Monday, as Israel and Hamas prepared for a fourth exchange of militant-held hostages for Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. Israel has said it would extend the cease-fire by one day for every 10 additional hostages released. Hamas has also said it hopes to extend the four-day truce, which came into effect Friday after several weeks of indirect negotiations mediated by the United States, Qatar and Egypt.

But Israel also says it remains committed to crushing Hamas' military capabilities and ending its 16-year rule over Gaza. That would likely mean expanding its ground offensive from devastated northern Gaza to the south, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have crammed into United Nations shelters, and where dire conditions persist despite the ramping up of aid delivery under the truce.

The release of dozens of people — mostly women and children — who were among

A THIRD RELEASE OF HOSTAGES AND PRISONERS

On Sunday, Hamas freed 17 more hostages, including 14 Israelis, in a third exchange under the four-day truce. In turn, Israel released 39 Palestinian prisoners. Most hostages appeared to be physically well, but 84-year-old Elma Avraham was airlifted to Israel's Soroka Medical Centre in life-threatening condition because of inadequate care, the hospital said. Those released Sunday included nine children and three Thai nationals. With a total of 17 freed, Thailand said it was pursuing the safe return of the 15 remaining Thai hostages, who were the largest single group of foreigners held by the militant group. Thais working in Israel are mostly employed as semi-skilled farm labourers. The Palestinian prisoners released were mostly teenagers accused of throwing stones and firebombs during confrontations with Israeli forces, or of less-serious offenses. Many Palestinians view prisoners held by Israel, including those implicated in attacks, as heroes resisting occupation. A fourth exchange is expected on Monday, for a total of 50 Israeli hostages and 150 Palestinian prisoners as agreed upon in the cease-fire deal. The freed hostages have mostly stayed out of the public eye, but details of their captivity have started to trickle out.

the roughly 240 captured by Hamas in its wide-ranging Oct 7 attack into southern Israel that ignited the war has rallied Israelis behind calls to return the rest of them. Sixty-two hostages have been released, one was freed by Israeli forces, and two were found dead inside Gaza.

"We can get all hostages back home. We have to keep pushing," two relatives of Abigail Edan, a 4-year-old girl and dual Israeli American citizen who was released

Sunday, said in a statement.

Families of the hostages have led mass marches and demonstrations accusing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of not doing enough to bring them home, and the mounting pressure could push him to extend the truce and make additional concessions to Hamas. But Israel also remains deeply shaken by the Oct 7 attack and determined to remove the militant group as a threat. "At the end of the day we

RESPIRE IN GAZA

More than 13,300 Palestinians have been killed since the war began, roughly two thirds of them women and minors, according to the Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza, which does not differentiate between civilians and combatants. More than 1,200 people have been killed on the Israeli side, mostly civilians killed in the initial attack. Some 77 soldiers have been killed in Israel's ground offensive. The pause has given some respite to Gaza's 2.3 million people after weeks of relentless Israeli bombardment that has driven three-quarters of the population from their homes and levelled entire neighbourhoods. But many say it's not nearly enough.

will return every one," Netanyahu said of the hostages, as he donned body armour and paid a rare visit Sunday to troops inside Gaza. "We are continuing until the end, until victory. Nothing will stop us."

Amani Taha, a widow and mother of three who fled from northern Gaza to stay with a host family in the southern city of Rafah, said she had only managed to get one canned meal from a UN distribution centre since the cease-fire began. She helps other families in the neighbourhood cook over firewood in return for food for her sons, ages 4 to 10.

She said the crowds have overwhelmed local markets and gas stations as people try to stock up on basics. "People were desperate and went out

to buy whenever they could," she said. "They are extremely worried that the war will return."

Palestinians who remained in northern Gaza, which was home to more than a million people before the war, have emerged to scenes of widespread devastation, with building after building either demolished or heavily damaged. The Israeli military has barred Palestinians who fled south from returning. The UN says the truce made it possible to scale up the delivery of food, water and medicine to the largest volume since the start of the war. But the 160 to 200 trucks a day is still less than half what Gaza was importing before the fighting, even as humanitarian needs have soared.

AMID CONFLICT

ELON MUSK TO MEET ISRAEL
PRESIDENT ISAAC HERZOG TODAYTDG NETWORK
TEL AVIV

Business tycoon Elon Musk is set to meet Israel President Isaac Herzog on Tuesday amid the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, The Times of Israel reported.

The Israeli President's Office confirmed the meeting between Tesla owner Elon Musk and Herzog. Herzog said that he would be joined in the meeting by some family members of hostages who are being held in Gaza, as reported by The Times of Israel. He further said that he will "emphasise the need to act to combat rising antisemitism online."

Musk, however, has recently come under fire for his endorsements of a virulently antisemitic trope on X, as well as the platform's complete failure to crack down on rampant disinformation and hate speech amid the ongoing war, The Times of Israel reported. The failure to combat antisemi-

tism on the app and comments viewed as anti-Semitic, shared by Musk himself resulted in several advertisers like Apple and Disney cutting off their spending on the microblogging site.

Amid the row over endorsing 'anti-semitic' post on X, the platform owner and Tesla CEO Elon Musk has said that the social media platform will file a "thermonuclear lawsuit" against the media watchdog 'Media Matters' alleging that it "completely misrepresented the real user experience" and "undermined free speech".

Musk is currently in Israel and is also expected to meet Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his visit. Earlier this week, Musk announced that X would be donating all revenue from advertising and subscriptions "associated with the war in Gaza" to hospitals in Israel and the Red Cross/Crescent in Gaza.

DEVASTATING DAMAGE

Turkey sends 500-ton aid to Herat
quake victims in AfghanistanTDG NETWORK
KABUL

A 500-ton aid shipment from Turkey was delivered to the earthquake-stricken province of Herat in Afghanistan, Khaama Press reported, citing the Afghanistan Red Crescent. The Afghanistan Red Crescent reported on Sunday that the Turkish aid materials had reached the province of Herat through the Torghundi port. According to the organization, these aid deliveries were handed over to government officials in Herat province in the presence of the Turkish ambassador, acting on behalf of the Turkish government. The provided assistance includes essential items such as food, clothing, spices, hygiene products, blankets,

and tents, Khaama Press reported.

During the handover ceremony, the Taliban officials announced that out of these aid packages, 300 tons would be distributed to the earthquake victims in Herat, while the remaining 200 tons would be allocated to recent returnees from neighbouring countries.

These aid deliveries from Turkey to Afghanistan come as recent reports state that Turkey plans to strengthen its friendly relations with Afghanistan through its TIKA (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency), Maarif, and the Turkish Red Crescent. They also plan to provide specialized medical care for Afghans shortly, according to Khaama Press.

US DIPLOMACY

'WILL NOT STOP UNTIL EVERY
HOSTAGE RETURNED TO THEIR
LOVED ONES': BIDENTDG NETWORK
WASHINGTON, DC

After the release of 13 hostages in Israel, US President Joe Biden has vowed unwavering commitment to ensuring the return of every hostage to their loved ones. While speaking at a press briefing on Sunday, President Biden said that he would not stop until every hostage is returned to their loved ones. He also underscored the 13 hostages, including an American, who were released yesterday under a deal brokered and sustained through intensive US diplomacy.

"We will not stop working until every hostage is returned to their loved ones. This has been the product of a lot of hard work and weeks of personal engagement for me and my team," he said.

The US President further highlighted that he has been in close contact with other West Asia countries.

"We have been in close contact with the leaders of Qatar, Egypt, and Israel, speaking with each one of them repeatedly over the past few weeks," he added.

He further said that he, his wife, and so "many Americans are praying" that 4-year-old Israeli-American Avigail Idan will be all right after she was released from Hamas captivity earlier on Sunday. Idan saw her mother killed in front of her in Kibbutz Be'eri during Hamas's October 7 terror attack and then ran to her father, who shielded her with his body, as terrorists then shot him dead, said Biden. She then ran to her neighbour's home, where she, along with those inside, was taken hostage in Gaza.

"What she endured is unthinkable," Biden emphasized.

CRIMINAL CHARGES

META SPOKESPERSON INCLUDED
IN RUSSIA'S WANTED LISTTDG NETWORK
WASHINGTON DC

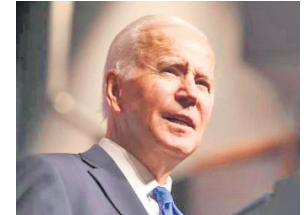
A spokesperson for US tech conglomerate Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, has been added to Russia's wanted list, according to an online database maintained by the country's interior ministry, Voice of America has reported.

The spokesperson, Andy Stone was reported on the list by Russian state agency Tass and independent news outlet Mediazona on Saturday.

In October, Russian authorities classified Meta as a "terrorist and extremist" organization, opening the way for possible criminal proceedings against Russian residents using its platforms.

Meta listed as a "terrorist and extremist" organization could lead to criminal investigations and fines for users. The interior ministry's database does not give details of the case against Stone, stating only that he is wanted on criminal charges.

Mediazona, the independent news website that covers Russia's opposition and prison system, claims that



noting that she celebrated her 4th birthday on Friday in captivity and that he had personally pressed for her release in a recent call with the emir of Qatar. Biden then expressed hope that the truce will be extended so that more hostages can be released. Moreover, US President Biden stated that he has pushed for a pause for weeks in order to get hostages out of Gaza and more humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. Roughly 200 trucks of aid have entered Gaza during the past three days of the truce, he said.

"Innocent children in Gaza are suffering greatly as well because of this war that Hamas has unleashed," leading to the deaths of thousands of civilians, Biden noted. He again stressed his plan to advance a two-state solution after the war.

"I get a sense that all the players in the region... are looking for a way to end this so the hostages are all released and (that) Hamas is... no longer in control any portion of Gaza," Biden said.

After the release of the hostages, hundreds of Israelis were seen cheering in Ofakim as the convoy made its way to Hatzertim Airbase near Beersheba, according to The Times of Israel. The Israel Defence Forces said that the Red Cross handed them 13 hostages near the border fence in northern Gaza. One was taken by helicopter to a hospital, and the other 12 were taken in a convoy to the Hatzertim airbase.

FOOD EXPORTS

Ukraine ships grain through
Black Sea amid Russia tensionsTDG NETWORK
KYIV

Grain thunders into rail cars and trucks zip around a storage facility in central Ukraine, a place that growing numbers of companies turned to as they struggled to export their food to people facing hunger around the world. Now, more of the grain is getting unloaded from over-crammed silos and heading to ports on the Black Sea, set to traverse a fledgling shipping corridor launched after Russia pulled out of a UN-brokered agreement this summer that allowed food to flow safely from Ukraine during the war.

"It was tight, but we kept working... we sought how to accept every ton of products needed for our partners," facility general director Roman Andreikiv said about the end of the grain deal in July. Ukraine's new corridor,

protected by the military, has now allowed him to "free up warehouse space and increase activity".

Growing numbers of ships are streaming toward Ukraine's Black Sea ports and heading out loaded with grain, metals and other cargo despite the threat of attack and floating explosive mines. It's giving a boost to Ukraine's agriculture-dependent economy and bringing back a key source of wheat, corn, barley, sunflower oil and other affordable food products for parts of Africa, the Middle East and Asia where local prices have risen and food insecurity is growing.

"We are seeing renewed confidence among commercial operators keen to take Ukrainian grain cargoes," said Munro Anderson, head of operations for Vessel Protect, which assesses war risks at sea and provides insurance with backing from

Lloyd's, whose members make up the world's largest insurance marketplace.

Ihor Osmachko, general director of Agroprosperis Group, one of Ukraine's biggest agricultural producers and exporters, says he's feeling "more optimistic than two months ago".

"At that time, it was completely unclear how to survive," he said.

Since the company's first vessel departed in mid-September, it says it has shipped more than 300,000 metric tons of grain to Egypt, Spain, China, Bangladesh, the Netherlands, Tunisia and Turkiye. After ending the agreement brokered by the UN and Turkiye, Russia has attacked Ukraine's Black Sea ports — a vital connection to global trade — and grain infrastructure, destroying enough food to feed over 1 million people for a year, the UK government said.

INVESTIGATION

PAK APEX ANTI-GRAFT BODY QUIZZES EX-PM
IMRAN KHAN IN CORRUPTION CASETDG NETWORK
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's incarcerated former Prime Minister Imran Khan was interrogated in jail by the country's anti-corruption watchdog in a multibillion rupee corruption case, according to a media report on Monday.

A National Accountability Bureau (NAB) team visited the 71-year-old Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party chief in the Adiala Jail on Sunday, a senior official of the anti-graft watchdog told the Dawn newspaper. The former premier has been incarcerated in the high-security jail in Rawalpindi since September 26 in various cases. The NAB team interrogated Khan for over two



Former Prime Minister Imran Khan

hours in connection with the charges he faces in the GBP 190 million (Rs 50 billion) Al-Qadir Trust corruption case, the report said.

The Al-Qadir Trust case is about the settlement of 190 million pounds, about Rs 50 billion, which the UK's National Crime Agency sent to Pakistan after recovering the amount from a Pakistani property tycoon. Khan, being the prime minister then, instead of depositing in the national treasury, allowed

the businessman to use the amount to partly settle a fine of about Rs 450 billion imposed by the Supreme Court some years ago.

The tycoon, in return, allegedly gifted about 57 acres of land to a trust set up by Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, to establish the Al-Qadir University in the Sohawa area of the Jhelum district of Punjab.

Officials from the accountability bureau have been visiting the Adiala Jail since November 15 to investigate the PTI chief's role in the case. The notice served to the accused says that the anti-corruption body took cognizance of the commission of offences of corruption and corrupt practices as defined under the NAB laws.

SEVERAL CROSSINGS

CHINA URGES MYANMAR CEASEFIRE, SUSTAINS BORDER DRILLS

TDG NETWORK
BEIJING

Beijing called for a cease-fire in Myanmar after a coalition of ethnic fighters seized several crossings along Myanmar's border with China in the past month.

However, China will continue live-firing drills on its side of the frontier aimed at "testing the mobility, border control abilities and firepower capabilities of the military units so that the People's Liberation Army is ready for any emergency", the army newspaper PLA Daily said.

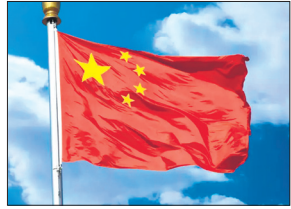
Myanmar heavily relies on trade with China, especially for importing manufactured goods and exporting agri-

cultural products. Unrest in Myanmar's border region has been a constant irritant to China, which nevertheless backed the military leaders who seized power in the Southeast Asian nation in 2021 from an elected government.

Yet China is highly wary of conflicts spilling over the shared border that is already rife with drug trafficking and people smuggling.

Cybercrime targeting Chinese victims has become a major concern, and China has pushed hard to eliminate the groups based in Myanmar and other countries and to send the perpetrators back to China for prosecution.

"China is highly concerned



about the conflicts in Myanmar and has urged all sides to cease fire and start peaceful dialogues to prevent the situation from escalating further," the PLA Daily said.

Meanwhile, the PLA will "safeguard border security and protect the lives and property of people living in the border areas".

The paper said the live-fire exercises that began on Saturday will "boost the sense of responsibility and vigilance of the troops" and will

continue for several days.

The Myanmar government has acknowledged losing at least three towns, and the fighting appears to have stopped almost all legal trade with China.

The Kyin-San-Kyawt border gate, one of the five major trading gates in Muse township in northern Shan state, was seized on Saturday.

Muse hosts the 105-Mile Trade Zone and has the greatest volume of trade with China. It is the fourth border crossing seized by the alliance forces in a month of intense fighting.

Chinese police have reportedly fired tear gas to drive away people who were sheltering close to the border fence.

WATCH



Israelis witness hostages' arrival by helicopter at Schneider Children's Medical Centre, Petah Tikva, released from Gaza Strip. (AP/PTI)

STRUGGLE

Afghan women journalists face unemployment challenges

TDG NETWORK
KABUL

The Afghanistan Women Journalist Association (AWJA) has conducted a survey about the situation of women journalists in Afghanistan within the past two years, wherein a majority of them said that "unemployment is one of their biggest challenges", as reported by the news channel.

Meena Habib, the head of AWJA said, "45 per cent of the participants said that unemployment is the biggest challenge ahead of women journalists."

"Five per cent of the participants are talking about the poverty of women journalists, while 10 per cent of



the participants said lack of access to information is the biggest challenge for women journalists," she said.

Moreover, some of the media-supporting organisations called on the Taliban to provide women journalists with all-out support, according to the news channel.

"We call on the Islamic Emirate to help women as much as it can in the fields of education, work and facilities," Taj Mohammad Ahmadzada, one of the members of the AWJA, said.

The women journalists in Afghanistan also expressed their concerns about fac-

ing an uncertain future and emphasised that they are struggling with the working environment.

"In many conferences, wherever women are invited, we go there but we face double standards. The security forces do not allow women to enter the conference," Hajar Jafari, a journalist, said.

"Females are facing many challenges compared to males. Women cannot get access to proper information in press conferences," said Marriam Madadi, another journalist.

Under the Taliban regime, at least 52 per cent of visual media outlets have ceased operations in Afghanistan

over the past two years, the news agency reported.

The Media Support for Afghanistan's Free Media (NAI) recently announced that more than half of the visual media outlets in the country have remained inactive.

After the Taliban took control of Afghanistan on August 15, 2021, press freedom in the country has taken a backseat, with several restrictions put into place for journalists.

Moreover, according to local media reports, after the political change in the country, 94 per cent of women journalists have become unemployed due to restrictions on their work.

NORMALCY

PRESIDENT ASSURES CALM AFTER ARRESTS IN SIERRA LEONE

TDG NETWORK
ABUJA

Sierra Leone's president said most leaders of attacks on the nation's main military barracks and prisons had been arrested and normalcy had returned across the country after a 24-hour curfew was relaxed to a dusk-to-dawn lockdown.

The attacks early Sunday morning surprised residents and security forces in the West African nation and raised fears of a possible coup in a troubled region.

But "most of the leaders" of the attacks now have been arrested and "calm has been restored," President Julius Maada Bio said in a Sunday night address.

Residents in the capital city



of Freetown were awoken by sounds of heavy gunfire as gunmen tried to break into the key armoury in the country's largest military barracks, located near the presidential villa.

They engaged in sustained gunfire with security forces and targeted major detention centres - including the central prison holding more than

2,000 inmates - and freed or abducted an unconfirmed number of people, authorities said.

Videos on social media appeared to show dozens of inmates pouring into the streets to hurriedly escape around the same time that security forces were engaged in a shootout with the attackers on the outskirts of the city.

The attacks deepened political tension in West and Central Africa where coups have surged, with eight military takeovers since 2020, including in Niger and Gabon this year. West Africa's regional economic bloc ECOWAS - of which Sierra Leone is a member - described the attacks as a plot "to acquire arms and disturb the peace and constitutional order" in the country.

SURVEILLANCE

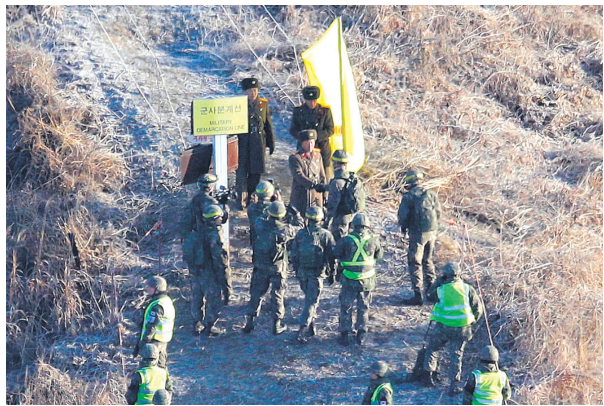
NORTH KOREA RESTORES BORDER POSTS AMID TENSIONS

TDG NETWORK
SEOUL

South Korea said on Monday North Korea is restoring frontline guard posts that it had dismantled during a previous period of inter-Korean rapprochement, deepening tensions that spiked over the North's recent spy satellite launch.

The two Koreas each earlier dismantled or disarmed 11 of their guard posts inside their heavily fortified border under a 2018 deal meant to ease frontline military confrontations. But the deal is now in danger of being scrapped, as both Koreas openly threaten to breach it amid rising animosities over the North's satellite launch.

After North Korea claimed to place its first military spy satellite into orbit last Tuesday, South Korea said it would partially suspend the



deal and resume front aerial surveillance in response.

South Korea called its step "a minimum defensive measure" to respond to the launch that it says involved the North's intentions of improving its missile technology as well as establishing a space-based surveillance system.

North Korea immediately slammed South Korea's decision, saying it would deploy powerful weapons at the

border in a tit-for-tat measure. The North said it also won't abide by the 2018 deal any longer.

In a background briefing for local journalists Monday, South Korea's military said it detected North Korea building guard posts and trenches at border sites where its dismantled guard posts once stood. The military said it found North Korea deployed troops and heavy weapons there.

REPORTS

Court documents allege Meta designed platforms to hook kids

TDG NETWORK
SAN FRANCISCO

Facebook parent Meta Platforms deliberately engineered its social platforms to hook kids and knew - but never disclosed - it had received millions of complaints about underage users on Instagram but only disabled a fraction of those accounts, according to a newly unsealed legal complaint described in reports from The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times.

The complaint, originally made public in redacted form, was the opening salvo in a lawsuit filed in late October by the attorneys general of 33 states.

Company documents cited in the complaint described several Meta officials acknowledging the company



designed its products to exploit shortcomings in youthful psychology such as impulsive behavior, susceptibility to peer pressure and the underestimation of risks, according to the reports.

Others acknowledged Facebook and Instagram also were popular with children under age 13 who, per com-

pany policy, were not allowed to use the service.

Meta said in a statement to The Associated Press that the complaint misrepresents its work over the past decade to make the online experience safe for teens, noting it has "over 30 tools to support them and their parents."

With respect to barring

younger users from the service, Meta argued age verification is a "complex industry challenge."

Instead, Meta said it favors shifting the burden of policing underage usage to app stores and parents, specifically by supporting federal legislation that would require

app stores to obtain parental approval whenever youths under 16 download apps.

One Facebook safety executive alluded to the possibility that cracking down on younger users might hurt the company's business in a 2019 email, according to the Journal report.

But a year later, the same executive expressed frustration that while Facebook readily studied the usage of underage users for business reasons, it didn't show the same enthusiasm for ways to identify younger kids and remove them from its platforms, the Journal reported.

The complaint noted that at times Meta has a backlog of up to 2.5 million accounts of younger children awaiting action, according to the newspaper reports.

POLLS

PAKISTAN ELECTION COMMISSION: IMRAN KHAN NOT PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

ASHISH SINHA
NEW DELHI

Pakistan's election commission has stated that former Prime Minister Imran Khan is not considered a "prisoner of conscience" but is in jail due to being accused in various cases, including the misuse of a diplomatic cable. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) responded to remarks made by Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

(PTI) party in its 24-point Charter of Demand ahead of the country's general elections on February 8. In the charter sent to the ECP on November 6 by PTI's Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan, Imran Khan, who is also the Chairman of the party, was described as a "prisoner of conscience." The party claimed victimization and persecution as a political entity. However, the ECP dismissed these

charges, stating that it has no role in the alleged victimization, as reported by The Express Tribune newspaper. The ECP, in its response to the charter on November 22, clarified, "Former PM and Chairman Imran Khan is in jail in different cases, including [the] cipher case." The term "prisoner of conscience" refers to an individual imprisoned for holding political or religious views not tolerated in their residing state.

Imran Khan, a cricketer-turned-politician, has been held in the high-security Adiala jail in Rawalpindi since September 26 on various charges. The ECP reiterated its "no-role" statement in response to PTI's claim that its leaders were coerced into giving interviews and statements against the party. The ECP stated it could not prevent any political leader from joining or leaving any party. Addressing PTI's claim of

not receiving a level-playing field, the ECP mentioned it had issued directions to all caretaker governments to provide a fair playing field to all parties. Responding to PTI's observation that the general elections were not occurring within the constitutionally stipulated 90-day period, the ECP explained that the Supreme Court had deliberated on the matter, and the election date of February 8, 2024, was set in

consultation with the presidential per the court's order. In response to PTI's allegation of pre-poll rigging by caretaker governments against the party, the ECP reiterated it had issued directions and urged the PTI to present specific and concrete proposals or evidence supporting its claims. The PTI had requested the ECP to instruct relevant authorities to allow the party to conduct political meetings, to which

the ECP assured that all political parties would be provided a level-playing field during the forthcoming elections. Without directly naming Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme leader Nawaz Sharif, PTI objected to a convicted and absconding prisoner receiving unprecedented protocol and permission to hold public meetings. The ECP confirmed that the issue would be addressed.

Regarding PTI's request for the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) to provide equal airtime to Khan and his party compared to PML-N and other parties, the ECP noted that the matter would be taken up with the caretaker federal government. The ECP also stated that the election schedule would be announced after the publication of the final list of constituencies.

RELEASE

TEASER OF AWARD-WINNING FILM 'KASTOORI' LAUNCHED



TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

Finally, the highly anticipated teaser of the National Award-winning film "Kastoori" launched, offering a glimpse into the compelling tale of childhood in search of the smell of happiness.

Directed by Vinod Kamble and presented by acclaimed filmmakers Anurag Kashyap and Nagraj Popatrao Manjule, delves into how children can help us rediscover the wonders of the world.

"Kastoori", a cinematic masterpiece that has garnered recognition and accolades at film festivals worldwide, tells the poignant story of a 14-year-old boy, who is a manual scavenger by profession and grapples with prejudice and teasing due to the scent of his body. The narrative unfolds as he navigates the challenges of education and self-discovery, all while encountering the enigmatic aroma of Kastoori.

Speaking about the teaser of Kastoori, Anurag Kashyap said, "Kastoori is an important film of our times. It's a kind of story that very few filmmakers can tell well. Vinod is a director who understands the world well and thus made a beautiful film around a heartbreaking story. That's what brought me and Nagraj together to present it to the world. We are sure that the audience will love the film as much as we did."

Filmmaker Nagraj Popatrao Manjule mentioned, "Kastoori is a real story being told by a filmmaker who knows the circumstances

and the difficulties faced by the kids of manual scavengers. He's made such a good film around it and won a National Award for it. Me and Anurag are sure that the story will resonate with every audience member."

The impactful storyline and extraordinary storytelling style of "Kastoori" have caught the attention of many industry professionals, which led to its selection at 13 International Film Festivals.

"Kastoori" has already left a mark across the globe by winning prestigious accolades such as the Best Children's Film Award and Swarna Kamal at the 67 National Film Awards in 2019, a FIPRESCI Special Jury Mention at the Aurangabad International Film Festival 2020, and the Best Actor Award for Samarth Sonawane at the same festival.

Notably, Kastoori has also earned nominations for Best Film, Best Director, and Best Child Actor at the New York Indian Film Festival.

Director Vinod Kamble shared his excitement over the teaser launch, stating, "This movie is a labour of love, and the teaser release marks a significant milestone. In a world where uniqueness is often ridiculed, Kastoori tells a universal tale of resilience, education, and the aromatic scent of self-discovery. We hope the audience embraces the film's message and connects with the characters on a personal level."

The film is set to hit cinemas on 8 December.

PICTURE PERFECT

Sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik created a sand sculpture of Lord Jagannath using 5000 flowers on the occasion of Kartika Purnima. (ANI)



CONCERT

Westlife performs in Delhi for 'The Wild Dreams' Tour

TDG NETWORK NEW DELHI

Sunday night at JLN Stadium was a captivating spectacle, with animated visuals illuminating the background, the charming Irish boy band Westlife delivering their iconic hits, and enthusiastic fans swaying to timeless tunes.

Following performances in Mumbai and Bengaluru, the renowned Westlife quartet comprising Nicky Byrne, Kian Egan, Shane Filan, and Mark Feehily delighted the Delhi-NCR audience. The heartthrobs of the 90s lived up to expectations, concluding their India leg of "The Wild Dreams" Tour on a high note.

Commencing with a flawlessly executed opening sequence, the boy band members took the stage by storm, delivering a spirited rendition of the pop hit "Starlight." This was followed by cascades of confetti mysteri-



ously appearing, adding to the dynamic atmosphere. "We love you India. We have been waiting for many years to come to India and do the concert, tonight is going to be the best of the lot. Are you ready to party, Delhi?" asked one of the band members to the pumped-up audience.

The Irish-band didn't wait too long to make music lovers walk down the 90s lane as they crooned to their nostalgic classics "Uptown Girl", "I Lay My Love On You", "Seasons in the Sun", "If I Let You Go", "My Love", and "Swear it again" -- the band's first single from their debut album in 1999. "When we

started this band we were a lot younger than what we are now, but so were you guys," said 43-year-old Kian Egan as he joked about how the group and its audience have grown old together.

Much to the delight of everyone in attendance, the band in donned coordinating silver basket coats as they treated the audience to a medley of ABBA tunes. The setlist included classics such as "Mamma Mia", "Take a Chance on Me", "Dancing Queen", "Thank You for the Music", and "Money Money Money." With hands waving in the air and voices harmonizing with every lyric, the audience, especially the

older millennials, savored every moment of the concert. "I know it's a cliché, but it truly was a dream come true for me. Having grown up listening to Westlife, witnessing their live performance after all these years is nothing short of a blessing. It feels surreal. Undoubtedly, this is the best concert I've ever attended," expressed 28-year-old Piyush Sharma, who attended the event with his wife.

Originating in Sligo, Ireland, the band initially formed under the name "JOYOU" in 1997, founded by Egan, Feehily, and Filan, with the subsequent addition of Byrne and Brian McFadden a year later. The group underwent a name change to Westlife.

Their debut single was released in April 1999, and since then, they have launched a total of 12 studio albums, the most recent being "Wild Dreams" in 2021.

PROJECTS

PAVAIL GULATI JOINS SHAHID KAPOOR, POOJA HEGDE IN ACTION-THRILLER 'DEVA'

TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

Actor Pavail Gulati is all set to join the action-thriller "Deva" starring Shahid Kapoor and Pooja Hegde.

In a significant development, Pavail Gulati has officially joined the lead ensemble cast of the highly anticipated action thriller, featuring Shahid Kapoor in the lead role, as per the statement.

Helmed by Rosshan Andrews, known for Malayalam films like "Salute" and "Kayamkulam Kochunni". The film is titled "Deva". The film is being produced by Siddharth Roy Kapur and Zee Studios.

Pavail Gulati, known for his versatile performances, expressed his enthusiasm about joining the project,



stating, "I am incredibly excited to embark on this exhilarating journey and absolutely thrilled to collaborate with exceptional talents like Shahid Kapoor and the amazing director Rosshan Andrews. It's my first with Roy Kapur Films and Zee Studios, this opportunity not only represents a significant milestone for

me but also a challenge that I wholeheartedly welcome and am eager to embrace. It's going to be a fun ride."

'Deva' promises to be a rollercoaster ride of suspense, deceit, and high-stakes action.

'Deva', starring Shahid Kapoor, Pooja Hegde and Pavail Gulati in the lead role is produced by Zee Studios

and Roy Kapur Films and directed by Rosshan Andrews, has gone into production and is scheduled to explode on screens worldwide on 11th October 2024 on the auspicious occasion of Dussehra.

On the auspicious occasion of Dussehra, Shahid announced the title of his next and shared the first-look poster.

In the poster, Shahid could be seen carrying a rugged look while dressed in a white shirt and trousers.

He wore a pair of sunglasses and carried a gun in one of his hands.

Sharing the still, he wrote, "DEVA in theatres on Dussehra 11th October 2024."

The film will be released in theatres on Dussehra 2024.

'HANGOVER' FRANCHISE

BRADLEY COOPER SAYS HE WOULD DO 'HANGOVER 4' IN A HEARTBEAT



TDG NETWORK LOS ANGELES

Hollywood star Bradley Cooper says if there is another instalment of the "Hangover" franchise, one of the earliest hits of his career, he would return in a heartbeat. The Oscar-nominated actor, who is currently promoting his directorial effort "Maestro", says he loves the team behind the comedy franchise about four friends who go on a misadventure in Las Vegas. The 2009 comedy, directed by Todd Phillips, featured Cooper, Ed Helms, Zack Galifianakis and Justin Bartha in key roles.

"I would probably do 'Hangover 4' in an instant," Cooper said. "Just because

I love Todd, I love Zach, I love Ed so much, I probably would," he said during an appearance on "The New Yorker Radio Hour". The third film in the franchise released in 2013 and opened to largely negative reviews.

Cooper believes that Phillips, who had a major critical success in "Joker", is unlikely to revisit the franchise.

"I don't think Todd is ever going to do that," he said. "Maestro", a biographical drama film, revolves around the relationship between American composer Leonard Bernstein and his wife Felicia Montealegre. Cooper directs and stars in the movie.

SEQUEL

WILLEM DAFOE REVEALS HIS CHARACTER IN 'BEETLEJUICE 2'

TDG NETWORK LOS ANGELES

Hollywood star Willem Dafoe has revealed that he plays a police officer in the afterlife in Tim Burton's much-hyped sequel to the 80s classic "Beetlejuice".

The film will see Michael Keaton reprise his titular character. Winona Ryder and Catherine O'Hara are also returning in the movie.

In an interview with Variety, Dafoe said plays as an undead action star turned detective.

"I haven't seen any footage yet, but it was fun to



do," Dafoe said.

"I play a police officer in the afterlife, so I'm a dead person. And in life I was a B-movie action star, but I had an accident and that's what sent me to the other

side."

Dafoe said because of his character's skill set, he becomes a detective in the afterlife but that new role is "colored by the fact of who I was (when I was alive): a

B movie action star."

The original Beetlejuice featured Alec Baldwin and Geena Davis as recently deceased newlyweds whose spirits remain stuck in their country residence. When a new insufferable couple (O'Hara, Jeffrey Jones) and their morose teenage daughter (Ryder) move into the house, self-proclaimed bio-exorcist Beetlejuice is summoned to help scare them away.

Jenna Ortega and Justin Theroux also star in the movie, set to arrive in theatres on 6 September 2024.

BRAIN PICKING



When the truth is on your side, you don't need support.



—HRITHIK ROSHAN (Bollywood Actor)

REALITY SHOW

KAJOL, RANI MUKERJI REUNITE ON KWK 8

TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

Bollywood divas Rani Mukerji and Kajol have been captured on the famous "Koffee" couch getting all candid about Karan Johar's directorial debut "Kuch Kuch Hota Hai", 25 years ago. Both the actors starred in the film along with Shah Rukh Khan.

Taking to Instagram, Johar who is hosting Season 8 of "Koffee with Karan" shared a promo video of the show and captioned it, "We've hit the (?) button hard enough to bring my first leading ladies—Kajol & Rani back on the Koffee couch & it's nostalgia in the purest form!!!! As soon as the video was uploaded, fans and followers flooded the comment section. One of the users wrote, "This looks like a riot...waiting eagerly."

Another user commented, "Can't waitttt ICONS FOREVER"

"I'm totally here for it! It's going to be an epic episode (?)," another user commented. In the beginning of the promo, Rani is heard telling Karan Johar, "I want to expose you."

To which the filmmaker responded, "Don't say such things," while Kajol added, "I like this show already." Reminiscing about "Kuch Kuch Hota Hai" and his father, Yash Johar, Karan Johar said, "I remember we were shooting Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, he was outside Mehboob Studios on the road talking, and Sanjay Dutt said, "Yash Ji, aap yahan kya kar rahe ho?" So, he



says "Mere bete ne set lagaya hai main road par aagaya hun"

During one of the conversations, Rani also reminded Karan of how he snatched food from her and hit her during the shoot of "KKHH".

Rani Mukerji says, "You snatched food from my hand, you hit me." In his defence, Karan says, "I didn't hit you." Rani Mukerji says, "What lies!" Fueling the fire, Kajol jokes, "Abuse! It was abuse"

Kajol also at one point in the show declares that she is walking out. "I can't take it anymore" and pretending that she is angry and got up from the couch. "I am staging a walk out right now. Cut!" "Kuch Kuch Hota Hai", released on 16 October, 1998 and went on to bag several awards and received an overwhelming response from the audience and critics alike. Apart from the lead cast, the flick also starred Salman Khan, Archana Puran Singh, Anupam Kher, and Johny Lever.

The movie proved to be a trendsetter of the '90s. From cementing the trend of gifting friendship bands on Friendship Day to SRK's "cool" pendant and Anjali's bob-cut, the film set the pace for many new trends. "Koffee With Karan" season 8 streams on Disney+ Hotstar.

TEASER

FIRST LOOK OF RISHAB SHETTY IN 'KANTARA CHAPTER 1' UNVEILED

TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

Following the massive success of "Kantara", the makers of the highly anticipated film "Kantara Chapter 1" on Monday unveiled the first look poster and teaser starring Rishab Shetty.

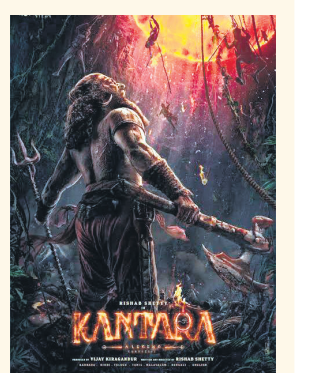
Taking to Instagram, the film's production house Hombale Films, treated fans to a glimpse of Rishab Shetty's look.

They captioned the post, "Step into the land of the divine Presenting #KantaraChapter1 First Look & #Kantara1 Teaser in 7 languages."

The teaser video gave a glimpse of the captivating look of actor-director Rishab Shetty and his world in the film.

The clip concluded with seven different ragas of music representing each of the seven languages in which "Kantara Chapter 1" will be released.

In the posters, Rishab is seen looking away from the camera, striking a pose in a



dhoti and holding a trishul and axe in his hands.

It has now been revealed that Kantara 2 is officially titled "Kantara Chapter 1". Rishab Shetty, who was the writer, actor, and director of the film, also received acclaim.

"Kantara" was released on 30 September and got a good response from the audience for its storyline and visuals.

Set in the fictional village of Dakshina Kannada, Kantara follows the character of Shetty, who is playing a Kambala champion who has a faceoff with an upright Forest Range officer.

PROSTATE CANCER IN YOUNG MALES



DR. SUMIT SHARMA

Prostate Cancer is a cancer which originates in the Prostate Gland. It is a small walnut-shaped gland in males that produces the seminal fluid that nourishes and transports sperm. Generally considered to be common in older male population but there's been an increase in early onset prostate cancer in younger males around the world. Prostate Cancer can be aggressive sometimes or can remain confined to the Prostate Gland but when detected early, it has the best chance of treatment success.

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS OF PROSTATE CANCER?

The cells in the prostate gland sometimes develop changes in their DNA. The changes tell the cells to grow and divide more rapidly and in unregulated manner than normal cells do. A family history of prostate cancer may increase the risk for early onset Prostate Cancer. Obesity has also been linked to developing a higher risk of aggressive prostate cancer. Smoking and a diet high in red meat or high-fat dairy products and low in fruits and vegetables may increase the risk of developing prostate cancer.

SYMPTOMS OF PROSTATE CANCER

When the cancer reaches an advance stage, it may exhibit symptoms such as:

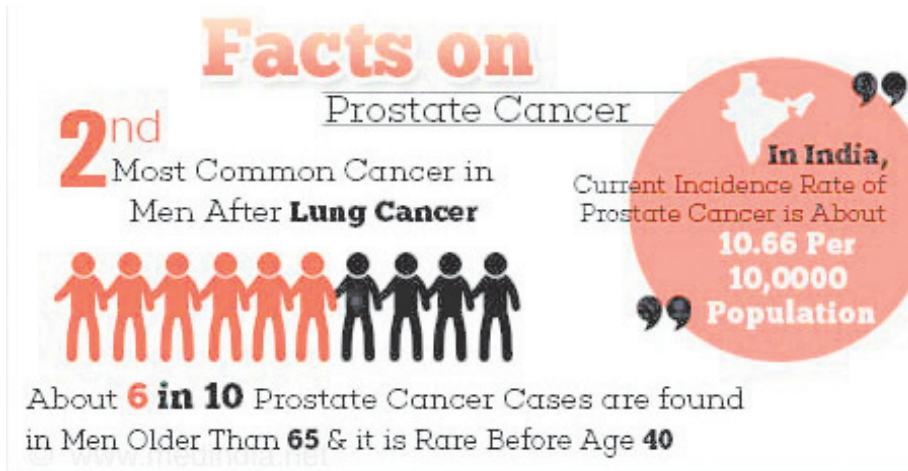
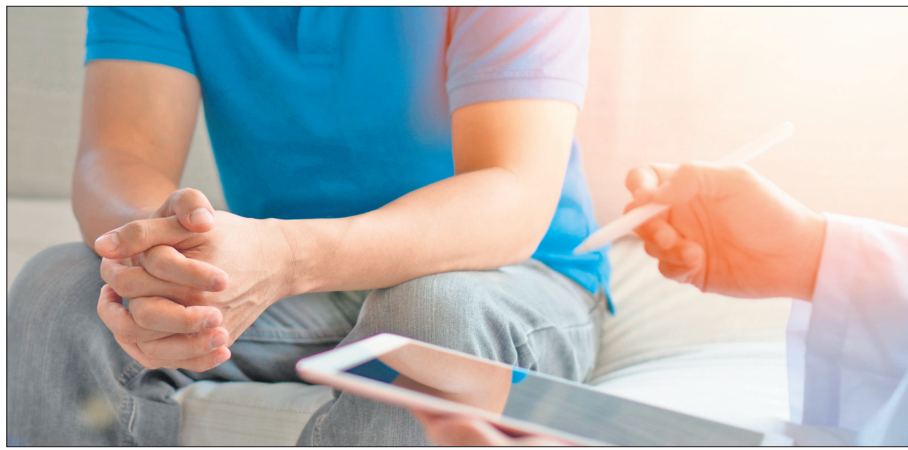
- Trouble urinating
 - Decreased force in the stream of urine
 - Hematuria - Blood in the urine
 - Hematospermia- Blood in the semen
 - Unexplained weight loss
 - Erectile dysfunction
- Investigation carried out to diagnose Prostate Cancer -

The doctor would prescribe some tests to diagnose the disease and move ahead with the treatment.

- **Digital Rectal Exam (DRE):** A doctor inserts a gloved, lubricated finger into the rectum to examine the prostate for any abnormalities.
- **Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) test:** A blood test that measures the level of PSA, a protein produced by the prostate gland. Elevated PSA levels may indicate the presence of prostate cancer.
- **Biopsy:** A procedure in which a small sample of prostate tissue is removed and examined under a microscope to check for the presence of cancer cells.

TREATMENT FOR PROSTATE CANCER-

- **Chemotherapy -** Conservative treatment using high dosage medications are used to reduce the size of the tumour.
- **Radiotherapy -** Using high energy waves to reduce or kill the tumour.
- **Radical Prostatectomy -** Removal of the prostate, including the prostate gland



and surrounding tissues. The surgery may be open or laparoscopic.

- **Immunotherapy -** Medications are used to activate the body's immune system to recognise and kill cancer cells.
- **Hormone Therapy -** Tes-

Symptoms to look out for include:

- Needing to urinate more frequently, often during the night
- Blood in your urine or semen
- Difficulty starting to urinate
- Back pain, hip pain or pelvis pain
- Taking a long time to urinate or a weak flow of urine
- Unexplained weight loss

tosterone helps the prostate cancer cells grow. Hormone therapy stops the body from making testosterone or stops it from getting to cancer cells.

PREVENTION OF PROSTATE CANCER

A healthy, nutritious and balanced diet is crucial to avoid maximum number of diseases. Choose a healthy diet with a variety of fruits and vegetables and whole grains. Food sources of vitamins and nutrients are considered the best.

The best way would be to exercise and maintain a healthy weight. Start slow and increase the frequency of exercises. One must exercise at least 2-3 times a week.

Seek support from family, friends, or support groups. It always helps to know you are not alone. Consult a healthcare professional if you have a very high risk of prostate cancer, you and your doctor may consider medications or other treatments to reduce the risk. In conclusion, an early detection and timely treatment can significantly improve the chances of successful management and recovery from prostate cancer. It's crucial to consult a healthcare professional for personalised advice and guidance.

The author is the Director and Head of Department in Urology, Uro-Oncology, Andrology, Uro-Robotics at Sanar International Hospitals.

Exploring the latest aesthetic medicine trends driving India's medical tourism



DR. AJAY RANA

In recent years, India has emerged as a global hub for medical tourism, attracting individuals from across the globe seeking high-quality healthcare services at competitive prices. While traditional medical treatments such as cardiac surgeries and orthopedic procedures have been the primary drivers of medical tourism in India, there is a burgeoning trend that is capturing the attention of a new wave of international visitors - Aesthetic Medicine. The realm of Aesthetic Medicine, encompassing cosmetic procedures and non-invasive treatments, is witnessing a surge in popularity, contributing significantly to the country's medical tourism landscape.

THE AESTHETIC MEDICINE BOOM

Aesthetic Medicine, once considered a luxury for the elite, has become increasingly accessible and mainstream. India, with its advanced medical infrastructure and skilled practitioners, is at the forefront of this global transformation. From advanced facial rejuvenation techniques to body contouring procedures, the Indian Aesthetic Medicine landscape is evolving rapidly, offering a diverse range of treatments to cater to different aesthetic needs.

CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY IN AESTHETIC PROCEDURES

One of the key drivers behind the influx of medical tourists is the integration of cutting-edge technology in aesthetic procedures. India has embraced state-of-the-art technologies such as laser therapy, non-surgical facelifts, and advanced body contouring methods. These technologies not only ensure better results but also minimize downtime, making them attractive to international

patients seeking efficient and effective treatments.

COSMETIC DERMATOLOGY

Cosmetic dermatology is at the heart of the Aesthetic Medicine boom in India. Advanced laser treatments for skin resurfacing, pigmentation correction, and tattoo removal have gained immense popularity. The country's dermatologists are utilizing cutting-edge technologies to address a myriad of skin concerns, making India a go-to destination for those seeking flawless and rejuvenated skin.

HAIR RESTORATION

India's prowess in hair restoration procedures is drawing individuals from around the world. With skilled trichologists and state-of-the-art facilities, the country is a frontrunner in providing advanced hair transplant surgeries, helping individuals regain their confidence and youthful appearance.

NON-SURGICAL AESTHETIC PROCEDURES

The demand for non-surgical procedures such as Botox, dermal fillers, and thread lifts is on the rise in India. These minimally invasive treatments, performed by certified practitioners, offer quick and effective results with minimal downtime, making them attractive options for medical tourists looking to enhance their features without undergoing surgery.

RISE OF SPECIALISED AESTHETIC CLINICS

Specialised aesthetic clinics focusing solely on cosmetic procedures have become increasingly prevalent across India. These clinics house experts in various fields of Aesthetic Medicine, providing a one-stop solution for patients seeking a range of treatments. The presence of such specialized clinics caters to the specific needs of medical tourists who often prefer dedicated centers with a comprehensive range of services.

AFFORDABLE AESTHETIC PROCEDURES

Compared to many Western countries, aesthetic procedures in India are often more afford-



able without compromising on quality. The cost advantage has positioned India as a top destination for medical tourists seeking cosmetic enhancements. The affordability factor extends beyond the procedures themselves to include accommodation, travel, and post-treatment care, making India an appealing choice for those looking for cost-effective aesthetic solutions.

WORLD-CLASS MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

The surge in demand for aesthetic procedures has prompted a corresponding rise in the number of skilled and experienced professionals in the field. India boasts a pool of world-class plastic surgeons, dermatologists, and aesthetic specialists who are well-versed in the latest techniques and trends. The expertise of these professionals is a significant draw for medical tourists, assuring them of quality care and optimal outcomes.

TOURIST-FRIENDLY INFRASTRUCTURE

India's rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and warm hospitality make it an attractive destination for medical tourists. The presence of world-class hotels, transportation facilities, and tourist attractions enhance

es the overall experience for individuals combining medical treatments with leisure travel.

HOLISTIC AESTHETIC TOURISM PACKAGES

Recognizing the diverse needs of medical tourists, many Indian clinics now offer holistic aesthetic tourism packages. These packages often include a combination of cosmetic procedures, wellness treatments, and leisure activities, providing a well-rounded experience for international patients.

This approach not only enhances the overall appeal of India as a medical tourism destination but also contributes to the country's reputation as a hub for wellness and rejuvenation.

CULTURAL AND TOURISTIC APPEAL

India's rich cultural heritage and diverse tourist attractions add another layer to the allure of medical tourism.

Visitors seeking aesthetic procedures can also immerse themselves in the vibrant tapestry of Indian culture, explore historical landmarks, and experience the country's culinary delights. The combination of aesthetic treatments with a cultural and touristic experience makes India a unique and enticing destination for medical tourists.

MEDICAL SPAS AND WELLNESS RETREATS

India's diverse cultural heritage and scenic landscapes provide the perfect backdrop for wellness retreats and medical spas. Integrating traditional holistic practices with modern aesthetic treatments, these facilities offer a comprehensive approach to beauty and well-being, attracting wellness-conscious travelers from around the globe.

CONCLUSION

India's Aesthetic Medicine landscape is undergoing a remarkable transformation, driven by a convergence of technology, skilled professionals, affordability, and a focus on holistic patient experiences. As the country continues to position itself as a global leader in medical tourism, the fusion of beauty and healthcare becomes increasingly evident. The journey towards unveiling beauty in India goes beyond cosmetic enhancements; it embraces the holistic well-being of individuals seeking both aesthetic and cultural enrichment.

The author is an internationally renowned Dermatologist, Surgeon & Aesthetic Physician (www.drajayrana.in/). Also, the Founder and Director of ILAMED & Dermalyn Aesthetics. He can be reached at drajayrana@ilamed.org

HEART-HEALTHY NUTRACEUTICALS: SUPPORTING CARDIOVASCULAR WELLNESS



FOOD IS MEDICINE

DR ANISH DESAI

Heart disease continues to be a significant global health issue, accounting for millions of deaths annually. Although traditional medical care is still essential for heart health management, nutraceuticals have become increasingly well-known as an additional tactic for preserving and improving cardiovascular health. These bioactive substances, frequently present in food and dietary supplements, can provide a complementary and all-natural method of maintaining heart health.

TULSI:

Tulsi, or Holy Basil, shows promise in reducing blood pressure and enhancing cardiovascular health due to its potential to lower stress and inflammation. Its traditional use and ongoing research highlight its potential as a natural remedy for heart-related conditions.

GARLIC:

Garlic is a common ingredient in Indian cooking and Ayurvedic medicine, and it may benefit cholesterol and blood pressure. Garlic is a valuable food for maintaining cardiovascular health because of its historical use. Current research indicates that its bioactive chemicals can help lower cholesterol and manage blood pressure, leading to enhanced heart health.

CURCUMIN:

Curcumin has anti-oxidative, anti-inflammatory, and anti-proliferative effects associated with calcium homeostatic properties. These functions are associated both with a reduction of BP levels and prevention of vascular smooth cell proliferation.

FENUGREEK SEEDS:

Fenugreek seeds have drawn interest for their ability to improve blood sugar regulation and decrease cholesterol. Fenugreek leaves are a great addition to both traditional Indian cuisines and modern dietary choices since research suggests that their soluble fiber and other bioactive components may help enhance heart health and better manage blood sugar levels.



COENZYME Q10 (COQ10) :

Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) is a potent antioxidant, safeguarding cells from reactive oxygen species (ROS) damage. CoQ10 exhibits anti-inflammatory properties, reducing inflammation and promoting overall cellular health. Foods that contain CoQ10 are spinach, broccoli, and cauliflower. Some nuts and seeds, like peanuts and sesame seeds, provide small amounts, whereas whole grains, like wheat germ, also contain CoQ10.

RESVERATROL : Resveratrol is a polyphenol primarily found in grapes, especially in their skins and red wine. It offers potent antioxidant properties and is linked to potential cardiovascular benefits, including supporting the health of blood vessels and reducing oxidative stress. Other sources include blueberries, cranberries, and peanuts.

In conclusion, novel foods with potential heart health benefits have been gaining attention, offering diverse options to support cardiovascular well-being. When included in a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle, these innovative and traditional ingredients with roots in different cultures offer delightful pathways for enhancing cardiac health.

Dr Anish Desai is MD, Clinical Pharmacologist and Nutraceutical Physician, Founder and CEO, IntelliMed Healthcare Solutions.

GURU NANAK DEV JI'S TEACHINGS GUIDE US ON THE PATH GODWARDS



SANTRAAJINDER SINGH JI
MAHARAJ

Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj, is the founder of the Sikh tradition and the first of the ten Sikh Gurus. He was born in the year 1469 in Talwandi, Pakistan. Perfect Gurus like Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj come to this earth to reunite souls with God. Such Enlightened Beings come to this earth as a ray of light and through their spiritual radiance, they help merge the souls, trapped in the cycle of birth and death, back with God. Among

his main teachings were "Kirat Karo, Naam Japo, Vand Chhako (Earn your living, Remember God, Share with Others)". It means that while earning our own living, we shall remember God at all times and share and serve others. Guru Nanak Dev Ji helped countless souls walk the path back to God. He traveled far and wide to spread the message of human fellowship under one Universal Parent, God. He taught that regardless of our

nationality or faith, we are all connected through God manifested as Shabd reverberating throughout Creation. He exhorted all to connect with this Power of God within to realize God.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj came to alleviate the pains of the world. We are forever grappling with difficulties because our attention is always attached to the outer world. Guru Nanak Dev Ji helped turn our attention back to God because all peace, bliss, and happiness can be found when we realize our closeness with God. As we invert our attention, flowers of God's bliss blossom amidst the sorrows of the desert of the outer world. Unaffected by our



outer challenges, we enjoy the inner peace and bliss of God. Saints such as Guru Nanak Dev Ji come to fill the goblet of our soul with Shabd or the Light and Sound of God.

The Shabd nourishes our soul and puts it in such ecstasy that our attention is always focused on God. Our soul, which is conscious, connects with the Ocean of All-consciousness to live in a state of eternal peace and ineffable bliss. Our path back to God is illuminated by the Light of God experienced within.

Our soul, nourished and guided by the Light of God, is then able to soar back to God.

As humans, we may call God by many names, but what is

important is that we remember God. We are, instead, engaged in remembering the world. We have thoughts and desires which drag our attention into the world.

We have to turn our thoughts to God. This we can do through Simran, the mental repetition of God's name.

The sole purpose of this human birth is to realize God. We are fortunate that we have the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj to guide us on the path back to God.

We celebrate the lives of such great saints when we embed their teachings in our lives and walk on the path shown by them so that our soul can merge back into its Source.

HOW DOES SMART TEMPLE MISSION BENEFIT THE TEMPLES INDUSTRY



GIREESH KULKARNI

THE AIM OF SMART TEMPLE MISSION:

The Aim of Smart Temple Mission is to revolutionise the gap between devotees and pilgrim experience through technological convenience; it is a unique and ambitious initiative to modernise temples. The primary objective is to implement a "Devotee-Centric Approach for Convenience" through the Smart Temples Mission. At its core, this shared mission seeks to enhance not only temple and pilgrim tourism but also to play a pivotal role in fostering the growth of temple-dependent economies.

The focus revolves around creating a seamless and convenient

experience for devotees throughout their spiritual journeys. By integrating technology into the temple experience, the Smart Temples Mission ensures that devotees can navigate the sacred spaces with ease, enriching their connection with spirituality. As the mission progresses, it aims to redefine the way people engage with and experience temples, making these sacred spaces more accessible and relevant in the digital age.

Critical components of this mission include safety measures, security protocols, surveillance systems, disaster planning, festival coordination, food management, augmented reality (AR),



virtual reality (VR), funds management, and more. Moreover, smart temples also play a role in environmental sustainability by efficiently managing resources like electricity and water.

THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN SMART TEMPLE MISSION

Augmented Reality (AR) Immersion: Smart Temples Mission involves the integration of Augmented Reality (AR) technology to offer devotees immersive and educational experiences.

Through AR-guided tours, visitors can delve into the temple's history, significance, and rituals. This innovative approach creates a more engaging divine experience, providing a deeper connection for those seeking spiritual enrichment.

Efficient Crowd Management & use of Robotic Assistance:

In response to the need for efficient crowd management, tem-

ples have implemented electronic Queue Management Systems. These systems utilise centralised control mechanisms to regulate crowd flow, providing real-time information on wait times. The result is a significant reduction in waiting times, ultimately enhancing overall visitor satisfaction and improving the overall pilgrimage experience.

In a bid to streamline operational tasks, some temples have embraced the assistance of robotics. These robots serve various functions, acting as guides, sources of information, or performers of simple tasks. The integration of robotics not only contributes to overall operational efficiency but also ensures a unique and hassle-free exposure

DIGITALISATION OF DONATION IN TEMPLE ECOSYSTEM:

The rise of digitalization has made easy accessibility for temple donations, introducing a

seamless avenue for devotees to make contributions through online platforms. This transformation is an important move that has brought in new wealth for the temple economy. The accessibility and smooth transaction of offerings via digital channels not only modernise the donation process but also provide a more convenient and efficient way for devotees to express their support.

Balancing Tradition and Innovation:

This approach to incorporate technology underscores the commitment of temples to evolve with the times while preserving the sacred essence of their traditions. The integration of modern solutions aims to make temple visits more accessible, engaging, and memorable, reflecting a harmonious blend of tradition and innovation.

Overall, the "Smart Temples Mission" represents a forward-thinking approach to the intersection of technology, spirituality, and convenience.

By embracing innovation, this initiative not only modernises the temple experience for devotees but also holds the potential to transform the economic landscape of temple-dependent regions, ensuring a harmonious blend of tradition and progress.

Gireesh Kulkarni, is the founder of Temple Connect & International Temples Convention & Expo (ITCX).



DETACHMENT (ART OF LETTING GO) ACCELERATES MANIFESTATIONS



THE KARMAS

SIDHARRTH S KUMAR

When it comes to manifestation, one of the most essential yet frequently neglected components is the art of letting go. This is actually one of the most vital aspects. Through the practice of detachment from the outcome, the universe is able to work its magic and bring about the fulfilment of your desires.

WHAT EXACTLY IS DETACHMENT?

The act of abandoning your attachment to a particular outcome while yet retaining your goal and intention is what we mean when we talk about detachment. It is about having faith that the universe will help you achieve your goals in the most effective manner and at the most appropriate moment.

WHY IS DETACHMENT SO IMPORTANT?

Manifestation requires detachment for a number of reasons, including the following: In situations where we are overly

connected to a particular outcome, we may unwittingly generate resistance, which makes it more difficult for our wishes to materialize. This prevents resistance from occurring. Through detachment, we are able to let go of this resistance and make room for the universe to perform its enchantment without interference. Detachment is an act of faith when it comes to the cosmos, and it helps to foster trust.

We are able to generate a potent energy that is beneficial to the process of manifestation when we let go of our attachments and have faith that everything will function as it should.

There are instances when our wishes come to fruition at unexpected times or in unexpected ways. This enables divine timing to take place.

Through the practice of detachment, we have the ability to grant the universe the liberty to bring our aspirations into reality in the most optimal manner and at the most opportune moment.



ADVICE FOR PUTTING DETACHMENT INTO PRACTICE

Release your intention: Once you have established a crystal clear intention for what it is that you wish to bring into existence, you should then let it go. Having faith that the universe has heard your request and will fulfill your desire in the most effective manner possible is essential.

Focus on the now and now (Mindfulness): Instead of becoming preoccupied with your desires or continually looking for indications that they are being brought into existence,

you should concentrate on the here and now. Spend your time doing things that make you happy and give you a sense of accomplishment, and have faith that the things you want will eventually come to you.

Practice gratitude: Make it a habit to express appreciation for the many benefits that are already present in your life. Your ability to build a sense of abundance and confidence that the universe will continue to provide for you can be aided by this.

Allow yourself to surrender control by acknowledging that you are unable to exert control over every

facet of the manifestation process. Give over control to the cosmos and have faith that it is aware of the strategy that will bring about the fulfilment of your goals and aspirations.

It is important to remember that manifestation does not always occur without some prior effort. Exert patience and have faith that everything is taking place according to the will of God. One of the most important aspects of successful manifestation is mastering the skill of letting go and developing the ability to practice detachment.

You may speed up the process of manifesting your dreams and create a life filled with joy and abundance if you let go of your attachment to a certain outcome and put your faith in the world to fulfil your needs in the most effective manner. Start practising detachment right now, and you will be amazed at how easily and gracefully your wishes will come to fruition.

Sidharrth S Kumar, Chief Happiness Officer at NumroVani, is an Astro Numerologist and life and relationship Coach on a mission to transform human lives by curating synergy between human aura and cosmic universe by leveraging traditional intellectual knowledge of Bharat.

ELOQUENCE AND WISDOM



MYSTIC MUSING

RAJESH M. IYER

King Bimbisara preferred revisiting Buddha's vihar whenever he could since he found it to be a better place than his palace to discuss matters of higher plane. The serenity of the vihar was unbeatable. Besides, Bimbisara realised how wealth and opulence—that enamours everyone—becomes a hindrance in the quest for spiritual answers.

The occasional meetings invariably filled the king with ecstasy, as it did that day when the king came calling. Looking at Buddha's disciples, the king often wondered as to how calm and content they could be without any worldly wealth in their possession. 'It's because they don't cling on to any worldly possession is what makes them blissful, O King,' Bimbisara remembered Buddha once telling him.

As he always did, the king sat with other disciples to listen to the sermon. After Buddha had spoken and it was time to leave, the king was still left with unanswered questions. That was usual! But this question that he was keen to pose was something that reared its head every time he visited the monastery. He had heard Buddha claiming that many of his disciples have reached the state he was in. However, to the king's eyes, Buddha stood head and shoulders above them. Besides, he

didn't find anyone as articulate as Buddha. Making sure he doesn't upset anyone with his query, the king posed the question when they were alone, 'You've claimed that others too have reached the state you have. Yet, I don't see anyone like you. Not as articulate, either.'

Buddha smiled on hearing the statement. 'Looks can be deceptive. Don't merely rely on what meets the eye, O King. I might be eloquent. However, the higher state I mention has nothing to do with it. It's a flowering that happens deep within, with little or no bearing on your extrinsic nature. Flamboyance, articulation, looks are external features. These traits have little connection with your internal achievements. Some of the greatest Buddhas remained silent. Likewise, many articulate self-styled masters are charlatans. Just because some of them aren't as eloquent as I seem to be doesn't take away what they have achieved. Let me assure you that we stand on the same plane.'

As external features aren't indicators of internal attainment, know that being eloquent, expressive and articulate aren't necessarily signs of wisdom. *Rajesh M. Iyer is a storyteller who explores human relationships through meaningful anecdotes, parables, and stories; he shares his work on www.rajeshmiyer.com.*



As external features aren't indicators of internal attainment, know that being eloquent, expressive and articulate aren't necessarily signs of wisdom.

TOP OF THE DAY

ARC LAUNCHES DRESSAGE COMPETITION

MUMBAI: Following the remarkable victory of their rider, who secured gold at the recent Asian Games in the Dressage discipline, the Amateur Riders' Club organised a special initiative with a series of competitions to encourage talent at the beginner and amateur level. The kick-off competition was held at the Mahalaxmi grounds, at the Dressage arena. More such main competitions have been scheduled for December 2 to December 6 respectively. Through these competitions, ARC aims to inspire young riders and encourage active participation, preparing them to represent the country on the global stage and enhancing the stature of equestrian sports in India.

SDT HOCKEY DOMINATES IN CHAMPIONSHIP WIN

KOVILLPATTI: SDT Hockey Nilgiris Academy registered a comfortable 6-2 win over Cuddalore Hockey Academy in their pool B encounter at the ongoing 1st Hockey India Junior Men Academy Championship 2023 - Zone B here on Sunday. In other matches, Berar Hockey Academy (Vidatbha) Amravati beat Thirumalavanan Hockey Academy 8-1. In the first match of the day, strikers from SDT Hockey Nilgiris Academy showed sublime form to score in the opening quarter. It was Visvanathan who scored the opening goal through a PC in the 7th minute and scored his second PC in the 30th minute while Kumar Vishnushree scored a hat-trick of field goals in the 9th, 44th and 58th minutes.

PARDEEP NARWAL LEADS UP YODDHAS

NEW DELHI: UP Yoddhas, representing the state of Uttar Pradesh in the Pro Kabaddi League, officially announced the appointment of the super-raider, Pardeep Narwal, as their captain for the upcoming tenth season of the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL). With numerous raiding records in the Pro Kabaddi League to his name, including the distinction of being the only raider to accumulate over 1500 raid points, Pardeep Narwal has etched his name as one of the most legendary kabaddi players in the history books of Indian Kabaddi.

TERRY VENABLES DIES AT 80

LONDON: Terry Venables, a charismatic and tactically innovative English soccer coach who led his national team to the European Championship semifinals in 1996 after winning trophies at club level with Barcelona and Tottenham, has died. He was 80. The death of Venables was announced on Sunday in a statement by his family to British media, saying he died on Saturday after a long illness. The English Football Association said Venables left behind a legacy that "captured the imagination of many and enhanced the global reputation of the English game."

TOURNAMENT

ADITI SECURES SECOND LET GOLF TITLE IN SPAIN

TDG NETWORK
MARBELLA

Star Indian golfer Aditi Ashok dished out a bogey free final round after a stunning back nine to win the Andalucia Costa del Sol Open de Espana tournament for her second title of the season here.

Aditi's final round of 66 with a back nine of 5-under 31 saw her finish at 17-under as she beat Anne Van Dam (68) of the Netherlands by two shots on Sunday.

It was Aditi's second win of the season and fifth of her career on the Ladies European Tour.

She began the 2023 season with a win in Kenya in the first event of the year and ended it with another trophy here in the last event.

It was an impressive week for Aditi, who had finished



fourth at the Tokyo Olympics, as she shot 69-68-68-66 at Real Club de Golf Las Brisas.

"It started out slow, I was missing a lot of birdies for the first six to eight holes. I hit it close on seven, after that I felt like I still had a chance. Initially, it felt like I was two shots away the whole time. I'm glad it picked up on the back nine," said Aditi.

"It was a great battle. Anne (Van Dam), when she's playing good, she can blow the

the 10th and 13th but it was her three birdies on the trot on 15, 16 and 17 which sealed her the title.

"On the front nine I wasn't hitting it as good, somewhere on the back on 13 when I hit that 8-iron close I feel I made a good swing and it just picked up from there. I made three or four good swings and all of those were in makeable range. I guess the 16th tee shot was the shot of the day," she said.

"One 18, I have struggled with that tee shot and missed it right almost all four days. It was a weird lie in the rough, I didn't know if it would go left on me, and it did. I was just trying to make sure I had a good look at par."

India's other star Diksha Dagar (67) ended tied-seventh on 10-under-par, along with defending champion Caroline Hedwall, Norway's

Madelene Stavnar, France's Celine Boutier and Spanish amateur Andrea Revuelta.

Diksha improved over the last two rounds after starting with 72-71. She carded 68-67 over the weekend.

Aditi, who played only eight events this season, finished fourth on the Race to Costa del Sol, while Diksha was third.

In the 2023 Race to Costa del Sol, Trichat Cheenglab took the trophy with a tally of 1,966.52 points ahead of Boutier and Dagar.

Cheenglab followed in the footsteps of compatriot Athaya Thitikul and became the sixth player to win both the Race to Costa del Sol and Rookie of the Year titles in the same season.

Dutch star Anne Van Dam ended the week in second place on 15-under-par after a final round of 68 (-4).

FOCUS

National Games aims to attract young talent

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Indian Olympics Association president PT Usha praised the Goa government and the National Games Organising Committee for including a wide range of sports disciplines in the recently concluded 37th edition of the National Games, saying it attracted more athletes from various age groups and would attract more fans towards these disciplines.

The 59-year-old, herself a legendary track and field athlete, said traditional and indigenous Indian sports should form the core of the National Games as that can help inculcate the sports culture in our society.

"Goa has done a fantastic job of organising the Na-



tional Games. Going forward, several strategies can be implemented to engage more youngsters. I would like to suggest that organisers should promote inclusivity by featuring a diverse range of sports. And, actively address issues related to gender and diversity. They should aim to involve local communities and schools in the planning and execu-

tion of the National Games," said Usha on the way forward to make the National Games a celebration of India's sporting prowess. "The infrastructure built to host the National Games should be open for local as well as outstation athletes. The legacy part of the games is important to build up sports culture. Pre-event activities, including roadshows, and

community events are good advertisements to build up excitement in the weeks leading to the National Games. "The organisers can also organize pre-event activities such as school competitions, roadshows, and community events to build excitement and involvement. They should also implement legacy projects that contribute to the development of sports infrastructure, community engagement, and youth participation even after the National Games have concluded," she added. The IOA president, who has been included in the Coordination Committee for the next Asian Games in Japan, said the need of the hour was to have a robust feedback mechanism from participants, stakeholders and spectators. "This infor-

SCORES

Rodrygo's Brace propels Real Madrid to top

TDG NETWORK
MADRID



Lautaro Martínez scored again but Inter Milan had to be content with a share of the spoils as the Serie A leader drew 1-1 at second-place Juventus. Martínez's 13th league goal of the season cancelled out Dušan Vlahovic's opener in the Derby d'Italia.

Inter remained two points above Juventus. Third-place AC Milan is six points behind its city rival, with defending champion Napoli two points further back in fourth. Both Milan and Napoli played on Saturday.

Inter faces another tough trip next weekend when it visits Napoli.

It was a matchup in Turin between two fierce rivals occupying the top two spots. Inter was looking to move five points clear while Juventus knew it could leapfrog into the lead.

Both sides had early chances in a match that was intense and entertaining from the start.

Juventus broke the deadlock in the 27th minute through a move started and finished by Vlahovic. The Serbia forward won the ball in midfield and then sent Federico Chiesa down the left before racing into the area to collect the ball back and steer it into the bottom right corner. The home side's advantage

with stomach problems. "Rodrygo made the difference in the game today," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said.

It was Rodrygo's first game since he said last week that he was the target of racist abuse on social media following Brazil's 1-0 loss to Argentina in South American World Cup qualifying.

The Brazil forward has scored five goals in his last three games with Madrid. He calmly dealt with defenders while scoring his goals on Sunday, first inside the area and then in a breakaway.

Also out for Ancelotti's team because of injuries were Vinicius Júnior and Eduardo Camavinga, who got hurt during the international break.

It was the second straight league win for Madrid, which is unbeaten in eight matches in the competition. Cadiz looked threatening at times but couldn't avoid seeing its winless streak in the league extend to nine matches, with six losses and three draws.

DERBY D'ITALIA

MARTÍNEZ SHINES, INTER DRAWS 1-1 WITH JUVENTUS

TDG NETWORK
MILAN



lasted just six minutes, however, before Marcus Thuram and Martínez — who have become one of European soccer's most dangerous attacking duos — combined again for the equalizer.

The move began with Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer and quickly moved forward where Thuram crossed from the right and Martínez got in front of Juventus defender Federico Gatti from an angled drive into the bottom left corner. Former Juventus winger Juan Cuadrado was brought on in the 69th minute to loud boos from the home fans and he was jeered every time he touched the ball.

Cuadrado joined Inter on a free transfer in July after eight seasons at Juventus, where he won a number of trophies including five Serie A titles.

TEAM GOAL Paulo Dybala and Stephan El Shaarawy scored late as Roma beat lowly Udinese

3-1 and closed the gap on the top four.

Roma — which had a poor start to the season — moved up to fifth, three points behind Napoli and 11 points behind Inter.

It was Udinese's first defeat in nearly two months and left it a point above the relegation zone.

Jose Mourinho's side took the lead in the 20th minute when Dybala floated in a free kick and Gianluca Mancini beat his marker to head the ball in across the face of goal.

Udinese had been pushing at the start of the second half and it equalized in the 57th when Martín Payero whipped in a cross from the left for Florian Thauvin to head in at the back post.

Roma restored its advantage nine minutes from time with a great team move that it finished off when Romelu Lukaku backheeled the ball to Dybala, who drilled it into the bottom left corner.

DECEMBER 24

Odisha to host Ultimate Kho Kho season 2

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI



Backed with a successful, exciting and entertaining inaugural season that reached 164 million households, Ultimate Kho Kho (UKK) is all geared up for its grand second edition, scheduled to kickstart on December 24, 2023, and final on January 13, 2024 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack, Odisha.

Inspired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's vision of 'sports for youth, youth for future', the Odisha government has not only hosted some of the major global sports events in the state, but it has also developed world-class multi-sport infrastructure and sporting experiences for sports enthusiasts from the state.

"We are extremely excited to host the 2nd edition of the Ultimate Kho Kho in Odisha. This is an exciting opportunity for all of us. Kho-Kho is a sport that is not only

played but widely followed as well in Odisha and hosting the second edition here will be a great opportunity for the people of the state to not only experience the spectacle live but also get inspired and pursue the game. We are fully committed to making the season a grand success," commented Tusharkanti Behera, Minister of State, Electronics & IT, Sports & Youth Services, Government of Odisha as quoted by a press release from UKK.

"We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Odisha Government and the Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for their support for Season 2.

The resounding success of the inaugural edition has attracted significant interest from brands and helped us secure new partners.

OUTCRY

EVERTON FANS PROTEST 10-POINT DEDUCTION MARCH

TDG NETWORK
LIVERPOOL



Everton fans marched in their thousands to Goodison Park ahead of a match against Manchester United, protesting against the decision to dock their team a Premier League-record 10 points for breaching financial rules.

Supporters on the march on Sunday held up pink cards featuring the word "corrupt" and the logo of the Premier League, and chanted "We shall not be moved." On one huge banner read the message: "Where there is power, greed and money ... there is corruption."

There is widespread anger at the Merseyside club at the severity of the sanction handed out by a disciplinary commission after Everton went less than 20 million pounds over the maximum losses allowed of 105 million pounds (\$130 million) across a three-year period, according to the league's profit and sustainability rules.

This was Everton's first match since the club received a punishment that many in soccer feel doesn't fit the crime. It made for a hostile atmosphere inside Goodison Park as fans jeered the Premier League anthem and waved the pink cards when the players came out of the tunnel before kickoff.

There was a huge chant in the 10th minute — marking the 10 points docked — accusing the league of corruption. Everton started the game tied for points with last-place Burnley, five points from safety, and stayed there after losing 3-0 to United, despite an encouraging performance for large parts of the game.

Everton manager Sean Dyche said it had been "a tough 10 days to take the news." "Most people think how unjust it is, including our fans, myself and the football club. We have to perform and win games."

TRIUMPH

Sinner clinches Davis Cup victory for Italy

TDG NETWORK
MALAGA



Jannik Sinner capped his perfect week by leading Italy to its first Davis Cup title in nearly five decades.

Sinner took his record to 5-0 this week by beating Alex de Miñaur 6-3, 6-0 in the second singles match of Sunday's final, giving Italy a 2-0 win over Australia for its first Davis Cup title since 1976.

Matteo Arnaldi had given Italy the first point with a 7-5, 2-6, 6-4 win over Alexei Popyrin.

The No. 4 Sinner beat top-ranked Novak Djokovic in the singles and doubles matches in Saturday's semi-final showdown against Serbia.

The 22-year-old Italian needed 1 hour, 21 minutes

to seal Italy's victory against Australia. "We are all very young. We are really hungry to try to win it one more time for our life, but having this feeling at least once, it is a really special feeling," said Sinner, who has beaten nine top-10 players since September, though he lost to Djokovic in the ATP Tour Finals a week ago. Arnaldi earlier saved eight break points before getting a break of his own to close out the first match in the decisive third set.

COURAGEOUS

I'M TRYING TO PLAY ALL MY SHOTS, BE FEARLESS, TAKE BOWLERS ON: JAISWAL

TDG NETWORK
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Talented India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal is learning the ropes fast and has been trying to be fearless, as evident from his boundary-laden 25-ball 53 against Australia in the second T20 International here.

The 21-year-old right-hander struck nine fours and two sixes during his knock, giving India a rollicking start. He shared a 77-run partnership with Ruturaj Gaikwad (58) for the opening stand before getting out in the sixth over. India posted a mammoth 235 for 4 and restricted Australia to 191 for 9 for a 44-run win.

"It was really special for me. I was trying to play all my shots, be fearless, and take the bowlers on. I was fully sure with my deci-



Jaiswal has been aiming to approach his game with fearlessness.

sions," Jaiswal said after the match on Sunday. "I have been told by (captain) Surya (Kumar Yadav) and (coach)

The 21-year-old right-hander struck nine fours and two sixes during his knock, giving India a rollicking start. He shared a 77-run partnership with Ruturaj Gaikwad (58) for the opening stand before getting out in the sixth over.

VVS (Laxman) bhai to express myself. I always think of how I can improve myself around experienced players and nothing else. Still learning," Jaiswal, named player-of-the-match, mentioned that he was working on improving his fitness level as well as mental strength. "I really worked on my fitness and playing shots. I feel the mental aspect is more important at this level. Trying to get better each and every day," said the youngster, who made his India debut this year. He has played two Tests and 10 T20 International matches so far.

When asked about his mix-up with Gaikwad in the first T20I in Visakhapatnam, which led to the latter's run-out, Jaiswal said, "It was my mistake. I went to him and said sorry. (Marcus) Stoinis was between me; I was sure but then not sure. I made the wrong call. I accepted that it was a mistake, and it happens. Ritu bhai was humble and said in the gym that next time we are running, we will take secure singles."

Rinku Singh, who has been playing the role of a finisher to perfection, said he was enjoying his batting.

LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

Surya's supportive role crucial for team's success: Prasidh Krishna

TDG NETWORK
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Suryakumar Yadav's leadership philosophy is very similar to his T20 batsmanship - uncomplicated, and that's what is helping the younger brigade perform well, according to the team's leading pacer, Prasidh Krishna. India is already 2-0 up in the five-match T20I series against Australia under Surya's captaincy, and Prasidh himself has received a lot of backing, bouncing back strongly in the second game with three wickets after conceding 50 runs in the first.

When asked about Surya's captaincy style, Prasidh replied, "It shows in the way he (Suryakumar) bats - very similar in his captaincy as well. He trusts his players, backs all of us to do what we want to do, and he's there right behind us to support if there's anything going wrong." Rohit Sharma is known to give a lot of free-

dom to his players, and his MI teammate is no different. "That has been the name of the game, and then that's the word around freedom. Go and execute your plans out there, and everyone trusts each other in the team," the Karnataka speedster said. He mentioned that he learned a lot being a part of India's World Cup campaign, although he did not play a single match. India lost to Australia in the summit clash. "Being a part of the squad was a massive learning for me. That's the biggest learning curve I've had since I've been a part of the team. I got to learn a lot about the way people prepare and the amount of information that you can take." However, there is no substitute for learning by doing, and Prasidh understood the difference between sitting in a World Cup dugout and being out there, executing it for the team in a pressure scenario.

CAPTAIN

Shubman Gill to lead Gujarat Titans in IPL 2024

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Gujarat Titans (GT) named Indian batter Shubman Gill as captain on Monday to lead the team ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 after Hardik Pandya returned to Mumbai Indians (MI).

A statement from Gujarat Titans read, 'Gill will be leading a team that has an unparalleled combination of experience and youthful exuberance, which has been the hallmark of the Gujarat Titans.' Gill has amassed 1373 runs in 33 innings at an average of 47.34, with three centuries and eight fifties. Last season was monumental for the opener as he scored 890 runs in 17 matches at an average of 59.33, with three centuries and four fifties, earning him the Orange Cap.

The opener played a crucial role in GT's sensational run since its debut in the IPL. In the last season, he



scored 129 runs in 60 balls against Mumbai Indians, the highest by a batter in the IPL playoffs.

'I am delighted and proud to assume the captaincy of Gujarat Titans and thank the franchise for their trust in me to lead such a fine team. We have had two exceptional seasons, and I keenly look forward to leading the team with our exciting brand of cricket,' Gill said on the announcement.

After winning the Indian Premier League (IPL) in their debut season in 2022, GT reached the finals in the next season, losing to Chennai Super Kings (CSK). Gill also hammered three centuries in the last IPL. Only Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) batter Virat Kohli (2016) and Rajasthan Royals batter Jos Buttler (2022) had more in a single IPL season, scoring four each.

EXCITEMENT

Cameron Green eager to shine in RCB Colours for IPL 2024

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Australian all-rounder Cameron Green expressed his excitement to play for Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024. On Monday, Mumbai Indians (MI) traded their all-rounder Cameron Green to Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) ahead of the IPL 2024 player auction.

"Hey RCB fans, it's Cam Green here. I am excited to join Andy Flower, the team's head coach. I can't wait to see you guys at the Chinnaswamy Stadium. Cheers," said Green in a video by RCB.

Green, who was bought by MI for a whopping Rs 17.5 crore at the auction last December, featured in 16 matches. The Australian had an impressive start to the IPL, scoring 452 runs, hitting an unbeaten century and two half-centuries while also taking six wickets. The trade has been car-



ried out as per the existing player fee. In 37 T20Is, Green has scored 697 runs at an average of 29.04, with a strike rate of over 151. He has scored a century and four fifties, with the best score of 100*. He also took 11 wickets, with the best figures of 2/16. This action coincides with the successful completion by the Mumbai Indians of another high-profile all-cash deal to acquire all-rounder Hardik Pandya from Gujarat Titans. Sri Lanka spinner Wanindu Hasaranga, Australian pacer Josh Hazlewood, and Indian pacer Harshal Patel are among the players released by RCB

ahead of the IPL next year. Among the other released players are New Zealand players Finn Allen, Michael Bracewell, South African all-rounder Wayne Parnell, England's David Willey, and Indian players Sonu Yadav, Avinash Singh, Siddharth Kaul, and Kedar Jadhav.

RCB traded Shahbaz Ahmed, their all-rounder, to Sunrisers Hyderabad in exchange for all-rounder Mayank Dagar.

The player retention window for the Indian Premier League 2024 season closed on Sunday, with the 10 franchises collectively retaining 173 players.

IN MEMORIAM

SANDHYA MUZUMDAR MUKHERJEE: A STALWART OF INDIAN CRICKET

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Today marks a somber day for women's cricket in India, particularly in Kolkata, as the community mourns the loss of Sandhya Muzumdar Mukherjee. She passed away this morning, leaving behind a legacy that resonates with her contributions to the sport and the lives she touched. May her soul find eternal peace, and strength be granted to her daughter during this profound loss.

Sandhya, known for her understated demeanor, left an indelible mark on those

who had the privilege of knowing her. Through the most challenging times, she stood as a pillar of support, instilling confidence with her simple yet powerful words. As we bid her farewell, her impact remains etched in our memories, a testament to her unwavering support.

Our association with Sandhya dates back to the 1974-75 Nationals in Varanasi, where her team emerged triumphant. Over the years, our friendship endured, and Sandhya's encouragement became a constant presence. Beyond being an opening

batsman, she served as a selector for West Bengal, contributing significantly to the growth of women's cricket.

During our Kolkata camp, Sandhya's generosity shone through as she and her teammates brought food for everyone. Her camaraderie

with fellow players, including Runadi, Lopamudra, Sharmila, Keya, and Chandana, reflected the discipline and dedication that defined their era. A poignant tribute comes from Fowzeih, the opening batsman and wicketkeeper, expressing deep sorrow at Sandhya's passing. Remembered as a good person and devoted cricketer, Fowzeih reminisces about their shadow practice sessions under the watchful eyes of Sunil Da, their coach during the Kolkata camp.

In this time of grief, we collectively honor Sandhya Muzumdar Mukherjee for

her significant contributions to Indian cricket and the lasting impact she had on her contemporaries. May her soul rest in peace, and may her spirit continue to inspire generations to come.

According to Nilima Joglekar, her colleague and former Indian women's cricket captain, "I remember the first Test match when we were playing a series in Australia. She was patrolling the field, and she was an electrifying fielder. She was a stylish cricket opener for India." Subba Mundkar Pandit Former Team Mate in conversation with Sumil Yash Kalra

TURNS 37

Indian cricket community sends warm birthday greetings to Raina

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Indian cricket fraternity took to social media on Monday to extend their wishes to former middle-order batter Suresh Raina, who turned 37. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) used X (formerly Twitter) to convey their wishes to Raina.

"322 intl. matches, 7988 intl. runs, 2011 World Cup & 2013 Champions Trophy-winner. Here's wishing @ImRaina a very Happy Birthday #TeamIndia," tweeted BCCI. Chennai Super Kings (CSK), Raina's Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise, also extended their birthday greetings to the once integral middle-order batter of their side. "Wishing our Chinna Thala tremendous hap-



piness and a positive year ahead!," tweeted CSK. India's World Cup-winning all-rounder Yuvraj Singh posted an Instagram story, expressing his wishes that Raina scores a lot of runs in the ongoing Legends League Cricket (LLC), where Raina is representing Urbanrisers Hyderabad. Former Indian all-rounder Irfan Pathan also tweeted, "Happy birthday brother @ImRaina. Have

a great year ahead. Lots of love." Indian opener Shikhar Dhawan wished Raina a very happy birthday by posting a story on Instagram, hoping that God blesses him with the best in everything. Indian middle-order batter and rising sensation Rinku Singh, who has stated that Raina is one of his idols on many occasions, also wasted no time in extending his wishes to the senior batter.

AVAILABLE

Steve Smith returns to Sydney Sixers for Big Bash League 13

TDG NETWORK
SYDNEY

Star Australian batter Steve Smith will make a return to the Sydney Sixers for Big Bash League (BBL) season 13, as announced by the club on Monday.

"Australian and Sydney Sixers champion, Steve

Smith, is set to rejoin the club this summer for BBL13," stated the team.

Sixers members and fans will have the opportunity to see the superstar in action on Friday, December 8, when the Sixers kick off their BBL13 campaign, hosting the Melbourne Ren-

egades at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG).

Smith is also likely to be available for the Sydney Smash against Sydney Thunder at the same ground on January 12, in a heavyweight clash with Australian teammate David Warner. One of the sport's

all-time greatest, Smith will don the magenta for a second consecutive year, following his explosive stint with the club last summer. Notching 346 runs at an incredible average of 86.50 and striking at a whopping 174.74, Smith quickly became one of the league's top

run-scorers, despite making just five appearances last season. The 34-year-old produced two of the most entertaining performances in Big Bash history, notching back-to-back hundreds and becoming the fourth Sixer - and the first male - to ever smash triple figures.